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IN SHILLONG**
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SDF IN MASS JOINING
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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Organic Mission attracting national and international visitors: Agri Secy

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JUN:**

Agriculture & Horticulture Department Secretary, Khorlo Bhutia, today said that more than 1058 individuals and organisations have already visited Sikkim this year to learn about the Sikkim Organic Mission. Organisations and individuals from different parts of the Country and abroad

have continuously been coming to Sikkim to learn about the Sikkim Organic Mission, he added.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Bhutia informed that these visitors include a team led by Bihar Agriculture Minister, a delegation from Nepal led by Agriculture Department Secretary, Government of Nepal and six MLAs from Himachal Pradesh

recently visited Sikkim to learn about Sikkim Organic Mission.

He informed that even scholars from the outside have been coming to Sikkim to learn about organic farming. Sikkim Organic Mission has become popular in different States of India and other countries and want to adopt organic farming in their respective places, he said.

However, the Secretary stated that despite the success and popularity of the mission some people are trying to spread misinformation. One-sided, distorted and alarmist information on the organic mission is being spread, he added.

He urged the people and organisations to do a thorough investigation and to contact the

department to get the correct facts and figures before publishing any article or report.

The Secretary also informed that Horticulture Department Director, Dr DK Bhandari has been appointed as the official spokesperson of the department and Sikkim Organic Mission.



Sikkim's Dhara Vikas project conferred Skoch Gold Award

NEW DELHI, 23 JUN [IPR]: The Dhara Vikas initiative of Rural Management & Development Department, Government of Sikkim has been awarded with the "Skoch Gold Award" in water sector for the year 2018. The award was presented at the Constitution Club in New Delhi on 22 Jun.

Additional Secretary cum Project Director, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act [MGNREGA], Sarika Pradhan, Officer on Special Duty, RM&DD, Dr Subash Dhakal, and State Dhara Vikas Coordinator, Pem Norbu Sherpa received the award.

The award is an initiative of Skoch Group, a think tank dealing with socio-economic issues with a focus on inclusive growth since 1997. The group companies include a consulting wing, a media wing and a charitable foundation.

It may be mentioned here, the Dhara Vikas

initiative had to qualify in various parameters namely early bird, stringent expert evaluation, presentation before jury and popular vote.

As part of climate change adaptation and recognizing the urgent need for ensuring water security, RM&DD conceptualised the Dhara Vikas initiative to revive the State's drying lakes, springs and streams back in 2008. The core thrust of Dhara Vikas is to catch the surface runoff water and use it to recharge ground-water sources.

The initiative was launched under the centrally sponsored MGNREGA with technical support from other government agencies and organisations like WWF - India, People's Science Institute, Dehradun, Advanced Center for Water Resources Development & Management [ACWADAM], Pune and Centre for Advance Computing [CDAC], Pune.

The initiative focuses on the drought prone

Gram Panchayats of South and West districts. It has helped to revive more than 60 springs and revived two dried-up lakes to its natural state and de-concretised hill top lakes and converted into recharge structures.

Till date 630 hectares of technically identified recharge areas has been covered with recharge intervention. More than 2500 springs have been mapped in GIS platform and developed an android based Spring Data management system.

The RM&D Department is currently working on hydrological decision support software in collaboration with CDAC Pune under the supervision of IIT Delhi. The department has initiated intensive research investigation to understand the hydro-geological characteristics of aquifer system in the Mid Hills in collaboration with CDAC, Pune and Geologists from University of Pune.

First ever Bhutanese Film Festival commences at Manan Kendra

GANGTOK, 23 JUN [IPR]: In commemoration of the Golden Jubilee Celebration of formal diplomatic relations between Bhutan and India, the first ever Bhutanese Film Festival was celebrated at Manan Kendra Auditorium in Gangtok today.

Speaker, SLA, KN Rai, attended the event as chief guest accompanied by Cultural Affairs Minister, GM Gurung, as guest of honour.

Chief guest Mr Rai, in his address, said that the film festival is a historical event as Sikkim is the first State to host the film festival of Bhutan. He talked about the similarities between Sikkim and Bhutan which



is based on religion and culture. He hoped for a stronger relationship between the two countries after the Green Field Airport is operational and also briefed the crowd about the achievements of Sikkim which included organic mission, en-

vironmental protection and other schemes envisioned by the state government.

Secretary, Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department, Ambika Pradhan, said that it was an honour to have the State chosen to host the 1st Bhutanese Film Festival. She added that the purpose of the film festival is to market Bhutanese films and to promote tourism and local economy. She appreciated the hosting agencies and expressed her gratitude towards

Director of Department of Information & Media, Ministry of Information and Communications, Thimpu, Rinchen Dorji, and other Bhutanese counterparts.

Consul General of Bhutan, Kolkata, Thinley Wangchuk, said that he

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Olympic Day Run to promote Olympic spirit

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JUN:**

Sikkim Olympic Association [SOA] with the support of Sports & Youth Affairs Department organized Olympic Day Run 2018 in Gangtok today to commemorate Olympic Day as per the Olympic Charter to promote its universal character and encourage worldwide participation, a press release informs.

The run that flagged off from MG Marg and covered White Hall and Kazi Road and ended at Titanic Park.

The event was attended by Gangtok MLA, Pintso Chopel Lepcha, as chief guest along with Mayor, Gangtok Municipal Council, Shakti Singh Choudhury, and Secretary,



Sports & Youth Affairs Department, SD Dhakal, as guests of honour.

Two-hundred runners including school students, sportspersons, senior citizens, and representatives from different clubs and associ-

ations affiliated to SOA from all the districts of the State participated in the event.

In the Sub Junior category for boys & girls, Arnab Sharma, Sheya Rai and Chutin Bhutia bagged the first, second

and third positions respectively.

In the men's category, the first position was secured by Ram B Neopany with Kamal Mangar and Hem B Neopany taking the second and third positions respectively.

Likewise, Chandrakala Sharma, Remika Rai and Purnima Tamang took the first, second and third positions respectively in the women's category.

In the seniors' category,

turn to pg03

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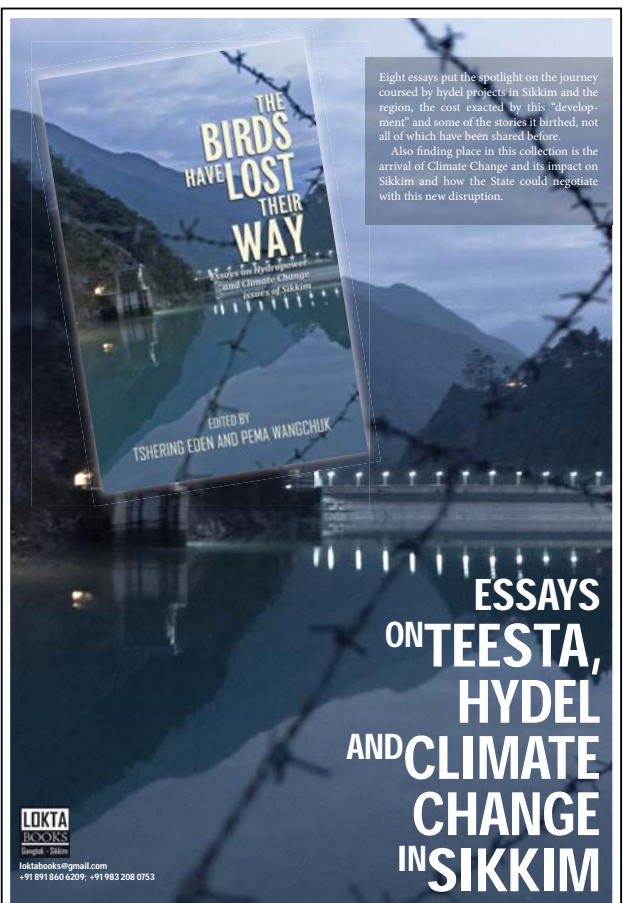
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**ESSAYS
ON TEESTA,
HYDEL
AND CLIMATE
CHANGE
IN SIKKIM**

Around 2,000 join SDF in mass joining function

REBYNA RANA/
NITESH R PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

A number of leaders and supporters of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha and other political parties today joined the ruling Sikkim Democratic Front during a mass joining programme held at SDF Bhawan in Gangtok. They were welcomed by SDF president, Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, with khadas, SDF flags and SDF books.

Among the notable figures who joined the party in the presence of Mr Chamling include former SKM working president, Bharati Sharma, and Sikkim Republican Party's Arjun Rai.

It was informed that 2060 persons from dif-



ferent political parties joined SDF today.

Addressing the gathering, Arjun Rai from Namchi informed that this was his return to SDF after being expelled from the party for car-

rying out anti-party activities during the 2014 elections.

"After being expelled from SDF, I met leaders of other political parties and deliberated with them. However, I nev-

er felt comfortable and always had SDF in my heart, and today I have returned home. During my political yatra after leaving SDF, I realized that only our CM Pawan Chamling can work for

the security and interest of Sikkim. We youth can give only our age for the development of the State and country and our age must be used in a proper manner. It is only the CM who can give proper leadership to our youth. I will give my best for SDF and ten times more than what I had given before," Mr Rai expressed.

Reinstating her allegiance to SDF, former SKM working president, Ms Sharma, stated that she had chosen the wrong platform after leaving SDF and that SDF has always been her home.

"I acted in haste after having a misunderstanding with certain SDF party workers and joined SKM. In SKM, I was following a person without

any vision and was in a group of blind people. They will never lead us to a destination and it is only SDF and CM Pawan Chamling who will lead people to their destination. Kranti under the leadership of Mr Chamling is the way forward and I will contribute as a loyal soldier," she said.

Addressing the gathering, SDF supremo, Mr Chamling, welcomed all and announced that they are now members of SDF.

"Most of you left the party due to differences or other reasons and now I welcome you all back. Whatever has happened, let it be forgotten. There is no personal enmity in politics. There are only ideological differences in politics," said Mr Chamling.

He added that it is due to the wrong ideologies of the opposition that the members have joined the ruling front. He also alleged that the opposition has no political or developmental programme and that instigating people on falsehood has been the agenda of the opposition.

On the Limboo-Tamang seat issue, Mr Chamling said that the State Government has given its all and the matter rests in the hands of the Centre.

"There is still 10-11 months' time left for the elections to come and I am very hopeful. It is in the hands of the Centre and I can only request. The Prime Minister has promised me. Recently the Home Minister also

informed that the work is in progress," stated Mr Chamling.

He further informed that he has had a talk with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who has expressed her wish to visit Sikkim to learn more about organic farming. He added that Ms Banerjee has assured every support from her side in fighting certain people in the opposition.

"People should not seek change just because one party has been in power for a long time. Change should be for better and not for destruction of Sikkim. Those who are running around for change today will only cause destruction of Sikkim," expressed Mr Chamling.

SKM claims people joining party in large numbers

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

A series of mass joining programmes of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha are being held in the State with many switching to the party from Sikkim Democratic Front, an SKM press release informs.

A mass joining programme was conducted today at Chotasamdong Ward under Soreng Chakhung constituency in West Sikkim which had the presence of acting president, Kunga Nima Lepcha, working president, MP Subba, other members.

Around 300 SDF members led by CK Rana



[youth vice convenor and ex-CEC of SDF] and Milan Gurung [SDF active youth] formally joined SKM, as per the release.

The new SKM mem-

bers said that in more than two decades of its government, SDF has not been able to work sincerely for develop-

ment of the State and

alleged that SDF has not been fair in distributing schemes funded by the Central Government.

Addressing the gathering, SKM acting pres-

ident, Mr Lepcha, has stated, "SDF does not have proper vision for Sikkim. What their leader wants is to retain Chief Ministership for his entire life with one point intention to make his close associates and family wealthier through commission and percentages from public works. SKM's Sikkim centric policies are the only solution that will bring an end to SDF's misrule."

Similarly, 13 SDF Cheli Morcha workers guided by Rupa Thapa from Tumin Lingee constituency, East Sikkim have quit SDF and joined SKM during the ongo-

ing Nari Ekikaran Yatra which was held at Lingee. They were welcomed by general secretary, Pabitra Bhandari, and other functionaries.

Furthermore, five families from SDF party from Tadong constituency, East Sikkim have also joined SKM during the CLC meeting held at Pani House in Gangtok. They were welcomed by Zonal vice president [incharge], Anand Lama, and party workers.

Likewise, 21 families of Poklok-Kamrang constituency, South Sikkim have left SDF and joined SKM during the CLC meet held at Poklok Kamrang.



Meeting conducted for Bhanu Jayanti celebration in Soreng

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

The first round of meeting for the celebration of the 204th Bhanu Jayanti which falls on 13 Jul was held at the auditorium hall of Soreng Sub Division in West Sikkim today which was convened by Sub Divisional Magistrate, Soreng, Sonam Topgay Tashi, and chaired by Minister of Human Resource Development Department, RB Subba, a press release informs.

Sub Divisional Mag-

istrate, Mr Tashi, briefed the gathering about the formation of Sub-Committee for execution of work and responsibilities assigned to them.

Accordingly, the house unanimously re-constituted Bhanu Jayanti Celebration Committee with HRDD Minister, Mr Subba, as its chief patron and all Advisors and Chairpersons under Soreng Chakhung constituency as patrons.

The final meeting of the committee is scheduled to be held on 30 Jun.

ASCKDSF thanks CM for extending weaker section of society reservation to Christian SCs

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

All Sikkim Christian Kami Damai Sarki Forum [ASCKDSF] has thanked the State Government and Chief Minister Pawan Chamling for providing 2% job reservation to the Weaker Sections of the Society [Kami, Damai, Sarki not categorized as Scheduled Castes].

The Forum further expressed its gratitude to the CM for working for the protection and welfare of the future generation.



Addressing a press conference here today, ASCKDSF president, DK Biswakarma, mentioned that Scheduled Caste Christians had not been able to enjoy the facilities and reservation of Scheduled Caste.

He informed that a delegation of the Forum had submitted a memorandum on this issue to the CM on the occasion on the Christian Summit held at Jorethang earlier this year and had received a very positive

assurance.

He expressed his deep gratitude to the CM for giving them status of the weaker section of the society and for providing 2% job reservation through a recent government notification on 21

June.

Mr Biswakarma expressed that through this decision of the government, justice had prevailed.

He added that the SDF government has always worked for the protection, upliftment and welfare of Scheduled Caste in the State.

"Sikkim is the only totally secular State in the country," he stressed.

ASCKDSF state chief coordinator, Geeta Ruchal, also expressed deep gratitude to the State Government and the CM for taking the de-

cision in the interest of the future generations of the community.

She added that this reservation provided by the State Government will further encourage the younger generation to move ahead in their lives. She also thanked all organisations and individuals for their support to the forum.

The press conference was also addressed by vice-president, Prashant Lamichaney, general secretary, RK Sundas, and publicity secretary, Binay Gazmer.

KVK to conduct residential training in West Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, West Sikkim is organising a three-day residential training programme under Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan at the KVK training hall in Gyalshing, West Sikkim from 23-25 Jun. The training is being conducted with the objective to develop entrepreneurship skills of rural youth and Self Help Groups [SHGs] from 25 villages selected under Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan in the Aspirational district programme, a press release informs.



Assembly to reconvene on 11 July

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

As per notification issued by Sikkim Legislative Assembly Secretariat, Gangtok, on 22 Jun, the SLA Speaker, KN Rai, will be reconvening a sitting of the House in the Assembly Hall in Gangtok from 11 July at 11 am.

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Gangtok on Sunday, 24 June

Temp: 24°C/17°C
Forecast: Cloudy, afternoon showers.
Sunrise: 04:42 AM
Sunset: 6:34 PM

Olympic Day Run to promote Olympic spirit

Contd from pg01

gory, Anup Baniya, Tsewang Bhutia and Yogesh Gurung secured the first, second and third positions respectively. 75-year-old senior citizen, Nimsang Lhamu [Pradhan], was awarded with consolation prize for participating in the run.

The winners of the Olympic Run were awarded with prizes by the chief guest.

President, SOA, BK Roka, has extended gratitude to Chief Minister Pawan Chamling for his vision for development of sports in the State and to various departments and associations for their support in conducting the event successfully.

First ever Bhutanese Film Festival commences at Manan Kendra

contd from pg01

was honoured to represent the Government of Bhutan and said that Sikkim and Bhutan always had a strong bond due to regular visits and exchanges.

He added that the celebration promotes long term relation between the two nations and further mentioned that selecting Sikkim to host the event will further build the relationship, exchanges of culture and tradition and also promote film locations and tourism.

The event also had the presence of Chief Secretary, AK Shrivastava, officials of various other departments, college students, filmmakers, singers and the local gentry.

It may be mentioned here, the two-day event is being organized by the Ministry of Information & Communications, Royal Government of Bhutan in collaboration with the Film Association of Bhutan with facilitation support from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Royal Government of Bhutan and the CA&H Department, Government of Sikkim.

SIBin teachers call off protest against management

**SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 23 JUN:**

Representatives of vocational education teachers working under SIBin Group have called off their protest after receiving positive response and assurances from the SIBin Group management to fulfill their demands. Following the successful meeting with SIBin Group management on 22 Jun, they have now been directed by the management to immediately join duty in their respective schools.

It may be mentioned here, the services of 556 teachers working under SIBIN Group in different government schools of



Sikkim were terminated without following an official procedure but through email. The teachers had threatened to go on an indefinite strike and also placed

various demands including hike in salary, yearly increment, etc.

In a press conference held today, vocational education teachers, Vishal Ria, Feroz Gu-

rung, Pratham Pradhan and Poonam Chettri, informed that during the meeting held on Friday, SIBin Group proprietor, Neil Chettri, assured to work on all their de-

mands.

They stated that the post of Lab Assistant no longer exists but there are around 100 lab assistants who, it was assured in the meeting, will be absorbed in other posts.

It is informed that following their termination, representatives of the vocational education teachers had met officials of HRDD and SIBin and other authorities. A team of vocational teachers had also apprised the Chief Minister twice during his ongoing Jan Sampark Abhiyan at Mamring and Saramsa Garden and had received positive assurance from the CM.

NE States to play in Ranji Trophy in Plate Division for the first time

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JUN:**

Board of Control for Cricket in India [BCCI] held its Special General Meeting [SGM] in Delhi on 22 Jun with president of Sikkim Cricket Association [SCA], Lobzang G Tenzing, representing Sikkim, an SCA press release informs.

The main agenda of the meeting was with regard to North East States' participation in the Ranji Trophy for the first time in a new format. The existing Ranji teams will be included in the "Elite Division" and the rest in "Plate Division", it is informed.

It was further decided during the meeting that in the upcoming



domestic season, new teams including North Eastern States and Bihar will be playing against each other in the Plate Division. The top two teams from the Plate Division will then face the bottom two sides of group A, B and C of the Elite Division. The best

two will be promoted to the Elite Division in the following season while the bottom two from the Elite Division will be relegated to Plate Division, the release adds.

While the modalities are being worked out, SCA president, Mr Tenzing, has expressed

happiness on NE States being part of the Ranji Trophy for the first time.

"This is the result of the hard work put up by the office bearers of North East States Associations in the last two years. The United Front of Cricket Associations of Northeast States un-

der the umbrella of North East Cricket Development Committee [NECDC] has been at the forefront of lobbying for development of Cricket in NE. This is a brilliant chance for our boys to showcase their talent in the National arena and playing for the National Team and IPL in future as Ranji Trophy is the main platform," he added.

Mr Tenzing has extended best wishes to the players of SCA for the upcoming season and has urged senior cricketers to take up cricket more seriously. He also mentioned that he now waits for SCA to be a member of BCCI with full voting rights.

RMDD helps promote local artisans in Singtam & Rangpo

**YOGEN THATAL
SINGTAM, 23 JUN:**

With the aim to promote the art of handicrafts in the State, Self Help Groups from all four districts have joined hands to boost Sikkim Rural Livelihood Mission through Rural Artisan Marketing Centre stalls.

The Rural Management & Development Department will be setting up stalls displaying handicraft items in Singtam Bazaar every Friday and will be moving on to Rangpo every Sunday.

Speaking to Summit-Times, Project Assistant, PL Chettri, said, "The idea behind setting up display stalls is mainly promote local talent and artisans while also helping them earn livelihoods. The display items have been contributed by artisans and SHGs of four districts."



5 Sikkim coaches in Premier Skills' football coach education course

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

Five Sikkimese football coaches from the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Sikkim participated in the Premier Skills Phase 1 Coach Education course held recently at Lakshmbai National Institute of Physical Education [LNPIE], North East Regional Centre in Sonapur, Guwahati.

A press release informs that the course was organised by British Council and Premier League in collaboration with Sports Authority of India [SAI] and All India Football Federation [AIFF].

The participating coaches from Sikkim were Suren Kumar Chettri and Pem Lhamu Lepcha from South Sikkim, Mayal Lepcha and Anuradha Chettri from West Sikkim and Dawa Lepcha from East Sikkim.

The coaches received expert training from qualified Premier Skills' coaches during the course thus giving them the skills and support to develop their own community football projects.

A total of 60 football coaches from the eight states of Northeast India had participated in the Premier Skills Phase 1 Coach Education course, the release adds.

Art of Living celebrates International Day of Yoga with events across State

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 23 JUN:

Teachers and volunteers of the Art of Living organization participated in the 4th International Day of Yoga events at various venues across the State.

A press release informs that at Gangtok, the Art of Living, Sikkim Chapter, organized a five-day Yoga Foundation Programme for yoga enthusiasts. The programme was organized in collaboration with the Department of Tourism & Civil Aviation, Government of Sikkim and MSME GOI and was held at the auditorium of the Department here at Paryatan Bhawan, Tadong.

The programme was facilitated by Roshan Pradhan and Kamala Rai, both Certified Yoga Teachers of the Art of Living Organization. Over forty participants from Gangtok and surrounding areas benefited from the programme, the release mentions.

The programme began on 17 June and culminated on the occasion of International Day of Yoga, ie. 21 June. The opening day was attended by Secretary Tourism Department, CP Dhakal. The programme was also attended by Deputy Director MSME, KD Bhat-tacharya.

QCI Certified Yoga Teacher of the Art of Living, Kamala Rai also conducted a yoga session on the evening of 21 June for students and faculty of Sikkim University, which was organized by the NSS Unit of Sikkim University.

Likewise, International Day of Yoga 2018 was organized by the Art of Living Organization in collaboration with 69th Battalion Shasastha Seema Bal (SSB) at the premises of Viswa Vinayak Mandir in Rhenock, East Sikkim. Rajesh Gupta, Art of Living Teacher shed light on the importance of yoga in one's daily life and also taught some pranayamas along with the yoga postures.

He was accompanied by Kalu Agarwal, also an Art of Living teach-

er based in Rhenock. The programme had the presence and participation of Jeet Singh, Commandant, 69th Bn SSB, along with other officials, SSB Jawans, Panchayats, representatives of various NGOs, Government employees and local gentry. Over seventy participants benefited from the programme.

Art of Living Teacher, Phurba Doma Bhutia led the yoga demonstration at the district level Yoga Day Celebrations at Bhanu Shalig, Gyalshing, West Sikkim. The programme was organized under the initiative of Minister, UD&HD, NK Subba. Speaker, Sikkim Legislative Assembly, KN Rai attended the occasion as the chief guest accompanied by MLA, Chandra Maya Subba, officers of the district administration, students and general public.

Similarly, Art of Living Sikkim Chapter, Jorethang in collaboration with NJMC and SIRD, Karfacter observed the 4th anniversary of International Yoga Day at Green Park today.

The mass yoga demonstration led by Art of Living volunteer, Kumari Majhi had the participation of over 350 yoga enthusiasts. The programme was also attended by Chairperson Scheduled Caste Welfare Board and Former MLA, Madan Cintury, Vice Chairperson NJMC, Pema Tamang, SDPO Jorethang, Sonam Wangdi, police and fire personnel, Art of Living members, SICB trainees, Sub-division level Government officials, students and staff of Jorethang SSS, members of various NGOs's and people from all walks of life.

At Yangtey, West Sikkim, the mass demonstration of over 300 participants, especially from SSB, was led by Art of Living Teacher, Indira Katwal.

At Langang School, over 100 people from different walks of life were guided with various yoga postures by Art of Living volunteer, Anita Subba.

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SummitTIMES

Let's Hope This Emergency Never Returns

The young should be taught more about the two lost years of India's democratic journey

Not too many recall the date 26 June, 1975, any more. Perhaps not even those who suffered most over the next two years. For the record, on 26 June 1975, the then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, clamped Emergency on the nation. Fundamental Rights were suspended, newspapers censored and journalists hauled to jail along with perhaps the entire Opposition. Midnight raids became common and Tihar was packed to the gills. Emergency apologists suggest that for once the trains ran on time and government officials actually worked. Fact remains that the two years of Emergency were times when India ran as a dictatorship and no matter how efficient the officers became at that time, it was a period which went against everything that democracy stands for. Everything that the idea of India was based on was suppressed. The concept did not go down well with the people and they voted not only Indira's INC out of power but also refused the original Mrs. G a berth in the Lok Sabha. It is another matter that the same people voted her back into power in 1979.

But that argument we keep for another day. The Emergency is something that the generation in schools and colleges at present does not even know about. This blind-spotting of the tumultuous two years in the history of Indian democracy is perhaps as unfair as the actual Emergency itself. Every generation should know what can happen if citizens of a democracy stop caring and refuse to engage or stay informed and collaborate. One does not expect the horrors of the Emergency to be taught in schools, but even the mainstream media is failing in its job with mere tokenism on the topic. This is perhaps because the media houses, save perhaps Indian Express and The Statesman, keeled over to official pressure at the time. This is a skeleton that everyone wants to keep locked. Media comprised just of newspapers and radio at the time and both were largely compromised and/ or capitulated. One sees the TV news channels remember the Emergency anniversary nowadays but that is more for Congress-bashing than anything else, because most of them sidestep the eerie parallels that one senses in governance nowadays with its obsession with centralizing everything and deploying nationalism to suppress voices and justify oppression.

So yes, the Emergency remains a largely forgotten chapter. But that is wrong. Young Indians need to know what happened from 1975 to 1977. They have to understand the situation that led to the Emergency so that they can recognise the signs when a repeat is being tried. And a repeat will not necessary follow the same playbook, but will deliver the same results. The young also need to know of the popular movement which finally overcame the draconian imposition so that they can emulate the same when required. The past, we should realise, is not something to pride over or feel ashamed about, it is something to learn from. India, and for that matter even Sikkim, prefers to ignore the uncomfortable bits. India ignores the Partition Riots and the Emergency and Sikkim dodges real discussion on the Merger or, for that matter, even questions of identity, rights and responsibilities.

This attitude should change.

One needs to look back into the past again, not for critiques and allegations, but, as mentioned earlier, to be better prepared. That said, it is important to bear in mind that the past needs to be learnt from, not mindlessly celebrated. It is important for Sikkim to bear in mind that if memories become more important than dreams, it will stop moving forward and start regressing...

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: letters@summittimes.com

As the US leaves the UN Human Rights Council, it may leave more damage in its wake

SARAH JOSEPH
theconversation.com

US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have announced the US was withdrawing from the UN Human Rights Council ("HRC").

In doing so, they claimed the council was a roadblock to genuine global human rights protection. This move by the Trump administration has been anticipated for some time. In a sense, the elephant has left the room. But in doing so, the elephant has belled the cat on a number of serious issues regarding the HRC.

Is the United States' decision sound in terms of international human rights protection? Is it one that Australia, an HRC member from 2018-2020, should follow?

WHAT IS THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL?

The UN Human Rights Council was established in 2006 to replace the UN Commission on Human Rights, which ran from 1947 to 2006. By the time of its demise, the commission was criticised from all sides for being overly politicised.

The HRC's 47 seats are divided between the five official UN regions in the following way: Africa (13); Asia (13); Latin America and the Caribbean (8); Western Europe and Other (7); Eastern Europe (6). The US (and Australia) is in the Western Europe and Other Group, known as WEOG.

One-third of the council is elected each year by the UN General Assembly, and members serve three-year terms. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms. A member can also be suspended from the council in a vote of two-thirds of the UN General Assembly: Libya was suspended in 2011 after Muammar Gaddafi's crackdown on Arab Spring protesters and armed dissidents. No other member has been suspended.

The HRC meets three times a year for a total of around ten weeks. Its 38th session has just begun. It also meets for one-day special sessions at the initiative of one-third of its members. It has so far held 28 special sessions.

The HRC's functions include the drafting and adoption of new human rights standards, as arose in its first year with the adoption of new treaties dealing with the rights of people with a disability and the scourge of enforced disappearances, as well as the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007.

The HRC also authorises independent investigations into particular human rights issues, either thematic (dealing with a human rights issue such as torture or LGBTI rights) or, more controversially, focused on a particular state. At the time of writing, there are 46 thematic mandates and 12 country mandates for these "special rapporteurs".

It has one major new function compared to its predecessor, the Universal Periodic Review ("UPR"), whereby the human rights record of every UN member is reviewed by the HRC (as well as all other "observer" nations) every five years.

The US' grievances against the HRC arise with regard to the human rights records of its members, and its politicised character. Its key red line concern seems to be the HRC's "unconscionable" and "chronic bias" against Israel (to quote from this morning's press conference). These issues are examined in turn below.

HRC MEMBERSHIP

Membership criteria as they stand are very soft: candidates commit to the highest standards of human rights, and states should take into account a nominee's human rights record when voting. Both of these rules are basically unenforceable.

Human rights criteria were mooted as prerequisites for membership when the HRC was created. However, the UN's nearly 200 members could not agree on substantive criteria, as they have very different views on human rights. The US, for example, wanted only "democratic nations" to be eligible. Such a criterion would have led to debates over the meaning of "democracy", and would seem to prioritise civil and political rights over economic, social and cultural ones. A focus on the implementation of economic and social rights might have led to the exclusion from eligibility of the US itself.

In any case, the "measurement" and respective ranking of human rights records across states is contentious. While comparisons between two states may lead to easy conclusions over which one is better or worse, it is a fraught exercise across the entirety of the UN membership.

Procedural criteria, such as a nation's record on ratification of human rights treaties, would be more objective. However, such criteria might have led to the exclusion of the two most powerful countries in the world – the US and China, which have both failed to ratify crucial treaties. Realpolitik indicates that such an outcome is very unlikely.

In the press conference, Haley and Pompeo decried the presence of human rights abusers on the council, including China, Cuba, Venezuela and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Consternation has also commonly been expressed over the com-

mon presence of Saudi Arabia and Russia on the HRC. Certainly, none of those states is remotely close to upholding the highest standards of human rights. Haley and Pompeo went further, claiming that these states manipulate the HRC to shield abusers and target blameless states in its resolutions.

So how bad is the HRC membership? Freedom House is a non-government organisation (NGO) that rates states as "free", "partly free", or "not free", according to certain civil and political rights criteria, such as press freedom. While Freedom House's methodology is assailable, I will use its rankings in assessing the current HRC, as the US itself historically uses them in making certain policy choices.

According to its 2018 rankings, the HRC of 2018 contains 21 "free" states, 12 "partly free", and 14 "non-free".

2018 is in fact one of the worst years in terms of the numbers of non-free HRC members. Nevertheless, free states always outnumber unfree states on the HRC, and can easily pass or block any resolution with the cooperation of just a few partly free states, if they vote together.

Any problem with "bad" resolutions on the HRC arises not from a preponderance of bad states, but from bloc voting within regions, like-minded groups and alliances.

THE PHENOMENON OF CLEAN SLATES

Nevertheless, one can still fairly criticise the HRC for containing 14 non-free states. How do such states get elected?

A major problem for HRC elections is the issue of "clean slates", whereby the number of candidates presented by a UN region correlates exactly to the number of seats it is scheduled to have elected at any particular time. For example, a region might put forward only two candidates for two seats. In such circumstances, the various candidates' election seems to be a fait accompli. This phenomenon



of clean slates was what Pompeo was referring to when he said that some states were elected by a rigged, collusive process.

Yet clean slates are a problem with all of the UN regions. The US itself was initially elected to the HRC on a clean slate in 2009. Australia was elected to the HRC on a WEOG clean slate in 2017, due to France's belated withdrawal of its candidature.

Genuine elections do occur when open slates are presented by regions. This is how Russia was rejected in 2016, an unprecedented and humiliating blow that probably led to Russia's failure to even stand for election in 2017. Other serious human rights abusers, such as Azerbaijan, Sri Lanka and Belarus, have failed to gain seats in similar circumstances.

Although states are elected on a regional basis, each member must still attain the majority of votes in the general assembly in order to be elected. There remains a possibility that an unacceptable candidate will simply not reach that threshold, even in the case of a clean slate.

That possibility has in the past led to the late replacement of controversial candidates, such as Syria's replacement by Kuwait in 2011. This author eagerly awaits the day when the General Assembly finally flexes its muscle by refusing to elect an entire clean slate, thus depriving a region of a seat for a year. Such an outcome, in the absence of a relevant reform, is one way to dissuade future clean slates.

Finally, while states – particularly WEOG countries – might rail against the awful records of other members, those sentiments might not be reflected in their actual voting. After all, voting is by secret ballot. For example, given that Saudi Arabia is a key US geopolitical ally, it seems likely that the US (and even Australia) has voted for it on occasion. Certainly, the UK seems to have done so.

The US is correct that membership criteria should be revisited. Certain obstacles could be put in the way of the worst abusers, such as compulsory open slates, public voting (which might help prevent UK votes for Saudi Arabia), and a requirement that an eligible state must allow visits by all special rapporteurs.

POLITICISATION OF THE HRC

As the HRC's members are representatives of their governments, the HRC is a highly politicised body, like its predecessor. State governments are political constructs, so any institution made up of government representatives is inevitably political too.

Unfortunately, states will generally vote in favour of their national interests rather than human rights interests if the two should clash. Pompeo inadvertently admitted that this morning, when he praised Haley by saying that she always put "American interests first".

Politicisation inevitably leads to the manifestation of political biases. The most notorious HRC bias concerns Israel. It seems that the US' biggest complaint over the HRC, and the "red line" that has led to its withdrawal, is the HRC's treatment of Israel.

ISRAEL AND THE HRC

The HRC is biased against Israel. It has aimed a disproportionate number of resolutions against that country. The HRC's regular agenda of ten items contains only one item that focuses on a particular state, that state being Israel.

Its special rapporteur mandate stands until the occupation is over, so its renewal is automatic rather than the subject of periodic debate, as is the case with other mandates. The mandate-holder investigates its actions rather than those of the Palestinian authorities, whose abuses are largely ignored.

Israel has been the subject of more special sessions than any other state (more than a quarter of the 28 sessions). Having said that, it was the subject of the first three special sessions in 2006, and four of the first six, so the "hit rate" of 4 out of 22 is less stark since then.

Why is the HRC preoccupied with Israel? For a start, Israel has committed serious human rights abuses that are worthy of the HRC's condemnation. It is absurd for Pompeo to have implicitly suggested that Israel has "committed no offence". Any HRC bias does not mean that the substance of its criticisms is wrong. The recent killings of Palestinian protesters, targeted killings, illegal settlements, forced evictions, war crimes, the Gaza blockade and, most fundamentally, an ongoing occupation of Palestine that has lasted for more than 50 years, will cause critics to proliferate.

Nevertheless, that does not explain the HRC's disproportionate attention to one country, given the scale of human rights abuses by other states that receive far less attention.

Ardent supporters of Israel often contend that the bias is driven by anti-Semitism. While such a motivation cannot be dismissed, there are other reasons that seem likely to be driving this phenomenon. The equation of "anti-Israel" with "anti-Semitic" is simplistic.

Israel has many enemies among UN states. Some have never accepted Israel's right to exist, believing that it was established illegitimately on Arab (Palestinian) land. Indeed, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation was set up in 1969 to unite Muslim states after the 1967 war in which Israel seized the occupied territories, so opposition to Israel has been an article of faith since its inception. The OIC routinely brings as much diplomatic pressure to bear on Israel as possible. As OIC states straddle the two biggest UN groupings, Africa and Asia, they can rely on significant bloc solidarity for support in their initiatives.

The racial element, whereby the Jewish State of Israel illegally occupies lands populated by Arabs in the occupied territories, attracts the ire of developing states, which have historical grievances regarding racial oppression. Yet other instances of racial tension – such as the oppression of the Tibetans, the Kurds, the West Papuans, the Tamils or the Chechens – fail to attract the same HRC scrutiny.

One difference is that Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territories is not recognised as legitimate by any other state, unlike for example China's sovereignty over Tibet or Indonesia's sovereignty over West Papua.

Indeed, increasing numbers of states have diplomatically recognised the occupied territories as the State of Palestine, and the UN General Assembly voted in 2012 to recognise Palestine as a non-member state.

Occupation also allows states to feel safe in attacking Israel without being too hypocritical. While human rights abuses are sadly common, the status of "occupier" is rare. Indeed, Israel is sometimes seen as a remnant of colonialism, and its actions certainly breach the right of self-determination enshrined in the UN Charter.

However, Israel is not the only occupier. Morocco has long annexed the [Western Sahara], yet the global silence on that situation is deafening in comparison.

Israel is also seen as a surrogate for the West, particularly the US. Given that Israel is almost always defended within the UN by the US, and is often defended by much of WEOG, the question of "Israel-bashing" has become part of a greater North/South divide in the UN. Anti-American states such as Cuba, Venezuela, Ecuador and Russia see Israel as a US surrogate in the Middle East, and exploit the issue accordingly.

Bias against Israel is matched by biased displays of support for Israel by its allies, such as the US and Australia. For example, the US instinctively presumed that the recent border killings were

turn to 05

Belonging in Shillong

C.K. LEPCHA

Last year, someone came up to me in a very deserted beach in Puri and asked if I was from Shillong. I wish I could've said, "Yes, I am from Shillong" but I only said, I lived there for a while. Apparently, it was my "I love shillong" tote that caught his attention as the stranger tried

palis, Biharis and now the Mazhabi Sikhs; even though these communities have been living in Shillong since or before colonial times. Interestingly there are those who have made home to Shillong in the last couple of decades and do not necessarily get in "conflict" with the Khasis because the tribal solidarity puts a strong front in their belonging to Shillong. I know of Nepali

am going to a place that does not exist anywhere in the world.

I arrived in Shillong as a student keen to study the cultures of the region. I was overwhelmed I had classmates from ten plus tribes in a class of 28 students. I spent long hours in the library but was soaking in the sights and sounds of this city too. I went to rock concerts, autumn festivals and was in Polo grounds

nor are they from Shillong; but we are the "Shillong friends". We have spent most of our adult lives here and feel that sense of belongingness to Shillong. But could we ever belong to Shillong? The Khasis would probably be quick to strip us off our belongingness to Shillong but there are nooks and corners of the city that belong to us and vice versa. We know no other place in the world better than we know Shillong. But in claiming belongingness to this controversial city, I am reminded what my friend in Shillong always says, belonging at the end of the day is but a myth.

Walking down Police Bazar on any given day, Shillong does not necessarily separate you as the outsider or the insider. It allows you to be someone or anyone from Shillong. That's why incidences like the Khasi-Sikh conflict is initially difficult to digest but not new. It is a reminder of the stark truth; we do not belong to Shillong; no one besides the Khasis have claim to Shillong (not even the Garos even though the Chief Minister of the state is a Garo).

So for people like myself, I have that luxury to come in and out of my belonging to Shillong but for the Bengalis, Nepalis, Biharis and the Mazhabi Sikhs who have lived there all their life, they have very less claim to this city and it is no myth that they still struggle to find belongingness in Shillong.

[C. K. Lepcha, Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study]



making connections far away from Shillong.

In recent days, Shillong has been making news for all the wrong reasons. The showdown between the Khasis and the Mazhabi Sikhs were to ignite communal tension, create insecurity for all non-Khasis and bring back sour memories of tribal-nontribal conflicts that has plagued the state. There is indeed a long history of Khasi skirmishes with the "outsider" Bengalis, Ne-



families from Shillong who have sold their old homes to buy new ones in Siliguri and I also know of Mizo families who have constructed houses in Shillong in recent days.

So when does Shillong welcome you and when does it reject you? My experience of Shillong has been a very welcoming one. Riding up NH40 listening to Michael Learns to Rock and feeling the cool in the air as we ascend the hills is an exercise I covet. It is also a reminder that I



when Shillong drummed its way into Guinness Book of World Records. I fell in love in Shillong sunsets and its kong shop food. I bought my first fancy phone (Motorola Razr) through which I could check email in Shillong although it got stolen at the Guwahati train station. But I always enjoyed when I would reach Guwahati and people would ask "where from?" because I could the finally say "from Shillong".

This belongingness to Shillong is almost natural. It is a bond I share with most of my friends in Shillong who are not necessarily Khasis

ICSE schools in Kolkata to resume classes from Monday

KOLKATA, JUN 23 (PTI): The ICSE-affiliated schools in Bengal have decided to resume classes from Monday following improvement in weather conditions, a senior member of the Association of Head of ICSE Schools said today.

This was decided during a meeting held by the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), on a different issue, yesterday, after the representatives of the association, took up the issue of suspension of classes since June 20, the association's Gen-

eral Secretary of Bengal chapter, Nabarun Dey, told PTI.

"As the issue came up during the meeting that held on a different issue yesterday, it was decided that in view of improvement in weather conditions, the schools can resume classes from Monday and most of them are expected to do so," Dey said.

Classes were suspended across various ICSE schools in wake of the state education department's notification and subsequent letter by CISCE recommending

suspension of classes due to severe heat conditions, he said.

The CISCE on June 19 called upon principals of all affiliated schools in West Bengal "to adhere and comply" with the request of the state government to suspend classes, due to the sweltering heat.

"The government of West Bengal has decided to suspend classes in government, government-sponsored and non-government aided schools in West Bengal from June 20 to 30, 2018 due to extreme hot

weather conditions," the CISCE had referred to the state government's June 19 notification, in its letter.

The school, where Dey is the principal, had suspended classes on June 21 and 22 following the council's letter.

"We are also starting classed from Monday," Dey said.

When contacted several other prominent institutions affiliated to the CISCE confirmed they would start classes from Monday.

There are around 100 ICSE-affiliated institu-

tions in and around the city and most of them had suspended classes from June 20 to 22, an association member said.

The notification was issued keeping in view the hardship faced by children in attending classes due to the sweltering heat, West Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee had said on June 19.

He had also said, while the notification would come into effect for state-aided, and state-run schools, the government also would request private schools,

including those affiliated under other Boards, to suspend classes from June 20 to 30.

Chatterjee could not be contacted today.

CBI to probe killings of 2 journalists in Tripura: CM Biplab

AGARTALA, JUN 23 (PTI): The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has agreed to take over investigations into the killings of two journalists in Tripura last year, Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb has said.

Santanu Bhowmik, who worked for a local television channel, was killed when he went to cover a road blockade agitation in the Mandwai area of West Tripura district on September 21 last year.

Another journalist, Sudip Dutta Bhowmik, a crime reporter with a vernacular newspaper, was killed inside the headquarters of the Tripura State Rifles' (TSR) 2nd battalion at RK Nagar in the same district on November 20 last year.

The trial in the Sudip Dutta Bhowmik case in the Additional District and Sessions Judge Court was stopped following orders from the Tripura High Court.

The state police's Special Investigating Team (SIT) had probed the killing and filed a charge sheet. It also investigated the Santanu Bhowmik case, but hasn't filed a charge sheet yet.

The CBI has decided to take over the investigations into the cases, Biplab Kumar Deb said.

Deb told reporters late last night that the state cabinet had sent separate proposals to the

Centre to probe the two cases to ensure justice to the affected families.

"Today, we feel relieved as the CBI is going to investigate both the cases. With this, the BJP-IPFT government has fulfilled yet another promise made in the party's vision document," he said.

CBI sleuths would investigate the cases to ensure justice to the two families. The government had taken positive steps so that the media could work with full freedom in Tripura, he said.

Deb said the government had already taken steps for a steep hike in pension for accredited journalists -- from Rs 1,000 to Rs 10,000 -- and providing financial assistance to the ailing scribes.

Law Minister Ratan Lal Nath said democracy turns fragile "when the media is not free to perform its duty".

"As the BJP's state unit president, Biplab Kumar Deb had promised a CBI probe into the two cases if the party was voted to power. Today, the promise has been fulfilled," he added.

The Agartala Press Club and other journalists' bodies, which had staged protests in the capital town demanding a CBI probe into the killings, have welcomed the decision.

As the US leaves the UN Human Rights Council, it may leave more damage in its wake

Contd from pg04

justified. Past bombings of Gaza (in 2009 and 2012) have been blithely dismissed by Australia as an exercise of Israel's right to self-defence. But a legitimate case of self-defence can still result in an illegal use of excessive, indiscriminate or unnecessary force.

Regardless of its causes, the HRC's perceived bias against Israel is counterproductive. It provides Israel with a ready-made argument to reject even legitimate condemnation, thus providing cover for human rights abuses. Indeed, claims of bias (within and outside the UN) have become a dominant part of the Middle East narrative on both sides, detracting from a focus on the actions of the actual protagonists. It has facilitated Israel's progressive disillusionment with and disengagement from the UN, and now, the disengagement of the US. It reduces the HRC's credibility and opens it up to charges of hypocrisy. None of these outcomes is useful for those who sincerely wish for improvements in human rights for all in Israel and the Palestinian occupied territories.

Finally, the biggest problem with the focus on Israel is the corresponding lack of focus on other serious human rights situations. While it is impossible to demand or expect that a political body, or even an apolitical one, should achieve perfect balance in its human rights focuses, it is fair to expect that such focuses not be way out of balance.

THE US AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Haley and Pompeo reassured us that the US will continue to play a leadership role in human rights, despite its withdrawal from the HRC. And certainly, the US' role on the HRC was in many ways positive. For example, it took the lead in addressing impunity in Sri Lanka. The WEOG group suffers from some dysfunctionality on the part of EU states, which generally seek a common position. Strong non-EU voices are important in this regard.

Yet the US is as political as other players on the HRC. Just as some states instinctively oppose Israel, the US instinctively supports it. Neither position is principled. The US has also protected other allies, such as Bahrain.

Outside the HRC, US President Donald Trump is not a credible leader on human rights. He seems to have an affinity with leaders with horrible records, such as the Philippines' Rodrigo Duterte. Most recently, he responded to comments about North Korea's human rights record, which is possibly the worst in the world, by praising the "talented" Kim Jong-un.

And of course, the US has long had its own serious human rights problems, which are too numerous to mention, but which include torture and the highest proportion of incarceration in the world. Its recent decision to separate migrant children from their parents and intern them reflects its status as the only country in the world that has failed to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Furthermore, it is nonsense for Pompeo to suggest that the HRC had sought to infringe on US sovereignty. This betrays a serious misunderstanding of the concept of sovereignty, indicating that it dictates immunity from criticism. It does not.

IS THE COUNCIL SALVAGEABLE?

The US is correct to note there are major deficiencies in the current HRC. Is its response therefore the correct one? If so, that would seem to indicate that Australia should also quit the HRC. It is very unlikely that Australia will do so.

The HRC is the peak global intergovernmental human rights body, which may represent the world of today, wars and all. The battle for universal human rights observance will not be won by adopting an "us and them" mentality, which excludes significant numbers of countries in the world from "the human rights club". Such a solution is

more likely to lead to balkanised human rights discussions, and possible competing institutions inside and outside the UN.

The HRC must remain a forum where non-like-minded states, and civil society, can talk to each other; and occasionally cross divides to make important human rights decisions.

Furthermore, the HRC is meant to be a political body. Other parts of the UN human rights machinery are made up of independent human rights experts, and accordingly take a more impartial approach than the HRC. While their human rights findings are more credible, it also seems that states generally take their findings less seriously.


States tend to care more about what their peers think than what human rights experts might think. Hence, human rights would suffer in the absence of a relevant intergovernmental global body.

Despite its flaws, the HRC does make decisions that benefit human rights, even in the face of political lobbying by members with scurrilous motives. For example, a special rapporteur was appointed to investigate Iran (after the application of US pressure), and it remains in place, despite that influential country's forceful efforts to dismantle the mandate. A special rapporteur on LGBTI rights was appointed in 2016, despite fierce opposition from the OIC and homophobic states, due to an alliance of developed and developing states, and civil society.

The HRC will continue to be an imperfect institution for as long as the UN is made up of states with imperfect human rights records. However, the council still can and must be improved.

But the worst way to achieve that goal is by just walking away.

[the writer is Professor, Director, Castan Centre for Human Rights Law, Monash University]



GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
HOME DEPARTMENT
MANAN BHAWAN, GANGTOK, SIKKIM 737101

PRESS RELEASE FOR NEXT RIMC ADMISSION TEST IN DEC 2018.

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (DEFENCE WING) GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

- The Rashtriya Indian Military college is an Inter-Services Institution and a Category 'A' establishment of the Ministry of Defence. The College was established in 1922 with the primary aim of preparing the boys for entry into Defence Services and to provide quality all round education to young boys.
- Applications are invited for boys only for admission to Class VIII in the Rashtriya Military College (RIMC), Dehradun (UK) for Jul 2019 Term which will be conducted at selected centres on 01(Sat) and 02 (Sun) Dec 2018.
- Entry Age. Candidates (boys only) appearing for the above test should not be less than 11½ years in age but should not have attained the age of 13 years as on 01 Jul 2019, i.e., they should have been born not earlier than 02 Jul 2006 and not later than 01 Jan 2008.
- Educational Qualifications. Candidates should either be studying in Class VII or passed Class VII from any recognized school at the time of admission to the RIMC, i.e on 01 Jul 2019.
- Scheme of Examination. The examination comprises of:-
 - (a) Written Examination. The written part of the examination will consist of three papers, namely English (1000-1200 hrs) and Mathematics (1400-1530 hrs) shall be conducted on 01 (Sat) Dec 2018 and General Knowledge paper (1000-1100 hrs) on 02 (Sun) Dec 2018. Minimum pass marks in each paper is 50%.
 - (b) Viva Voce. The interview date shall be 04(Thu) Apr 2019, and interview will be held for only those candidates who qualify in the written exam. Minimum pass marks in the interview is 50% and the date, venue for interview will be intimated to them by respective States by first week of Mar 2019. Intelligence and personality of the candidates will be tested in the interview.
 - (c) Medical Examination. All the candidates qualified after interview will undergo a medical examination at selected Military hospitals and only those candidates found medically fit will be considered for selection and admission to the RIMC. The medical examination of the candidates forms only a part of the system of selection and does not imply the final selection.

Note:

- As per the Government of India, Ministry of Defence letter No A/36105/GS/MT-6/D(GS-II) dated 03 Sep 2014, the wards of Central Government employees can undertake their exam and viva-voce at the place of posting of employee/ domicile state. However, their domicile will be as per original domicile state and accordingly, their candidature will also be considered as per the state of domicile.
- The Interviews will be held for only those candidates who pass the written exam; their list will be sent to the respective State Governments by RIMC after approval of MT Directorate.
- It is mandatory for all the selected candidates (including candidates from all India Reserve Merit List, if selected) to join RIMC within 10 days of commencement of term as per the joining instructions, if the selected candidate fails to join within 10 days, his candidature will be cancelled and next reserve candidate will be called to join.
- Vacancies for Jul Term 2019, in all respect will be filled by 30 Jul 2019. No candidate will be allowed to join RIMC after 30 Jul 2019 under any circumstances (incl. medical).
- Results and joining instructions will be regularly updated on RIMC website. It is candidate's responsibility to check the status regularly.

- Examination Centres. Examination centres are generally located in the state capitals or in cities/towns as advertised.
- Fee. Fees at RIMC is heavily subsidized by the Central Govt. The fee is presently Rs. 42,400/-per year. It may increase from time to time. At the time of entry a Security Deposit of Rs.20,000/- is to be made. This is refunded when the boy passes out.
- Scholarships. Scholarships are granted by various state Govts to meritorious students. The amount of scholarships varies from state to state and is in between Rs. 10,000/- to Rs.20,000/- per annum. Continuation of Scholarship once granted by the state is subject to merit, income and discipline of the cadet and his performance during the year.
- The Application Forms. The prospectus-cum-application form and booklet of old question papers can be obtained from The Rashtriya Indian Military College, Garhi Cantt, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, Pin- 248003 through speed post by forwarding self addressed slip and an account payee bank demand draft of Rs.600/- for General Candidates Rs.555/- for SC/ST candidates along with Caste Certificate. The demand draft will be made in favour of 'THE COMMANDANT RIMC DEHRADUN', DRAWEE BRANCH, STATE BANK OF INDIA, TEL BHAVAN, DEHRADUN, (BANK CODE-01576), UTTARAKHAND. The address should be TYPED / WRITTEN clearly in CAPITAL LETTERS with pin code and contact number. The delay on part of postal department is not the responsibility of this institution.

Note:

- The application forms issued by RIMC only shall be valid. Locally printed / Photocopied and without RIMC hologram (Seal) forms shall not be accepted.
- No refund of the application fee on any condition.

- Last Date. Applications in duplicate on prescribed form accompanied by documents to be attached with application form two passport size photographs, Domicile Certificate of the candidate, Birth Certificate (issued by Municipal Corporation / Gram Panchayat), SC, ST Certificate and Certificate from principal of the School in original with photograph on it attested stating date of birth and in which Class studying. Application forms should reach the respective State Governments (as specified in the press note) of which their parents/guardians are domicile of, by 30 Sep 2018. The wards of Central Government employees, in order to verify the antecedents of such candidates, the State (where such candidates intend taking the written test) are free to ask for service certificates over and above the routine documentation. The States where the candidates appear must also satisfy themselves with respect to place of duty of the parent/guardian. Other than the above, states are to ensure that no other candidate must be allowed to appear for the written examination in a state other than which the candidate is domicile of. Kindly note the application forms must be sent to the State Govts and not to the Rashtriya India Military College, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

Ro.No. 152/4pr/pub/class1/18-19

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Pele memories live on as Honda embraces 'final' World Cup

KAZAN, JUN 23 (AFP): Japan icon Keisuke Honda's dream of winning the World Cup began when, as a six-year-old, his father showed him footage of Brazilian legend Pele on an old VCR.

And although restricted to a substitute appearance so far in what is his third, and almost certainly final campaign, the former AC Milan star has not given up on that unlikely dream becoming reality.

"I'm feeling that this World Cup is my final one," Honda said at the team's training base in Kazan on Friday.

"I'm 32 years old and four years is pretty long. Right now I can't decide about (what will happen) four years later, so I'm spending all my energy on this World Cup.

"That's why I really want to succeed at this World Cup, with these teammates."

Honda, who came on for the last 20 minutes of Japan's 2-1 win over



10-man Colombia -- the first for an Asian team over South American opponents -- will be hoping for more when the Blue Samurai host Senegal in Yekaterinburg on Sunday.

With both sides sharing top spot in Group H after Senegal stunned Poland 2-1, he believes his experience could be key against both the Africans and final match

opponents Poland.

"I'm an experienced player, I'm confident and know what we have to do for the next game against Senegal," he added.

"Even if we lose against Senegal, I know how to avoid the pressure and how to prepare for Poland."

But the midfielder, known for his free kicks and versatility in attack

that have helped him to 36 goals in 96 appearances including seven in Japan's qualifying campaign, almost never made it to Russia at all.

- 'NO REGRETS' -

Among several experienced Japan players to fall foul of former coach Vahid Halilhodzic's attempt to radically change their approach after he took charge in 2015,

Honda's World Cup dream only took shape when the France-Bosnian was sacked in April.

When he was sacked, the decision could not have come sooner for Honda.

"I don't have any regrets (about the change of leadership)," Honda, who now plays for Mexican side Pachuca, said in a documentary that aired in Japan in mid-May.

"To submit myself to the kind of football Halilhodzic played in order to get picked, that would be shameful for me."

Although former JFA technical director Akira Nishino took over the reins, Japan had only three months to prepare.

A string of disappointing results from matches in the lead-up to Russia, including a 2-0 defeat to Ghana in Yokohama and a 2-0 defeat to Switzerland in Lucerne did not augur well for the 63-year-old Nishino, who led Gamba Osaka to the

2008 Asian Champions League.

It took a 4-2 win over Paraguay in Innsbruck, Japan's final friendly before Russia, to restore a degree of faith in the Blue Samurai.

Although it's early days yet, Honda is living the dream. And even if Japan doesn't succeed, he still feels "amazing" to still be representing the national side.

"My target was (to win) the World Cup when I was a child because my father showed me the video of Pele playing in the World Cup," Honda explained.

"Since I made that my target, I've just focused on that.

"This World Cup is my third. It's pretty nice, it's amazing in fact..

"I really am happy to be playing soccer at 32 years old, I don't really want to have regrets after this World Cup.

"I really hope I can do something for the team.

Veteran mountaineer rock climber dies



KOLKATA, JUN 23 (PTI): Veteran rock climber and mountaineer Gautam Kanjilal died of a lung infection at a city hospital here, official sources said.

Kanjilal, 69, passed away yesterday. He is survived by his wife and a son.

An engineer by profession and a member of city-based mountaineering club Himalayan Association, Kanjilal began his outward bound activities way back in 1970 when he attended a rock climbing course at Susunia Hills.

Subsequently he underwent training at the

Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in Darjeeling and took part in the expedition to hitherto unclimbed Sudarshan in 1978.

He also acted as an instructor and course commandant in various rock climbing and adventure courses till a few years back.

A keen rock climber, Kanjilal explored quite a few rock routes in the hills of Bankura and Purulia districts and one of them is named after him (Kanjilal) which he pioneered along with three other rock climbers during late 1970s.

Sonia, Mandeep in final; Shiva takes bronze at Mongolian boxing tourney

NEW DELHI, JUN 23 (PTI): World silver-medallist Sonia Lather (57kg) and Mandeep Jangra were among the finalists but Shiva Thapa (60kg) signed off with a bronze medal in a mixed first semifinal session for India at the Ulaanbaatar Cup boxing tournament in Mongolia today.

Also making the final was Lovlina Borgohain (69kg), a gold-medallist at the India Open earlier this year.

Ending with bronze medals were Shiva and Bina Devi Koijam (48kg), the latter a direct entrant into the last-four stage owing to the small size of the draw.

While Shiva lost a closely-contested bout to home favourite Battumur Misheelt, Bina was outpunched by Korean Kim Kum Sun.

Sonia, a two-time world and Asian championships silver-medalist, defeated Tian Tian Zhao of China in a split decision. The Indian looked off-colour in the opening round, which Zhao dominated with her well-connected right hooks.

However, Sonia staged a strong recovery in the second and third rounds, drawing from her huge reservoir of experience to fetch a favourable verdict in the end.

She will face local fa-

vourite Tumurkhuyag Bolortuul in the summit clash.

Lovlina, in contrast, dominated from the very start, taking good advantage of her opponent Enkhbaatar Erdenetuya's sluggish foot movement.

The Indian punched at will, her jabs connecting powerfully. The Assam-boxer will square off against Chinese Taipei's Nien Chen Chen in her summit clash.

In the men's draw, Mandeep, a former Commonwealth Games silver-medalist, was up against local favourite Tsend-Ayush Otgon-Erdene. The Indian was way superior when it came to hitting impactful punches and was also helped by a warning to Otgon-Erdene for excessive bending.

Shiva, on the other hand, fought out a messy slugfest with Misheelt.

The former world bronze-winner and three-time Asian-medalist Indian connected better but could not get the nod from the judges, who were split in their verdict favouring the crowd favourite.

Bina was beaten in a unanimous verdict by Korean Kim Kum Sun, undone by lack of power in her punches and the longer reach of her opponent.

Germany face crunch Sweden clash as Belgium eye knockouts

SOCHI, JUN 23 (AFP): Germany can ill afford another slip-up when they take on Sweden at the World Cup today, as the defending champions attempt to follow Brazil's lead by belatedly springing into life.

Joachim Loew's side slumped to a 1-0 defeat against Mexico in their opening Group F match, paying the price for a calamitous first half in a performance that drew stinging, widespread criticism.

Lothar Matthaeus, the 1990 World Cup-winning captain, said he hadn't seen a Germany team "so weak at a big tournament for a long time" following the loss in Moscow.

The holders will likely be without defensive pillar Mats Hummels due to a neck injury, while Marco Reus could be handed a start after a bright 30-minute cameo off the bench against Mexico.

"Everyone is ready to fight for their lives," said striker Timo Werner, who is again set to lead the Germany attack.

With 10 World Cup goals to his name, Germany will also expect more from Thomas Mueller at his third finals appearance.



"The pressure is terrifically high, but we won't win both games if we beat ourselves up internally and look for the mistakes in each other," said Mueller, with Germany to meet South Korea in their final match.

Sweden beat the Koreans 1-0 to join Mexico at the top of the section, but a stomach bug has prevented three players -- Pontus Jansson, Filip Helander and Marcus Rohden -- from travelling to Sochi.

They could yet make the trip separately, with Sweden also hoping Victor Lindelof can return after

sitting out the opener due to an illness of his own.

"This is really what you spend your whole career and life working towards. It is an extraordinary opportunity to be involved in a World Cup match like this," said Sweden boss Janne Andersson.

"Whether we knock out Germany is one thing, but we have a chance to qualify and that is extraordinary."

Brazil, one of several contenders to make a slow start in Russia, left it late before finally overcoming a plucky Costa

Rica 2-0 on Friday.

Neymar won a penalty before referee Bjorn Kuipers reversed his decision after he consulted the video assistant referee, the first time a spot-kick award has been chalked off at the tournament.

Philippe Coutinho broke the deadlock in the 91st minute, with Neymar volleying in a second with virtually the last kick of the game.

Brazil must pick up at least a point against Serbia next Wednesday to be assured of progressing, with Switzerland also in a strong position

in Group E after Xherdan Shaqiri's 90th-minute winner in a 2-1 victory over Serbia.

Argentina received a lifeline in Group D as Ahmed Musa's brace sealed a 2-0 victory for Nigeria over Iceland, who saw Gylfi Sigurdson sky a VAR-awarded penalty.

Lionel Messi and company looked down and out after capitulating against Croatia, but a win over Nigeria on June 26 could send them through as runners-up.

Romelu Lukaku and Belgium can effectively

lock up a last 16 berth with victory over Tunisia in Moscow in Group G, ahead of a blockbuster clash with England next week.

Lukaku scored twice in a 3-0 win over debutants Panama, and Roberto Martinez is trying to finally squeeze the best out of a squad brimming with talent.

"The World Cup does not respect generations, the World Cup doesn't respect individual names, it only respects winning teams," Martinez said.

Mexico head into their showdown with South Korea after a "milestone" win over Germany, but a misstep in Rostov-on-Don would undo all that good work.

The Taegeuk Warriors are drawing inspiration from Asian rivals Japan and Iran as they bid to avoid a premature end to their Russian adventure.

"I had a suspicion the Asian teams in this World Cup would do well and I had the idea that we would do well as an Asian team too," midfielder Jung Woo-young said.

"It has caused a lot of excitement for us and we are even stronger in our belief that we can do it.

Chechen strongman makes Egypt's Salah honorary citizen



MOSCOW, JUNE 23 (AFP): After his team crashed out of the World Cup, Egypt's star player Mohamed Salah has won a consolation prize in the form of honorary citizenship of Chechnya.

Chechen strongman Ramzan Kadyrov wrote on Telegram that he had presented the Liverpool star with the honorary title while hosting a dinner for the Egypt team, whose World Cup training base is in the Chechen capital Grozny.

"Mohamed Salah is an honorary citizen of Chechnya! That's right!" Kadyrov wrote late Friday.

"Tonight I signed a decree to grant the high honour to the great footballer who

plays for Egypt and Liverpool." Kadyrov, supported by Russia's President Vladimir Putin, rules Chechnya with an iron fist, drawing constant condemnation from human rights groups.

He is known as an ardent football fan and in 2013 took to the public address system during a match involving Chechen team Akhmat (formerly Terek) to publicly insult the referee.

Salah has been photographed smiling and clapping hands with Kadyrov during the tournament.

Egypt crashed out of the World Cup after losing to Russia 3-1 on Tuesday, with Salah returning to action for the first time in three weeks following

a shoulder injury but unable to save his team. The Egyptians play their final match against Saudi Arabia on Monday.

Kadyrov said that at "a gala dinner that I gave for the Egypt team I presented Mohamed Salah with a copy of my decree and a lapel badge. This is a well-deserved honour!"

The Chechen leader has previously presented French actor Gerard Depardieu with the same honorary title.

He also said that he was confident that Akhmat would play a friendly with the Egyptian national team in Grozny at some future date.

Kadyrov said Salah had praised the "wonderfully warm and good welcome" the team received in Grozny.

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Trump vows to secure borders, says wants merit-based people to come inside US

LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, JUN 23 (PTI): President Donald Trump has vowed to secure US' international borders and prevent people from illegally entering America, and said that he wants only those based on merit to come inside the country, amid a major immigration row.

Trump, who earlier this week bowed to public pressure and reversed the controversial migrant family separations policy, made the remarks while hosting family members of those killed by undocumented immigrants



at an event at the White House yesterday.

He emphasised that his government's first duty and highest loyalty was towards the citizens of the United States, towards ensuring safety in the coun-

try and along the borders.

"We want people in our country based on merit, not based on a draw where other countries put their absolute worst in a bin and they start drawing people," he said told

the victim families, also known as 'angel families'.

"You think they're going to put their good ones? They don't put their good ones, they put their bad ones. And then when they commit crimes, we're so surprised. We'll not rest until our border is secure, our citizens are safe and we finally end the immigration crisis once and for all," he said.

Trump said the US wants people to come in, but in the proper way.

"So thank you all for being here, these are incredible families, incredible

people. Your loved ones have not died in vain," he told the angel families.

He alleged that it is the stories of these families that the Opposition Democrats and people that are "weak on immigration" don't want to discuss.

"No major (news) network sent cameras to their homes, or displayed the images of their incredible loved ones across the nightly news. They don't do that. They don't talk about the death and destruction caused by people that shouldn't be here, people that will continuously get

into trouble and do bad things," Trump said.

According to a 2011 government report, he said, the arrests attached to the criminal alien population included an estimated 25,000 people for homicide, 42,000 for robbery, nearly 70,000 for sex offenses, and nearly 15,000 for kidnapping.

In Texas alone, within the last seven years, more than a quarter million criminal aliens have been arrested and charged with over 600,000 criminal offenses, he said.

In 2016, he said, more than 15,000 Amer-

icans died from a heroin overdose. More than 90 per cent of the heroin comes from across the southern border. As a result of sanctuary city policies, in fiscal 2017, more than 8,000 criminal aliens were in police custody, and were released because of weak laws.

"Where is the media outrage over the catch-and-release policies that allow deadly drugs to pour into our country? Where is the condemnation of the Democrats sanctuary cities that release violent criminals into our communities

and then protect them, like the mayor of San Diego, when she warned everybody that 'ICE is coming', and they scattered," he asked.

The Trump Administration created the Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement (VOICE) Office in order to support the victims and families affected by illegal alien crime.

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement launched the VOICE Office in April 2017, following an Executive Order by the President calling for its creation, he said.

India, Cuba agree to enhance cooperation in biotechnology, renewable energy

HAVANA, JUN 23 (PTI): India and Cuba have agreed to enhance cooperation in biotechnology, renewable energy and traditional medicine as President Ram Nath Kovind held wide-ranging talks with his Cuban counterpart Miguel Diaz-Canel to further cement the strong bilateral ties.

Kovind, who arrived here on Thursday on the last leg of his three-nation tour which also took him to Greece and Suriname, commenced his engagements here by paying tributes at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi.

Leter, Kovind met his counterpart Diaz-Canel.

"President Kovind held delegation level talks with President Diaz-Canel of Cuba; both countries agreed to enhance cooperation in biotechnology, renewable energy and traditional medicine," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted.

Cuba also reiterated support for India's candidature for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

President also addressed the University of Havana on 'India and the Global South'.

During his address, Kovind stressed on the need for India and Cuba to work together to push for greater space for developing countries in global governance structures.

Several killed in blast at Ethiopian PM's rally

ADDIS ABABA, JUN 23 (AFP): Several people were killed today in a blast at new Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's first rally in the capital attended by tens of thousands of people, state media reported.

Abiy had just wrapped up his speech in the heart of Addis Ababa when the explosion went off, sending panicked crowds towards the stage as the prime minister left hurriedly, apparently safe and sound.

"All the casualties are martyrs of love and peace," Abiy was quoted as saying by state-affiliated Fana Broadcasting Corporate. The cause of the blast was unknown and further details on the casualties were not immediately available.

It was Abiy's first public speech in the capital since he took office in April, although he has

made several in provincial areas. In the past three months, Abiy has made major changes in Ethiopia including shaking up the security services, releasing jailed dissidents, moving to liberalise the economy and to resolve a two-decade conflict with arch-enemy Eritrea.

"Ethiopia will be on top again, and the foundations will be love, unity and inclusivity," he declared today, dressed in a

green T-shirt and a hat.

After the blast, dozens of people stormed the stage, hurling various objects at police, shouting: "Woyane down, down" and "Woyane thief", using a pejorative term for the government, the AFP correspondent said.

Abiy succeeded Hailemariam Desalegn, who resigned in February amid a wave of anti-government protests led by the country's two largest

ethnicities that started in late 2015 and left hundreds of people dead.

His actions since coming to power represent dramatic shifts in the power balance within Africa's second-most populous country. But it remains unclear how deep Abiy's support runs within the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) for carrying out the reforms.

Yesterday, Ethiopian opposition group Ginbot 7 announced it would cease armed attacks in the country following the reforms announced by the new government.

Last month, Ethiopia released from prison top Ginbot 7 official Andargachew Tsige. Prosecutors also dropped charges against the group's leader Berhanu Nega, who is based outside Ethiopia and had in

2009 received a death sentence in absentia over an assassination plot.

"Our forces have received strict orders to refrain from any sort of armed resistance," the group said in a statement. Formed after a disputed 2005 election, Ginbot 7 -- named after the date in the Ethiopian calendar when the ballot took place -- has claimed numerous deadly attacks in the past.

Five migrants travelling in another boat were rescued in the same area, the spokesman said.

A total of 900 migrants have been intercepted or rescued by the Libyan navy since Wednesday as departures pick up due to favourable weather. Usually in such cases the migrants are taken to detention centres pending repatriation.

Libya is a key departure point for thousands of migrants hoping to reach Europe, although hundreds drown each year attempting the crossing.



At least five people were killed and six others injured in a nighttime Boko Haram raid and suicide attack on a village in northeastern Nigeria, residents said today. A male suicide bomber detonated his explosives among a group of residents sleeping in the open in Tungushe village in Borno state at about 12:15 am. The blast was followed by indiscriminate gunfire from Boko Haram jihadists lurking in the dark, said Mustapha Muhammad, a civilian militia leader in the area. Tungushe resident Umara Kyari, who gave similar casualty toll, said the attackers torched eight thatched houses and three vehicles before stealing about 100 cows. Its nine-year armed violence to establish a hardline Islamic state in remote northeastern Nigeria has killed more than 20,000 people.

Five migrants die, nearly 200 rescued off Libya

TRIPOLI, JUN 23 (AFP): Five migrants died and nearly 200 were rescued off the coast of Libya while trying to cross the Mediterranean to Europe in two boats, the Libyan navy said today.

Three children and nine women were among 94 migrants rescued yesterday when their inflatable dinghy sank 12 nautical miles from Garabulli, east of the capital Tripoli.

Five migrants -- from Sudan, Nigeria, Chad and Egypt -- aboard the same vessel lost their lives, said navy spokesman Ayoub Kacem. Another

91 migrants travelling in another boat were rescued in the same area, the spokesman said.

A total of 900 migrants have been intercepted or rescued by the Libyan navy since Wednesday as departures pick up due to favourable weather. Usually in such cases the migrants are taken to detention centres pending repatriation.

Libya is a key departure point for thousands of migrants hoping to reach Europe, although hundreds drown each year attempting the crossing.

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EU leaders to hold mini-migration summit as crisis festers

BRUSSELS, JUN 23 (AP): European Union leaders tomorrow will try to find common ground for tackling migrants arriving on Europe's shores in search of better lives - a growing political crisis threatening to undermine the entire EU project.

The leaders of about 16 countries - more than half the 28-nation bloc - will take part in what is being billed as "informal talks" in Brussels, ahead of a full EU summit on June 28-29, where migration will top the agenda.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said yesterday that the meeting involves "talking with particularly affected nations about all problems connected with migration." She said the hope is to see if "we can reach bi-



tri- or even multinational agreements to better solve certain problems."

The arrival of more than one million people in 2015, most fleeing conflict in Syria and Iraq, exposed glaring defi-

ciencies in EU migrant reception capacities and asylum laws. It has fueled tensions among member states, and anti-migrant parties have won votes by fomenting public fears of foreigners.

At the heart of the problem lie deep divisions over who should take responsibility for arriving migrants - often Mediterranean countries like Italy, Greece and increasingly Spain - how

long they should be required to accommodate them, and what should be done to help those EU countries hardest hit.

The problem was crystallised last week in a row between Italy's new populist government, Malta and France over who should take responsibility for 630 people rescued from the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya, the main departure point for people trying to reach Europe.

Amid the mud-slinging, Spain's new Socialist government agreed to take charge of the migrants.

By Friday, hardline Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini was again demanding that Malta, the EU's smallest

country, allow a rescue ship carrying hundreds of migrants to land because it was in the island's waters.

Like everything to do with migrants in Europe lately, even this meeting is proving controversial. What started as talks between half a dozen leaders now involves at least 16, as others demanded to take part. Four countries in Eastern Europe - the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia - refuse to attend.

Referring to hasty arrangements and a domestic crisis over migration policies within Merkel's coalition government, the fervently anti-migrant Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orban, said: "We understand that countries

have domestic political difficulties, but this can't result in pan-European confusion." "This is an open invitation. Nobody is excluded, everybody is invited. Nobody is forced to attend either," said Alexander Winterstein, spokesman for the European Commission, where the talks will take place.

With plans to reform Europe's asylum laws bogged down, EU leaders will in coming days affirm their intention to stop migrants leaving north African shores by paying countries like Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia to hold people until their eligibility for asylum can be established.

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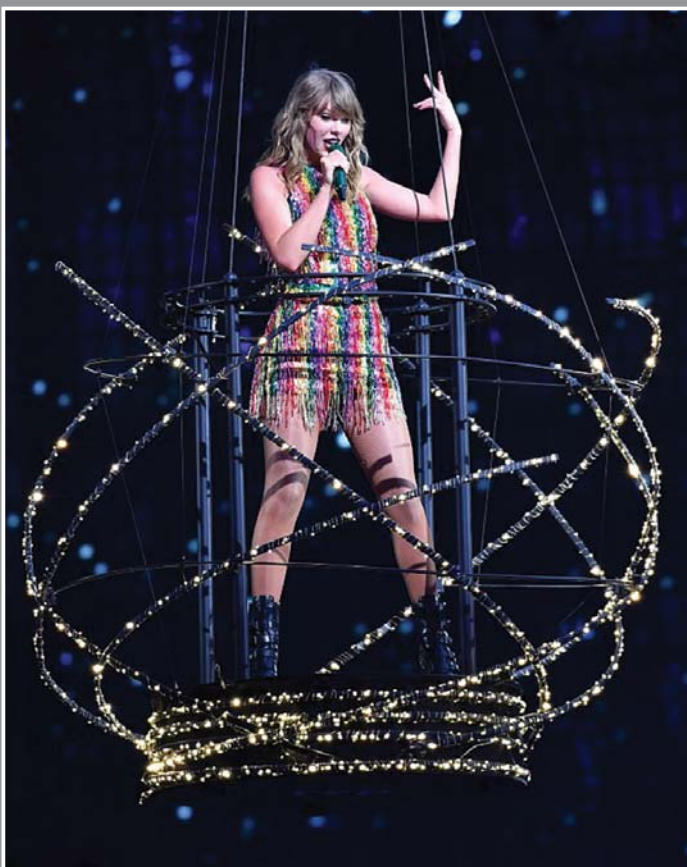
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RAINBOW LOVE! Taylor Swift rocks a series of sequinned and colourful ensembles as she brings her energetic Reputation tour to London.

Extremely heartening to see 'Hichki' resonate with audiences: Siddharth P Malhotra

MUMBAI, JUN 23 (PTI): Film-maker Siddharth P Malhotra says he is happy that his last directorial venture "Hichki" was well-received by the audiences, specially women.

The film, featuring Rani Mukerji in the lead role, was recently aired on Sony TV and it rated higher than any other women-centric film since the time Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) came into industry usage to derive rating points.

"With Hichki we challenged various norms like it being a female-centric film, an issue based film which spoke about syndrome which



not many were aware of and an actress coming back on screen post maternity.

"Adi (Aditya Chopra), Rani, Maneesh (Sharma), my DOP Avinash, the entire team

and me went with the hope that we have made an honest film. It is extremely heartening to see how it has resonated with the audiences and even more heartening to know that it has rated so well on television as I am a TV guy and this is a medium for a huge audience," Malhotra said in a statement.

"Hichki is a story of an aspiring teacher played by Rani, who suffers from Tourette syndrome. The film recently received a standing ovation at the Shanghai International Film Festival.

Mallika Sherawat chooses ZEE5's The Story for her web-series debut!



ARIES: This is a great day for you to get up on stage and make your presence known to the crowd, Aries. Let people know that you're the leader of the pack. There is a great need for you to take the helm now, and you shouldn't back away from this responsibility. The warrior instinct inside you is probably strong, so don't hesitate for a second. Be brave and courageous in all situations.

TAURUS: This is a good day to add spark to your life, Taurus. If things have seemed boring and stagnating lately, you may need to infuse a bit of excitement into the situation. Add flair and dynamism to the mix. Take matters into your own hands and actively pursue your goals. You have a strong inner sense of where you need to go. Trust your instincts and move in that direction. Don't hesitate.

GEMINI: You'll notice that your emotions are coming to a monthly climax today, Gemini. Don't be alarmed, but do be cautious about lashing out at people for no reason. You may feel on edge. Unintended slights from others could push you over that edge in a fury of emotion. Harsh words spoken today can damage other people's feelings for a long time, so remain silent.

CANCER: Extremes is the name of the game now, especially for you, Cancer. Today the emphasis is on action. You're the one to call to get the job done. You won't wait another second to simply go for it. Your emotions are flowing, and you have an endless well of internal strength and resources. Use this power to your advantage.

LEO: Be adventurous and strike out

into new territory, Leo. Be a pioneer. Work to make some new discoveries in the world. Today isn't a day to worry about consequences. It's a day to get things started. There is a great deal of fiery energy in the cosmos helping you in your quest for the new and fresh. Take the lead and try not to get thrown off course by leeches and party poopers. **VIRGO:** Certain situations may be difficult to deal with today as they take an emotional spin, Virgo. You're getting anxious. Things are getting started without the careful planning and consideration you feel is necessary. Try not to worry so much. Your own doubt is likely to hinder any project. Have faith that things will work out. Be bold. Take an active role in helping to get the ball rolling instead of holding it back.

LIBRA: You should find that the

general mood of the day is favorable to your personality style, Libra. Take this opportunity to present more of your thoughts and ideas to the world. Let your voice be heard. Use it with strength and vigor. You have partners and friends who are eager to hear what's on your mind. Engage in verbal sparring. You'll find that you can learn a great deal about yourself and others.

SCORPIO: The fog has lifted and you're ready to take off, Scorpio. The dreaminess you may have experienced lately has been nice, but now it's time to get moving again. Use all that you have learned from that recent internal processing and put it to use in the practical world. Try not to get caught up in the crossfire of conversations that don't really pertain to you. Feel free to start something new.

SAGITTARIUS: This is a terrific

actors. Now it is anybody's guess if the incidents are real or a figment of their imagination. The series is available on ZEE5 in the languages of Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu & Marathi.

With the latest episode featuring Mallika, audience are in for a dose of drama watching Mallika fight off a stalker. It takes us through a thrilling experience where she is harassed by threatening calls from a stalker and on the verge of ambush. Her journey to finding out the true identity of the mystery stalker will have you at the edge of the seat all through.

The first episode narrated by Swara Bhasker talks about her story

with her ex-flame. Swara describes it as the crazy break-up night where the couple was bothered by a jealous ex-girlfriend, cops running after them and a curious taxi driver. Sumeet Vyas, starring in the second episode, talks about his obsession [read as OCD] with hygiene. Be ready to have a fun-filled session while watching Sumeet react to an unclean car situation, making him anxious for a date and picking up fights.

Commenting on the launch, Manish Aggarwal, Chief Marketing Officer, ZEE5 India said, "The Story is a successful experiment by ZEE5 with unscripted life stories of celebrities. The first two

episodes with Swara and Sumeet have received a phenomenal response from our viewers and we are confident that the third episode with Mallika will be well-received too. This is a big one for us in our original content portfolio and viewers can expect many more such innovative formats from the ZEE5 stable."

ZEE5 has an exciting original content line-up which will feature some of the biggest and most entertaining faces from the world of Indian entertainment. The platform will have 90+ original shows by the end of March 2019.

Aquarius. Today marks the beginning of the rest of your life. Treat it with respect. You may be on a crusade and your combative instincts could be working overtime. There's a lot of fuel in your engine, so don't worry about running out. The only thing you really need to be concerned about is possibly stepping on other people's toes. Make sure you consider how your actions affect others.

PISCES: You may feel as if someone is poking you today, Pisces, urging you to get up and get moving. Don't be surprised if someone seems to be picking on you for no reason. Other people's lack of sympathy and sensitivity could be acute on a day like this. Try not to take it personally. Your hard outer shell may be put to the test in terms of its ability to protect your soft vulnerability.

Game of Thrones stars Kit Harington and Rose Leslie to marry in Scotland

The Game of Thrones stars Kit Harington and Rose Leslie – who played on-screen lovers in the TV drama – are to marry in Scotland.

The actors, both 31, are thought to be holding the ceremony in Leslie's 12th-century family castle on Saturday. A date of 23 June was previously posted at Huntly registration office in Aberdeenshire.

The couple met while filming the fantasy series in 2012, in which they played Jon Snow and Ygritte.

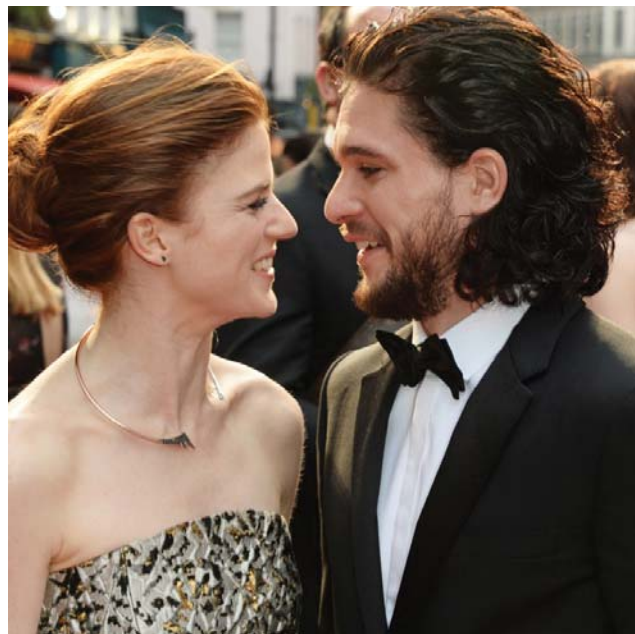
They announced their engagement in the Times last year and are expected to marry at Wardhill Castle.

Leslie left Game of Thrones two years after they met, while Harington has become one of the most popular stars.

Speaking to L'Uomo Vogue, Harington said it was "easy" to fall in love with Leslie and his best memory of the show was meeting his future partner while filming in Iceland.

"The country is beautiful ... the northern lights are magical ... it was there that I fell in love," he said. "If you're already attracted to someone, and then they play your love interest in the show, it becomes very easy to fall in love."

Leslie said she had been too busy



to plan the wedding, telling Town & Country magazine: "There's just too much to do. I haven't tackled it."

Nick Jonas hangs out with Priyanka and her mother in Mumbai!

Weeks after Priyanka Chopra accompanied Nick Jonas to his cousin's wedding in New Jersey, the new couple arrived in Mumbai on Thursday night. If rumours are to be believed, Nick came to meet PC's mother and get a feel of what her life's like in this part of the world.

The singer, 25, accompanied our desi-girl along with mother Madhu Chopra for a dinner date on Friday evening, and the paparazzi went ape shiz about them!

After arriving in Mumbai on late Thursday night, PC was seen with Nick Jonas on a dinner date at the fine-dining Yauatcha Chinese and Asian food restaurant in BKC with mom, Madhu Chopra, in tow.

The 35-year-old star wore a black-and-white gingham print two-piece dress, showing off her midriff with a tied knot, matched with a thigh-hugging shin-length skirt. For a warm night in the



buzzing metropolis of India, she accessorised her outfit with a small white purse and open-toe white heels.

After walking hand-in-hand during their dinner date last night, Nick posted some happy moments of Priyanka letting her hair down in the Mumbai rains on his Instagram story. Nick posted a

way too cute video of Priyanka happily walking towards him. And if the video wasn't enough to melt your heart, he captioned it as, 'Her' followed by a heart-eyed emoji.

Amidst other things, it has also been heard that Priyanka has purchased a sea facing bungalow in Versova few years ago and has now

been planning a housewarming party to serve as the perfect occasion to introduce Jonas to her friends and family. The party is expected to take place over the weekend and Nick will be the special guest of the evening, say sources.

Is a wedding in the offing for PeeCee and Jonas?