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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Minister directs NHPC-BRO to mend Dikchu-Mangan road



WANGCHUK BHUTIA DIKCHU, 10 JUL: Roads & Bridges Minister, Samdup Lepcha, accompanied by ADC(N), Somnath Adhikari, SP(N), SG Bhutia, AEE, BRO, Rajat Agarwal, General

manager (Incharge), NHPC HEP Stage V, S Khatwa, Forest department officials and Panchayats visited the landslide spot on Mangan-Dikchu highway today. The Minister directed NHPC HEP stage V and BRO

officials to carry out protection work on the highway road and RCC bridge which is in critical condition. He assured all support from the state government. The BRO and NHPC HEP stage V officials in-

formed that they will start protection works within 5-7 days as they need to bring materials and it may take 4-5 days to manage all the required materials, inputs, machines and staff.

A landslide near the Dikchu RCC bridge (Dam Site HEP, NHPC Stage -V) towards Mangan has damaged 50% of the road formation and the road can collapse any time as rainfall continues.

Dhurba Lohagun to be conferred Bhanu Puraskar



Bhanu Jayanti Samaroh Samiti urges all to participate in celebration

SAGAR CHETTRI GANGTOK, 10 JUL: The 205th Bhanu Jayanti Samaroh Samiti 2019 has appealed to all social organisations and language and literature lovers in the State to be a part of the state-level celebration of Bhanu Jayanti to be held in the capital on 13 July. The theme of this year's celebration is 'Sanskriti Sambridhi Diwas'.

The 205th Bhanu Jayanti Samaroh Samiti led by HRDD Minister, Kunga Nima Lepcha as the president has been preparing for the grand celebration with series of activities. The celebration will have Sobha Yatra, talks, cultural presentations and presentation of the prestigious Bhanu Puraskar and presentation of Sewa Shree Samman.

Addressing a press conference here today,

Nepali Sahitya Parishad Sikkim president, Rudra Poudyal, who is also the working president of the celebration committee, appealed to different organisations and literature lovers to participate in the grand celebration of Bhanu Jayanti.

Samaroh Samiti general secretary, Chunnilal Ghimirey informed that the morning programme will be held at Bhanu Park and will be followed by Sobha Yatra from Bhanu Park to Manan Kendra.

Sobha Yatra will have the participation of different organisations and school students and the best Jhanki will be awarded by the organising committee. The committee has organised poem recitation and Ramayan recitation competitions in the inter-school and open categories.

Winner of each category will get the chance to perform during the main celebration on 13 July afternoon at Manan Kendra, which will have Chief Minister PS Tamang as the chief guest.

The main highlight of the afternoon pro-

gramme is the presentation of the prestigious Bhanu Puraskar and presentation of Sewa Shree Samman.

This year, the Bhanu Puraskar 2019 will be conferred to a senior theatre artist and litterateur of Sikkim, Dhurba Lohagun. He hails from Naya Bazaar in West Sikkim and has contributed hugely towards the development of Nepali language and literature through his works in theatre and writings.

This year Bhasa Sewa Shree Samman will be presented to MB Khulal 'Deep', Sahitya Sewa Shree Samman to Amar Baniya 'Lohoro', Sangeet Sewa Shree Samman to Norden Lepcha, Chitrakarita Sewa Shree Samman to Lokendra Pradhan, Natya Sewa Shree Samman to Mandeep Lama and Bikram Gautam and Patrakarita Sewa Shree Samman to Pranay Lamichaney and KK Chettri.

The committee has also introduced Natya Sewa Shree Samman from this year, which will be presented to Sumi Rai.

3 PCEs transferred as Secretaries

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 10 JUL: PCE, UD&HD, Sital P. Pradhan, was today transferred and posted as Secretary, Information Technology Department, relieving Additional Chief Secretary, VB Pathak, who, apart from holding charge of DPER&NECAD, had also been holding additional charge of IT Department. Also today, PCE, RMDD, RK Pariyar was posted as PCE and Secretary, WS&PHE Department, while the PCE, WR & River Development Department, TP Shangdarpa, was transferred and posted as PCE-cum-Secretary, Roads & Bridges Department.

Sikkim-bound Innova plunges into Teesta, 3 feared dead

SUMMIT REPORT KALIMPONG, 10 JUL:

A Sikkim-bound Innova Crysta vehicle bearing registration number WB73-E-2940 met with an accident near Coronation Bridge on NH10 and plunged into the Teesta. All three people on board, including the driver, are missing and are feared dead.

The vehicle had picked up a couple from Rajasthan at Bagdogra and was headed to Sikkim, it is informed.

There were several eye-witnesses to the mishap, but even though the accident was reported immediately and rescue operations launched with NDRF teams, neither the vehicle nor the passengers could be traced.

The vehicle had slipped on the slushy road surface at a turn-



ing and tumbled around 150 feet into the Teesta. There were vehicles lined up on both sides

since traffic at this stretch had been held up owing to a landslide since early morning.

Assam flood situation deteriorates; 3 dead, over 2 lakh affected

GUWAHATI, JUL 10 (PTI): Three people were killed in rain and flood related incidents in Assam as the situation turned grim on Wednesday with over two lakh people across 11 districts of the state being affected by the deluge.

Till Tuesday, 62,400 people were affected by floods in eight districts, but now 2,07,100 persons are affected in the state, the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said.

Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Biswanath, Darrang, Bapeta, Nalbari, Chirang, Golaghat, Majuli, Jorhat and Dibrugarh districts are hit by the deluge, it said.

Three persons died in rain and flood related incidents in Golaghat,

Dhemaji and Kamrup Metropolitan districts, the ASDMA said.

One person was washed away in Bokakhat in Golaghat district and another in Dhemaji, while a person was killed in a landslide at Kotabari in Kamrup Metropolitan district, it said. The state disaster management authority said 530 villages are under water and 13,267.74 hectares of crop area has been damaged.

In view of heavy rains and possibility of landslides, the Kamrup Metropolitan district administration has withdrawn all permissions granted for excavation of land and extraction or blasting of stone with immediate effect.

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POCSO Act made stringent, death penalty for aggravated sexual assault on children

NEW DELHI, JUL 10 (PTI): To combat rising cases of child sex abuse, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved amendments to strengthen the POCSO Act by including death penalty for aggravated sexual assault on children, besides providing stringent punishments for other crimes against minors, officials said.

The proposed changes in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act also provide for fines and imprisonment to curb child pornography.

The modification in the law will address the need for stringent measures against rising trend of child sex abuse in the country and combat the menace of relatively new kind of crimes, the government said, stressing that the strong penal provisions will act as a deterrent.



"It intends to protect the interests of vulnerable children in times of distress and ensures their safety and dignity. The amendment is aimed at establishing clarity regarding the as-

pects of child abuse and punishment thereof," it said.

The government, in a statement, said the amendments in Section-2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 14, 15, 34, 42 and 45 of the POCSO Act, 2012

are being made to address the aspects of child sexual abuse in an appropriate manner.

"Section-4, 5 and 6 are proposed to be amended to provide option of stringent punishment, including death penalty, for committing sexual assault and aggravated penetrative sexual assault crime on a child to protect the children from sexual abuse," it said.

The amendments are also proposed in Section-9 to protect children from sexual offences in times of natural calamities and other similar situations and in cases where children are administered, in any way, any hormone or any chemical substance, to attain early sexual maturity for the purpose of penetrative sexual assault, the statement said.

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CBI turns down probe plea for Arunachal student leader's murder

ITANAGAR, JUL 10 (PTI): The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has turned down the Arunachal Pradesh government's request to investigate the murder case of student leader Ojing Tayang terming it "simple in nature", the state assembly was informed on Wednesday.

Ojing Tayang, former finance secretary of All East Siang District Students Union (AESDSU) and two of his friends were attacked by unidentified youths in Itanagar on the night of June 10, 2017. Tayang succumbed to his injuries in a Guwahati hospital on June 19.

Responding to a question raised during Question Hour by Congress MLA Ninong Ering, Home Minister Bamang Felix

said the CBI had in a letter during August 2018 expressed its inability to take up the matter as the case was simple in nature and does not have inter-state ramifications.

The murder case was first investigated by Itanagar Police and then transferred to a special investigation team (SIT) on April 27 last year.

However, the SIT failed to make any headway into the case, leading to the home commissioner seeking a CBI probe in July 2018.

Felix informed the assembly that the prime suspect has been arrested.

"Hopefully we will be able to make a breakthrough in the case soon," the home minister said.

Centre's flood relief funds meagre, officials told to tackle disaster effectively: Arunchal CM



ITANAGAR, JUL 10 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Wednesday expressed concern over the havoc created by floods and landslides over the past few days, while asserting that district authorities have been asked to provide necessary aid and amenities in affected areas.

Incessant rain over the past couple of days triggered flashfloods and heavy landslides in the hill state, causing major damages to houses, bridges, culverts and roads.

The strategically important Bhalukpong-Charduar-Tawang (BCT) road in West Kameng district remained closed to vehicular movement for the fourth day on Wednesday as landslides have blocked the thoroughfare at several locations.

A 23-year-old woman was reportedly swept away by the flashfloods on Monday and is still untraceable.

During the Zero Hour in the assembly, Khandu admitted that the funds allotted by the Centre for flood relief were insufficient and the state has to send a report of damage assessment to receive the financial support.

"The deputy commissioners of all districts send reports of flood damages to the state government, which is then compiled and forwarded to the Centre in the form of a memorandum.

"The Centre then deputs a team to assess flood damages in the state. The central government allots funds only after receiving a report from the team," the chief minister said while replying to a question by Congress MLA Ninong Ering on the steps being

taken to tackle disasters. The district authorities and officials have been asked to maintain vigil to "prevent loss of life", while reaching out to those affected in the calamity with necessary aid and amenities, the CM said. Later in the day, a press release issued by Khandu's office said all government departments have been told to coordinate and work out an emergency mitigation plan under the supervision of the chief secretary.

He also said the Disaster Management Department has been asked to ensure that district administrations provide relief materials, essential commodities and drinking water to flood-affected people.

"Precautionary measures should be taken to avoid casualties. If the need arises, defence sorties will be put into service for air-dropping of ration commodities to the areas where surface communication has been disrupted," the release said quoting Khandu.

The CM also maintained that the Finance Department has been asked to allocate additional funds to the Disaster Management Department for mitigating the crisis.

"Water supply and electricity and all other basic services will be restored as soon as the weather conditions improve," he said.

Expressing sorrow over the report of a missing person, Khandu said the West Kameng deputy commissioner has been asked to involve personnel of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) in the search and rescue operation.

Governor attends special prayers for Late Swami Satyamitranand Giri



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 10 JUL:

Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad today attended a special prayer and obituary function "Shraddhanjali Mahotsava-Shordsi Bhandara" organised in memory of Lt Jagadguru Shankaracharya Padmabhusan Swami Satyamitranand Giri Maharaj at Haridwar, Uttarakhand, as per a Raj Bhavan release.

Swami Satyamitranand Giri, the Shankaracharya of Uttaramaya Math and also the founder of famous Bharat Mata Mandir at Haridwar, had passed away on 25 Jun, 2019. He was conferred Padmabhusan in 2015 by Government of India.

A galaxy of dignitaries including heads of states, saints and religious heads were present

on the occasion. Present among dignitaries were Rashtriya Swayemsevak Sangh Chief Mohan Bhagwat, Swami Ramdev, Governors from the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhanda, Meghalaya, Goa and Sikkim, Chief Ministers of Haryana and Uttarakhand, Ministers, heads of 13 Akhadas, International Imams and others.

The Governor made

his obituary reference to the departed saint and hailed him as noble son of Mother India. Highlighting his contribution to the nation, the Governor stated that the life and deeds of Late Swamiji will continue to show us the way forward and inspire us to remain committed towards strengthening the great nation Bharat.

Cabinet nod for bill to ban unregulated deposit schemes

NEW DELHI, JUL 10 (PTI): The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill with an aim to tackle the menace of illicit deposit-taking activities in the country.

The bill will replace the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance, 2019.

The proposed legislation is likely to be introduced in Parliament during the ongoing session.

Talking to reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said people are suffering due to chit fund scams.

"The bill will help tackle the menace of illicit deposit taking activities in the country, which at present are exploiting regulatory gaps and lack of strict administrative measures to dupe poor and gullible people of their hard earned money," an official release said.

The proposed legislation will have adequate provisions for punishment and disgorgement/repayment of deposits in cases where such schemes nonetheless manage to raise deposits illegally, it added.

The banning of Unregulated Deposit Scheme Bill, 2018 was considered by the Lok Sabha in February and after discussion, the same was passed.

However, before the same could be considered and passed in the Rajya Sabha, the Rajya Sabha was adjourned sine die on the same day.

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FPAS delegation calls on CM, invites him to awards ceremony



GANGTOK, 10 JUL [IPR]: Footballers Nirmal Chettri, Bikash Jairu, Sonam Gyalchen and Mayaldok Lepcha and Sikkim Express correspondent, Dichen Ongmu, called on Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] at Tashiling Secretariat today.

They called on the CM as representatives of Football Players Association of Sikkim [FPAS] which is hosting the Football Players Nation-

al Awards ceremony in Gangtok on 21 July. The awards ceremony is an annual feature of the Football Players Association of India.

The delegation congratulated the Chief Minister and invited him to attend the awards ceremony as the guest of honour.

The Chief Minister accepted the invitation and expressed his gratitude and wholeheartedly supported the event.

A poster on Football Players Annual Awards 2019 was also released by the Chief Minister during the meeting.

India captain Sunil Chhetri along with prominent players and former national players will be participating in the awards ceremony. An exhibition match will also be played between top Indian Footballers and Sikkimese footballers on the day of the awards ceremony.

Cabinet approves transgender bill

NEW DELHI, JUL 10 (PTI): The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved a bill which provides a mechanism for social, economic and educational empowerment of transgender persons by defining their identity and rights to prohibit discrimination against them.

The bill will benefit large number of transgender persons, mitigate the stigma, discrimination and abuse against this marginalised section and bring them into the mainstream of the society, an official statement said.

This will lead to inclusiveness and make them productive members of the society, it said.

"The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal to introduce the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019. The Bill will introduced in the ensuing session of the Parliament. The Bill provides a mechanism for their social, economic and educational empowerment," the statement said.

Passage of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019, which aims at empowering the community by

defining and protecting their rights, is one of the priorities of the Social Justice and Empowerment ministry in the first 100 days agenda of the second term of the Narendra Modi government, an official source said.

The bill will bring greater accountability on the part of the central government, state governments and UTs for issues concerning transgender persons, besides making all the stakeholders also responsive and accountable for upholding the principles underlying the Bill.

The bill was passed by Lok Sabha in December 2018. The draft bill without any new amendments was approved by the Cabinet on Wednesday, sources in the ministry said.

According to the bill, a transgender is a person whose "gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-man or trans-woman (whether or not such person has undergone Sex Reassignment Surgery or hormone therapy or laser therapy or such other therapy), person with intersex varia-

tions, gender-queer and person having such socio-cultural identities as kinner, hijra, aravani and jogta."

Going by the bill, a person would have the right to choose to be identified as a man, woman or transgender, irrespective of sex reassignment surgery and hormonal therapy. It also requires transgender persons to go through a district magistrate and "district screening committee" to get certified as a transperson.

The committee would comprise a medical officer, a psychologist or psychiatrist, a district welfare officer, a government official, and a transgender person.

The bill prohibits discrimination against a transgender person in areas such as education, employment, and healthcare. It directs the central and state governments to provide welfare schemes in these areas.

Offences like compelling a transgender person to beg, denial of access to a public place, physical and sexual abuse, etc. would attract up to two years' imprisonment and a fine.

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POCSO Act...

"Section-14 and Section-15 of the POCSO Act, 2012 are also proposed to be amended to address the menace of child pornography. It is proposed to levy fine for not destroying or deleting or reporting the pornographic material involving a child with an intention to share or transmit it," the government said.

Assam flood...

Thirteen relief camps and distribution centres are being run by authorities in four districts and 249 people have taken shelter at these facilities.

Embankments, roads, bridges, culverts and other infrastructure have been damaged at various places in Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Hojai, Barpeta, Golaghat, Majuli and Jorhat districts.

Several rivers, including the Brahmaputra, the Dikhow, the Dhansiri, the Jia Bharali, the Puthimari and the Beki, are flowing above the danger level at various districts.

Massive erosions have been witnessed at various places of Biswanath, Sonitpur, Udalguri and Baksa districts, ASDMA said.

GHEWA

The Ghewa (Antayasti Kriya) of my beloved husband late Ashok Lama (Ex-Panchyat) Son of late Pema Tamang who left for heavenly abode on 23rd June, 2019 falls on 14th July, 2019.

All relatives, family, friends and well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence at Upper Syari, Kopibari, below Deorali Khadi, Gangtok, East Sikkim. We also express our gratitude to all those who stood by us during our time of bereavement.

Mrs. Phigu Tamang (Wife) : 9832469895.

Mr Tshring Chopel Tamang: 7908416933

Mr. Dilip Tamang (Brother): 9002624755

Mr B M Tamang (Brother in law): 9002775011

Mr M B Rai (Bother in law) : 9851926384

Mr BB Tamang (Brother)



~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

URGENTLY REQUIRED:

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

PLOT FOR SALE:

Vacant plot measuring 0.38 Acres for sale at Amdo Golai, Deorali. Contact: 09717191985/097474651223

WANTED

HOUSEKEEPER/BABYSITTER.

Contact: 9933443442/9800500696.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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

Mr. Subash Lama

Proprietor

Hotel Parasol Residency, Panihouse, Deorali, East Sikkim

BUILDING FOR SALE

A 5 storied building with 3 floor completed having a land area of 30x70 at DABUWA, Melli road (2km from Namchi) is for sale. Rate reasonable. Interested party please contact: 6296370905, 9733284142, 8597088755.

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

Novin Gurung to join Real Kashmir Football Club

REBYNA RANA

GANGTOK, 10 JUL:

Sikkimese footballer, Novin Rai is officially joining the Real Kashmir Football Club [RKFC] on a year-long contract on 01 Aug, 2019. He has played for Shillong Lajong Football Club from 2014–2019.

Hailing from Rongli, East Sikkim, the 21-year-old plays as a midfielder and right back.

Speaking to SummitTIMES, Novin shared his excitement on joining Real Kashmir Football Club.

“I am looking forward to have a great season,” he stated.

At present, he’s representing Indian Navy Football Team through Shillong Lajong Football Club [SLFC]. It has been one year since Novin has been playing for Indian Navy Football Team through SLFC.

“I will cherish the moments which I have spent in Indian Navy because



the best thing about Indian Navy is that they allowed me to play professional football also,” said Novin.

At the age of 10, he got an opportunity to represent the state from Namchi Sports Hostel. In 2006, he joined State Sports Academy, Gangtok. He then got selected

for Shillong Lajong FC, where he played from 2014–19.

He has played 37 matches in Hero I-League and 2 matches in Hero Super Cup from Shillong Lajong FC. He has played many national tournaments from SLFC. In 2018, he got an offer from Indi-

an Navy Football which he accepted.

Novin has thanked his coaches and seniors [Suren Chetri, Amos Subba, Puspa Gurung, Nima Thendup Bhutia, Thupden Rabgyal, Leonard Gurung], for their genuine support as well as polishing his skills.

Hard to accept 45 minutes of bad cricket put us out of World Cup: Kohli

MANCHESTER, JULY 10 (PTI): It was unacceptable that 45 minutes of bad cricket resulted in India’s shock exit from the World Cup, lamented captain Virat Kohli after his team suffered a heart-breaking semifinal defeat against New Zealand.

In a stunning top-order collapse, India were reduced to 24 for four while chasing a modest 240. MS Dhoni (50) and Ravindra Jadeja (77) then fought back with a superb 116-run partnership for the seventh wicket but the former’s run-out in the penultimate over tilted the game in the favour of the Kiwis.

“Always feels disappointed when you play such good cricket and then 45 minutes of bad cricket puts you out of tournament. It is difficult to accept and difficult to come to terms with,” Kohli said.

“Credit to New Zealand bowlers. They were really good with the new ball and outstanding with the kind of areas they hit and the kind of swing they got from the surface. The way they bowled in the first half hour of our run chase was what made the difference. I think it was the skill level on display and that made life difficult for our batsmen,” he added.

Talking about Jadeja and Dhoni’s performance, he said, “Jadeja had a really outstanding couple of games and his performance today is a great sign of his skill-set and what he can do for the team. Going out with so much of clarity and turning the whole game around in no time was outstanding.” “MS (Dhoni) had a good partnership with Jadeja, and again it was a game of margins, and he (Dhoni) got run out in the end and it could have been anybody’s game (had not run out),” said Kohli, who made just 1 from 6 balls. Kohli said 240 was a chaseable total on any surface but somehow his batsmen could not cross the line.

AAP, BJP accuse each other of hooliganism at DERC public hearing

NEW DELHI, JUL 10 (PTI): The Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) public hearing on Wednesday turned into a political battleground as the AAP and BJP accused each other of hooliganism and violence.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta said he had filed a complaint at the Lodhi Road police station against Aam Aadmi Party “loyalists” since he was “forcibly prevented” from submitting his petition before the DERC.

AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj, however, said, “If he has any evidence in the matter, he should show it. In fact, we have proof that Devinder Kumar Sehrawat misbehaved with Rakhi Birla while Vijender Gupta snatched papers from her hand and tore them up.”

In a tweet, Bharadwaj claimed that BJP MLAs arrived at the DERC hearing “very late” but wanted to speak first.

AAP MLAs protested against BJP legislators sitting in the VIP area, he wrote on the microblogging site, adding the saffron party MLAs were not ready to sit with the public.

“At DERC, it all started with DERC inviting @NitinTyagiAAP to speak (first some first serve basis). And @OPSharm-

aBJP interrupting MLA Nitin Tyagi. Then people asked BJP to reduce electric tariffs in BJP ruled states (sic),” Bharadwaj tweeted.

He also alleged that BJP MLAs used “filthy language against lady MLAs of the AAP”.

Condemning the “hooliganism of AAP MLAs, leaders and workers” at DERC public hearing on tariff petitions, Gupta alleged, “I was forcibly prevented from submitting a petition before the DERC. AAP MLA Jarnail Singh went to the extent of snatching the petition from my hands and tearing it up. BJP MLAs O P Sharma and Jagdish Pradhan, Sehrawat and Anil Bajpai were manhandled.”

He claimed that his personal assistant was badly beaten and his clothes were torn.

“Representatives of various RWAs were manhandled and maltreated. They were not allowed to present their case in the public hearing,” the leader of opposition alleged.

Gupta, in his petition to the DERC, demanded the AAP government to roll back the fixed charges, Power Purchase Cost Adjustment Charges (PPAC), Surcharge and Pension Trust Surcharge.

Claiming that the Delhi government has

increased the fixed charges on electricity bills by six times in just one year from Rs 20 to Rs 125 per connection, he demanded that the government compensates consumers the the financial loss they incurred on account of payment of these charges.

Some consumers complained that due to commotion caused by the two parties, they wouldn’t get adequate time to put forth their views at the hearing.

The DERC will analyse all suggestions and objections received during the public hearing and consider it while determining new tariff rates.

Power sector experts said the process may take around a month’s time although efforts are made to come out with new tariffs as soon as possible.

The power discoms in the national capital had filed tariff revision petitions to power regulator DERC, citing deficit of Rs 287 crore in the average revenue requirement for the year 2019-20, besides dues.

The DERC had fixed July 10 as the date of public hearing on the petitions submitted by BSES discoms BRPL and BYPL, and Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (TPDDL).

away from the party.

The MLAs include Atanasio Monserratte, Jennifer Monserratte, Francis Silveira, Philip Nery Rodrigues, Cleofacio Dias, Wilfred DSa, Nilkant Halarnkar and Isidor Fernandes. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who was present when the group arrived at the Assembly complex, said the 10 MLAs have merged with the BJP.

With the 10 MLAs changing sides, the strength of Congress in

the House would be reduced to five.

BJP is the single largest party with 17, Goa Forward Parrry and Independents have three each, while one MLA each is from NCP and MGP.

When asked, Kavlekar refused to give reason behind their move, but said that they will make a statement later in the evening.

Sawant was sworn in as CM in March this year, after the death of then CM Manohar Parrikar.

Sikkim Amateur Athletic Association forms new body

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 10 JUL:

Sikkim Amateur Athletic Association [SAAA] formed its new executive committee in a meeting held on 02 July. The new body is headed by Superintendent of Police [East], Hari Prasad Chettri as president and has Thupden Rapgyal as general secretary, Mingma Sherpa as joint secretary and Tashi Zangpo as treasurer.

It has been informed that other executive members in the new committee would be elected in the coming days. The new committee has also decided to call the annual general meeting of SAAA very soon to revive the association and to take up athletic activities and competitions in the State.

FinMin restrictions: Editors Guild calls it ‘gag’ on media freedom

NEW DELHI, JUL 10 (PTI):

The Editors Guild Wednesday described the Finance Ministry restrictions on the entry of media persons into North Block as a “gag” on media freedom and urged Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to withdraw the “arbitrary decision”.

A clarification issued by the office of the finance minister Tuesday said a procedure has been put in place for “streamlining and facilitating” the entry of media persons inside the ministry of finance and “no ban is in place” on the entry of media persons in the ministry.

The Editors Guild, however, condemned the ministry’s “arbitrary decision” to deny even government-accredited journalists’ access to its offices in North Block, without prior appointment.

The guild, in a statement, said it has no dispute with the ministry that journalists should behave with restraint and responsibility while enjoying their access to the finance ministry, but a blanket order is not the answer.

“Journalists do not go to government offices to enjoy the comforts and hospitality of visitors’ rooms designated for them. They go to perform their challenging job of news gathering,” it asserted.

“This order is a gag on media freedoms and can even result in a further fall in India’s global press freedom rankings, especially as the contagion can easily spread to other ministries as well,” the Editors Guild said.

If the finance minister believes that journalists’ access to government offices is causing some inconveniences, the system could be improved in discussions with journalists, the guild said.

The guild urges Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to reconsider her decision and withdraw it, the statement said.

Fashion industry stakeholders discuss way forward



NITESH R PRADHAN

GANGTOK, 10 JUL:

Fashion industry stakeholders held a meeting today which was also attended by Secretary, Commerce & Industries department, SK Pradhan. The meeting had additional inputs from DR Sharma, MSME.

Stakeholders were briefed about formation of clusters by those engaged in fashion and related fields for availing benefits of government schemes.

Marketing and display of creations was also discussed with the stakeholders and organisers of annual calendar events like Mr Sikkim Manhunt

and Miss Sikkim. It was further informed that women, those belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe will get some additional benefits.

Secretary, Mr Pradhan appealed to stakeholders to be aware of all the government related schemes and work together.

Many stakeholders expressed the need for awareness of various schemes which can translate into more vibrancy in the field of fashion.

Joint Secretary, Commerce and Industries, Jaswant N, gave his inputs and urged them to form clusters so that there is unison of interest and convergence among

different fields related to fashion.

The stakeholders have urged the government to include fashion industry in policy decisions.

It was decided that a consultation meeting with stakeholders would be held regularly.

Need for expert advice and collaboration was also mentioned by many fashion entrepreneurs which they stated could translate into more business volume.

Additional Secretary, Commerce and Industries, P Paljor, alongside Under Secretary, Commerce & Industries, Sunita Sharma, also attended the meeting.

U-17 FOOTBALL LEAGUE

SSA stays strong, New Light bounces back

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 10 JUL:

State Sports Academy won its second consecutive match of the Sikkim Football Association U-17 Football League 2019 here at Paljor Stadium on Wednesday.

SSA outplayed Gang-

tok Football Club 3-nil to secure three more points. John Tshering Lepcha, Sidhanth Darjee and Milan Chettri scored a goal each for SSA.

Meanwhile, after losing its first match, New Light Academy of Namchi bounced back with a

2-1 victory over Namthang Football Academy in its second of the League today.

Binay Subba and Pranay Rai contributed a goal each for New Night Academy, while the lone goal for Namthang FA was scored by Silash Bhujel.

Debate in TN House over Centre’s NEEM and Nepal migrant workers

CHENNAI, JUL 10 (PTI):

The Tamil Nadu Assembly Wednesday saw a debate on the Centre’s National Employability Enhancement Mission, with DMK alleging that it precluded benefits under labour laws like Provident Fund, while government asserted it bestowed both skill development and employment opportunities.

When DMK demanded priority for locals in jobs, pointing to the presence of a chunk of migrant labourers from various places, including Nepal, the government said it already has been telling new industries to give over 60 per cent jobs for those from Tamil Nadu.

DMK MLA T M Anbarasan, speaking on the demand for grants to the labour department, said like NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test), which went

against the interests of medical aspirants, NEEM deprived trainees benefits, including the ESI, PF and Gratuity under labour laws

They could also not settle down in permanent jobs, he said and demanded that NEEM not be implemented in Tamil Nadu for such features.

Culture Minister K Panidarajan said NEEM was not an initiative that thwarted permanent jobs, but created a window for both skill development and job opportunities.

Anbarasan, who was Labour Minister during the DMK regime, said he saw a big chunk of migrant labourers from other states and on a recent visit to the nearby industrial belt of Sriperumbudur, he felt as if he was “in Nepal.”

The DMK legislator wanted new industries setting up shop in Tamil

Nadu to provide 60 and 20 per cent of jobs to those from Tamil Nadu, and local region (where the industry is located) respectively.

Industries Minister M C Sampath, referring to the Global Investors Meet, said the government, while inking deals with investors, had all along insisted that they fill over 60 per cent jobs by recruiting locals.

“This is a condition (60 per cent jobs for Tamil Nadu people)” the government laid while inking the deals,” he said.

When Anbarasan pointed to charges on misuse of shelters provided for migrants by the government, Labour Minister Nilofer Kafeel refuted it, saying only those who registered themselves with the trade union and possessing an identity card had access to state-run dormitories.



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SECRETARY GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM GANGTOK

No. 257/CS/SK/2019

Dated: 08.07.2019

CIRCULAR

This is for the general information of the public that preparations are going on for the ensuing Budget Session of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly. Consequently, the Hon’ble Chief Minister will be engaged w.e.f. 8th July, 2019 to 12th July, 2019. Hence, it is to inform, with regret, that the Hon’ble Chief Minister will not be available to meet the public during the aforementioned period.

Sd/-
(Alok.K.Shrivastave, IAS)
Chief Secretary, Sikkim.

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Pending Issues

Difficult Delhi or poor follow-up?

The new Government, with its new leaders and new josh, finds itself often in Delhi, petitioning central leaders with reminders of Sikkim's demands that have waited in Shastri Bhawan for way too long. Any time a Sikkim Chief Minister or any other leader, whether from the government or outside of it, visits Delhi and calls on Union Ministers there, they submit memorandums which reiterate a substantial list of "pending issues" with the Centre. The list of demands has remained unchanged for a while, and this not because Sikkim is unimaginative, but because the demands have remained pending and hence continue to be petitioned for. Delhi has acquiesced to Sikkim's demands/ requests in too piecemeal a fashion – IT exemption for the Sikkimese and ST status for Limboos and Tamangs – are the only major demands that have been granted in a long while now, and these too after too many years of dithering and delaying and both, in their own ways, incompletely see through. The list of demands and its follow-up has been so static that one does not even need to await an official communiqué any more before putting out a report on what Delhi was reminded about and received a patient hearing against.

That is how routine the pending nature of Sikkim's demands has become!

One understands that the wheels turn slow in Delhi, and now that the current dispensation in office there is trying to reinvent the wheel itself, Sikkim will need to learn afresh how to get things moving in the Capital. But even as Sikkim and its representatives try and find their way around the new Delhi, a question that still needs to be asked is why Sikkim needs to keep returning to Delhi with "pending issues". At one level, the reason is simple – because Delhi needs to be constantly reminded about them since concerns of a State that sends only one MP each to the two Houses of Parliament are rarely priority. There is nothing that Sikkim can do about that "tyranny" of slim representation. But there must be more reasons behind Delhi's easy amnesia on Sikkim's pending issues, for one the possible fact that Sikkim still does not have officers diligent enough to follow up on proposals which have even the PMO's backing. Once the politicians raise a demand with Central leaders and the same gets forwarded to the respective ministries, the bureaucracy comes into play and the files start moving. Files don't however move if there is no one pursuing them, and experience bears out that Sikkim officials rarely do so. What is worse, sometimes, they don't even respond to queries from the Centre. There have been enough instances even in the recent past when recalcitrance has defined follow-up from Sikkim's departments.

Sikkim should have figured out by now that Delhi lacks the capacity and the time to figure out Sikkim's "issues". Most of the pending issues, however, need to be resolved by Delhi which lobs the ball back into Sikkim's court and expects a neatly packed and formatted solution to be recommended by Sikkim for enforcement by Delhi. In complicated matters, the State also needs to provide the supporting arguments and watertight justifications and a ready reckoner on Sikkim's special status and the leeway it allows. For more routine issues, sometimes it is as simple as placing the right proposal on the right table. Since this is clearly not happening as fluidly and as professionally as is required for new demands to be framed (since too many of the old have not yet been granted), what else can the elected representatives do but keep trooping down to Delhi to raise issues that are still pending even after everyone has cleared them in principle? Sikkim needs a bureaucratic machinery at home to troop through the doors that its leaders open in Delhi. Till that happens, an annual Delhi pilgrimage with a dusty list of pending demands will remain and constant feature.

WRITE US:

Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence.

Mail us at: news@summittimes.com

Counterfeit alcohol, sometimes containing jet fuel or embalming fluid, is a growing concern for tourists abroad

MONICA H. SWAHN
theconversation.com

The news about the tragic deaths of several American tourists in the Dominican Republic in May 2019 has created an outcry and a media frenzy. As of June 30, there were at least nine deaths with similar circumstances in the past few months. The FBI and Dominican authorities are investigating, and one theory is that alcohol was the cause of these deaths.

The FBI has reportedly taken samples of alcohol for testing, and the hotels where some tourists died have removed alcohol from the minibars in the hotel rooms. But the concerns are growing, and Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) on June 30, 2019 recommended that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention should aid the ongoing investigation.

Many may find it puzzling that alcohol, particularly adulterated or counterfeit alcohol, could possibly have caused these deaths. But, some experts seem to agree that the symptoms and circumstances fit the indicators of deaths caused by adulterated alcohol.

As a professor of public health, I need to note that research now shows that no amount of alcohol is considered safe in terms of your health, and that alcohol is linked to many cancers and heart disease and is also a key contributor to traffic crashes, violence and suicide. Even so, counterfeit or illegally made alcohol brings a new level of risk, as it is not monitored for safety and may include added ingredients, such as methanol, known to be extremely harmful to health.

FAKE, ILLEGAL AND ADULTERATED

Thanks to rigorous regulation of alcohol, Americans may not see or hear much about counterfeit alcohol in the U.S., but in many other parts of the world counterfeit or "illegal" alcohol is more common and a growing public health concern.

Counterfeit or illegal alcohol is part of a larger category described as "unrecorded" alcohol because it is not recorded in official statistics and not monitored for quality or for taxation. The World Health Organization estimates that 25% of the alcohol consumed worldwide is unrecorded.

Counterfeit alcohol is typically meant to resemble legitimate alcohol, such as finer wines and expensive spirits, in terms of its look, taste and packaging. But there are also other types of alcohol that are typically considered illegal, such as "moonshine" or "bootleg" alcohol, or simply alcohol that is made under less rigorous processes and that have added ingredients to make the alcohol faster or cheaper.

One of the key aspects of counterfeit or illegal alcohol is that producers distill the alcohol more cheaply and quickly using dangerous shortcuts in the process, such as adding water and methanol, also known as methyl alcohol, which is highly toxic.

Methanol is not intended for human consumption and can cause liver damage, blindness and death if consumed. Earlier this year, toxic alcohol killed at least 154 people in India because it was tainted with methanol.

Alcohol that has special ingredients added is usually described as adulterated alcohol. Sometimes, those who make counterfeit alcohol will add ingredients not only to make it cheaper but also to improve the taste or strengthen the high. The added ingredients may vary.

For example, in Kenya, one of the popular illegally brewed types of alcohol is called Chang-aa or "Kill me quick." That is because it usually has a very high alcohol concentration and is often also adulterated with harmful ingredients such as pilfered jet fuel or spiked with embalming fluid from mor-



tuaries. This type of alcohol is usually consumed in the urban slums among those vulnerable and poor who want the cheapest type of alcohol with the biggest "high."

SIPHONING SALES FROM LEGIT BOOZE

INTERPOL, the International Criminal Police Organization, claims that counterfeit alcohol is a top concern globally. In 2018, during one operation, it reported that "16,000 tonnes and 33 million liters of potentially dangerous fake food and drink was seized worth an estimated \$117 million." In Europe, wine and spirits are in the top five sectors for lost sales.

Counterfeit wine is becoming more common and now represents a billion-dollar market. In China, for example, counterfeit wine is so common it has been referred to as an epidemic, especially in terms of finer wines.

According to Forbes, Asian buyers comprise the majority of buyers of fine wines (60%) sold at Sotheby auctions across the world. And, it turns out that a very expensive bottle of wine sold at Christie's in London for US\$157,000, which set a record at that time in 1985, was a fake.

But even more recently, in May 2019, an opera-

tion in Ukraine seized a large operation of counterfeit alcohol beverages.

MORE THAN MONEY AT STAKE

Even though lost revenue is a big concern for law enforcement and businesses, travel advisories for Americans traveling abroad are sometimes issued because of the risk posed by tainted alcohol. One was issued in 2017 to a resort in Mexico. Similarly, in June 2019, there was a notification that 23 people died and 10 patients were undergoing treatment for alcohol tainted with methanol in Nigeria.

The reality is that counterfeit or toxic alcohol is common in many places of the world, even in places you may not expect. So the next time you travel abroad and reach for an alcoholic beverage, particularly a finer wine or spirit, take a second look at

that bottle.

The travel experts at the U.S. Overseas Security Advisory Council made a list of tips for alcohol consumption while abroad. In particular, they recommend to tourists traveling abroad:

- Don't drink homemade or counterfeit "booze."
- Don't overdo it.
- Don't compete with locals and their brew.
- Don't let your drink out of sight.

Also, there are some tips for spotting fake alcohol by the Trading Standards Institute in the U.K. It is key to remember to pay attention to the place, price, packaging and product, the group says. Most importantly, if the alcohol tastes or smells bad, don't drink it.

The medical and public health community is growing more concerned about the dangerous effects of alcohol, as new research show that there is no safe amount of alcohol. That said, if you choose to drink, especially while abroad, make sure the alcohol you drink is the real thing, and keep it shaken or stirred, but not poisoned.

[the writer is Professor, Epidemiology and Public Health, Georgia State University]

A booming international movie market is transforming Hollywood

WEIKO LIN
theconversation.com

Marvel's "Shang-Chi" – the studio's first Asian superhero movie – is a sign of the times.

Destin Daniel Cretton, who is of Asian descent, will be directing the film, which will feature a Chinese superhero who originally appeared in one of Marvel's 1973 comics.

As a bilingual screenwriter with projects in the U.S. and China, I see "Shang-Chi" as yet another example of an exciting trend in Hollywood.

More than ever before, studios are realizing that diverse casts and stories are just as profitable – if not more so – than the traditional Western narratives that dominated Hollywood for decades.

MORE 'COMPS' FOR INCLUSIVE STORIES

When pitching a film to studios, writers and producers will commonly use what are called "comps." These examples of previously released films that are similar in style or content bolster the feasibility of a film project; if a version of a pitched script has been successfully pulled off in the past, the studio might worry less about sinking money into it.

A dearth of financially successful comps with diverse lead casts has made it tough to pitch films with non-white main characters. And that's one of the reasons why inclusive stories were only sporadically green-lit for major studio productions.

For years, if you were to pitch a story to a major studio with an all-Asian cast, you would have had almost no comps other than "Joy Luck Club." That critically acclaimed film pulled in US\$32.9 million at the U.S. box office on a \$10.5 million budget.

While that's a respectable profit, it was no blockbuster, and it didn't trigger an onslaught of movies starring Asians.

Then "Crazy Rich Asians" happened. The 2018 romantic comedy wildly surpassed expectations by earning \$238 million around the world with a \$30 million budget, making it the top-grossing romantic comedy in 10 years, surpassing both "The Proposal" and "Sex and the City: The Movie."

Other successes have followed. "To All the Boys I've Loved Before" features a Korean American teenager whose secret love letters are mailed to her crushes. "Always Be My Maybe" is about two Asian American childhood friends who fall for each other as adults.

The same thing is happening with films that feature African American leads.

Just in the past few years, "Get Out," "Us" and "Black Panther" were blockbusters that starred black lead actors.

Now, any screenwriter who wants to pitch a horror and superhero movie starring black actors or a romantic comedy with Asian characters has a handful of highly profitable comps at their disposal.

A NEW DEFINITION OF 'STAR POWER'

Some claim the lack of representation on screen could be attributed to a simple fact: Movies need star power, and very few A-list movie stars were people of color.

Aside from actors like Denzel Washington or Jennifer Lopez, it was rare for an actor of color to be able to "carry" a film. That reasoning doesn't hold water anymore. Today, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, who identifies

as black and Samoan, is the world's highest-paid movie star.

But one of the interesting aspects of films like "Crazy Rich Asians" is that they were huge successes at the box office without any marquee movie stars.

This has done two things: It showed studios that star power isn't as necessary as it was once thought to be. And it has allowed a new crop of diverse actors to emerge, with these films acting as a springboard to stardom.

Studios have since realized it's less of a financial risk to hire unknown actors, who they can then cultivate and, if all goes well, leverage for future projects.

Netflix is doing just that with talents like Ali Wong. After two successful Netflix stand-up comedy specials, she co-wrote and starred in her first feature role in "Always Be My Maybe" for the studio.

The same thing happened to Daniel Kaluuya of Universal Pictures' "Get Out." Before the film, he was a relative unknown. Now he's starring in the upcoming "Queen and Slim" from the same studio.

THE EXPANDING CHINESE MARKET

But why is all of this happening now?

Ticket sales at U.S. cineplexes are at a six-year low, while marketing costs are soaring. As a result, studios are increasingly relying on international markets to reach profitability. Films like "Coco" – which is set in Mexico – and "Fate of the Furious" – which features Hispanic and African American lead actors – have global appeal.

The most tantalizing market is China. "Coco" is the highest-grossing an-

imated movie ever in China; it pulled in \$189 million at the box office, which almost matched the \$209 million it earned stateside. And "Fate of the Furious" actually made \$392 million in China, easily overtaking the \$226 million it earned in the U.S.

China is presently Hollywood's biggest foreign market. According to projections by PricewaterhouseCoopers, this year the Chinese box office will rake in \$11.05 billion, compared to ticket sales in the U.S. of \$12.11 billion. Next year, however, China is expected to surpass the U.S. for the first time and be crowned the world's largest film market.

Chinese audiences love superhero flicks. "Avengers: Endgame," for example, earned more than \$600 million in China alone. But films with modest budgets can also do well there. With a \$10 million budget, the 2016 Bollywood hit "Dangal" made \$193 million in China, almost tripling its \$77 million take in India.

As for the future? Disney's upcoming live-action "Mulan," which is based on a classic Chinese folk tale with an all-Chinese cast and a budget exceeding \$100 million, has the potential to shatter box office records.

For too long, doors to mainstream Hollywood have been closed off to stories set in diverse cultures and precluded inclusive lead characters in popular movies.

But now, thanks to a powerful global market, those doors are cracking open and studios are rolling out the red carpet.

The result is happy shareholders and, for audiences, refreshing stories that more accurately reflect the world we live in.

[the writer is Associate Professor in Screenwriting, Emerson College]

Rose Valley scam: After Prosenjit, ED summons Rituparna

KOLKATA, JUL 10 (PTI): Bengali film actor Rituparna Sengupta has been summoned by the Enforcement Directorate next week in connection with the investigation into the Rose Valley ponzi scam, a day after it summoned superstar Prosenjit Chatterjee in the same case.

According to the sources, Sengupta allegedly accompanied Rose Valley group chairman Gautam Kundu on several foreign trips and helped him in the sale and production of films.

"We have summoned actor Rituparna Sengupta in connection with the Rose Valley scam. She has been asked to appear next week," ED sources told PTI.

Phone calls made to Sengupta for her reaction went unanswered.

Chatterjee, meanwhile, had been asked to depose before the ED officials at the CGO Complex office in Salt Lake on July 19. The Tollywood actor's statement will be recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The sources said the agency wanted to question Chatterjee about Rs 2.75 crore received by his company, Idea Lo-



cations and Production Pvt Ltd, from the Rose Valley group between 2010 and 2011. Of this, Chatterjee is suspected to have received about Rs 23.5 lakh.

The probe agency wants to understand the purpose of these funds, they claimed.

Chatterjee has acted in several films produced and distributed by the Rose Valley, notable among them being 'Moner Manush' and 'Hangover'.

'Moner Manush' had won the award for 'Best Feature Film on National Integration' at 58th National Film Award.

A probe by the agen-

cy has revealed that Rose Valley, on papers, undervalued the film's production cost and used depositors' money to fund the movie, the ED sources added.

Earlier this year, noted Bengal film producer Shrikant Mohta was arrested and sent to jail in the course of investigation into the scam.

The ED had on Monday interrogated senior Trinamool Congress leader Madan Mitra in connection with the ponzi scam.

Mitra, who was the then state transport minister, was arrested in 2014 by the Central Bureau of Investigation

for his alleged connection with Saradha ponzi scam. He served a jail term of over 21 months before getting bail.

According to ED estimates, the Rose Valley scandal is at least five times the Saradha ponzi scam. The agency had in 2015 arrested its chairman Gautam Kundu and attached his assets worth Rs 2,300 crore, including hotels and resorts. The group had reportedly floated 27 companies to allegedly run the chit fund operations.

The ED has alleged that the scheme floated by the group promised investors in various states inflated returns

between eight and 27 per cent. The company had allegedly pledged astronomical returns to depositors on land and assets, and bookings done in the real estate sector. It has also been accused of making "cross investments" in its various sister firms to suppress its liabilities towards investors.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) had probed the company before the ED and the CBI registered cases against the group. The ED has pegged the total volume of the alleged irregularities at Rs 15,000 crore, including interest and penalties.

BSF foils smuggling bid, seizes 107 buffaloes along Indo-Bangla border in WB

KOLKATA, JUL 10 (PTI): The BSF has repulsed armed Bangladeshi cattle smugglers and seized 107 buffaloes along the Indo-Bangla border in Murshidabad district of West Bengal, the force said Wednesday.

The smuggling bid took place on the intervening night of July 9-10 at border post Nirmal Char in the Murshidabad district of the state, the Border Security Force said.

The smugglers were attempting to take the

cattle herd to the Bangladeshi side amid "unabated rain" and darkness, and they attacked the troops with 'dahs', a cleaver-shaped weapon, hasua (axe) and bamboo sticks among other sharp objects, the BSF said.

"BSF personnel though were outnumbered by the Bangladeshi smugglers, they displayed valour, grit and commitment to foil the smugglers' attempts. The troops were also attacked with

arms and country-made bombs," it said.

The BSF troops also fired a number of pump action gun (PAG) rounds to thwart the attack and the smuggling bid after which the group of 200 smugglers, called 'Rakhal' in local language, was dispersed, it said.

The seized 107 cattle, worth about Rs 18.68 lakh, have been kept at the BSF border post and a case has been registered at the local police station at Ranitala, it added.

Clashes in WB's Birbhum dist over cut money, nine arrested

SIURI, JUL 10 (PTI): Clashes erupted on Wednesday between two groups of villagers in West Bengal's Birbhum district over the issue of 'cut money', prompting the police to increase vigil in the area and arrest nine persons, sources in the administration said.

Crude bombs were hurled indiscriminately by the two sides at Sahapur village in Sadaiapur police station area near Siuri, with the locals claiming that the miscreants were supporters of the ruling TMC and the BJP, they said.

Police officers, too, came under attack while trying to stop the clash,

the sources claimed.

According to local people, a group of villagers on Tuesday evening agitated before TMC leader Enamul Haque's residence, demanding the return of 'cut money' which they had allegedly given to get benefits under government schemes. The situation, however, turned violent on Wednesday when supporters of Haque allegedly attacked those who had agitated the day before.

A huge contingent of armed forces has been rushed to Sahapur village in the wake of the clashes, Birbhum Superintendent of Police Shy-

am Singh said.

"Nine persons have been arrested in connection with the clashes. The situation is now under control, but police are maintaining a strict vigil in the area," he added.

'Cut money' is the commission charged illegally from common people by alleged TMC functionaries in return for delivery of services and benefits under government schemes.

The issue has rocked the state over the past few weeks after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee issued a diktat asking party leaders to return the 'cut money' they had taken from people.

Govt evades reply on NRC in West Bengal



NEW DELHI, JUL 10 (PTI): The Centre Wednesday evaded a direct reply on whether the National Registrar of Citizens (NRC), currently being updated in Assam, will be undertaken in neighbouring West Bengal too.

Union Minister of State for Home Nitayanand Rai did not give a reply to a question in this regard asked by Ritabrata Banerjee, an independent Rajya Sabha MP from the state.

In a written reply, Rai said, "The NRC is being implemented at present in the state of Assam only as per the provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955 and the provisions contained in the Schedule framed under

Rule 4A(4) of Citizenship Rules, 2003."

Banerjee had asked if the NRC updation is going to be carried out in West Bengal also.

The Supreme Court-monitored NRC exercise, aimed at identifying illegal immigrants, was carried out only in Assam which has faced an influx of people from Bangladesh.

The draft NRC published on July 30 last year excluded of 40.7 lakh people from it leading to a huge controversy. The draft included names of 2.9 crore people out of the total 3.29 crore applicants.

The final NRC list for Assam will be published on July 31, 2019.

Miraculous escape for 36 Nepalese nationals as bus falls into canal in UP

LAKHIMPUR KHERI (UP), JUL 10 (PTI): Three dozen Nepalese nationals had a miraculous escape Wednesday when the bus carrying them fell into the overflowing Sharda canal here, police said.

All the passengers were returning to Nepal from Shimla when the accident took place near Shardanagar under the city kotwali area in the early hours, police said.

Shardanagar police outpost in-charge Mahesh Gangwar who was

among those who rescued the passengers told PTI: "Barring some minor injuries to some, all were taken out safe and sound from the damaged bus."

"A bus was arranged and all passengers including 19 men, 10 women and four children along with three drivers were sent back to Nepal after their medical treatment," he added.

Some locals too assisted the police in the rescue operation.

'Drug-free Tripura' and 'Save Water' are themes of Kharchi festival this year: Deb

AGARTALA, JUL 10 (PTI): Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb Wednesday inaugurated the Kharchi festival here and said that 'Nesha Mukta' Tripura (drug free Tripura) and 'Save Water' are the themes of the festival this year.

Thousands of devotees visited the Chaturdash Devata temple at 'Puran Agartala' near here Wednesday, to offer pujas as the week-long Kharchi festival, one of the most popular festivals of Tripura.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also greeted the people of the state on

the occasion. "Greetings to everyone, especially the people of Tripura on the start of the auspicious 'Kharchi Puja'. May 'Chaturdas Devata' bless everyone with happiness, good health and prosperity," Modi tweeted.

In his inaugural speech, the chief minister said, "This year, the themes of Kharchi festival are 'Save Water' and 'Nesha Mukta Tripura' with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has started the campaign to save water".

Kharchi is the biggest traditional festival in the state. Earlier, the kings

of Tripura offered pujas to the 14 Gods and Goddesses, but later it became the festival of common people, Deb said.

People irrespective of their caste, creed and culture throng the premises of the festival and celebrate it with pomp and gaiety, Deb said.

Biplab Kumar Deb inaugurated the festival by lighting lamp.

State Revenue Minister and prominent tribal leader, N C Debbarma, Mayor of Agartala Municipal Council, Prafullajit Sinha and other dignitaries were also present on the occasion.

Eight-day summer session of Assam Assembly to begin on July 18



Guwahati, Jul 10 (PTI): The eight-day summer session of the Assam Assembly is set to begin on July 18.

On the first day, the Speaker will read out a report of the Business Advisory Committee, following the Question Hour, an official release said on Wednesday. Government business, on the opening day, will include scheduled activities, such as laying of ordinances and rules, if any, and presentation of reports on various assembly committees, it said.

Motion for election of members to various government committees

and boards, presentation of the list of Supplementary Demand for Grants and Supplementary Appropriation for the year 2019-20 and introduction of government bills are also likely to take place on the first day of the assembly session.

On the second day, the Question Hour will be followed by Private Members' Business, which includes introduction and consideration of bills, resolutions and special motion, if any.

The assembly will be on recess and holiday on July 20 and 21 respectively. Government business will resume on July

22 when the Question Hour will be followed by voting on Supplementary Demands for Grants and Supplementary Appropriation 2019-20.

Along with that, the Assam Appropriation Bill, 2019 might be introduced, considered and passed at the assembly during the day.

On July 23, apart from the Private Members' Business, deputy speaker of the House might be elected and felicitated, the release said.

On the last two days, government business will continue as usual with consideration and passing of bills, it added.

17-yr-old sentenced to 20 yrs rigorous imprisonment for rape

KOLKATA, JUL 10 (PTI): A city court has sentenced a 17-year-old youth to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment for raping a minor girl, who was his friend.

Jimut Bahan Biswas, additional sessions judge at Sealdah court here, sentenced the youth under Section 6 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and imposed a fine of Rs 2 lakh on him, 90 per cent of which will be paid to the girl as compensation. Juveniles aged 16 years and above are tried under laws for adults for heinous crimes.

In default of payment of the fine, the youth will have to undergo rigorous imprisonment for another year.

The court, in its order on Tuesday, also directed the West Bengal government to pay Rs 5 lakh to the 16-year-old girl from the victim compensation fund.

The girl had fallen ill in February

and was taken to state-run R G Kar Medical College and Hospital. On examination, she was found to be pregnant, special public prosecutor Vivek Kumar Sharma told the court.

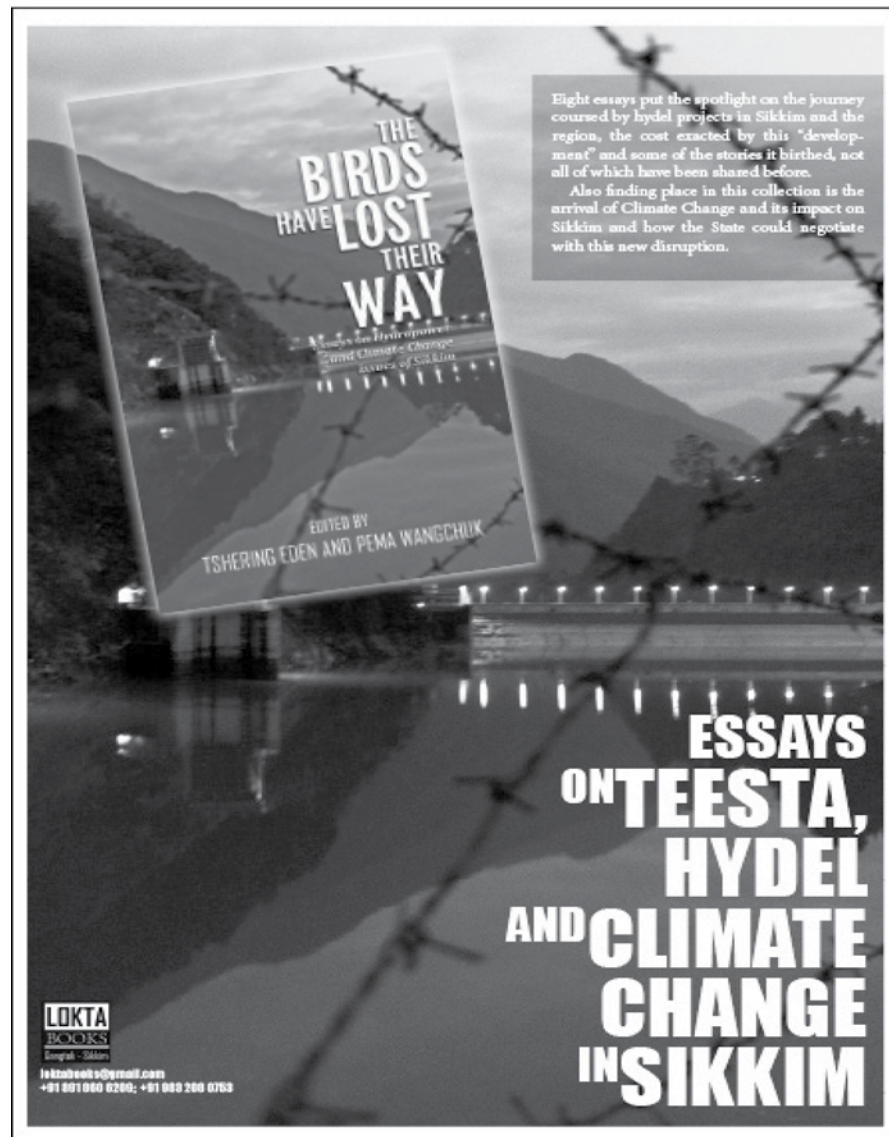
She disclosed to her parents that her friend had forced her to have sex with him after promising her marriage.

An FIR was lodged in the case at Ultadanga police station on March 3.

According to the complaint, the youth had come to the residence of the girl when her parents were not at home and since they shared a good relationship, she offered him food.

The youth then forced the girl to have sex with him taking advantage of her parents' absence, Sharma submitted before the court.

The court, after examining 10 witnesses and hearing both sides, found the youth guilty.



Thurman has appetite for destruction of ‘legend’ Pacquiao

LOS ANGELES, JUL 10 (AFP): Keith Thurman warned he is targeting the destruction of Filipino boxing icon Manny Pacquiao when the two welterweights face off in Las Vegas later this month.

The undefeated Thurman puts his World Boxing Association welterweight crown on the line against the 40-year-old Pacquiao on July 20 at the MGM Grand.

Thurman, 30, has relentlessly fanned the flames for the contest by stating he plans to send Pacquiao into retirement.



On Tuesday, Thurman took a more respectful tone against Pacquiao, the eight-division world champion who remains one of boxing’s biggest draws as he prepares for the 71st fight of a two-decade professional career.

Thurman said he plans to take an aggressive approach into the fight as he chases an emphatic victory.“This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to destroy a legend and create my own legacy,” Thurman said on

a conference call. “How can I not Babe Ruth it and step up to the plate, point and start swinging. How can I not go for it? I’ve got an ‘O’ and I’m not afraid to let it go.

“If Manny Pacquiao is the man that beats me, he’s the man that beats me. I’m going to shake his hand after the fight and congratulate him.

“It is what it is. But when Keith Thurman steps into the ring, you’re dealing with Keith Thur-

man. And he’s a bad man.” Thurman sees the fight as his chance to claim victory over one of the greats of boxing in Pacquiao (61-7 with two drawn and 39 knock-outs).

“Manny Pacquiao towards the end of his career, all those fights, and his record -- it’s as if I’m fighting Sugar Ray Robinson himself. It’s as if I’m fighting Roberto Duran,” he said. “This is Manny Pacquiao. It’s a tremen-

dous feeling and it’s going to feel even greater when my hand is raised at the end of the night.”

Thurman (29-0, 22 KOs), who last fought in January when he was made to work hard for a majority decision win over Josesito Lopez, said Pacquiao’s victory over Adrien Broner, also in January, had inspired him.

“He wants to prove his greatness. He’s still reaching for greatness at the age of 40 and it’s ad-

mirable,” Thurman said.

“I was impressed by his performance against Adrien Broner. It was inspiring. After watching him, I got out into the streets and ran at one in the morning. Because I just watched a 40-year-old man beat a much younger man. Manny has done so much, but he wants to do more,” Thurman said.

“I want to do more too, and on the 20th I want to show you more.

Rapinoe says US World Cup teammates will snub

White House WASHINGTON, JUL 10 (AFP): Star striker Megan Rapinoe said she does not think the United States’ Women’s World Cup-winning team would accept an invitation from President Donald Trump to visit the White House.

“I would not go and every teammate that I’ve talked to explicitly about it would not go,” Rapinoe said on CNN’s “Anderson Cooper 360.”

“I don’t think anyone on the team has any interest in lending the platform that we’ve worked so hard to build and the things that we fight for and the way that we live our life, I don’t think we want that to be co-opted or corrupted by this administration,” she said.

Rapinoe, one of several gay players on the team, also took aim at Trump’s “Make America Great Again” slogan, saying the president is looking back to a time that “was not great for everyone.” “I would say that your message is excluding people. You’re excluding me. You’re excluding people that look like me. You’re excluding people of color,” the footballer said when asked what message she had for Trump.

“I think that you’re harking back to an era that was not great for everyone. It might have been great for a few people and maybe America is great for a few people right now, but it’s not great for enough Americans in this world,” she said.

The US defeated the Netherlands 2-0 on a penalty by Rapinoe and a strike by Rose Lavelle in the World Cup final on Sunday in Lyon.

Rapinoe had vowed prior to the victory to stay home if Trump invited the team to Washington.

Former cricketers slam ‘slow’ pitch used for India-New Zealand semifinal

MANCHESTER, JULY 10 (PTI): Former cricketers have come down heavily on the pitch used for the first World Cup semi-final between India and New Zealand here at Old Trafford.

New Zealand found it tough to score runs after opting to bat on what seemed to be a slow and two-paced surface here on Tuesday. The Kiwis managed to reach 211 for five in 46.1 overs before rain pushed the match to the reserve day.

Former Australia batsman Mark Waugh took to twitter to slam the pitch.

“Doesn’t look a great pitch at Old Trafford. Very much on the slow side and offering some turn. If NZ can somehow get to 240 they will be in the game,” Waugh wrote.

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson took 97 balls for his 67 while veteran Ross Taylor was unbeaten on 67 off 85 deliveries.

Former England Test cricketer Mark Butcher went to the extent of terming the pitches at the ongoing World Cup as “garbage”. “Sorry,

but pitches have been garbage this tournament,” Butcher tweeted.

“Uneven, two-paced...MIGHT give you an exciting 5 overs at the end of a run chase, but you’ve scared everybody off in the previous 95.”

Another ex England cricketer Graeme Fowler, who has played a lot matches during his first-class career with Old Trafford-based Lancashire, said the wicket for the first semifinal was “awful”.

“What an awful wicket for (a) World Cup semi-final,” his Twitter account said.

“I feel sorry for the spectators who have travelled and paid hefty prices having to watch this lottery on a very substandard pitch. It’s a disgrace,” Fowler added.

Low scores have been a trait of this World Cup with pitches playing exactly opposite to what is usually seen in One-day Internationals in England in recent years.

Another Ex-English cricketer Paul Newman tweeted: “Old Trafford usually a terrific pitch. What has happened to pitches at this

World Cup?? Has to be ICC instructions, surely?” The International Cricket Council (ICC), however, have denied accusations of instructing the groundsmen to prepare slow pitches and said it had only told them to make sporting tracks. “The guidance we give any host of an ICC event is to prepare the best possible pitches for the conditions in that country -- so in this case the best possible ODI pitch for typical English conditions and we would also look for even bounce and good carry,” ICC said a statement.

“The ICC does not instruct groundsmen to prepare pitches in a certain way to advantage, or disadvantage, any team.”

Earlier, England batsman Jonny Bairstow had criticised the surfaces on offer, saying these have been totally different from those they normally play on.

“The pitches we’ve been playing on the last two years are surely the pitches we would be playing on in a World Cup? I don’t know why they’ve changed,” Bairstow said.

Dutee wins 100m gold in World Universiade, creates history

NAPOLI (ITALY), JUL 10 (PTI): National record holder Dutee Chand became the first Indian woman track and field athlete to clinch a gold medal in the World Universiade after she won the 100m dash event here.

The 23-year-old Dutee clocked 11.32 seconds to win the gold as she led the race from start to finish.

Running at lane number 4, Dutee was the first one out of the eight athletes to blast off the starting blocks and she made most of it to fend of a late challenge from Del Ponte (11.33) of Switzerland.

Lisa KwaYie of Germany took the bronze in 11.39 seconds in the race run past midnight Indian time on Tuesday.

The Odisha runner, whose national record stands at 11.24 seconds, thus became the first Indian to win a 100m gold in a global event.

She has now become only the second Indian sprinter to win a gold in a global event after Hima Das, who clinched the top spot in 400m in the World Junior Athletics Championships last year.

Dutee, who had a silver each in 100m and 200m in the 2018 Asian Games, is also only the second Indian track and field athlete to win a gold in the World Universi-

ade. Inderjeet Singh had clinched the top spot in men’s shot put event in the 2015 edition.

After winning the race, Dutee, who recently admitted to having a relationship with a girl, tweeted: “Pull me down, I will come back stronger!”

She further added: “With years of hardwork and your blessings, I have yet again broken the record by winning the Gold in 100m dash in 11.32 seconds at The World University Games, Napoli. In the pictures (picture of all three medal winners), are the winners too, with a heart of Gold from Germany and Sweden.

Earlier on Tuesday, Dutee qualified for the final with a time of 11.41 seconds in the semifinal, which had made her the first Indian sprinter to make it to the final of World Universiade.

On Monday, she had advanced to the semifinals from the heats with a time of 11.58 seconds.

Dutee has a season best of 11.26 seconds in 100m, recorded in the Doha Asian Championships in April. She could not reach the semifinals in the previous edition of the World University Games in Taipei City in 2017, where Sanjivani Jadhav had

won a silver in women’s 10000m race.

Dutee is a student at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology, a deemed university in Bhubaneswar. She is yet to qualify for the World Championships to be held in Doha in September-October.

President Ram Nath Kovind congratulated Dutee on her feat.

“Congratulations @DuteeChand for winning the 100m sprint at the Universiade, the World University Games, in Naples. This is India’s first such gold and a moment of immense pride for our country. Please keep up the effort, and look to greater glory at the Olympics,” the President tweeted.

Dutee replied to the President’s tweet, saying: “Thank you, sir. I will try my best to bring Olympics Gold Medal home. Once again, many thanks for your blessings.”

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju also applauded Dutee’s efforts.

“I’ve been passionately following since my childhood but it never came. Finally, for the first time, a gold for India! Congratulations @DuteeChand for winning the 100m sprint at the Universiade, the World University Games, in Naples,” Rijiju said in his tweet.

FC Goa ink 3-yr deal with Jesuraj; to be loaned to Mohun Bagan



PANAJI, JUL 10 (PTI): Winger Alexander Romario Jesuraj has joined FC Goa on a three-year-deal, which will keep him at the club until the summer of 2022, the franchise announced Wednesday.

The 22-year-old Jesuraj made 34 appearances for I-League side Chennai City FC across previous two seasons, ending 2018-19 with a winners medal.

Romario was happy to join FC Goa and praised their style of football.

“I am very excited to join the best club in India.

I watched them play last season and understood that this is the type of football that I wanted to play,” the winger was quoted as saying in a release issued by the club.

The Tamil Nadu youngster will be sent out on loan to Mohun Bagan for the upcoming season, the release said.

Chasing history, England aim to upstage seasoned Aussies in WC semis

BIRMINGHAM, JULY 10 (PTI): England seem primed to win their maiden title but it will take a special effort to upstage arch-rivals and record five-time champions Australia in the second World Cup semifinal here on Thursday.

England have turned it around following their first-round exit in the 2015 edition and have become a formidable one-day side.

Considering the firepower the hosts possess, many current and former players have said it is England’s World Cup to lose, a trophy they have not been able to lift despite making the final in 1979, 1987 and 1992.

And between them and a fourth shot at the title, stand familiar foes Australia who have been so consistent in the mega event that they are yet to lose a semifinal, having won six and one being a dramatic tie against South Africa in the 1999 edition.

Not many would have put their money on Australia as recent as four months ago but Aaron Finch and his team have made a phenomenal comeback that began with a rare series win in India in March.

Though they still cannot be bracketed among the ‘invincible’ Australian teams of the past, trust them to rise to the occasion when the stakes are high.

They seem to be peaking at the right time and look a relaxed bunch, something that was very much evident when the entire squad walked barefoot around the outfield at Edgbaston here on Monday. “If you go back 12



months ago there wasn’t too much to be relaxed and chilled about in Australian cricket, was there?. And that’s the truth,” said Australia coach Justin Langer ahead of the game.

“We went through a major crisis in our cricket. It didn’t just affect our cricket, it affected our country, so there wasn’t too much to be relaxed about. We’ve had to work hard on being more humble in what we do and being focussed on playing good cricket but also being good people as well. “And I know there will be some English people who will laugh about that but its actually true. We had to work hard on that and that’s a good bunch of players,” said

the former opener,” he said referring to the period which saw senior players David Warner and Steve Smith being handed out one-year bans for ball-tampering.

England may have won 10 out of their last 12 meetings against Australia but they know well that the piece of statistic counts for little heading into the semifinal, especially after the Eoin Morgan-led side’s 64-loss to them in the league stage. But England are back to their best since that loss to Australia as they beat India and New Zealand in their final two league games. Openers Jonny Bairstow and Jason Roy have been on fire and the

team will be expecting another flying start from the destructive duo. England pacer Liam Plunkett feels his team is a title favourite for a reason and fancies beating Australia who suffered an unexpected defeat against South Africa in their final league fixture.

“We are a different sort of animal compared to our last teams. We have played well for the past four years, we’re ranked number one. We feel on our day we can beat anyone in the world,” he said.

The pace attack has provided the x-factor to both teams, adding to excitement of the contest. While England don’t have injury issues, Australia coach Langer has already confirmed Peter Handscomb will replace an injured Usman Khawaja in the playing eleven.

All-rounder Marcus Stoinis has recovered from a side strain he sustained against South Africa.

Squads:

Australia: Aaron Finch (captain), Jason Behrendorff, Alex Carey (wk), Nathan Coulter-Nile, Pat Cummins, Peter Handscomb, Usman Khawaja, Nathan Lyon, Glenn Maxwell, Kane Richardson, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, David Warner, Adam Zampa (Standby players: Matthew Wade, Mitchell Marsh)

England: Eoin Morgan (captain), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonny Bairstow, Jos Buttler (wk), Tom Curran, Liam Dawson, Liam Plunkett, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, Jason Roy, Ben Stokes, James Vince, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood.

Match starts 3 PM IST.

24 killed in Papua New Guinea tribal massacres



PORT MORSEBY, JUL 10 (AFP): Twenty-four people have died -- including two pregnant women with their unborn children -- in tribal fighting in Papua New Guinea's lawless highlands, prompting the prime minister on Wednesday to promise swift justice.

Local officials said at least 24 people had been killed in Hela province, a rugged region in the west of the country, in a three-day spasm of violence between rival tribes.

Highland clans have fought each other in Papua New Guinea for centuries, but an influx of automatic weapons has made clashes more deadly and escalated the cycle

of violence. "Twenty-four people are confirmed dead, killed in three days, but could be more today," Hela provincial administrator William Bando told AFP on Wednesday. "We are still waiting for today's brief from our officials on the ground." Bando has called for at least 100 police to be deployed to reinforce some 40 local officers.

The incident has shocked both the country and recently appointed Prime Minister James Marape, whose constituency includes the district where the killings occurred.

He vowed more security deployments and warned the perpetrators

"your time is up".

"Today is one of the saddest day of my life," he said in a statement.

"Many children and mothers innocently murdered in Munima and Karida villages of my electorate." In the Kari-da attack, fighters are said to have hacked and shot six women and eight children -- as well as two pregnant women and their unborn children -- in a 30-minute rampage.

Local health worker Pills Kolo said it was hard to recognise some of the body parts and posted images of remains bundled together using mosquito nets as makeshift body bags. Images provided by local police

showed the corpses of two children of school age, one with severe head injuries.

Local media reported the attack appeared to be in retaliation for the ambush and murder for six people the day before.

"Gun-toting criminals, your time is up," Marape said. "Learn from what I will do to criminals who killed innocent people, I am not afraid to use strongest measures in law on you." He noted that the death penalty was "already a law".

It is not clear what prompted the attack, but many fights are fuelled by old rivalries prompted by rape or theft, or disputes over tribal boundaries.

In nearby Enga province, a similar surge in violence prompted the establishment of a makeshift military garrison and the deployment of a company of around 100 government soldiers under the command of a Sandhurst-trained major.

Marape has not yet provided details of the security deployments but appeared exasperated by the current resources available.

"How can a province of 400,000 people function with policing law and order with under 60 policemen, and occasional operational military and police that does no more than band-aid maintenance," he said.

Trump revamps kidney care to spur transplants, home dialysis

WASHINGTON, JUL 10 (AP): President Donald Trump is directing the government to revamp the nation's care for kidney disease, so that more people whose kidneys fail have a chance at early transplants and home dialysis along with better prevention so patients don't get that sick to begin with.

Senior administration officials told The Associated Press that Trump is set to sign an executive order Wednesday calling for strategies that have the potential to save lives and millions of Medicare dollars.

That won't happen overnight some of the initiatives will require new government regulations.

And because a severe organ shortage complicates the call for more transplants, the administration also aims to ease financial hardships for living donors, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of the announcement. Another key change: steps to help the groups that collect deceased donations do a better job. Officials cited a study that suggests long-term, it may be possible to find 17,000 more kidneys and 11,000 other organs from deceased donors for transplant every year.

Federal health officials have made clear for months that they intend to shake up a system that today favors expensive, time-consuming dialysis in large centers over easier-to-tolerate at-home care or transplants that help patients live longer.

"Right now every financial incentive is toward dialysis and not toward transplantation and long-term survivorship," Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, whose father experienced traditional and at-home dialysis before getting a living donor transplant, told a Senate hearing in March. "And you get what you pay for."

About 30 million American adults have chronic kidney disease, costing Medicare a staggering 113 billion. Careful treatment including control of diabetes and high blood pressure, the two main culprits can help prevent further kidney deterioration. But more than 700,000 people have end-stage renal disease, meaning their kidneys have failed, and require either a transplant or dialysis to survive. Only about a third received specialized kidney care before they got so sick. More than 94,000 of the 113,000 people on the national organ waiting list need a kidney. Last year, there were 21,167 kidney transplants. A fraction 6,442 were from living donors, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing, which oversees the nation's transplant system.

"The longer you're on dialysis, the outcomes are worse," said Dr. Amit Tevar, a transplant surgeon at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, who praised the Trump administration initiatives being announced Wednesday.

Too often, transplant centers don't see a kidney patient until they've been on dialysis for years, he said. And while any transplant is preferable, one from a living donor is best because those organs "work better, longer and faster," Tevar said.

Among the initiatives that take effect first: Medicare payment changes that would provide a financial incentive for doctors and clinics to help kidney patients stage off end-stage disease by about six months.

A bonus to kidney specialists who help prepare patients for early transplant, with steps that can begin even before they need dialysis.

Additional Medicare changes so that dialysis providers can earn as much by helping patients get dialysis at home as in the large centers that predominate today.

Patients typically must spend hours three or four times a week hooked to machines that filter waste out of their blood.

Home options include portable blood-cleansing machines, or what's called peritoneal dialysis that works through an abdominal tube, usually while patients are sleeping. Today, about 14 per cent of patients in kidney failure get at-home dialysis or an early transplant. By 2025, the goal is to have 80 per cent of people with newly diagnosed kidney failure getting one of those options, officials said. These changes are being implemented through Medicare's innovation center, created under the Obama-era Affordable Care Act and empowered to seek savings and improved quality.

The Trump administration is relying on the innovation center even as it argues in federal court that the law that created it is unconstitutional and should be struck down entirely. Other initiatives will require new regulations, expected to be proposed later this year. Among them: Allowing reimbursement of lost wages and other expenses for living donors, who can give one of their kidneys or a piece of their liver.

The transplant recipient's insurance pays the donor's medical bills. But they are out of work for weeks recuperating and one study found more than a third of living kidney donors reported lost wages, a median of USD 2,712, in the year following donation.



Convicted people will not be allowed media space: Pak govt

ISLAMABAD, JUL 10 (PTI): The Pakistan government has decided that media should not be allowed to promote the narrative of convicted or under-trial persons, in a move that aims to curtail the space given by the press to jailed politicians like Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari.

A Cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday directed the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) to fulfil its responsibility to discourage airing of such programmes by the electronic media.

Education Minister Shafqat Mehmood said Khan and members of his Cabinet unanimously decided that no convicted or under-trial prisoner should be given media coverage or allowed to give an interview, Dawn newspaper reported. Those who have plundered national wealth and brought the country on the verge of collapse should not be glorified. No democracy permits interviews and media coverage of those who have been arrested on charges of corruption, Mehmood quoted the prime minister Khan as saying.

Former prime minister Sharif has been serving a seven-year prison

term at the Kot Lakhpat Jail in Lahore since December 24, 2018 when an accountability court convicted him in the Al-Azizia steel mills corruption case filed in the wake of the apex court's July 28, 2017 order in Panama Papers case.

Former president Asif Ali Zardari was on July 1 arrested in the Park Lane case which is related to his and his families' alleged properties in London. Zardari was already in the custody of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in a multi-million dollar money laundering case along with his sister Faryal Talpur.

Mehmood also said the government had not directed Pemra to close down any private TV channel as it was an independent body competent to take its own decisions.

Pemra suspended transmission of three private TV channels for airing an interview of Zardari.

The authority also took off air an interview of the former president which was being conducted by anchor Hamid Mir on July 1 on the premises of the Parliament House, where Zardari came to attend a National Assembly session after the speaker issued his production order.

Nawaz Sharif's daughter summoned by anti-graft court in fake trust deed case

ISLAMABAD, JUL 10 (PTI): Jailed former Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif's daughter Maryam Nawaz has been summoned by an anti-corruption court to appear before it on July 19 for allegedly submitting a fake trust deed in the high-profile Avenfield Apartments case.

The Avenfield properties case was one of three filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) last year in light of the Supreme Court's verdict against Sharif in the Panama Papers case.

The case pertains to the ownership of the Sharif family's apartments at Avenfield

House, London. Accountability court Judge Muhammad Bashir issued the notice to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice-President Maryam, asking the 45-year-old political leader to appear in court on July 19.

According to the NAB, Pakistan's anti-corruption watchdog, the trust deed Maryam presented in the Avenfield case was fake and have requested a trial against the PML-N leader for fraudulent documents.

In 2017, a Pakistani team investigating former prime minister Sharif alleged illegal offshore properties - flagged in

the Panama Papers. Last year in September, the Islamabad High Court suspended the sentences for Maryam and her husband Captain (retd) M Safdar in the Avenfield corruption case.

On July 6, after four extensions in the original six-month deadline to conclude all three cases, the accountability court announced its verdict in the Avenfield case. Sharif, his daughter Maryam and son-in-law Safdar were sentenced to 11 years, eight years and one year, respectively, in prison.

Maryam and Safdar were accused in the Avenfield corruption case only.

Pakistani news anchor gunned down in Karachi



KARACHI, JUL 10 (PTI): A news anchor of a prominent Pakistani channel was shot dead over personal enmity here, police said Wednesday.

Bol News anchor Mu-reed Abbas had a heated argument with some people over a monetary dispute which escalated into a violent clash in Khayaban-e-Bukhari area on Tuesday night, they said. The accused

opened fire, killing the anchor and his friend, DIG South Sharjeel Kharal said. Abbas sustained multiple bullet wounds in chest and abdomen, he said. Police raided the house of the suspect and caught him attempting suicide.

"The suspect shot himself in the chest," he said. He was admitted into hospital in a critical condition. Sindh In-

spector General of Police (IGP) Kaleem Imam directed the concerned deputy inspector general to furnish a report. He also directed the concerned officials to conduct a forensic examination of the evidence.

Chief Minister of Sindh Murad Ali Shah, who was on Iran visit, issued directions to maintain law and order following the incident.





ALL SMILES! The TV personality, Jwoww is seen wearing a leopard dress, black heels and golden spectacles while out in the Big Apple.

Chris Messina joins cast of thriller 'I Care a Lot'



LOS ANGELES, JUL 10 (PTI): "Sharp Objects" star Chris Messina has boarded the cast of thriller "I Care a Lot".

Starring Rosamund Pike and Peter Dinklage in the lead, the film will be directed by J Blakeson from his own script, reported Variety.

Pike will be essaying the role of Marla Grayson, a highly successful legal guardian with a knack for using the law to her benefit and her clients' detriment. But when she cherry picks her seemingly perfect client, she soon realises looks are deceiving.

Dinklage, who was most recently seen in the finale season of hit HBO series "Game of

Thrones", will be portraying a gangster in the movie. Messina will take on the role of a lawyer who represents Dinklage's character.

The project is backed by Teddy Schwarzman's Black Bear and Blakeson's Sugar November.

Schwarzman, Ben Stillman, Michael Heimler and Blakeson will serve as producers, while Sacha Guttentstein will be executive producing.

Messina will be next seen in Warner Bros' "Birds of Prey" movie, opposite Margot Robbie and Ewan McGregor. He also has projects such as "The Secrets We Keep", "Dark Cargo" and "Mainstream" in his kitty.

Confident about 'Batla House': John on clash with 'Mission Mangal', 'Saaho'

MUMBAI, JUL 10 (PTI): This Independence Day, "Batla House" will lock horns with "Mission Mangal" and "Saaho", and actor John Abraham on Wednesday said his film stands a good chance in the three-way clash at the box office.

The actor said he has full confidence in film's director Nikkhil Advani's calibre.

Asked if he was concerned about the film opening to a divided collection, John said, "The other two films don't concern me. But I'm concerned about my film. We have done the math and we still want to release it on this day."

"More importantly, it is not overconfidence. I have a lot of respect for every other film. I am confident that Nikkhil has made a very good film."

The actor was speaking at the trailer launch of "Batla House" with the cast and crew of the film here.

John said he shares a friendly equation with former co-star Akshay Kumar,

who features in "Mission Mangal", and that there is space for more than one film to release on the same date.

"Akshay and I are dear friends. We get along well. We are releasing two

one of his films will arrive in the cinema halls on Independence Day 2020.

"We will be releasing 'Batla House' this year and there is another sequel of my film which we will be releasing next



films on the same day, we are giving the audience a lot of choice. Our film is very good, I can hope the other two films are also good. August 15 is a good day."

The actor revealed that a sequel of

Independence Day. We are very clear we want to release our films on Independence Day," he said.

"Batla House" also stars Mrunal Thakur and Nora Fatehi.

Nicole Kidman to executive produce 'Crime Farm'

LOS ANGELES, JUL 10 (PTI): Nicole Kidman is all set to executive produce drama series "Crime Farm" for WarnerMedia's upcoming streaming service.

The show, described as a "psychosexual love story", is based on forensic homicide experts and real-life couple Selma and Richard Eikelenboom, reported Variety.

The couple's marriage thrives on their all-consuming investigations into the depravity of the world's most notorious criminals. As a seminal case upends the par-

adigm of their relationship, their unique, unconventional and sometimes dangerous arrangement stretches the boundaries of marriage and science to the limit.

The show will be written and executive produced by Janine Sherman Barrois, best known for serving as showrunner on TNT series "Claws".

Kidman will executive produce alongside Per Saari under their Blossom Films banner.

No casting for the project has yet been announced.

Tyrese Gibson to headline thriller 'Inside Game'



LOS ANGELES, JUL 10 (PTI): Actor Tyrese Gibson will be starring in and producing the upcoming thriller movie "The Inside Game". According to Variety, the "Fast and Furious" franchise star will produce the project through his banner Voltron Pictures in collaboration with Wonderfilm Media, reported Variety.

The thriller, which has been co-written by Gibson and Ryan Jackson, revolves around a Miami police officer suspended for excessive force and his penchant for not doing things by the book. When he returns home to the urban streets of Atlanta, he finds himself thrown into a dark underworld of high-stakes blackmail and extortion that has ensnared his brother, a pro football star.

"I am beyond grateful that Wonderfilm has decided to take this journey with me as my producing partner. Being able to follow 'Fast & Furious 9' and 'Morbius' with this project is going to make for a great 2020," the 40-year-old actor said in a statement. The film will also be produced by Gibson's Voltron Pictures co-founders Jeff Bowler and Bret Saxon. Dan Grodnik will executive produce.

Munmun Dutta Abandoned Kilimanjaro Climb After She 'Almost Fainted'



Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah actress Munmun Dutta wrote a lengthy Instagram note, sharing her experience of her expedition on Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania a few days ago, which began trending only recently. Munmun Dutta wrote in her post that she was one of the "strongest" members of the trek team but little had she guessed she'll experience "severe claustrophobia" on her journey. "With deep regrets I have to declare here that I had to end my climb of Mount Kilimanjaro after the Day 2 climb due to severe claustrophobia two nights in a row." Elaborating on her post, she added: "I was one of the strongest person in the group - physically and mentally both. And I knew I would reach the peak sooner than expected."

Munmun Dutta revealed that one her second day on the mountain, she was in crit-

ical condition, which made her change her mind and descend to the base camp: "The stark darkness on the mountain gave me severe claustrophobia and I had my heart palpitating so fast that I almost fainted last night outside my tent. And that's when I decided to pull out of the expedition because I was dreading the darkness every day during sunset."

The TV actress also thanked the trek organisers for escorting her for an hour in the severe cold on her way back: "Couldn't thank the team of Kiliwarriors enough for saving me from this near death experience of mine. The porters, the guides everyone helped me pack my bags, walk with me 1 hour in total darkness in 5 degrees cold to take me to a place where the car could come and pick me up and bring me down the mountain."

ARIES: Take a deep breath and come back to the present—a place of joy and love. Remember, the root of all suffering is either hanging to a past you should have let go of a long time ago or projecting your worries onto the blank canvas of the future. Our thoughts create our reality, Aries. Don't let worry and anxiety cloud what could be a perfect tomorrow.

Tip: Come back to the present.

TAURUS: We are not here to wage wars. We are here to spread the message of love, compassion and oneness. Be aware of where you are operating from. Could you be using your words as weapons? You have the choice of to step back, no matter how triggering the situation. Take a deep breath and count backwards from 10. Learning to respond, rather than react, will change the game for you permanently. Tip: We are here to spread the message of love and compassion.

GEMINI: Golden words courtesy Mooji: "Dying to your own attachments is a beautiful death. Because this death release you into real life. You have to die as a seed to live

as a tree." Welcome a time of resurrection, Gemini. A time of getting to know yourself sans the things that keep you tangled in the outside world. Jump into the fire of self-discovery. There is so much you are yet to uncover on this journey to enlightenment.

Tip: A metaphorical death awaits.

CANCER: "When you place yourself in a high vibrational state you become aligned with all of the abundance that exists within the universe," said Esther Hicks. You are the reason your career is witnessing steady progress. Continue to take focused action towards your best life with the belief that what you desire is already yours.

Tip: There's no mountain too high.

LEO: Just because your work environment is harsh, doesn't mean you have to be. Don't match their vibration, Leo. Raise yours. Create an environment where you feel loved, supported and nurtured. Surround yourself with soothing colours and healing crystals. Sometimes, listening to your favourite song in the midst of a chaotic work day is all it takes to make that shift.

Tip: Don't 'match' their vibration. Raise yours.

VIRGO: Why are all these self-help gurus and enlightened masters are constantly talking about 'letting go'? What the hell does it really mean? A Steve Maraboli classic to help you work through the heavy emotions that are weighing you down: "Unless you forgive yourself, unless you forgive the situation, unless you realise the situation is over, you cannot move forward." Start by accepting the things you cannot change, Virgo.

Tip: This is a time of letting go off the heavy emotions that have been weighing you down.

LIBRA: The only way out is in, Libra. What this phase of your life calls for: a greater degree of self-reliance, a deeper understanding of the workings of your inner world. Remember, our spirit team communicates with us in a multitude of ways. Angel therapist Doreen Virtue describes the four 'clairs' as—visions, feelings, thoughts and sounds. Your clairaudience ability could be especially heightened at this point. Turn up your frequency so you can access messages from a pure consciousness.

Tip: Your spirit team is communicating with

you in a multitude of ways.

SCORPIO: "What makes you human is your power to make decisions. To make choices to elevate the way you live, behave and lead." Dear Scorpio, let Robin Sharma's quote on owning your messes inspire you to change your circumstances for the better. Recognise the doors that are opening for you as the old ones are closing. A future forward vision will help you make your way up the ladder.

Tip: Take ownership of your life.

SAGITTARIUS: Sometimes, life feels like rainbows and sunshine. At other times, it could feel like walking through glass shards. Be cognizant of those who reach out to you in the midst of chaos. Recognise those who don't shy away from having a real conversation when things get tough. The Universe is helping you understand what makes a true friendship.

Tip: Be cognizant of those who reach out to you in the midst of chaos.

CAPRICORN: This is a time of working through the trauma, and consciously so. Get ready to hit the internal reset button this week. But here's the thing about transforma-

tion: it's sure to make those who are running away from their own truth uncomfortable. Don't let anybody shame you for being you, Capricorn. Respond to their fears by being the most unapologetic version of yourself.

Tip: Get ready to hit the internal reset button.

AUQARIUS: "Love what you do. Do what you love." Apply this simple philosophy to every area of your life, and you'll never have to work a day in your life. This is a time of realigning with the life path and remembering why you started this journey in the first place. The inner alchemy is sure to expand your horizons and open the door to golden opportunities.

Tip: Take the 'do what you love' philosophy very seriously.

PISCES: Feelings are just visitors, let them come and go," said Mooji. You are now understanding the true meaning of detachment, Pisces. Remember, birthing a significant project is sometimes a lonely process. Don't let that deter you from embracing the void and creating something you are going to remember for a long time.

Tip: Practice the fine art of detachment.