



SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Govt forms Niti forum for inclusive growth of northeast

NEW DELHI, FEB 25 (PTI): A special Niti forum has been created to accelerate the central government's efforts to spur inclusive growth in the northeastern region of the country, Union minister Jitendra Singh said today.

He said the Niti forum for the Northeast would have its secretariat office in the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER).

"The exclusive Niti Aayog forum will work to identify constraints that stand in the way of achieving accelerated, inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the eight states of the Northeast region," the minister told PTI.

It would recommend suitable interventions for addressing the identified constraints, he said.

The forum would also be tasked to review the

turn to pg03



'Sliding Bridge' to span Mantam Lake this week

**WANGCHUK BHUTIA
DIKCHU, 25 FEB:**

The North District Administration and the Road & Bridges Department are working on a war-footing to complete the "sliding bridge" being constructed across Mantam Lake before the onset of the monsoons.

The bridge is now ex-

pected to be completed over the next four days, and once completed, it will have a carrying capacity of 14 tonnes, informs Neytok Lepcha, Junior Engineer, the engineer on site overseeing the construction work.

The bridge will finally make the cut-off villages of Tingvong and Sakyo-

ng-Pentok GPUs accessible.

The bridge is being constructed on a sliding system which makes it maneuverable to adjust to the erratic nature of the water level in this lake formed by a massive landslide at Mantam.

People from the cut-off areas will have to depend on this bridge until

the permanent bridge proposed at Kayam-Lingzya comes up.

The current bridge will replace the 140 metre long rickety bamboo span thrown across Mantam lake at present.

It may be recalled that three Gram Panchayat Units of Upper Dzongu were cut-off from the rest

of the world when the Syok Bhair landslide collapsed on 13 August, 2016 and submerged the lake in Mantam village and dammed up a wide lake behind it.

People were initially ferried across the lake in motor rafts, but owing to high level of sedimentation, motor boats are no longer an option here.



Sikkim thrashes Tripura 5-0, reaches semis of Dr T Ao football tournament

**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 25 FEB:**

Sikkim has secured a berth in the semi-final round of the ongoing Dr T Ao Memorial U-21 Football Tournament 2018 at Guwahati in Assam. Sikkim made it through after thrashing Tripura 5-0 today in its last match of the qualifying round.

Being a very crucial match, Sikkim played an

attacking game right from the start to maintained constant pressure on Tripura.

Noel Darjee finally broke the Tripuri resolve in the 29th minute and shortly afterwards, goals by Dawa Lhendup Sherpa in the 33rd minute and Prashant Chhetri in the 39th took the lead to 3-0.

Dawa was still not done and completed his brace in the 44th minute

and the first half ended with Sikkim 4-0 lead.

In the second half, Prashant Chhetri also completed his brace in the 69th minute to take the lead of Sikkim to what proved to be an unassailable lead of 5-0.

With no further goals in the match, Sikkim humbled Tripura 5-0 and made it to the semis. Prashant Chhetri was ad-

judged the Man of the Match today. Sikkim's semi-final clash is scheduled for 27 February.

Speaking over the phone from Guwahati, Sikkim team manager, Arjun Rai, stated that all players played their hearts out with an attacking game from the start knowing the importance of the match.

"Our boys played exceptionally well through-

out the match to register an easy win over Tripura. Our players are in high spirits and motivated to continue this form in the semi-final match as well," he said.

Earlier, in the qualifying round, Sikkim lost its first match against Meghalaya by a solitary goal and got walkover in its second match as Mizoram failed to turn up in the tournament.



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 25 FEB:**

Thirty-five teachers from as many government senior secondary schools of the state have completed a 5-day teachers' training on 'Drug Abuse Prevention in Schools' coordinated by Sikkim Against Addiction Towards Healthy India (SAATHI) at the International Youth Hostel, Delhi.

SAATHI, a project initiative under the Chief Minister's Youth Empowerment Mission, 2013, took the teachers through a training

on various physical and emotional aspects of substance abuse over the course of the workshop. The teachers are now going to play key roles in SAATHI's operating model of creating strong peer educators within the school system to reverse the peer pressure which leads to substance abuse among youths, a press release informs.

The programme was inaugurated by Bhagwan Shankar, Secretary, IPR Government of Sikkim on 19 February.

The 5-day workshop

turn to pg02

Sridevi: The diva who lit up Indian cinema screen

MUMBAI, FEB 25 (PTI): Those expressive eyes and the mischievous smile sent hearts aflutter and lit up the cinema screens, making Sridevi Bollywood's first female superstar.

Sridevi's sudden death at the age of 54 in Dubai due to cardiac arrest yesterday has left family and fans in shock and grief. This 'Chandni' left the world too soon.

The actor, wife of producer Boney Kapoor, died late at Saturday night reportedly due to cardiac arrest in Dubai, where she had gone along with her family to attend her nephew Mohit Marwah's wedding.

In an impressive career, spanning five-decades, the actor ruled the commercial cinema space in the '80s and '90s like no heroine had done before.

In an industry dominated by male superstars, Sridevi reversed the trend by her sheer acting prowess. Her name, most of the times, was a guarantee enough for a film's success.

An extremely shy person in real life, Sridevi came alive in front of the cameras, playing a variety of roles. Such was her popularity that her style and dance moves would be copied by her fans country over. She was 'Miss Hawa Hawaaii' and 'Chandni' for them.

Sridevi started acting at the age of four and made her debut with M A Thirumugham's "Thunaiyan".



She continued acting in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada films but it was her career in Bollywood that made her a household name in the country.

She made her Bollywood debut as a child artiste in 1975 hit "Julie" but continued ruling the South Indian film industry where she established herself as a leading heroine with films such as "16 Vayathinile", "Sigappu Rojakkal", "Meendum Kokila" and "Moondram Pirai".

In Bollywood, she made her debut in 1978 as a lead actor in "Solva Sawan".

She gained commercial success with the 1983 film "Himmatwala" opposite Jeetendra, which also established her as one of the best dancers in cinema. She was grace-personified dressed as an apsara (a celestial beauty in Hindu mythology) performing on the hit track 'Nainon mein sapna'.

The year 1983 also saw Sridevi give stellar performances in both critically acclaimed and box-office hits such as "Sadma", where she played the role of a woman who loses her memory.

Both she and actor-turned-pol-

itician Kamal Haasan played the roles in the Hindi remake of their 1982 Tamil movie, "Moondram Pirai". The climax of the heart-wrenching movie was deemed as poetic as the entire plot, with the song 'Ae zindagi laga le' as an ode to the philosophy of uncertainty in life.

Sridevi followed it up with a number of commercial hits such as "Mawaali", "Tohfa", "Masterji" and "Nazrana".

In 1987 came Shekhar Kapur's "Mr India", a film which was produced by her future husband

Boney Kapoor.

Sridevi gave a memorable performance as crime reporter Seema Sohni. She was one of the few female actors who left the audience spellbound with both her comic timing and sensuality.

How her undercover scribe transformed into Ms Hawa Hawaaii, thanks to her dancing skills in one of the popular songs, is one of the most memorable scenes of the film.

Owing to the cult status the song went on to achieve, the Kavita Krishnamurthy number has been recreated a number of times in films such as "Shaitan" and most recently in Vidya Balan's "Tumhari Sulu".

And so will 'Kaate nahi kat-te', an iconic sultry number which saw the actor romance an invisible man in a song revelling in a never-before-seen boldness and fantasy.

Filmmaker Yash Chopra cast her in the title role of "Chandni" in the 1989 film, another iconic film of her career. Such was her performance in the film that fans came to recognise her with the name of Chandni.

Impressed with her performance in the film, Chopra cast her again in "Lamhe" in a dual role, where she played the mother and the daughter.

It did not do well at the box office at that time but has come to be known one the best films of Sridevi,

Chopra and Anil Kapoor's careers. The film was said to be ahead of its times as it dealt with a woman falling for an older man who is in love with her dead mother.

Her other major box office hits of the era were "Chaalbaaz", where she played the role of twins, "Nagina", and "Khuda Gawah" opposite Amitabh Bachchan.

Her pairing with Anil Kapoor, her "Mr India" co-star and brother-in-law, was particularly successful and she would work with him again in "Laadla" and "Judaai".

After "Judaai", Sridevi took a break from acting to focus on her marriage with Boney Kapoor. She had two daughters -- Janhvi and Khushi -- with Kapoor.

The actor made a successful comeback to cinema 15 years later with Gauri Shinde's "English Vinglish", playing a housewife who learns English after feeling left out in her family.

She also had a starring role in Tamil film "Puli" and followed "English Vinglish" with another successful outing in "Mom", which also featured Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Akshaye Khanna.

The actor's elder daughter Janhvi is on the cusp of her own cinematic journey with "Dhadak", a remake of the Marathi blockbuster "Sairat". Unfortunately, Sridevi will not be there to witness it.

SKM meets in Hee Gaon

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 25 FEB:

A ward-level meeting of the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha was held at Upper Hee Gaon under Maneybong-Dentam constituency in West Sikkim on Sunday. At the meeting, Apir Dhoj Limboo of the SDF joined SKM and was welcomed with khadas by the SKM working president, MP Subba, informs an SKM press release.

Christian leaders close church at Jesus's burial site in tax dispute

JERUSALEM, FEB 25 (AFP): Christian leaders today took the rare step of closing the Church of the Holy Sepulchre built at the site of Jesus's burial in Jerusalem in protest at Israeli tax measures and a proposed property law.

It was not immediately clear how long the closure of the church, announced by Christian officials at a news conference and which began at around noon (1000 GMT), would last.

The church is considered the holiest site in Christianity, built where Christians believe Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected, and is a major pilgrimage site.



SKM meets in East and South, receives new members

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 25 FEB:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha held a co-ordination meeting at Makha under Tumin Lingee constituency on Sunday chaired by the party's East district president TD Kazi, CLC president Lall Man Limboo and

also attended by Tshering Lepcha and CLC executives, an SKM press release informs.

The day also included the inauguration of a ward-level party office inaugurated and included SDF youth member Dherain Nepal officially joining the SKM. In fact,

the SKM office here is now housed in Mr Nepal's building. He has also been given charge as Office Secretary of the Singbel Ward, the release adds.

Also on Sunday, a district coordination meeting of the party's South District Committee was

held in Namchi attended by the SKM district president Lobzang Bhutia, MB Moktan and representatives of various constituencies of the district.

Various agendas, including intensifying the membership drive, formation of committees

and induction of new executives in district committee were discussed.

SDF youth Arjun Bhujel from Melli constituency formally joined the SKM today, adds the release issued by Ranjana Pradhan, SKM secretary Press & Publicity.

Govt school teachers complete SAATHI training in New Delhi

Contd from pg01

comprised of various technical sessions conducted by Smita Barua, a Singapore-based Addictions Counselor, Dr. Ashok Agarwal from the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), Dr. Anju Dhawan from the National Drug Dependence Centre of the AIIMS, Dr. Biswadip Chatterjee from the National Drug Dependence Centre of the AIIMS and Vikram Hegde, a lawyer at the Supreme Court.

The sessions included a wide variety of topics like drug abuse and young people (problems and responses at global, national and regional level), Role of the school in drug abuse prevention, Basics of Counseling, Understanding the health and social impacts of drug use, reproductive and sexual health of young people, particularly women, the influence of school, classroom, community and home in the children, managing drug related incidents, sexual harassment awareness training and prevention, legis-

lation on Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances, medical aspects of drugs, communication skills, adolescent health, drugs and gender, introduction to SADA and the consequences of substance abuse, identifying warning signs, counseling techniques, treatments procedure etc.

During the one-day field trip which was part of the workshop, the teachers, under the supervision of Dr. Rajesh Kumar, Founder and National Executive Director of the Society for Promotion of Youth and Masses (SPYM), visited the Juvenile Rehabilitation Centers for boys and girls run by the organization.

The training programme, concluded on the 23rd of February, saw a positive response from the teachers as all of whom are keen on starting the new academic year with a lot of positive initiatives in their respective schools and help the greater cause of fighting against drugs in the State, the release concludes.



RB Subba joins BJYM dharna on concluding day

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 25 FEB:

The two-day dharna of the state-unit of Bharatiya Janta Yuwa Morcha [BJYM] here in front of the District Administrative Centre [East] ended today.

The second day of the dharna included the par-

ticipation of former Minister, RB Subba, workers from different industrial units based in the State and members of district level committees and constituency level committees along with youth and party workers of BJP's Sikkim unit, informs a BJP press release.

The release informs that in his address today, the BJP-Sikkim president, DB Chauhan, contended that the people of Sikkim were suffering due to financial and political corruption of the ruling party.

He further alleged that various industrial

units set up in the State have also become mediums of corruption and that local youth working in these units have been facing severe problem due to the contract labour system.

He also demanded that the daily wages be enhanced to Rs 500.

AAP MLA booked for 'inflammatory' remarks against 'govt officials'

NEW DELHI, FEB 25 (PTI): AAP's Uttam Nagar MLA Naresh Balyan has been booked for making "inflammatory" remarks against Delhi government officials.

An FIR under relevant IPC sections was filed against Balyan at the Dwarka police station in Dwarka yesterday, based on a complaint of a policeman, who was on duty when the MLA made the remarks at JJ Colony, Bindapur, on February 23, a police officer said.

According to the complainant, Balyan said offi-

cials, who throw spanners in public welfare works, "should be beaten up".

He was referring to the alleged assault on Delhi Chief Secretary Anshu Prakash.

His comments added to the existing tension between the Delhi government and the bureaucracy after the alleged assault on Prakash, according to the police complaint.

In a speech, the MLA had alleged that officers delay developmental work by "holding up" files for "commission".

Just 7.28 pc women in police forces: Govt data

NEW DELHI, FEB 25 (PTI): Amid a rising graph of crime against women in the country, they constitute just 7.28 per cent of the police force in India and at 2.47 per cent, their presence is the lowest in Naxal-hit Telangana, according to government data.

In militancy-affected Jammu and Kashmir, there are just 3.05 per cent women in a police force which has a sanctioned strength of more than 80,000 police personnel, Union home ministry statistics said.

The government data comes amid an increasing graph of crime against women in the country where overall crimes against them rose from 3,29,243 incidents in 2015 to 3,38,954 incidents in 2016.

The situation is pathetic despite the Union home ministry sending advisories in 2009, 2012 and 2016 to all the state governments and Union territories to increase the strength of women police personnel to 33 per cent, a senior ministry official told PTI.

All state and UTs have also been requested to create additional posts of women constables and sub-inspectors and fill up vacancies by recruiting them, the official said.

As on January 1 last year, Telangana had just 2.47 per cent women in the rolls of its police force which has a sanctioned strength of 60,700 personnel, the data said.

In Uttar Pradesh, the country's most-populous state, the police force has only 3.81 per cent women. It has a sanctioned strength of around 3,65,000 personnel.

The percentage of women in police forces in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Meghalaya was also low, the statistics showed.

While Tamil Nadu has the highest number of women police personnel,

the situation in Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Goa was relatively better.

Among the Union territories, Chandigarh has the highest number of women personnel while the Delhi Police, with a sanctioned strength of around 85,000 personnel, had just 8.64 per cent women in its roll as on January 1 last year.

The home ministry has taken a number of steps for increasing the strength of women in paramilitary forces, another official said.

Women are expected to soon account for one-third of constable-rank personnel in the Central Police Reserve Force and around 15 per cent in the border guarding forces-- Border Security Force (BSF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), he said.

These forces together comprise around nine lakh personnel of whom only around 20,000 are women now.

The CRPF, considered to be world's largest paramilitary force, is mostly deployed for law and order duties and the anti-Naxal operations.

The year 2015 saw the registration of 34,651 cases of rape in the country and the figure increased to 38,947 in 2016.

Overall crimes against women also rose from 2015 to 2016, according to the data of the National Crime Records Bureau.

The majority of cases categorised as crimes against women were reported under cruelty by husband or his relatives, followed by assault on woman with intent to outrage her modesty, kidnapping and abduction and rape.

The highest number of rapes have been reported from Madhya Pradesh followed by Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra in 2016.

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storm in spots.
Sunrise: 06:04AM
Sunset: 5:33 PM

SBJM announces fundraising program for kidney patient

**YOGEN THATAL
SINGTAM, 25 FEB:**

The Singtam and Rangpo branches of Sikkim Bihari Jagran Manch have jointly resolved to organize a charity program at Eco Paradise Resort here at Mining from 3 pm onwards on 28 February to raise funds to assist the treatment and medication costs of a kidney patient from Rangpo Bazaar.

40 year old Sanjay Prasad of Rangpo bazaar is suffering from a Kidney ailment and is in no position to finance his treatment from his meager resources.

"The funds collected will be given to Sanjay Prasad for the treatment and medication. The decision was taken by the Manch after learning of the medical condition and financial position of the patient," informs Ajit Sharma, the general secretary of Sikkim Bihari Jagran Manch, Rangpo.

Mr Sharma, who is also the Principal of Tiny Tots School at Rangpo, has also enrolled the patient's daughter in his school and will be providing her free education upto class VII.

Seen in the accompanying photograph is the Singtam branch president, Dilip Prasad, on a publicity drive to promote the charity show.



Gangtok MLA confers with Kazi Road residents

**REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 25 FEB:**

Gangtok MLA Pintso Chopel Lepcha held an interaction with residents of the Kazi Road area of his constituency, Gangtok. The session, held at a local hotel here, was attended by residents, local youth and ward councillor SD Pulger.

The meeting, it is informed, was initiated by the MLA to take stock of the grievances and problems of the people of the area and also to update them about developmental projects planned

for the area by the government.

The interactive session was also aimed at arriving at solutions for problems faced by the residents.

The residents shared problems being faced by them in relation to water supply, sewerage and other civic amenities. They also made suggestions on how the Kazi Road area can be further developed. They also sought adequate street lighting, footpaths from Kazi Road to Dukhit Pan Dokan and a police booth.

The MLA, on his part, informed

the gathering that the government has sanctioned a flyover at Zero Point near DHH and that road widening from Kazi Road to the Palace has also been sanctioned and NOC granted by the Palace authorities. Now, work will start, he said.

Mr Lepcha further shared that the White Hall area will be kept vehicle-free so that people and tourists can walk and enjoy the surroundings of the Ridge in a leisurely manner.

More such works are in the pipeline, he said, for instance, a resting

shed is coming up at the Dukhit Pan Dokan turning.

"We must all work together and set aside our egos and differences to develop the Kazi Road area further. We have to maintain and take care of our public properties. If people, especially the youth, are united and work collectively, everything is possible, he stressed.

Regarding unemployment, the MLA maintained that there was actually no dearth of opportunities and urged the youth to seize these.

The residents also asked for the installation of CCTVs in the area, mentioning that miscreants have been causing nuisance ever since the Sadar Thana shifted from the Old Children's Park area.

Mr. Lepcha said that he was trying to get a police booth sanctioned for Kazi Road area and that space was proving a hurdle.

People at the meeting also extended gratitude towards the Chief Minister, the Palace and the Gangtok MLA for their works in the area.

PNB fraud: ED to seek info from over dozen countries on Nirav Modi, Choksi's assets

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, FEB 25 (PTI): Widening its probe into the PNB fraud case, the Enforcement Directorate will soon send judicial requests to over a dozen countries for obtaining information about the overseas businesses and assets of diamondaire Nirav Modi and owner of Gitanjali Gems Mehul Choksi.

Official sources said the agency will approach a competent court in Mumbai with a request to obtain Letters Rogatories (LRs) to be sent to about 15-17 countries where the central investigation agency has traced the footsteps of the diamond and gold jewellery businesses of the firms owned by Modi, his uncle Choksi and others associated with them.

The countries where the LRs would be sent include Belgium, Hong Kong, Switzerland, the United States, the United Kingdom, Dubai, Singapore and South Africa.

Some official requests on the basis of agency-to-agency exchange will also be sent to few countries, the sources said.

The attempt of sending these judicial requests for exchange of information is aimed at obtaining

the details of the overseas financial holdings of Modi and Choksi, who are accused in the Rs 11,400 crore PNB loan fraud case, their bank accounts, assets, partnerships, showrooms, trusts and other assets, they said.

These assets and their sources of income will be investigated and if necessary would be attached under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) if it is found that they have been created using tainted funds or the proceeds of crime of the alleged bank fraud, the sources said.

Meanwhile, Modi, his wife Ami, and Choksi have been summoned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to appear at its zonal office in Mumbai tomorrow.

Sources indicated that if they skip the summons, the agency may approach a special PMLA court to get non-bailable warrants against them.

The agency has also asked about 16 other banks, apart from the Punjab National Bank, to share with it the details of loans extended and collaterals offered in the case of Modi, Choksi and their

companies.

It has also asked the RBI to share with it audit reports of the PNB conducted by it since 2011.

The total assets seized by the ED in this case are now over Rs 6,393 crore, officials had said, adding that this was being independently valued.

Modi, Choksi and others are being investigated by the ED and other probe agencies after the fraud recently came to light, following a complaint by the PNB that they allegedly cheated the nationalised bank to the tune of Rs 11,400 crore, with the purported involvement of a few employees of the bank.

The CBI and the ED have registered two FIRs each to probe the case. Both Modi and Choksi are said to have left the country before criminal cases were lodged against them.

The ED, a central probe agency under the Union finance ministry, is investigating if the allegedly defrauded bank funds were laundered and proceeds of crime were subsequently used by the accused to create illegal assets and black money.



Manav Sewa Dal camp concludes in Rangpo

**SANJAY AGARWAL
RANGPO, 25 FEB:**

A three-day long Manav Sewa Dal camp, organised by the Manav Utthan Sewa Samiti, North East Region, at Suyesh Satsang Dham here ended.

Attended by 120 delegates from Sikkim, Do-

ars, Darjeeling and Bhutan, the camp had begun on 23 February with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Gangtok MUSS in-charge, Mahatma Prun Baaiji.

Organisers inform that the main aim of the programme was to provide special training to mem-

bers on social activities, discipline and spreading the message of MUSS founder Sadgurudev Sri Satpalji Maharaj.

The programme was conducted by Bhupen Giri and Prakash Chhetri and ended with a vote of thanks by Bhim Prakash Rai.

Consortium of researchers to turn farming into 'assured' activity

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB 25 (PTI): In a major initiative to apply disruptive technology in agriculture, a consortium of researchers has been formed in partnership with 3 leading institutions in the country, with the aim of turning farming from an 'uncertain' to 'assured' activity.

The platform, the Consortium of Researchers for Disruptive Technologies in Agriculture (CDTA), is a joint venture of the academic-cum-research scientists of IITMK, Thiruvananthapuram, GB Pant University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Pant Nagar (Uttarakhand) and Indian Institute Space Technology, a press release here said.

The team will advocate and implement application of technologies like Artificial Intelligence

(AI), Data Analytics (DA), Internet of Things (IoT), Cloud Computing (CC), Aerospace Observation and Miniaturised Sensors in the agriculture domain.

They together present the untapped potential to overcome challenges facing Indian agriculture and to transform it from an Uncertain to Assured one.

Assured agriculture represents a scenario where individual farmers are guided at every stage of crop growth and provided with timely advisories and physical or fiscal assistance, to ensure beneficial returns for investment; without compromising on biological diversity in the immediate vicinity.

Having seized the need for tapping the tremendous potential of disruptive technology in agriculture, it was considered necessary

to create a platform for advocating, creating, applying and sharing the new knowledge for the benefit of the Indian farming sector.

Dr R Jaishanker (Associate Professor, Ecological Informatics, C V Raman Laboratory of Ecological Informatics, IIITM-Kerala), Prof Ajeet Singh Nain (Head, Department of Agro-Meteorology, GB Pant University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, (Uttarakhand) and Dr V K Dadhwal (Director, Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram (Mentor) are the lead role players of the initiative.

They are currently engaged in integrating crop simulation models on Cloud, which will help deliver farmer specific advisories and constitute the first step towards Assured Agriculture.

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Govt forms Niti forum for inclusive growth...

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status of developmental works in the Northeast, according to the DoNER minister.

The forum will be co-chaired by the vice chairman of the Niti Aayog and the DoNER minister.

Its members include secretaries in the min-

istries of road transport and highways, railways, power, water resources, river development and Ganga rejuvenation, new and renewable energy, health and family welfare, human resource development and environment, forest and climate change.

The chief secretaries of all the eight states of the region will also be its members.

Secretary, North East Council (NEC) will be Member Secretary, while Joint Secretary (North East) in MHA and several other experts from other fields will also be members.

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS
Government of Sikkim
Soochana Bhawan

CORRIGENDUM

Tender Notice bearing R.O. No. 589/IPR/PUB/Classi./17-18 dt. 23.02.2018 of Information and Public Relations Department published in SummitTimes, Samay Dainik on 24/02/2018 and in Sikkim Herald on 23/02/2018 may be read as 17/03/2018 instead of 10/03/2018 and in Sl.No 2, the size should be mentioned as - 7.9 x 10.63 cm.

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R.O. No. 592/lpr/pub/classi./17-18 Asst. Director (Publication),
Dt. 24.2.2018 Information and Public Relation Department



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NOTICE

**Subject- Six week Intensive Short Course on Shaytrin
(Nagarjuna's Letter to a Friend)**

The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology will be conducting a six-week intensive short course in English on SHAYTRIN (NAGARJUNA'S LETTER TO A FRIEND) by Khenpo Dr. Chowang with effect from 5th March 2018, Monday to Friday from 4.30 - 6.00 pm. The course carries 3 credits (45 lecture hours plus 90 tutorial/assignment hours) to be issued by Sikkim University. Locals may also register to attend the classes out of interest without sitting for the examination.

All interested candidates who are registered college students or graduates in any discipline may submit their application to the Joint Director, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology on or before 1st March 2018 paying the requisite registration fee of Rs.700/-. The application must be accompanied by authentic documents to prove their qualifications for the course. Online application will also be accepted subject to submission of scanned copies of their qualification certificates and on payment of registration fee in the office of the Joint Director prior to taking admission.

For syllabus content and application form, kindly see the 'latest news' on the homepage of the NIT website www.tibetology.net.

Sd/-

Joint Director

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Amartya Sen docu to be released on March 9 after beep on 'Gujarat'

KOLKATA, FEB 25 (PTI): The documentary on Nobel laureate Amartya Sen will be released here on March nine after a beep on the word 'Gujarat' as recommended by the Censor Board, its director Suman Ghosh said today.

The hour-long documentary 'The Argumentative Indian' had courted controversy after the Central Board of Film Certification, Kolkata, asked for muting nine words/phrases, but the CBFC, Mumbai finally let it pass with just one beep on the word Gujarat on July 11, 2017, Ghosh said.

"I started to shoot in 2002-2003 with a group of enthusiastic friends and we shot across three countries - in India, the UK and the USA. Finally in 2017, 15 years since



I started the journey I completed the film," the director said.

Referring to the initial Censor hurdle in mid-July last year when the CBFC Kolkata had asked Ghosh to cut or mute six words/phrases

'-Gujarat', 'In India', 'Hindu', 'Cow', 'These days' and 'Hindutva' -- from the documentary for a 'U' certification, 'At one point last year I thought that it was a losing battle," he said.

"But thanks to the

media support all over the country and abroad it gave me the strength to fight it out. Finally the film is finding the light of day. A special thanks to (CBFC chief) Prasoon Joshi for this," Ghosh said.

Asking the people to watch the film, the director said, "Let's do this to honour one of the greatest living intellectuals of the world and a proud son of India Amartya Sen who received Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award in India, in 1999.

I sincerely believe that such a "voice" is so needed in the current world scenario, he said.

"On January 12, Ghosh had told PTI, "I recognise that the decision (on removing the word 'Gujarat') is not the best but I strongly believe that the film should be shown to the public without further delay since beyond the controversies, which were unfortunate, I have a larger point in the film which needs to be communicated."

CISF headless for over a month; govt yet to appoint DG

NEW DELHI, FEB 25 (PTI): The country's front line security force against terror threats at civilian airports and strategic nuclear and aerospace installations, the CISF, is working without a regular chief for over a month as the Centre is yet to appoint a Director General (DG).

The about 1.80-lakh personnel strong force has been without a regular DG since January 22 after serving chief O P Singh was repatriated to his cadre, on the request of the Uttar Pradesh government, and appointed the state's director general of police (DGP).

The process of decision-making and making large policy moves in the force has slowed down owing to the absence of the designated chief, official sources said.

"This is not a healthy

precedent at all and it is happening again and again in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). This shows that the government has utter disregard for the importance of such an important paramilitary force," retired IPS officer Prakash Singh told PTI.

Singh, who has served as the DGP of the Uttar Pradesh and the BSF, has been an advocate for police reforms in the country and the Supreme Court, acting on his petitions, had issued guidelines on the subject.

"Not only policy making and decisions but the entire organisation suffers in the absence of a full-time chief. I do not know what is the problem in appointing a regular CISF chief when there is a pool of eligible IPS of-

ficers available to chose from," he said.

Sources in the Union home ministry said the process of appointing the CISF chief is ongoing since the last month.

"It is not at all good to keep a large and important paramilitary force like the CISF headless for such a long time.

"Last year, the government appointed the new CRPF DG after a delay of two months, during which the force suffered two major reverses in anti-Naxal operations," a senior official in the security establishment said.

The CRPF lost 38 troops in two deadly Maoist ambushes in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district when it was without a regular chief, and after these incidents senior IPS officer R R Bhatnagar was quickly appointed the new DG.

State Bank of India set for UK restructuring

LONDON, FEB 25 (PTI): In a strategic shift, the State Bank of India (SBI) will undertake a major restructuring of its business in the UK from April and ensure greater protection for depositors, India's largest state-owned bank has said.

SBI's UK operations will transform into a subsidiary named State Bank of India UK Limited from April 1, in compliance with wider ring-fencing of capital requirements by the Bank of England.

The move will mean that all retail branches of SBI in the UK will fall under a new UK-incorporated banking entity instead of their previous status as overseas branches of the Indian entity.

"While there will be no visible change, the brand changes to State Bank of India UK Limited. The 12 retail branches that we have - seven in London and the rest outside London - will become branches of SBI UK Ltd. Apart from that, if we look at the day to day, there will be no dislocation," said Sanjiv Chadha, SBI's Regional Head for UK.

He explains that while customers would be able to carry on using their debit cards and other banking facilities as before, the move marks a strategic shift for the bank with a greater focus on the UK market.

"We will be looking to doing more business in the UK, expanding the products that are designed for the UK market," he said.

Political parties take the music route to woo voters in Meghalaya

WAHIAJER (MEGHALAYA), FEB 25 (PTI): Election campaigning has taken a musical upswing in Meghalaya with political parties trying their best to connect with the voters by hitting the right notes.

Every evening, for the past one month, Wahiajer and its neighbouring village, Ummulung, in Nartiang assembly constituency, has been witnessing a live soiree with people dancing and singing to some of the liveliest campaign songs of candidates contesting this February 27 elections.

"One will find here young and old, men, women and children

participating in the once-in-a-five-year festival of democracy with fervour every evening," a retired government employee and a resident of Wahiajer village, W Shylla, said.

The rallies of candidates and political parties are never complete without good music, she said.

The political battle here in Nartiang is getting intense by the day with sitting MLA and NPP contender Sniawbhalang Dhar trying his best to outsmart his rivals Jopthiaw Lyngdoh of the Congress and Draison Kharshing of the BJP.

The constituency is also home to thousands of people whose coal

businesses have been affected badly by the NGT ban.

"Coal ban, lack of employment for the youths, inadequate health care and education facilities are some of the issues that bother people in this part of the state," Donkhian Lyngdoh, a youth leader in the area, said.

Music may not solve the problems of the people but it is a catalyst for change, Jopthiaw told PTI, urging voters to vote for him to ensure better development in the constituency.

At his rallies across the constituency, Jopthiaw and other Congress leaders are campaigning hard for Dhar's ouster, blaming

him for the lack of development and loss of jobs in the constituency.

"But not all people who attended the political rallies are interested in what the loud-mouthed politicians said from the dais. Hundreds are drawn to the rallies by the foot-tapping music," the youth leader said.

The candidates are not the only ones to be blamed for the new musical mishmash ahead of the polls. The state election commission has been using this art form to get the voters registered.

The campaign yielded results as the total voters in the state went up from 15 lakh plus voters in

2013 to 18.42 lakh voters this year, chief electoral officer F R Kharkongor said.

Singer Usha Uthup was roped in by the Election Commission to urge the 18 lakh eligible voters in the state to actively participate in the forthcoming elections.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi, too, began his campaign in Meghalaya by attending a rock concert last month.

The BJP, which drew a blank in 2013 elections, has also roped in local musical icon Lou Majaw for their campaign video.

The regional parties like the United Democratic Party, the Hills State Peoples Democratic

Party and the Khun Hyniewtre National Awakening Movement are no exceptions.

AF Dkhar, the United Democratic Party general secretary, said each candidate have their own theme song for the campaign.

The candidates took time out to get the songs recorded individually. The party theme song, however, is the same one that was used in the 2014 general election, he said.

Sitting Congress legislator from Shillong-East constituency and two-time minister Ampareen Lyngdoh's campaign song has become hugely popular among the youngsters in her constituency.

Fiery campaign for Feb 27 poll in Meghalaya, Nagaland draws to end

SHILLONG/KOIHIMA, FEB 25 (PTI): The high-octane Meghalaya and Nagaland poll campaign during which barbs flew thick and fast among parties ended today.

Voting in the two states, both having 60-member assemblies, will take place on Tuesday. The results will be declared on March 3 along with that of Tripura, where elections were held on February 18.

The BJP is making a determined bid to expand its footprint in the Northeast, buoyed by formation of its governments in Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.

Meghalaya, in particular, is important for the Congress, which has ruled it for 10 years.

But, this time the BJP is making a determined effort to throw them out of power and include Meghalaya, a next door neighbour of BJP-ruled Assam, in its kitty.

BJP's resolve could be gauged from the fact that Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself spearheaded the campaign. Party chief Amit Shah, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, I&B minister Smriti Irani and a host of other leaders also chipped in.

Union Minister of State for Tourism K J Alphons, a Christian from Kerala, stayed put in Meghalaya as the BJP in-charge of the state with a predominant Christian population.

From the Congress, its president Rahul Gandhi campaigned in the state. Its media chief Randeep Singh Surjewala and MP Shashi Tharoor extended helping hands.

With a total of 25 Lok Sabha seats and 14 Rajya Sabha berths, the eight states of the region are crucial for the BJP to add up to its number in 2019 general election.

At present, the BJP has eight Lok Sabha members from the region, and the Congress has seven.

In the Rajya Sabha, out of total 14 seats, the BJP has one and the Congress nine. The rest are with local parties.

As the clock ticked 4 pm, campaigning ended in both Meghalaya and Nagaland.

The Congress and the BJP are slugging it out in Meghalaya. The Congress has fielded 59 candidates, while the BJP has put up nominees in 47 constituencies.

Though they are fighting separately, in Meghalaya NPP of Conrad Sangma, son of former Lok Sabha Speaker P A Sangma, is the BJP's partner in NEDA (North East Democratic Alliance).

In Nagaland, the BJP's hope hinges on its alliance partner NDPP (Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party) of Neiphiu Rio which is contesting 40 seats. The BJP is fighting 20.

The Congress, which has given three chief ministers to Nagaland, is contesting only 18 seats, two less than the BJP.

Voting will take place for 59 seats each in Meghalaya and Nagaland.

In Meghalaya, election has been countermanded in Williamnagar in the wake of the killing of NCP candidate Jonathone N Sangma in an IED blast during campaigning.

In Nagaland, NDPP chief Neiphiu Rio has been declared elected unopposed from the Northern Angami-II constituency.

There are 370 candidates in the fray in Meghalaya whose fate would be decided by EVMs on February 27.

A total of 18.4 lakh voters are eligible to exercise their franchise at 3,083 polling stations in the state.

Chief Electoral Officer F R Kharkongor said 67 all-women polling stations and 61 model polling stations have been set up for the first time in the state. Thirty-two women are in the fray, the maximum so far in electoral politics in the state, he said. A total of 11,91,513 voters, including 5,89,806 women will exercise their franchise on February 27.

Voting will be held in 2,156 polling stations as 40 polling stations falls under the Northern Angami-II seat, from where Rio has won unopposed.

Election process in Nagaland started on a difficult note.

In view of no-election diktat from the Core Committee of Nagaland Tribal Hohos and Civil Organisations advocating "solution (to the Naga political issue) before election", political parties initially kept away from poll.

Though filing of nominations started on January 31, the first batch of 22 contestants filed their nominations only on the penultimate day on February 6. The last day saw heavy rush of nominees filing papers.



RANGPO MUNICIPALITY
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TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tenders are invited from the Individuals, Registered Cooperative Societies based in the jurisdiction of Rangpo Nagar Panchayat for the Bazaar Contract and Car Parking for the financial year 2018-2019.

The details of the contract and tender documents can be obtained from the Office of the Rangpo Nagar Panchayat at IBM, NH-10, Rangpo from 1.3.2018 to 8.3.2018 during working days from 10 AM to 3 PM.

First Date for the Sale of Tender Documents	1.3.2018
Last Date for the Sale of Tender Documents	8.3.2018
Last Date for Submission of Tender Forms	10.3.2018 UPTO (1300 HRS)
Date of Opening of Separate Tenders of Bazaar Contract and Car Parking by Tender Opening Committee	10.3.2018 (1400 HRS)

CONTACT DETAILS : Municipal Assistant, 78639-09396

Sd-
MUNICIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER
RANGPO NAGAR PANCHAYAT



SINGTAM NAGAR PANCHAYAT
SINGTAM, SIKKIM
email : singtam.municipality@gmail.com

TENDER NOTICE

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The details of the contract and tender documents can be obtained from the Office of the Singtam Nagar Panchayat, Singtam from 5.3.2018 to 12.3.2018 during working days from 10 AM to 3 PM.

First Date for the Sale of Tender Documents	5.3.2018
Last Date for the Sale of Tender Documents	12.3.2018
Last Date for Submission of Tender Forms	14.3.2018 UPTO (1300 HRS)
Date of Opening of Separate Tenders of Bazaar Contract and Car Parking by Tender Opening Committee	14.3.2018 (1400 HRS)

CONTACT DETAILS : Municipal Head Assistant, 94740-56128

Sd-
MUNICIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER
SINGTAM NAGAR PANCHAYAT

NSD to host ‘Theatre Olympics’ in Kolkata

KOLKATA, FEB 25 (PTI): Theatre productions in India and abroad will be seen at the ‘8th Theatre Olympics’, organised by the National School of Drama, here from February 27, as part of its 17-city tour of the country, an NSD official said.

“The Kolkata leg of the festival, organised for the first time in India, will end on March 13 after staging 21 theatre productions including English and other foreign and regional languages in both verbal and non-verbal forms in three venues,” NSD Dean (Academic) Shantanu Bose told a press meet here last evening.

The 21 productions include five foreign theatre groups - Bangladesh (Morphokam), Sri Lanka (Pyramus & Thisby), Spain (The World Around 80 Boxes), Germany (Compassion: The History of Machine Gun), and Azerbaijan (Punishment), he said.

The Union Ministry of Culture has provided Rs 51 crore to host the ‘Theatre Olympics’, so named due to its international nature, he said.

The ‘Theatre Olympics’ is being held in 17 cities across the country with Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram and Bhubaneswar already having staged the show.

Theatre groups of 30 countries have been staging their globally acclaimed productions in the 17-city tour, he said.

The last leg of the festival will take place in Mumbai with a concluding show on April 8.

Bose said the ‘Theatre Olympics’ was first held in 1993 in Greece and over the years became a platform for theatrical exchange for students and eminent actors.

“While English plays will not require any sub-titles, for other foreign and Indian language plays there will be sub-titles of dialogues which will be flashed on side display board during the performances,” he said.

There will be no Bengali plays from here excepting the Bangladeshi production.

The ‘Theatre Olympics’ had been previously held in Japan, Russia, Turkey, South Korea, China, Poland but not in every year, he said.

NSD Director Prof Waman Kendre said in a statement, “For the past three years we had nourished the dream to bring Theatre Olympics to India. The dream ... has come true.”

The 7th Theatre Olympics was held in Poland in 2016.



Golden finish for Norway as Russian flag barred

PYEONGCHANG, FEB 25 (AFP): Winter Olympics legend Marit Bjoergen lifted Norway top of the final Pyeongchang medals table today, as Russia celebrated a dramatic men’s hockey gold -- but also saw their flag barred from the closing ceremony over doping.

Bjoergen, 37, won her second gold and fifth medal at Pyeongchang in the women’s 30km cross country mass start, extending her record Winter Olympics career tally to 15.

It was a fitting finale as it handed Norway their 14th gold to overtake Germany in the final medal count, after the German team won the four-man bobsleigh earlier on Sunday.

Germany also finish on 14 golds, but Norway take top spot with their record 39 medals overall to Germany’s

31. Canada are third with 11 golds, while hosts South Korea are seventh.

Norway’s celebrations capped a dramatic final day of competition that saw the Olympics Athletes from Russia beat Germany 4-3 in a sudden-death, overtime hockey thriller.

Kirill Kaprizov scored a thumping power-play goal 9:40 into the extra period to trigger wild celebrations and end a 26-year wait for the title to return to Russian hands.

The Russian players were heard singing the Russian national anthem on the ice -- apparently contravening rules governing their participation as neutrals, following a major doping scandal.

However, the International Olympic Committee had already voted to maintain Russia’s ban pending the re-

sults of final dope tests from Pyeongchang, meaning the Russians cannot wave their national flag at Sunday’s closing ceremony.

Altogether 168 Russian athletes including the ice hockey players were deemed “clean” and allowed to compete as neutrals in Pyeongchang, despite the suspension of Russia’s national Olympic committee.

But two Russians tested positive for doping during the Olympics and IOC president Thomas Bach said as a result, the ban could not be lifted for the closing ceremony.

“This was hugely disappointing and does not permit the IOC to envisage lifting the suspension of Russia for the closing ceremony,” Bach said, referring to the positive tests.

The men’s ice hockey win brought Russia’s total gold medal haul to two, far behind

their dope-tainted haul of 13 at Sochi.

Then in the final event of the Games, Norway’s Bjoergen claimed her second gold in Pyeongchang as she signed off from her record-breaking Olympic career in style.

The cross-country legend won convincingly, 1min 49.5sec ahead of ahead of Finland’s Krista Parmakoski, with Stina Nilsson of Sweden taking bronze.

Bjoergen had already become the most decorated athlete in Winter Olympics history with her 14th medal on Wednesday, outstripping fellow Norwegian Ole Einar Bjoerndalen, who has 13 in biathlon.

However, the fairytale of South Korea’s smash-hit “Garlic Girls” women’s curling team ended in a stinker, as they lost the final 8-3 against Sweden.

Kohli, Dhoni rested as India select young squad for T20 tri-series

NEW DELHI, FEB 25 (PTI): Skipper Virat Kohli along with senior most player Mahendra Singh Dhoni were prominent among the host of players rested for the T20 tri-series in Sri Lanka, starting March 6.

Rohit Sharma will lead a second string team comprising the leading performers in domestic (Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 and IPL) tournaments. Shikhar Dhawan will be his deputy in a side that has as many as six changes.

“MS Dhoni was not available for selection as he had requested for rest,” national selector MSK Prasad was quoted as saying in a press release.

On predicted lines, top fast bowling duo of Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Jasprit Bumrah have been rested along with all-rounder Hardik Pandya after they shared enormous workload on the South Africa tour.

“We’ve kept in mind the workload and upcoming schedule while finalizing the team for Nidahas Trophy. The high-performance team has suggested that adequate rest should be given to our fast bowlers to help improve athletic performance, maximize rest and prevent injury,” Prasad added.

Chinaman bowler Kuldeep Yadav is also not in the Sri Lanka bound team.

A close look will indicate that selectors maintained

consistency by selecting all those players, who were part of the home T20s against Sri Lanka in December.

Coming back in the team are prolific keeper batsman Rishabh Pant, after a solid season in white-ball cricket including centuries in both national T20s and One-dayers.

Off spinner Washington Sundar, pacer Mohammed Siraj and all rounder Deepak Hooda are back in the side after the home series against Sri Lanka.

All rounder Vijay Shankar is the like for like replacement for Pandya.

Dinesh Karthik is the first keeper while Pant may play as pure batsman.

The prominent performer to miss out was Mayank Agarwal who scored 2000 plus runs in the season.

“Mayank has not been selected because we are following a pattern. Any domestic performer will have to play India A before being considered for senior team selection,” a senior BCCI official close to selection committee told PTI.

Squad: Rohit Sharma (Captain), Shikhar Dhawan (vice-captain), KL Rahul, Suresh Raina, Manish Pandey, Dinesh Karthik (wk), Deepak Hooda, Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Vijay Shankar, Shardul Thakur, Jaydev Unadkat, Mohammad Siraj, Rishabh Pant (wk).

More Chinese turning vegetarian

KJM Varma

BEIJING, FEB 25 (PTI):

China - the world’s largest market for beef, pork and poultry - is steadily growing wary of meat as health-conscious Chinese are taking to a vegetarian diet that has sparked mushrooming of vegan restaurants in the world’s most populous country.

China’s restaurant industry over the past few years is reporting growing number of entrepreneurs looking to capitalise on the popularity of healthy eating, which usually means a meatless, organic and environmentally-friendly diet.

The niche market of vegetarian and vegan eateries has never been more competitive, a recent report from various cities complied by the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post said.

Han Lili, a Shanghai-based artist who has tracked and mapped vegetarian and vegan restaurants in major Chinese cities including Shanghai, Chengdu, Lhasa, and Hong Kong since 2012, said it had been difficult to accurately count the number in operation in the past year or two because the market changed so rapidly.

In Shanghai, China’s largest city, the number of vegan outlets soared from 49 in 2012 to more than 100 last year, she said. In Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, almost half the 80 eateries needed updating after her last count.

A report by research firm Euromonitor said though China is still the world’s biggest market for pork, beef and poultry, the demand showed decline in recent years.

A report by Chinadialogue.net said sales of pork declined from 42.49 million tonnes in 2014 to 40.85 million tonnes in 2016. A new dietary guideline issued by China’s health industry two years ago also suggested eating less meat, poultry and seafood.

The Chinese meat industry adds around 150 million tonnes of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere every year, according to one study.

The growing trend of vegetarianism showed more Chinese turning to fruits and vegetables. China currently consumes 40 per cent of the world’s fruit and vegetables, indicating the growing trend of vegetarianism in China.

UN trade figures show that between 2010 and 2016, China’s imports of avocados rose from 1.9 tonnes to 25,000 tonnes a 13,000-fold increase.

According to one study, the vegan market in China is expected to rise by more than 17 per cent between 2015 and 2020. This will be the fastest rate of growth internationally in this time period and suggests a huge shift in consumer habits in Asia.

Health campaigns are also trying to influence people’s habits. Environmental group WildAid held an event in Beijing in August 2017 to promote vegetarianism.

Popular actor Huang Xuan said his family is eating more and more vegetarian food, a change from the traditional diet in his native province of Gansu in China’s northwest, which is high in beef and mutton.

He thinks it’s because people are more aware of the links between meat-eating, high blood pressure and obesity.

In 2014, state-run Xinhua news agency quoted Public Radio International, an independent non-profit

multi-media organisation, reporting that China’s vegan population has reached more than 50 million.

Dr Xu Jia, a dietician who leads the China programme at the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, a Washington-based NGO, said he estimated one per cent would be closer to the truth.

A study conducted by researchers from Shanghai Jiao Tong University in 2016 surveyed more than 4,000 people in the city and found that 0.77 per cent were vegetarians.

According to the world vegetarian outfits, India where vegetarianism was rooted in religion and culture estimated to have over 500 million vegetarians who shun meat in their meal.

Significantly, the vegan culture is spreading among young people in China which has a population of over 1.3 billion.

The Shanghai Jiao Tong University study also surveyed eight popular vegetarian restaurants in downtown Shanghai and found that close to half their customers were aged between 20 and 29, even though the average age of vegetarians was 65.

Sixthtone.com, a youth news portal has reported that in November last year Hebei University of Environmental Engineering in the city of Qinhuangdao has added a vegetarian counter in the canteen at the request of a student organisation called the Lohas Vegetarian Society.

“Sure, it might not be front-page news, but by serving meat-free meals to college students, the college is embracing a heartening trend toward vegetarianism in a society where most square meals contain pork, chicken, or beef,” the report said.

Stories like this have played out across more and more Chinese universities, driven by the recently established Universities and Colleges Vegetarian Association (UCVA).

This organisation for college vegetarians was founded at Beijing’s Tsinghua University on World Earth Day last year.

“Alongside the rise of animal protectionism...more and more young Chinese are viewing vegetarianism as a healthy, eco-friendly, and trendy lifestyle,” the Sixthtone report said.

Need to explain to people what climate change means in daily life: UN environ chief

TUHIN DUTTA

NEW DELHI, FEB 25 (PTI):

United Nations environment chief Erik Solheim has said spouting “doom and gloom” while talking about climate change will not work and stressed that there was a need to present it in a “simpler” language that explains to people what it really means for them in their daily lives.

He also noted that plastic pollution is similar to climate change and if steps are not taken to curb it now, reversing it will be “almost impossible”.

As far as India is concerned, he said, it views environmental issues very much as a moral obligation and has got what it takes to lead the world into this change.

Solheim said a lot of people find the topic of climate change “boring”.

“The problem with climate

change is that it’s a long-term phenomenon involving some quite complex science. It does not surprise me that a lot of people find the topic boring, and frankly we are never going to bore people into action. And if we continue to spout doom-and-gloom, then people just switch off,” he said.

He said that when the issue of climate change is discussed mostly the focus has been on the problem and the risks and that needed to change. “People want to see solutions, and to understand how they can contribute. It is time for a global mass movement for the environment, one that has never been seen before.”

“For this to happen, we have to

speak in a different language that is simpler and breaks down the science to explain to people what

climate change really means for them, in their daily lives, here and now,” the executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) told PTI.

“We have to make it a dinner table conversation,” he said, “in other words, we need to help people connect with this issue in a way that makes it personal, and not abstract.”

It could be about things like house prices, the cost of insurance policies, the impact on food prices or the link to mass migration, he said.

Solheim was in India for a week where among others, he signed a letter of intent on India hosting the World Environment Day on June 5.

On the issue of plastic pollution, he said it has been caused by “laziness and a failure” of imagination and innovation which needs

to change. He said an astounding amount of plastic is produced every year, much of which is often used for a few seconds and discarded.

“Plastic pollution is similar to climate change. If we don’t step on the brakes now, it will be almost impossible to reverse.”

He pointed out that this year an estimated 360 million tonnes of plastic will be produced and one-third of this will be non-recyclable.

“So imagine where this plastic is going. It is in our oceans and water bodies. It is in landfills and on our beaches. This year World Environment Day will bring the focus on plastic pollution, calling on people all over the world to ‘refuse what you cannot re-use,’” he said.

Tackling plastic pollution requires one to make a big push on three fronts, he said.

Firstly, people need to know that there are many simple steps they can take to reduce their own plastic footprint like “do we really need straws or apples wrapped in copious amounts of plastic? We don’t and we can change that.”

“Second, 40 per cent of used plastic currently goes to landfill, when it could serve countless other uses. We need to recycle and re-use whatever we can. Thirdly, and this is where business comes in, we need to look at the whole life of a product and our consumption and trade systems.”

“It is no longer possible for us to design products that are thrown away immediately after use,” he said. “We need to re-think designs...and there are tremendous opportunities for businesses here.”

Talking about efforts being

made in India in this direction, he expressed his delight that the country is the global host of World Environment Day 2018 and will be leading the push to save the oceans and the planet.

“India has very high rates of recycling, and in recent years, some of the biggest citizen action movements have happened in this country- for example, the Versova beach clean up in Mumbai,” he said.

“So India has what it takes to lead the world into this change,” he said.

“It is a booming economy with the innovation and business expertise to change the way we make and use products. And it is a country that views environmental issues very much as a moral obligation, to give back to people, nature and the world,” he added.

India congratulates China on FATF post, hopes Beijing will be balanced

NEW DELHI, FEB 25 (PTI): India today congratulated China for becoming the vice chair of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a global body mandated to combat terror financing, and hoped Beijing would “uphold and support” the objective of the watchdog in a balanced and objective way.

In its plenary meeting in Paris on Friday, the FATF extensively deliberated on ways to combat terror financing and money-laundering but did not put Pakistan on its international terror-financing watch list. It gave Islamabad time till June to prepare an action plan against terror groups operating from Pakistan.

“Congratulations to China on its election as Vice President of Financial Action Task Force at the #FATF plenary mtg. on 23 February 2018. We remain hopeful that China would uphold & support the objectives & standards of FATF in a balanced, objective, impartial & holistic way,” MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted.

China, Pakistan’s all-weather ally, has repeatedly blocked efforts by India, the US and the UK in the UN to designate JeM chief Masood Azhar a terrorist.

The FATF, in a report on Friday, named nine countries with “strategic deficiencies”. Among the countries identified were Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Tunisia. Pakistan was on FATF’s “grey list” from 2012 to 2015.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) was set up in 1989 with the primary goal of setting standards to combat money laundering, but in 2001 its mandate was expanded to include countering terror financing. It can take action such as financial restrictions against any country.

At the FATF plenary meeting, the US and some of its European allies were in favour of placing Pakistan on the list of countries that financially support terrorism.

However, Pakistan has been given time till June to prepare an action plan to take action against terror groups operating from its soil following which the FATF would take a call on whether to name it on its terror-financing watch list.

UNITED NATIONS, FEB 25 (AFP): The UN Security Council has unanimously demanded a 30-day ceasefire in Syria, as new air strikes on the rebel enclave of Eastern Ghouta took the civilian death toll from seven days of bombing to more than 500.

With support from Russia, the Security Council adopted a resolution on the ceasefire to allow for humanitarian aid deliveries and medical evacuations, but the measure did not specify when the truce would go into force beyond saying it should be “without delay.”

After the council vote yesterday, Syrian warplanes backed by Russian air power launched new raids on a town in Eastern Ghouta, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

At least 127 children are among the 519 dead in the bombing campaign that the regime launched



last Sunday on the rebel enclave, just outside Damascus, the British-based monitor said.

At least 41 civilians were killed in yesterday’s strikes, including eight children. Russia has denied taking part in the assault.

Quickly following up on the vote, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel will speak by phone today with Russian President Vladimir Putin to push for the truce to take hold “in the coming days,” the Elysee palace said in a statement.

To this end France’s Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian will also go to Moscow on Tuesday.

The UN vote was initially expected to be held Thursday, but was repeatedly delayed as diplomats were locked in tough negotiations to avoid a veto from Russia, which is militarily supporting President Bashar Al-Assad.

Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia rejected accusations of foot-dragging, saying that negotiations were needed to arrive at a demand for a ceasefire that was “feasible.”

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who has described Eastern Ghouta as “hell on Earth,” said the ceasefire must be “immediately” implemented.

To win Russia’s approval, language specifying that the ceasefire would start 72 hours after adoption was scrapped, replaced by “without delay,” and the term “immediate” was dropped in reference to aid deliveries and evacu-

ations.

In another concession to Moscow, the ceasefire will not apply to operations against the Islamic State group or Al-Qaeda, along with “individuals, groups, undertakings and entities” associated with the terror groups.

That would allow the Syrian government offensive to continue against Al-Qaeda-linked jihadists in Idlib, the last province in Syria outside the control of Damascus.

Russia has vetoed 11 draft resolutions throughout the Syrian conflict to block action that targeted its ally. In November, it used its veto to end a UN-led investigation of chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

In Eastern Ghouta, news of the UN vote on the ceasefire was greeted with a shrug.

“I don’t think this decision will be implemented. It will be respected neither by the regime nor Russia,” said Abu Mazen, a resident of Douma, Eastern Ghouta’s main town.

“We can’t trust Russia or the regime. We are used to their betrayals,” he added.

Control of Eastern Ghouta is shared between two main Islamist factions, while Syria’s former Al-Qaeda affiliate is also present.

Russia has been pressing for a negotiated withdrawal of rebel fighters and their families like the one that saw the government retake full control of Syria’s second city Aleppo in December 2016.

But all three rebel groups have refused.

The enclave is surrounded by government-controlled territory, and its 400,000 residents are unwilling or unable to flee the deadly siege.

High-level N Korean delegates arrive in the South

SEOUL, FEB 25 (AFP): A black-listed North Korean general arrived in the South today for the Winter Olympics closing ceremony, which will also be attended by US President Donald Trump’s daughter Ivanka.

The visit by Kim Yong Chol, who led an eight-member high-level delegation that crossed the Demilitarized Zone in the morning, is the final piece of the Games-led diplomacy that has dominated headlines from Pyeongchang.

The nuclear-armed North has gone on a charm offensive in connection with the Olympics, sending athletes, cheerleaders and performers to the Games, with leader Kim Jong Un’s sister Kim Yo Jong attending the opening ceremony.

Analysts say it is seeking to loosen the sanctions imposed against it over its banned nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programmes, and trying to weaken the alliance between Seoul and Washington.

But Kim Yo Jong had no interaction with US Vice President Mike Pence at the opening ceremony, even though the two were sitting just a few seats apart in the same VIP area, and according to the US, a planned meeting between the delegations from Washington and Pyongyang the following day was cancelled at short notice by the North Koreans.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in -- who has long pushed for engagement with the North to bring it to the negotiating table -- also did not immediately accept an invitation passed on by Kim Yo Jong from her brother to go to Pyongyang for a summit, saying the right conditions needed to be created.

Washington, which describes its approach to Pyong-



yang as “maximum pressure and engagement”, announced a raft of new sanctions against it on Friday.

Pence also condemned Kim Yo Jong as part of an “evil family clique” and “murderous regime”, prompting a denunciation from Pyongyang on Sunday, which said it would not talk to the Trump administration for “even 100 years or 200 years”.

Kim Yong Chol’s delegation crossed the heavily-fortified border into the South on Sunday morning, a spokesman for Seoul’s unification ministry said.

Television footage showed Kim Yong Chol, wearing a dark long coat, being greeted by Seoul’s vice unification minister Chun Hae-sung before getting into a black sedan prepared by the South, while others boarded a bus and a van.

Kim’s nomination as the leader of the group is controversial in the South, where he is widely blamed for a spate of attacks including the torpedoing of Seoul’s Cheonan warship in 2010, with the loss of 46 lives. Pyongyang

described as the “heaviest sanctions ever” levied on Pyongyang.

The UN Security Council has already banned North Korean exports of coal -- a key foreign exchange earner -- iron ore, seafood and textiles, and restricted its oil imports.

Washington is also seeking to have the United Nations ban 33 vessels from ports worldwide and blacklist 27 shipping businesses for helping North Korea circumvent sanctions, in a bid to cripple North Korea’s maritime network.

Kim Yo Jong’s trip at the start of the Games -- the first visit to the South by a member of the North’s ruling dynasty since the Korean War ended in 1953 with a ceasefire on the divided peninsula -- made global headlines.

But Pence told an audience of thousands at the Conservative Political Action Conference: “The sister of Kim Jong Un is a central pillar of the most tyrannical and oppressive regime on the planet, an evil family clique that brutalises, subjugates, starves and imprisons its 25 million people.”

In the US, he added, “We stand up to murderous dictatorships.”

Pyongyang denounced his comments today, with the official Korean Central News Agency carrying a statement from the North’s Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee saying Pence would discover “what quagmire his crazy remarks threw the US and himself into”.

Trump, it said, should know that the North would “have no dealings with those viciously slandering the dignity of our supreme leadership and government”.

“We will never have face-to-face talks with them even after 100 years or 200 years.”

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4th Prize Rs.300/- 1672 5th Prize Rs. 206/- 5912
6th Prize Rs.100/-
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1007 1009 1018 1030 1043 1342 1394 1434 1569 1591
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1952 1976 2005 2006 2013 2065 2122 2152 2205 2225
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3766 3810 3814 3836 3978 4018 4019 4156 4157 4189
4279 4316 4389 4427 4647 4711 4721 4739 4762 4789
4815 4974 5059 5116 5201 5230 5252 5259 5398 5404
5484 5513 5611 5646 5654 5677 5684 5823 5838 5926
6th Prize Rs.100/-
1034 1046 1072 1079 1130 1135 1151 1167 1205 1211
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MAGIC MAGENTA: World of Dance host Jenna Dewan Tatum looks flawless in this color-coordinated ensemble (including her earrings and eye shadow!) at the Los Angeles Ballet Gala.

Underprivileged Kids Can See A Wrinkle in Time for Free at AMC

Underprivileged children will be able to see A Wrinkle in Time at AMC Theatres—for free. The “Give a Child the Universe” initiative, spearheaded by the racial justice organization Color of Change, is committed to helping those who can’t afford tickets to the Walt Disney Pictures film. The initiative encourages individual and group benefactors to buy and donate matinee tickets; it will distribute them to a network of local partners, schools and community-based organizations.

“Color of Change believes in the power of images and supports those working to change the rules in Hollywood so that inclusive, empathetic and human portrayals of black people and people of color are prominent on the screen,” said executive director Rashad Robinson.

In a statement to E! News, Nikkole Denson-Randolph, vice president of special



content at AMC, said, “The Wrinkle in Time story is one that children from all backgrounds and walks of life can identify with and draw inspiration from, and we are thrilled to celebrate this film in a meaningful way, through the vision of Ava DuVernay and in partnership with Color of Change.”

A Wrinkle in Time, adapted from Madeleine L’Engle’s 1962 novel, stars Mindy Kaling, Oprah Winfrey and Reese Witherspoon. Storm Reid was cast as Meg Murry, a black

teenager from South Central L.A.; in the book, Meg is white and lives in Connecticut. For DuVernay, that was an important and necessary change. “She’s just a black girl who has no super powers but ends up doing extraordinary things that she didn’t even know she could, and I relate to that,” she recently told The Washington Post. She acknowledged that she took “a big swing” by casting Reid, explaining, “It is a fantasy where a black girl goes to another planet and saves the world.”

ARIES: It’s a good time to start a new business or consider long-term investments. This morning you seem to be in great shape and very enthusiastic, much to the satisfaction of your loved one. Relationships with your friends will be excellent. People will most likely appreciate your efforts, but you should be patient and wait for the results of your work to start showing. **TAURUS:** You may run into an old friend who’ll make an offer for you to

join in a partnership. It seems to be worth trying, but you should be cautious. During the afternoon you might be invited to a party. Try to keep your equilibrium and avoid overeating! **GEMINI:** You seem to be in very good shape, so you should make the most of these favorable circumstances. It’s a good day for business and traveling. Your love life is also going well. You could manage to earn extra from side jobs. Your health is good, but you should slow down when

it comes to work. **CANCER:** Intuition will help you seize an opportunity and start a new business endeavor which will finally improve your budget. You may want to consider your loved one’s advice. You should pay more attention to the needs of an older family member. **LEO:** You seem determined to begin a new stage in your life. Chances are you’ll succeed in a business of your own. You should pay more attention to your need for rest. You can rely on intuition.

VIRGO: During the afternoon you may learn that a significant amount of money is coming your way, possibly an inheritance. Don’t lose your head and avoid speculations! Consider your loved one’s expectations too! **LIBRA:** This is a favorable time for you in all respects, and you have a good chance at solving important issues. You may decide to buy a new house or make a property exchange. You should listen to the advice of an older family member. Try

to remain calm and avoid making hasty decisions! **SCORPIO:** In the financial department, things might finally go your way. You could earn a lot of money if you join in a new business partnership. People appreciate your skills and could ask for help regarding sensitive issues. You should avoid getting involved in anything that could get you in trouble with the law. **SAGITTARIUS:** This morning you’ll probably manage to get the money you need in order to start

a new business. Don’t hesitate to forge a partnership with an experienced friend! Since you’re so concerned with material aspects of life, you might try to neglect your love life. **CAPRICORN:** You may be thinking about starting a business on your own. Be realistic and consider all the requirements of such a project! You shouldn’t be so reluctant to visit relatives. A friend might give you some good news this evening. **AQUARIUS:** Your

schedule seems to be very busy. You might have to run a lot of errands. You might expect to leave on an important trip soon. Try to show more appreciation for your loved one’s efforts! **PISCES:** Today could be very important for your love life. Either you might fall in love, or the relationship with your loved one may enter a new stage. You should keep calm and not worry over money. Relatives are ready to offer support if needed. Don’t let your tasks build up!

Amal Clooney Is Inspired by Parkland Survivors: “Watching Them Gives Me a Lot of Hope”

Human rights attorney Amal Clooney, who is married to superstar actor George Clooney, has nothing but praise for the outspoken students who survived the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting on Feb. 14.

During the 2018 Watermark Conference for Women in San Jose, CA., the 40-year-old mother of twins made it a point to speak about how the survivors have inspired her and why she and her husband decided to donate \$500,000 to the students’ March For Our Lives earlier in the week.

“I am just blown away by these students. I think they are doing an amazing job turning a tragedy into advocacy,” Clooney said (via Pop-sugar). “It’s only been a week since this happened and I’m in awe of how courageous they are and how effective they are. I would never have had the possession of mind or the courage at 16 years old, let alone having just gone through what they have, to be able to stand face to face with the president, a senator, the NRA, and answer those tough questions.”

The legal eagle continued, “They are the best vehicle and best hope for change. I really hope that they will succeed and make a meaningful difference.”

In the wake of the



shooting that left 17 dead, Stoneman Douglas students have advocated for gun control. Some have spoken at protests, several appeared in front of Marco Rubio and the spokeswoman for the NRA at a CNN town hall earlier this week. Others have met with Donald Trump at the White House.

Earlier this week, Amal put her money where her mouth is. She and her Oscar-winning husband pledged \$500,000 to March for Our Lives—a protest organized by survivors of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas school shooting.

George and Amal said in a statement to E! News they were “so inspired by the courage and eloquence” exhibited by Marjory Stoneman Douglas’ students, and said they plan to “stand by side with this incredible generation of young people from all over the country” during the event.

As for why this cause was so important to her and her husband, the attorney said at the Watermark Conference, “George and I just personally wanted to make this contribution and say that we will be there with our family because my children are very

lucky to go to school here and I know their lives will literally depend on it.”

“The new generation, the young people, feel empowered to make a change, and frankly, they are the ones who should have the platform. The march we’re attending, it’s their march. They are the ones that are going to be speaking, and if someone tries to tell them what the reality is, their response should be, ‘Well, I was the one hiding in the closet a week ago, so let me tell you how I feel and this is what would make me feel safe.’ Watching them gives me a lot of hope.”

Shah Rukh’s funny disclaimer for whomsoever’ it may concern

NEW DELHI, FEB 24 (PTI): Superstar Shah Rukh Khan was at wittiest best today as he addressed a session on ‘Bollywood’s digital push’ and ended his speech with a disclaimer saying that he should not be trolled for his ‘star status, religion or handsomeness’ and his films should not be “banned” if his words have irked any individual or a group.

The 52-year-old star, who was speaking at the Yes Bank and Economic Times Global Business summit, read the disclaimer which stated that the intention of his speech was not to hurt the sentiments of any fringes that “may not exist today but will evolve later.”

“This whole speech is original and not plagiarised or copied from anywhere. There are some thoughts that I have said elsewhere, but these are my thoughts. I can repeat them and use them as I wish to. Any resemblances to people, places and things, living or dead, is purely co-incidental.

“Anything that might have hurt sentiments of any group or groups of people is

unintentional and without malice... I don’t even know you guys. This may also include any new organisation, trust or new hooligans or new fringes that may not exist today but will evolve later. It does not include boys and girls who have fringe hair cut. I love Sadhan ji,” Shah Rukh read leaving the audience in splits.

The actor added that if any troll finds any word in his address “troublesome” they are free to change them and even after this, if he has hurt the “sentiments of any over sensitive being, human or non-human living or dead I already tender an unconditional apology and take my words back to where they belong.”

SRK quipped that he has also attached a written apology to the speech-- his thumb print and signature.

“Also please do not troll me for this speech for my star status, religion or handsomeness. Just accept the fact some guys have all the luck and are just sexy. And finally to everybody please do not ban my films,” he concluded.



SAMUEL L JACKSON SLAMS DONALD TRUMP’S PROPOSAL TO ARM TEACHERS

Samuel L Jackson has hit out at US president Donald Trump’s proposal to give teachers guns in the wake of the Florida shooting.

The tragic Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting last week left 17 people dead and has led to renewed calls for stricter gun laws in the US - led by the survivors of the attack.

Trump has controversially suggested that teachers be armed as a solution (rather than, you know, making it harder for those committing the acts to actually get their hands on weapons)

One person (among many) who’s having none of it is Mr Samuel L Jackson, who pointed out a rather big flaw in the president’s idea in a tweet.

“Can someone that’s been in a Gunfight tell that Muthaf***a that’s Never been in a Gunfight, the flaws of his Arm The Teachers plan????!!” the Pulp Fiction star wrote on Twitter on February 23.

Samuel has made no secret of his disdain for Trump in the past, stating before he was elected; “hopefully he won’t destroy Hollywood.”

THE DAY AHEAD