



SummitTIMES

SDM convenes meeting to address Chungthang's worries with Teesta Stage-III reservoir level

TEESTA URJA TO KEEP EVERYONE IN LOOP WHEN WATER LEVEL RISES TOO MUCH

WANGCHUK BHUTIA
CHUNGTHANG, 18 MAR: Following complaints [read SummitTimes issue dated 18 March 2018 for details] by the public and panchayats of Chungthang in North Sikkim regarding what they perceived as an alarming rise in the water level of the 1200 MW Teesta Stage III reservoir, a meeting was called by the Sub Divisional Magistrate [Chungthang] between Chungthang Zilla and Gram Panchayats, local administration, Teesta Urja Limited (TUL) officials and locals today. Teesta Urja officials informed that the land acquired by TUL at the reservoir site was upto 1,590 meters above mean sea level

(MSL) and as per Global Positioning System (GPS), water level at the reservoir site during winter/ lean season is maintained at around 1584 meters. TUL officials further informed that the water level reached 1585 meters in the last few days, which according to them was 'rare' and seen 'only during testing the reservoir and generation requirement'. During monsoons, the maximum level of the water is maintained between 1575 to 1580 meters and minimum is 1565 meters, they detailed. TUL officials have, however, now agreed to alert the district and sub divisional administration, police, zilla and gram panchayats of Chungthang in case the water level rises beyond 1584 meters. "The intimation will be given through phone, WhatsApp messages to individual phones and groups and subsequently in writing for confirmation," the officials said.



put up a representation to TUL through official channels with copies marked to all concerned for urgent and immediate consideration. The same will be put by Chungthang TUL authorities here to their seniors for "urgent necessary action," it was decided. With regards to Moonlight Junior High School at Chungthang, TUL has agreed to make a mesh and wire fencing along the Lachen Chu towards Chungthang to provide additional safety. Further, in instances of damage to private property, the affected public were directed to make requests for necessary appropriate action through official channels. TUL deputy manager, Dr Pema Tenzing Lachungpa, is the Nodal Officer with reference to official and local related matters of TUL.



Issues should be resolved through dialogue: Dalai Lama

JAMMU, MAR 18 (PTI): Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama today said issues should be resolved through dialogue and India needs to play its role in ensuring a peaceful 21st century. Opposing the arms race and nuclear weapons, he said violence leads to counter violence and the cycle continues unabated. This cycle should be broken to make the world a better place to live in, the Dalai Lama said here at the first convocation of the Central University of Jammu (CUJ), which was established in August 8, 2011. "The only way to create peace, is we must develop will power no matter how complicated the situation is and try to resolve issues through dialogue," he said. Dialogue will be successful if views of opposite parties are respected and their interests are taken into consideration, the spiritual leader said. "India's ancient knowledge is very relevant in today's world to achieve a peaceful 21st century. The 21st century must be a century of peace and India can play a major role to achieve this goal," he said. The world is going through immense violence and there is a threat of use of nuclear weapons, and "if you think it will make the world a better place, the answer, I think, is simply no", the Dalai Lama said. The world presently has too much violence and it seems that the 20th century belongs to armies, he said. "No matter how sincere the motivation (for violence) is and once there is involvement of military forces, it will have unpredictable consequences," the Dalai Lama warned. Differences will always be there. But in order to face these differences, the use of force cannot be justified, the spiritual leader. Once violence is committed, it "leads to counter violence and a chain cycle", he said referring to the 2003 Iraq war. "I had written a letter to former US president George W Bush and suggested non-violent measures. What happened, today the entire Arab world is engulfed (in violence). I feel a wrong policy was one of the factors that increased hatred towards the US," the Dalai Lama said. The US, Russia and even a small country like North Korea, is developing deadly weapons and "if it continues, the

Bill on transgender rights sent to Cabinet

NEW DELHI, MAR 18 (PTI): The Social Justice ministry has sent a Bill on transgender rights to the Cabinet after finalising nine amendments, including those in the definition of the term 'transgender', keeping with the recommendations of a parliamentary panel. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill that has undergone inter-ministerial consultation and was vetted by the law ministry has been sent to the Cabinet, a senior ministry official said. The earlier definition of a transgender was "neither wholly male nor female, a combination of female or male, or neither female nor male and whose sense of gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at the time of birth", has been removed, as per the advice of the standing committee, he said. The official said according to the new definition proposed in the Bill, "a transgender means a person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-man or trans-women (whether or not such persons has undergone sex reassignment surgery or hormone therapy or laser therapy or such other therapy)". It also includes person with intersex variations, gender-queer and person having such socio-cultural identities such as 'kinnar', 'hijra',



Temi Tea Estate to begin paragliding in April

SUMMIT REPORT
TEMI, 18 MAR:

The Temi Tea Estate management is initiating paragliding at the estate as an added attraction for tourists visiting the only tea garden in Sikkim. "It is our maiden venture and will open adventurous joys of paragliding to the people," said the tea tourism in-charge at Temi Tea

Estate, Mani Kumar Tamang. Paragliding elsewhere in Sikkim has become an increasingly popular adventure sports. "As per plans, tandem flights operated by experienced and certified pilots will be offered to the interested people," he said. Paragliding at Temi is scheduled to start from 02 April. Flights will take-off from section

01 of the tea garden and land in section 02. "One can enjoy the view of the mountains and the entire tea garden and also of Bhaleydhunga during the flight. They can also see the workers plucking tea during the flight," Mr Tamang added. Mr Tamang informed that three commercial pilots are staffed to operate the flight.

Nepal for "mutually beneficial" ties with India, China: FM

Kathmandu, Mar 18 (PTI): Nepal's Left alliance government will maintain a "mutually beneficial" relationship with India and China to seek economic benefits from both the Asian giants, the country's newly-appointed Foreign Affairs Minister said today. Pradeep Gyawali, who was inducted on Friday, also said that the Nepal government had started preparations as it expects both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping to visit the country this year. "We want to build a

Bhaichung to kick-off Sikkim political inning with Yuva Yatra



REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 18 MAR:

A 10-member Yuva Yatra team led by former Indian football captain, Bhaichung Bhutia, is embarking on a Sikkim tour starting Monday [19 Mar]. The team members, besides Bhaichung, are: DS Limboo, Tshering Wangchuk Lepcha, Navin Kishore Chettri, Phurba Dorjee Tamang, Guru Prasad Luitel, Gyaltsen Lepcha, Kedar Nath Tiwari, Yougen Rai and Phurba Tshering Bhutia. The tour of Yuva Yatra is scheduled to start from Tinkitam, Bhaichung's native village in South Sikkim. In a press statement, Bhaichung said the tour is basically to interact with the people in all four districts of the State and to understand their grievances, aspirations and their developmental requirements. "We will be touring all four districts of Sikkim. This tour is organised to meet the people and get ideas and also blessings from them. We will be interacting with the people at the grassroots level and aim to know more from them. This public interaction tour is important for

me before getting into Sikkim politics," said Bhaichung. Bhaichung, it may be mentioned, had resigned from Trinamool Congress [TMC] and Bengal politics recently. He has previously spoken about his desire to enter Sikkim politics. Bhaichung shared these details with SummitTimes on the sidelines of an archery tournament at Pachey Navey archery ground in East Sikkim when asked about his political interests. "Still meeting people, getting lot of suggestions, meeting a lot of people and getting a lot of feedback. Let's see what happens. And as I said before, looking for likeminded people who are really willing to commit for the betterment of Sikkim," said Bhaichung. When asked about his activities so far, Bhaichung replied, "Activities so far? Nothing, I am just meeting and taking advice from people." "I want us to protect Sikkim and everyone including the communities and all the people of Sikkim. We need to work for it. Everyone should have concern and feelings for the State and the people of Sikkim," he said.

Issues should be resolved through dialogue: Dalai Lama

Contd from pg01

21st century would be a century of disaster", he warned.

"Basic human nature is more compassionate and constant anger and fear is actually eating our immune system," he said.

Mentioning India's rich culture and ethos, he said the country's 1,000-year-old tradition is of secularism, non-violence and religious harmony.

"India's Constitution is also based on secular credentials and according to Indian understanding it means respect for all religions. People from different faiths live peacefully in Jammu and Kashmir."

"I think religious harmony is really marvelous in the whole of India and it is the only country where people of different religions live together which is something very unique in today's world," he said.

The Dalai Lama said that modern education methods had failed to help reduce violence and that India was the only nation that can combine modern education and its ancient knowledge to achieve peace.

"Modern knowledge has given us physical comfort but ancient Indian knowledge has the power to provide inner comfort and peace. You can combine the two. Ancient Indian knowledge is very relevant in today's world," he said.

Education institutions should take full responsibility, and not only work for the development of the brain but also to teach the students wholeheartedness, the Lama said.

"I never attended school, university and modern institutions. Our knowledge came from India. India is our teacher and we are its reliable pupil," he said.

Expressing displeasure that the ancient knowledge was disappearing from the country, he said, "We kept this knowledge."

The world is passing through "crisis of emotion" and many top leaders are also "emotionless". This country has the knowledge about how to tackle this crisis as well, the spiritual leader said.

Students, who had successfully completed courses till 2017, were conferred degrees, gold medals and merit certificates at the CUJ convocation.

SDF convenes orientation prog for youth at Kopibari

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 18 MAR:

Sikkim Democratic Front organised an interaction programme at Kopibari ward under Shyari constituency on Sunday. The programme, which also doubled as a youth orientation initiative, is part of the ongoing youth orientation programme in the constituency.

The programme was attended by CLC president, Sonam Tashi Bhutia, youth convener Rajesh Rai, ward panchayat Phigu Tamang along with SDF publicity secretary, Amber Rai,

and former panchayat Manoj Rai along with senior citizens and youth and women of the area.

During the programme, the party youth convener explained the various policies, principles and youth-centric programmes of the SDF party.

He urged the youth to become self-reliant and self-employed by taking advantage of the various government programmes and contribute to the State-building process. He also stressed that the State government has been working equally for every section of the society.

Mr Rai spoke about the opportunities and programmes created by the government for the youth and also specifically for the women of the State.

He encouraged the youth to take full advantage of the Start-Up programme of the government.

The CLC president encouraged the youth to work for the State and its people and stay away from communal politics. He also urged them to work for the upliftment of the people by using the schemes and programme of the SDF government.

He also assured to take all

requirements and demands of the people of the area to the government.

SDF publicity secretary, Mr Rai, in turn, spoke about the development and progress achieved by Kopibari and its people under the SDF government.

During the interactive session, the youth of the area raised various issues and needs for further development of the area. The programme also included a group of SKM party youth joining the SDF party. A youth committee of SDF party has also been formed during the programme.



Awareness prog held for laborers at Chungthang and Manul

SUMMIT REPORT
MANGAN, 18 MAR:

Labor Department, in collaboration with Sikkim Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board, organized a two-day awareness-cum-distribution of welfare items/goods programme at Chungthang and Manul in North Sikkim on 16 and 17 Mar respectively.

On 16 Mar, the programme was held for laborers engaged with the 86 Road Construction Company (RCC) in Chungthang which was attended by RCC members and laborers along with Teesta Urja Limited staff members.

Joint Labor Commissioner in his address spoke about the Labour Act and schemes implemented by the State Government for their welfare. He urged the laborers to register

their names under the schemes and take advantage of the assistance provided by the State Government in the field of medical treatment, marriage, death in the family or education of their children.

He further urged the workers to register their names for the health insurance scheme of the government.

"88 cancer patients have been treated under the health insurance provided by the government," he informed.

He also informed the laborers that the department was willing to conduct training and skill development programmes if they wished to attend and learn from experts in the field.

A similar programme was held for the laborers of 107 Road Construction Company (RCC) in Manul, North Sikkim on 17 Mar.

BJP Vijay Yatra enters South district



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 18 MAR:

The ongoing Vijay Yatra of the Bharatiya Janta Party's Sikkim unit today entered South Sikkim after covering all the constituencies in West Sikkim.

A BJP press release informs that the third day of the rally started from Yuxsom and covered Gerethang, Tashiding, Legship, Ravangla, Damthang, Temi-Tarku and finally concluded at Singtam.



SKM convenes meetings in Dentam and Tadong

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 18 MAR:

A constituency-level meeting of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party was held at Dentam Bazaar on Sunday.

The meeting was chaired by working president, Nabin Karki, and attended by working president, MP Subba, as

special guest and other senior leaders and workers of the party, a press release from the party informs.

Mr Subba, in his address, said that SKM has emerged with new thoughts and vision to make Sikkim better. He added that SKM was ready to debate with any

leader from the Sikkim Democratic Front.

A ward-level coordination meeting was also held at Lumsey under Tadong constituency today chaired by party vice president-in-charge (East Zone I), Anand Lama and attended by party workers and youth of the area.



Training on SHG formation held at Mangshila-Tibuk GPU

SUMMIT REPORT
MANGAN, 18 MAR:

A training on Self Help Group formation was conducted at Mangshila-Tibuk Gram Panchayat Unit in North Sikkim by Community Organizer for Sikkim State Rural Livelihood Mission under Rural

Management and Development

Department on 17 Mar.

The training, chaired by zilla member Zomin Limboo, was also attended by Panchayat President, Panchayat Secretary and other members along with women from different wards of the GPU.

Resource person Tara

Prasad Bhattarai explained the procedures of SHG formation and how to maintain SHG registers.

Also during the programme, Ward Resource Persons (WRP) for all wards of the GPU were nominated in consultation with the panchayat members.

Orientation and training prog for IPL field officers held at Tadong

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 18 MAR:

A daylong orientation and training programme for the field functionaries of International Panacea Limited (IPL) in association with Sikkim Organic Mission was held at Sahakari Bhawan in Tadong, East Sikkim today, a press release informs.

IPL senior general manager, Dr Ranvir Singh, after interviewing the field functionaries suggested that they work on their skills, knowledge and experiences for future promotions.

He advised the field officers to look at the bigger picture and updated about developments in Organic Farming and informed that the Central Government has plans to extend the mission in other States of the country as well.

State Coordinator [IPL], Hoshier Singh Sharma, in his ad-



dress, advised the staff to work diligently and in sync with officials and farmers.

"We have to encourage farmers to grow more vegetables as its demand will be high in future," he said.

He urged the field officers to encourage farmers to adopt organic methods to grow vegetables.

Office Executives Sangay Dem Bhutia and Ongmit Lepcha explained the changes in checklist;

farm diary and field map. They also highlighted the inspection procedures and asked the field officials to contact them regarding any confusion or problems.

A similar programme was organized at Amba Gram Prasashan Kendra in East Sikkim by Food Security and Agriculture Development Department and Horticulture and Cash Crop Development Department on seed treatment of ginger.

Bill on transgender rights sent to Cabinet...

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'aravani' and 'jogta', he said.

The ministry has also done away with the provision of recommendation required from district screening committees for issuing certificate, if a transgender undergoes a surgery to change his or her gender.

A transgender, who has already been issued a certificate and undergoes a surgery to his or her gender, may now get it from the medical superintendent or chief medical officer, authenticating the same to make an application to the district magis-

trate for a revised certificate.

"The district magistrate on receipt of an application and after being satisfied will issue a certificate indicating change in gender in such form and manner and within such time, as may be prescribed," the official said.

The standing committee had called for removing some provisions after hearing the contentions of the stakeholders that transgenders were reluctant to undergo physical examination in front of the district screening committee for a certificate.

"The standing committee wondered why will the same person would apply again for a certificate and undergo the same procedure which he went earlier," the official said.

Besides, now every establishment, irrespective of how many people are employed there, will have to designate an officer to deal with complaints, he said.

Earlier, establishments of 100 or more people had to designate a complaint officer.

The standing committee had ex-

pressed dismay over the functions of the national council for redressal of grievances of transgenders not being precisely mentioned, the officials said.

It had recommended that the council be vested with more power and that its powers and functions be elaborated, he said.

Following this, the Centre has specified that the council will advise the central government on the formulation of policies, programmes, legislation and projects for transgenders, the official said.

The ministry did not make any changes on the recommendation that transgenders be exempted from Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) which criminalises homosexuality and including them in the other backward classes category.

The council will also monitor and evaluate the impact of policies and programmes designed for achieving equality and full participation of transgenders, review and coordinate the activities of all departments and NGOs, redress grievances among others.

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Monday,
19 Mar**

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Forecast: Periods of
clouds and sunshine.
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Sunset: 5:46 PM

Swachh Bharat awareness wraps up at Lingtam Phadamchen GPU

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 18 MAR:**

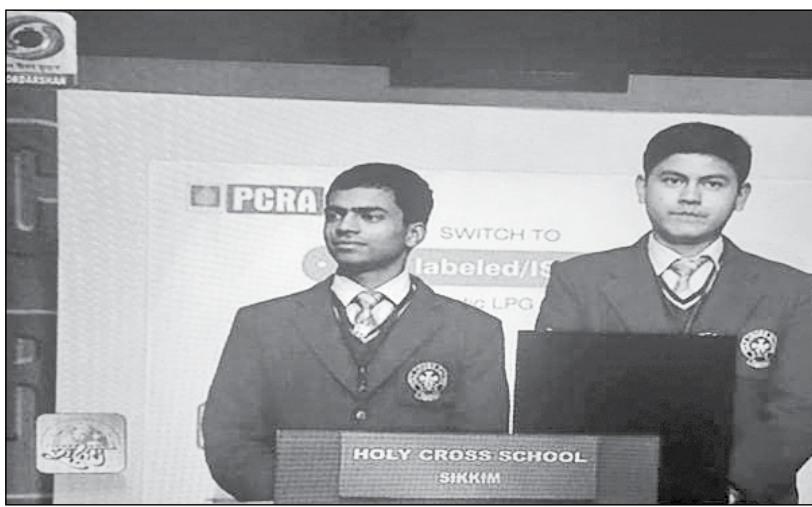
Lingtam Phadamchen Gram Panchayat Unit under Reghu Block Administrative Center, East Sikkim, organised a two-day awareness campaign under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan at Lingtam on 16-17 March, a press release informs.

A garbage management van provided by District Collector [East] was also flagged off during the campaign.

The campaign was attended by Block Development Officer [Reghu], Sabindra Rai, Panchayat President, Dawa Choden Bhutia, locals, Non Government Organizations and students.

Panchayat President Dawa Choden Bhutia thanked Area MLA, Bikram Pradhan, District Collector [East], and BDO [Reghu] for supporting the campaign.

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HOLY CROSS SCHOOL STUDENTS SHINE AT PCRA QUIZ COMPTT

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 18 MAR: Rishal Pandey Chettri and Saurav Kumar from Holy Cross School, Gangtok emerged victorious in the semifinal rounds of the National Level Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) Quiz Competition which was telecast at Doordarshan National today at 09 a.m. The final round will be telecast on 25 Mar.



SVYS conducts Swarved Yatra to ring in New Year

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 18 MAR:**

Sadguru Sadafaldeo Vihangam Yog Sansthan, Sikkim rang in the Hindu New Year by organizing a Swarved Yatra in Gangtok today which kicked off from their office at Tibet Road, a press release

informs.

The yatra culminated at the office after covering areas like Kazi Road and the White Hall complex.

The yatra was organised under the national program initiated by the central office of Sadguru Sadafaldeo Vihangam Yog Sansthan

to spread the message of swarved [the light of soul] and the Swarved Maha Mandir, currently under construction in Varanasi.

The yatra was joined by SVYS members, delegates and members from different organisations of the area.

ATTC student hit by Army truck at Bardang

**YOGEN THATAL
SINGTAM, 18 MAR:**

A student in his early twenties was grievously injured after being hit by an Army truck this morning at Bardang, East Sikkim.

The victim has been identified as an ATTC student. Along with him, six army personnel who were travelling in the ve-



hicle have been injured as well.

An eyewitness told SummitTimes that the victim was waiting for taxi when the 'out of control Army vehicle' hit him.

The driver reportedly

confessed to have 'dozed off' while driving when the accident occurred.

The injured student was immediately rushed to Singtam Hospital for medical examination along with the injured Army personnel.



ABF CONDUCTS SPORTS MEET FOR DIFFERENTLY-ABLED CHILDREN IN SILIGURI

GANGTOK, 18 MAR: Anshul Bansal Foundation (ABF) today organized its second annual athletic meet for underprivileged and differently-abled children, a press release informs. 70 students from four children's homes in Siliguri took part in the sports meet which was attended by Siliguri Mayor, Asok Bhat-tacharya as the chief guest. The children took part in running and other sports activities including 75-meter race.

102 rhinos in Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, census finds

Morigaon (Assam), Mar 18 (PTI): A total of 102 rhinos have been counted in Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary here during a census carried out by the state's forest department, a senior official said today.

The one horned rhino census was conducted after six years in the sanctuary, which has vast tracks of swamp land.

Divisional Forest Officer, Wildlife Division-Guwahati, P Boruah told reporters that 102 rhinos



are there in the 48-sq km Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, the "densest habitat of one horned rhinos in the world".

During the last six

years, six rhinos have been shot dead by poachers in the sanctuary, while 20 others had natural deaths, the DFO said.

Boruah said the sanc-

tuary was badly affected by floods in 2017, but after repair work, there has been heavy turn out of both domestic and foreign tourists this year.

Nepal for "mutually beneficial" ties with India, China: FM

Contd from pg01

mutually beneficial relationship with both in the changed context," Gyawali said, adding that Nepal needs support from both the countries.

"Chinese President Xi was supposed to visit Nepal in 2016, which could not be materialised possibly due to frequent government changes," he said.

Speaking to reporters here, Gyawali said similar high-level visits will take place from Nepal's side also.

He said the government was making necessary preparations for the foreign trip of Nepal Prime Minister K P Oli.

"Prime Minister will make foreign trip soon and we are making necessary preparations to that end. But we have not yet decided from which country he will begin his foreign trip with," he said.

Meanwhile, External Affairs

Minister Sushma Swaraj has congratulated Gyawali on his appointment to the post of Foreign Minister of Nepal.

She made a phone call to congratulate the newly-appointed Foreign Minister on Friday, Indian embassy officials said.

In her congratulatory letter, Swaraj expressed confidence that India-Nepal partnership will be further strengthened during his tenure. She also extended an invitation to Foreign Minister Gyawali to visit India, they said.

Oli expanded his Cabinet and inducted 15 new ministers in his Council of Ministers, including the daughter-in-law of Maoist chief Prachanda, on Friday.

Nepal concluded three phase of provincial, local and parliamentary elections as part of its efforts to implement the new Constitution that was promulgated in Septem-

ber 2015.

The new government led by Left parties convened its first parliament session on March 5 following the elections.

In 2015, when Nepal adopted a new Constitution that split it into seven states, dozens of people were killed in ethnic clashes over territory and rights.

The ethnic Madhesi group, mostly of Indian-origin, protested for months, saying they were not getting enough territory in one of the states and were also facing discrimination.

Violent clashes not only killed 50 people, but also left the country with severe shortages of fuel and medicine because protesters blocked the borders with India.

The protesters finally agreed to the elections after some amendments were made to the Constitution.

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Mutter Matters

From farms to markets on govt or pvt enterprise?

Farmers from Himachal Pradesh are unlikely to vacation in Hong Kong or Japan, or maybe, a decade now years since they began trading there, they have begun holidaying there as well. But that would not have been the case in the year 2007, a year when, if they found themselves in Hong Kong or Japan and decided to visit the sabzi mandis there, they would have ended up buying peas they produced for nearly ten-times the cost they sold them at. Some 600 tonnes of peas grown in the valleys of Himachal Pradesh were purchased by a Punjab-based company and exported with huge success to Japan and Hong Kong in the year 2007.

No, the Himachali farmers were not conned.

They made bulk sales at a handsome Rs. 25 per kg [remember, we are talking year 2007 here]. Peas, even in the inflated markets of Sikkim, are selling in the current 'season time' [eleven years later] for around Rs. 85 per kilo. It is safe to say that 600 tonnes purchased at Rs. 25 per kg in 2007 ensured a major windfall for farmers in Himachal Pradesh, who, as per the agri-data [NHB 2011-12] produce only 6.90 percent of the nation's pea production. This high rate accrued to them becomes even more significant in light of the fact that the exporters had also supplied the seeds to the farmers... for free! Flash forward to the present times. The opportunity opened by exporters from neighbouring Punjab has been seized by growers in HP who now have their own registered food processing partnership specialising in peas and the turnover has been increasing every year.

The lesson here for Sikkim is not necessarily to start growing peas more [although that would not be a bad idea], but to accept that market success soars on the wings of private enterprise, not governmental spoon feeding. Government largesse, and for that matter even private sector indulgence, needs to be capitalised by the real stakeholders and harnessed for sustainable prosperity. Opportunities have to be recognized and unanimously pursued. One is not seeing this follow-up enough in Sikkim as is reflected in the still continuing need to hold "awareness programmes" to convince people of the benefits of organic farming a fortnight short of the proposed ban on import of a slew of vegetables grown in chemically-spiked farms outside. One may have issues of the ban route to boost local enterprise or even unconvinced about nature of the ban, but what cannot be ignored is that an opportunity has been force-created for farms here. What one cannot also help notice is that this development has not triggered the kind of excited engagement and preparation that would have been expected from the growers.

It goes without saying that farmers should have rediscovered organic solutions from previous generations by now and should have been demanding better market access by now, their fields already organic certified and their produce tagged and prepped for markets which respect organo farming. Clearly, the current ban regime flows from the palpable absence of this mood in the fields, which is unfortunate because such engagement would also have kept the concerned agency sharp and on its toes and not recklessly lackadaisical as they continue to appear.

On a similarly note, it was around ten years ago that the State Government had brought Orchid suppliers from Holland to Sikkim. What came of that initiative? It is probably floundering because while the State Government did its part by bringing the potential partners over, from thereon the local entrepreneurs who should have taken over probably did not. International flower festivals have also been held in Sikkim. What was the take away for florists from there? It is easy to blame bureaucratic indifference and even interference, but market realities are different now and private enterprise can overcome these attitudes. But an effort has to be made; something on the lines of what farmers from the Kangra valley of Himachal Pradesh did with peas...

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

Good Politics Bad Economics

SD TSHERING

The promise of freebies to people by political parties if they are voted to power is now a common feature during elections in India. Distribution of freebies during elections or in the pre-election cycle is a deeply ingrained tradition in democratic India. Therefore, there is an upsurge in the trend of doling out freebies to voters in cash or kind in pre and post election periods. Freebies often take the form of cash, bribes, free rice, loan waivers, salary enhancement, and its mandatory practice by parties has taken the centre-stage in all election campaigns.

The pre-election warm-up to next year's Assembly election has already begun in Sikkim with the Sikkim Democratic Front Government making several announcements to attract voters to their camp. The declaration to regularize muster roll workers and home guards is an old promise which has been used by the SDF party in the last few elections. A weak attempt was made a few years back to regularize some muster roll employees but was stopped citing some technical problems. Enhancing the salary of ASHA and Anganwadi workers is also a long pending demand and salary raise has always been taken just before the elections. The implementation of Pay Commission recommendation is the ultimate carrot dangled for the government employees. It is seen that political parties in India do not really care for the economic fallout of the expenditure they splurge on distributing goodies and freebies during election time.

While most large States can afford to splurge on some freebies and goodies, small States like Sikkim, with their limited revenue resources, cannot afford to spend funds to attract voters. The financial impact on regularizing muster roll employees, for instance, is extremely large. Though the government banned muster roll employees, the rule has been confined to paper with political bosses employing muster roll workers without any problem. The state's biggest committed expenditure is on employee salaries along with pensions.

Sikkim has the highest government employee to population ratio in the country which is mainly due to the failure of the government to generate employment in the private sector. Expenditure on salaries is presently about 35.88% of the revenue receipts and 37.25% of revenue expenditure. The committed expenditure of the government comes to around 53.65 % of revenue receipts. The latest announcement to regularize muster roll and home guards along with enhancement of salaries of ASHA workers, Anganwadi, Adhoc and other elected members will run the State to near bankruptcy.

Data on government employees clearly shows that non-regular employees are more than regular employees despite the government orders to curb non regular employment. Irrespective of the loom-

Number of Government Employees

Regular	31216
Muster Roll	13542
Workcharged	1592
Consolidated	2646
Adhoc	13024
Co-terminus	641
Substitute	68
Contract	286
Central govt/Deputation	49
Homeguard	1046
Honorarium	2905
Elected/Nominated	255
Total (Regular+Nonregular)	67270

Estimated financial burden	Amount in lacs
Pay revision	17343.48
MR and Home guard regularization	797.04
ASHA/Anganwadi pay raise	326.04
Elected members pay raise	268.56
Total	18735.12

ing financial disaster in the horizon, the government seeks to please the non regular employees by offering them wage hikes and regularization.

The State, which already has a huge debt accounting per head loan burden of Rs 77,850 for every citizen of Sikkim, is fully dependent on the center for funds with only 26% of its revenue being generated internally and the remaining coming from the center. Growth of liabilities stands at 17% while growth of assets comes to around 8.47%. Committed expenditure stands around 53.65% of revenue receipts.

The expenditure on salaries would be more than 70% of total expenditure leaving little funds for other works.

In such a bleak financial scenario, taking such decisions without considering the future financial implication is pure economic suicide. The financial impact of the recent announcement will force the state into total financial crisis. Calculating the burden of pay revision at half the raise of 23.55% of central government employees at 12% without taking into consideration the arrears payment annually is staggering. And add to that salary payment to home guards who have completed 15 years and muster roll employees who have attained five years of service. There is an estimated 4,000 Muster Roll employees and Home Guards who are eligible as per the government announcement for regularization. Also to factored in is salary enhancement of minimum of Rs 1000 to elected members of Panchayats, Municipal Nagars, MLAs, ASHA and Anganwadi workers.

The total revenue expenditure in 2015-16 stood at 85 % of the total expenditure of the state. The

Expenditure on Salaries (budgeted)

Year	Amount in lacs	% increase
2011-12	74027	
2012-13	85145	15.02
2013-14	94138	10.56
2014-15	108612	15.38
2015-16	126408	16.38
2016-17	144529	14.34

Salaries as % of revenue receipts

2011-12	30.45
2012-13	29.53
2013-14	28.09
2014-15	30.25
2015-16	35.88
2018-19 (estimated)	51.44

additional expenditure will raise the percentage much higher. Along with the committed expenditure on salaries there is also expenditure on interest payment and subsidies which will further raise the committed expenditure of the government. With more than half of revenue going to committed expenditure the expenditure on other sectors will be further curtailed. The government has been able till now to adhere to the FRBM requirement of deficit to 3.5% of GDP due to the high growth of GDP which is mainly due to the contribution from the Pharmaceutical companies which are reporting high turnovers. If the contributions from these companies are deflated, then the state would have defaulted on the FRBM requirement long ago.

The high GDP has also enabled the government to go for higher borrowings but the additional expenditure on salaries will curb the government from further borrowings since the capacity to repay will come down. The vision of earning thousands of crores from hydel projects already evaporated and strict grant of funds from Central Government, Sikkim is rapidly moving towards bankruptcy with the government more concerned about wooing voters than the fiscal health of the state. With all opposition parties more concerned with other issues, the attention to the breakdown of financial health has been neglected. Since the economy of the state is government expenditure centric any fiscal slowdown will immediately decelerate economic activities in the state which will give rise to unemployment, poverty and growth of social discontentment. Though the recent promises of the government may be good politics, it is a bad economic decision.

[The writer is former Director General of Department of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, Government of Sikkim]

I was a student of Stephen Hawking's – here's what he taught me

MARIKA TAYLOR

theconversation.com

Like many students of my generation, Stephen Hawking had already had enormous influence on me long before we ever met. When I was hesitating about my A-level choices, it was his book A Brief History of Time that convinced me to continue with physical sciences. In 1994, Hawking and mathematical physicist Roger Penrose gave a series of inspiring lectures about cosmology in Cambridge. As a direct result, I chose courses on black holes and relativity for my fourth year of study at the University of Cambridge.

I first saw Hawking when I was an undergraduate. At that time he was living in an apartment building just behind my student house. He was already so famous that friends would come to my room just to watch him leaving and entering his apartment. But as an undergraduate I never tried to talk with him, feeling much too junior and intimidated.

After I finished my fourth year, I was invited in to talk to Hawking, who was already using a speech synthesizer, about options for my PhD. I was quite nervous when I first met him, but he jumped straight into physics and soon we were discussing black holes. I became a student at the time of the "Second String Theory Revolution" in theoretical physics. Hawking had not worked actively in string theory, but he was very keen to understand the new ideas.

Following that meeting, he sent me off to read all the papers that Edward Witten, a famous string theorist, had written that year. My task was to come back and summarise them

for him – the student teaching the master. It's difficult to describe how hard this task actually was: Hawking expected me to jump straight to the frontier of string theory as a starting graduate student. He also chose the title for my PhD thesis: "Problems in M-theory", which I worked on from 1995 to 1998.

I can only hope that my explanations of string theory were helpful. Hawking went back and forth on his views on M-theory, but eventually ended up thinking that it may be our best bet for a theory of everything.

NO HAND-HOLDING

PhD students were enormously important to Hawking. In the early phase of his illness, his students helped take care of him. By the time I



became his student he needed round-the-clock nursing. At this point, his students were no longer involved in his physical care, but remained essential to his research. Theoretical physics begins with ideas and concepts, but these then evolve into explicit detailed calculations. Hawking had a remarkable ability to do complex calculations in his head, but he still relied on collaborators to develop and complete his research projects.

Theoretical physicists typically give early PhD students "safe" research projects, and guide them through the calculations required. As the students develop, the projects become more ambitious and risky and students are expected to work inde-

pendently. However, PhD students working with Hawking did not have the luxury of this gentle introduction – he needed us to work on his own high-risk, high-gain projects.

Hawking's communication via his speech synthesizer was necessarily concise and he simply could not provide detailed guidance about calculations, making it extremely challenging to work with him. But it was also stimulating, forcing students to be creative and independent. He did give praise when he thought it was due. He once sent me away with a very hard problem – finding exact rotating black hole solutions of Einstein's equations with a cosmological constant – and was stunned when I came back a few days later with the solution. I can't even remember exactly what he said but I will never forget his enormous smile.

Hawking was a determined and stubborn person. On many occasions he got through serious medical issues with sheer determination. This same determination could make him very difficult to work. But it could also push research projects forward: Hawking would refuse to give up on seemingly unsolvable problems.

In fact, never giving up is the main thing Hawking has taught me – to keep attacking problems from different directions, to reach for the hardest problems and find a way to solve them. It's immensely important as a scientist, but also in other aspects of life.

PITHY ONE-LINERS

Hawking was devoted to his family. His eyes would light up when one of his children came to visit or when he proudly showed us pictures of his first grandchild. In many respects, Hawking treated his PhD students and collaborators as a second family. However busy he was, he always made time for us, often making dignitaries wait outside his office while he talked physics with a student. He would eat lunch with us several times per week, and funded a weekly lunch

for the wider group to bring everyone together.

There were many occasions when physics discussions merged seamlessly into social activities: going to the pub, eating dinner at one of his favourite Cambridge restaurants, and so on. Hawking had a wonderful sense of humour. He turned his communication difficulties into an advantage, composing pithy one-liners. For instance when changing his mind about what happens to information in a black hole, he announced it in the pub by turning the volume up on his synthesizer, saying simply: "I'm coming out." He would discuss anything and everything in a social setting: politics, movies, other branches of science, music.

As we worked in closely related fields, we saw each other regularly even after I finished my PhD. In 2017, I attended a conference in Cambridge celebrating his 75th birthday. The list of participants illustrates Hawking's influence on academia and beyond. Many of his former students and collaborators have gone on to become leaders in research in cosmology, gravitational waves, black holes and string theory. Others have had huge impact outside academia, such as Nathan Myhrvold at Microsoft.

There is currently pressure on academics to demonstrate the immediate impact of their research on society. It is perhaps worth reflecting that impact is not easily measurable on short time scales. Hawking's was truly blue-sky research – and yet it has fascinated millions, attracting many into scientific careers. His academic legacy is not just the remarkable science he produced, but the generations of minds he shaped.

There's no doubt Hawking's death is a huge loss to physics. But personally, what I will miss most is his humour and the general feeling of inspiration I got from being around him.

[The writer is Professor in Theoretical Physics, University of Southampton]



INDIAN ARMY ORGANIZES VETERANS RALLY IN PEDONG

GANGTOK, 18 MAR: A Veterans Rally was organized by the Indian Army at Pedong in West Bengal today under the aegis of Black Cat Division to address the concerns of veterans and their families, including veer naris and veer matas. The rally was attended by 500 veterans and their families, a press release informs.

The rally aimed at strengthening the traditional bonds and solidarity amongst serving personnel and the veterans. The rally assisted in resolving the problems of veterans and also empowering them with respect to various policies and facilities concerning them and their dependents. Veterans, veer naris, veer matas, widows and veterans of World War II, disabled soldiers and senior citizens were also felicitated during the rally, the release reads.

Jethmalani calls for Mamata-led third front to "oust" Modi

INDORE, MAR 18 (PTI): Renowned lawyer Ram Jethmalani today called for formation of a third front led by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to "oust Prime Minister Narendra Modi" in the next Lok Sabha elections.

Both Congress and BJP governments have been deliberately apathetic to recovery of black money stashed in "Germany and other countries", Jethmalani said, speaking to reporters here.

"They have committed a joint crime of cheating people."

Therefore, a third front of honest leaders is needed," the former Union Law Minister said.

"I want Mamata Banerjee to lead the third front to oust prime minister Narendra Modi in the next general elections. Mamata has the ability to be the prime minister," said Jethmalani, a one-time Modi supporter who later became the prime minister's bitter critic.

The senior lawyer also criticised Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and the NDA government over their policy on black money. The NDA government has no right to stay in power, he said.



Bengali movie based on euthanasia theme to hit screen in May

KOLKATA, MAR 18 (PTI): A Bengali film based on the theme of euthanasia is all set to hit the screen in May this year after getting approval from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

The movie "Pupa" would be probably first on the subject of euthanasia after the Supreme Court had recently recognised a 'living will' made by terminally-ill patients for passive euthanasia.

A five-judge constitution bench, headed by Chief Justice of India Dipak Mishra had on March 9 last said passive euthanasia and advance living will are 'permissible'.

CBFC has given certificate to the Bangla film "Pupa", a movie which debates the issue of euthanasia after the region-

al office here had initially asked the director to cut all scenes showing syringe and vials.

Director Indrashis Acharya told PTI here, the CBFC Mumbai agreed to give U/A certification to the film and only recommended putting a disclaimer that the film did not promote mercy killing and blur the label of the syringe and vial.

"The CBFC Kolkata had six months back asked me to cut the scenes showing syringe and vials administered into body which I did not agree. I then moved the revising committee and after the six month long battle now I am sensing victory. I hope to release the film commercially by this May," Acharya said today.

He said the revising

committee, which consisted of a popular actor and a well known director, did not find anything objectionable in the scenes showing syringe and vials and "found the film's treatment of the issue of mercy killing subtle."

Acharya also thanked the new CBFC Kolkata office head Samrat Bandyopadhyay for "His help in resolving the situation and ensuring the film, which had been screened in the Kolkata International Film Festival 2017, was screened before the Revising Committee in Mumbai on Thursday last."

Pupa revolves round an expatriate Bengali in the US whose father has slipped into coma and how he was faced with a predicament whether or not to stay back in India.

Chhetri named 'Hero' of ISL, Corominas wins Golden Boot

BENGALURU, MAR 18 (PTI): A title triumph may have eluded his team but Bengaluru FC skipper Sunil Chhetri was named the 'Hero' of Indian Super League's fourth edition for his leadership and goal-scoring prowess.

Chennaiyin FC triumphed with a 3-2 victory over Bengaluru FC in the title clash here on Saturday.

The Bengaluru FC skipper was not only instrumental in taking Bengaluru FC to the final scoring a hat-trick in the semifinals against FC Pune City but also his partnership with Venezuelan co-striker Nicol s Ladislao Fedor or Miku made his team a force to reckon with.

His impact was visible throughout the league including the final where he scored with a flying header to give BFC an early lead.

He is the highest Indian scorer with 14 goals and third in the overall list behind Golden Boot winner Ferran Corominas (18) of FC Goa and his teammate Miku (15).

ISL-4 also belonged to a number of emerging Indian talents with players like Udanta Singh, Ashique Kuruniyan, Sarthak Golui, Hitesh Sharma, Ji-



tender Negi, Pranjal Bhuj, Baoringdao Bodo all making a mark with their stand-out performances.

But Kerala Blasters FC's 23-year-old Mizo defender Lalruatthara walked away with the ISL Emerging Player of the Season Award.

The ex-Aizwal FC player, Lalruatthara was a regular in the KBFC line-up playing in 17 out of their 18 games.

BFC's 21-year-old Manipur forward Udanta walked away with the DHL Winning Pass of

the League Award. Both BFC's goal in the final against CFC came from Udanta's assist. First it was Chhetri who scored the opening goal from a cross from Udanta and then Miku pulled one back in the dying minutes from an assist from the 21-year-old.

FC Goa star striker Ferran Corominas won the Golden Boot for his consistency in finding the back of the net.

If FCG has made it to the semis, Coro definitely has played a very big role

in it. His swiftness, accuracy and a goal conversation rate of over 38 percent made him one of the most feared strikers this season.

The Golden Glove Award went to debutants Jamshedpur FC's wall, Subrata Paul, for having made 44 saves, which included an envious seven clean sheets in 18 matches. If Jamshedpur FC possessed one of the most robust defensive unit in the league, a lot can be attributed to the 31-year-old custodian under the bar.

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A+ category was proposed by Virat and Dhoni: Rai

KUSHAN SARKAR

NEW DELHI, MAR 18 (PTI): Contrary to popular belief that Mahendra Singh Dhoni was relegated from the elite category of central contracts, it was the former skipper himself who wanted an A+ grade for top performers, says CoA chief Vinod Rai.

Twenty-six cricketers have been handed central contracts with skipper Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Jasprit Bumrah being included in the Rs 7 crore A+ category. Dhoni is in the A category with Rs 5 crore annual retainerhip.

"This A+ category was proposed by the players themselves. We had a discussion about this category with Dhoni and Virat. They proposed that there should be category of world-class excellence in which players who play all three formats of the game should be there," Rai told PTI in an exclusive interview.

The head of the Committee of Administrators said both Dhoni and Kohli wanted A+ to be a functional category to indicate who are the Indian team's top performers.

"This should be a functional category where players move in and out. Also it will show that the best in the business are rewarded as per performance."

What the former CAG found heartening was the camaraderie between Kohli and Dhoni.

"Their camaraderie is exceptional with so much mutual respect. Virat respects Dhoni's cricketing acumen and Dhoni respects what Virat is achieving as a player," said Rai.

In fact, Virat has told the CoA why he thinks Dhoni is irreplaceable in the limited overs set up as of now.

"Virat feels that there are no faster



pair of gloves than MS Dhoni today. Also Dhoni's cricketing mind honed over so many years is an asset for Virat. As far as how many years of cricket is left in him, time and his performance will tell," he said.

Rai said that the best part about central contracts was that it ensured a decent earning for domestic players.

"These increases have been proposed in consultation with the players. Domestic players, who were getting Rs 10-12 lakh per annum, will now get Rs 20-22 lakh per annum in addition to the earnings from Gross Revenue System (profits from TV broadcast).

"Now with this kind of salary, domestic players can concentrate on their game without looking for jobs," Rai said.

There was a lot of anguish among

BCCI office bearers at not being consulted and the finance committee being allegedly bypassed, but Rai set the record straight.

"We discussed with players and we placed the proposal to the office-bearers. The package was there with them from September (2017) and there's nothing new in it. Finance committee did not meet is a fact but package was known to them," said Rai.

"They did not even have any comments to make. Finally when we again met the players (during Sri Lanka series), we showed them and they did it was reasonable. So we decided to put it out as players have contracts and their insurances are in place before IPL," he said.

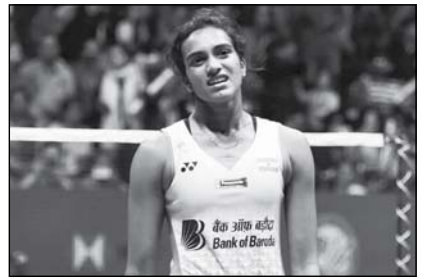
The retired bureaucrat feels that

while everyone is happy to call themselves cricket administrators, very few know the practical problems the players have.

"Nobody knows the plight of the cricketers than the cricketers themselves. They are interacting with cricketers everyday. In fact it was the cricketers who gave us names of former players who are facing difficulty in getting two meals together."

The CoA chief said no administrator should forget that they are there because of those 11 people who sweat it out on the cricket field.

"The only thing we should never compromise is cricketers' benefit. Whether it is the administrators or the media, we all sustain because 11 people play on the ground," he concluded.



Sindhu loses epic semifinal to bow out of All England Championship

BIRMINGHAM, MAR 18 (PTI): Olympic silver medallist shuttler P V Sindhu lost an epic semifinal against World No. 2 Japanese Akane Yamaguchi to bow out of the USD 1000,000 All England Championship in Birmingham.

Sindhu failed to build on a handsome lead in the decider to go down 21-19 19-21 18-21 to Yamaguchi after battling for an hour and 19 minutes last night. This was the ninth victory on the trot for the 20-year-old Japanese, who had won the German Open early this month.

In scenes similar to the one that went down to the wire in the summit clash of last year's Dubai Super Series Final, both Sindhu and Yamaguchi threw themselves for everything on the court, traversing diagonally again and again during a series of punishing rallies, which defined the edge-of-the-seat thriller.

However, in the end it was Yamaguchi, who showed better nerves to walk away with the match and book a place at the final against World No. 1 Taiwanese Tai Tzu Ying at the Arena Birmingham.

Despite being on the court for almost 3 and a half hours during the three-game matches in last three days, Sindhu didn't show any signs of fatigue and matched the nimble-footed Yamaguchi as they looked to outdo each other. But a slight lapse of concentration in the dying moments contributed to her defeat.

Sindhu, who has come out victorious in six of their nine previous matches, made an aggressive start with a smash and rode on unforced errors from Yamaguchi to jump to a 5-0 lead.

Playing with the drift, the Japanese struggled to keep the shuttle inside court initially.

A couple of shots going out from Sindhu and a tight net play saw Yamaguchi make it 3-8. Sindhu hit a stunning down-the-line smash but twice she erred at the forecourt as the Japanese moved to 5-9. However, Sindhu enjoyed a healthy 11-5 lead

at the first break.

The Japanese dynamo made Sindhu work hard with her attacking game. The Indian too tried to create angled strokes to put her opponent in difficult situations. Yamaguchi hit one at long and found the net twice as Sindhu lead 14-7.

Yamaguchi continued to commit unforced errors as Sindhu doubled her lead at 16-8. However, the Indian missed one at the forehand forecourt and made a bad judgement to allow Yamaguchi reach double figures.

The Japanese kept fighting and started forcing Sindhu into error to narrow the lead to 15-17. A long rally ensued next which ended with Sindhu failing to sent one across at the forecourt. Another missed chance at the backhand forecourt and it was 17-17.

It was again a couple of unforced errors which broke the run of points as Sindhu led 19-18. A great judgement at the back line gave Sindhu two game points. Yamaguchi saved one with a half smash before Sindhu sealed the opening game with a smash and celebrated with a fist pump.

The fast-paced rallies continued after the change of sides as the duo looked to outdo each other. Yamaguchi dictated the rallies but Sindhu kept up with her rival as the duo split the initial 14 points.

It was quite a task to tame the baby-faced Japanese as she was extremely fast on the court and retrieved most of the diagonal strokes that Sindhu threw at her. In the end, a jump cross court angled smash and then a return after catching the shuttle early helped Yamaguchi reach 11-9 lead at the interval.

After the break, a tight net play followed by a smash and then an easy mistake by Yamaguchi saw Sindhu make it 12-12.

Yamaguchi, however, soon opened up a four point lead at 18-14. A cross court drive earned the Indian a point. But she couldn't reach the forecourt to retrieve a slow drop by the Japanese.

Hyderabad, Rajkot to host WI tests, Delhi gets Australia ODI

NEW DELHI, MAR 18 (PTI): Either Hyderabad or Rajkot may host India's maiden day-night Test match when the West Indies will arrive for a tour, later this year.

The BCCI on Saturday finalised Indian team's home series itinerary and picked the two centres for hosting Test matches during the West Indies tour.

"If the Committee of Administrators (CoA) gives its approval, one of the two centres will host the Test under floodlights," a BCCI source told PTI.

The CoA was unhappy that acting secretary Amitabh Chaudhary had explored had discussed the possibility of playing a day-night Test with Ravi Shastri even as the head coach was not averse to the idea.

According to India's home series itinerary, the Indian team will play only three Test matches at home -- the historic first against Afghanistan in June along with two more against West Indies in October after Diwali.

Apart from that, India will also host the Caribbeans for five ODIs in Mumbai, Guwahati, Korch, Indore and Pune in early November. The series will end with three Twenty20 Internationals at Kolkata, Chennai and Kanpur. The Kolkata T20 will held on November 4 but dates for other matches are yet to be known.

CAB president Sourav Ganguly was a special invitee (as technical committee chairman) at the Tours and Fixtures Committee meeting on Saturday.

Apart from Ganguly, acting secretary Amitabh Chaudhary, GM (Cricket Operations) Saba Karim and Rajan Tiwary were present. CEO Rahul Johri is in Dubai for a strategic group meeting of ICC while acting president CK Khanna didn't attend due to personal reasons.

India will leave for Australia after the Twenty20 series for a two-month long tour.

They will again host Australia for five ODIs and two T20 Internationals in February-March.

Chennaiyin coach Gregory takes exception to Gurpreet comments

BENGALURU, MAR 18 (PTI): A war of words has broken out after an entertaining Indian Super League final, with Chennaiyin FC coach John Gregory taking exception to Bengaluru FC goalkeeper Gurpreet Sandhu's "we won league stage and so we are champions" quip, saying his team has won the crown fair and square.

Chennaiyin defeated Bengaluru 3-2 in the summit clash to clinch the title of the fourth edition of ISL at the Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday night.

Just after the match ended, Bengaluru and India number one goalkeeper Gurpreet said "we are the champions because we won the league stage".

Asked at the post match conference about Gurpreet's comments, Chennaiyin head coach Gregory said, "I was honestly disappointed to hear these words. We won the cup is what I know."

"A large number of countries use this format. Play-offs were introduced in the UK about 20 years ago. You could finish sixth in your division and still win promotion to the Premiership. You could finish 20 points behind the champion.

In my years, we did it, we fin-



ished sixth, well behind Portsmouth and then won promotion," said the former Aston Villa boss.

Bengaluru had finished at the top in the league stage, eight points ahead of second-placed Chennaiyin and then stormed into the final after clinching a two-leg semifinal play-offs against FC Pune City.

"Everybody knows we finished first, eight points above Chennaiyin. We are human beings, the players did an incredible job. I am sad for them and the fans. But that's football," Bengaluru FC head coach Albert Roca said.

He said it's left for others to judge whether the structure of the tournament was fair or needs to be changed to reward the teams which finish top of the league stage.

"It is too easy for him to say yes. I think even some of their (Chennaiyin) players came to us and said we should not have been in this

situation. The tournament is like it is and we cannot change that. It is not for me to say that is fair or not. It is for you to say," he added.

Bengaluru and India captain Sunil Chhetri expressed disappointment.

"The fact is that we had 40 points and won the league stage. Sadly, we could not win the final."

Gregory praised Mailson Alves for his two crucial strikes which saw Chennaiyin win their second ISL title.

"Big man (Mailson) had scored twice all season, but has had lot of opportunities. Today he couldn't have connected any better for both goals, which were almost identical."

He said he was delighted to hear the final whistle after a long season, especially after Bengaluru had reduced the margin by one goal in the dying minutes of the final match.

"We showed a lot of gumption. We did not let anything bother us. This was a big obstacle, playing against the home team in a final. They are just an incredible group of players."

Gregory lauded captain Henrique Sereno for braving an injury and yet playing the entire match.

J&K needs 2,500 playfields, says State Sport Council

SRINAGAR, MAR 18 (PTI): Jammu and Kashmir needs 2500 play fields for its 1.21 crore population to harness its true sporting potential and take sports from the capitals to other districts and towns of the state, according to the State Sports Council.

Officials at the supervisory body for sports activities in the state, feel that the existing 137 play fields -- mostly concentrated in Jammu and Srinagar -- are just too small in number to allow a proper environment for budding sportspersons of the state. According to officials, while Srinagar district accounts for 29 of the 103 playfields of the valley, Jammu district has half of the 34 playfields in entire Jammu region which consists of 10 districts.

Surprisingly, Ladakh region -- consisting of Leh and Kargil districts -- has no play field at all, an official said.

The council has formulated an ambitious plan of making play fields accessible to all the people of the state but it will require massive funding.

With no resources of its own, the Council is looking up to the state government and the Centre to fund this massive development of sports infrastructure.

"The infrastructure requirement has been projected to the Chief Minister during a meeting recently and the draft paper envisages one play field each for every 8,000 persons," said a Sports Council official on conditions of anonymity.

The official said while there is enor-

mous talent and potential as far as sports is concerned, lack of proper sporting facilities is proving a major stumbling block in the transition of players from the state to the level where they will be in reckoning for representing the country.

"We have players like Parvez Rasool (Kashmir's only international cricketer) and Manzoor Pandav (who was recently signed by IPL franchise Kings XI Punjab) coming through the ranks. They have showcased their talent even though we do not have proper training facilities other than the cricket stadium where only limited number of players have access," the official said.

He also cited the example of top footballers like former Indian captain Majid

Kakroo, Mehrajuddin Wadoo and Ishfaq Ahmad who have shone at the national level.

"We have now got an astro turf where our footballers can practice throughout the year. The Results have started to show in very short span of time. We have two teams from Kashmir playing the I-League second division and some players from the valley have gone to play in European clubs. There is no dearth of talent," he said.

The athletes from the state have won over 250 medals in zonal and national level sporting events during 2016-17, the official said adding this was testimony to the enthusiasm for sports in the state.

As per the projections for infrastructure development, the Sports Council

wants the number of playing fields in Baramulla district to be increased from present 22 to 320.

Similarly, in Anantnag district, the council wants to add 258 playing grounds to the existing 17 grounds.

The council, in its report, has laid major thrust on increasing the number of play fields in Jammu division from 34 to 1302 in order to provide sporting opportunities to the nearly 70 lakh population.

It has also proposed 200 playing fields for Udhampur district, 197 for Rajouri, 185 for Kathua, 175 for Jammu district, and around 100 each play fields for other districts of the division. Only Doda (50) and Samba (68) districts have got a proposal of less than 100 play fields.



Chinese Premier Li re-elected for second five-year term

BEIJING, MAR 18 (PTI): Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, the no. 2 leader of the ruling Communist Party, was today re-elected for a second five-year tenure by China's rubber-stamp parliament, a day after Xi Jinping was re-appointed as the president with no limits on the number of terms he can serve.

Li, 62, who was nominated on behalf of Xi, was re-appointed with 2,964 votes in favour and two against during the annual session of the National People's Congress at Beijing's Great Hall of the People.

Li maintained a low profile under the Chinese president mainly looking after the country's economy as Xi consolidated power and surrounded himself with powerful aides.

Li completed the first five-year tenure along with Xi who is now regarded as the "core" leader of the party placed along with party founder Mao Zedong.

Xi, 64, was yesterday re-elected unanimously by 2970 deputies of the NPC, days after it ratified constitutional amendment to remove the decades old two-term limit for the president and vice president posts.

He was also re-elected as the Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) which is the overall high command of the two million strong Chinese military, the world's largest.

Xi's loyalist and close confidant Wang Qishan has been elected as vice president, who like Xi is set for a lifelong tenure.

Other officials who got elected included was Yang Xiaodu director of the national supervisory commission, a newly formed anti-corruption body with statutory powers.

MISSING



Ms Rebika Biswakarma, D/o. Govind Biswakarma, age about 13 years, R/o of Kumrek, East Sikkim is missing. Any information regarding her or anyone seen her please inform Ranipool Police Station or Contact: **03592-251712**.

Lanka Prez Sirisena lifts nationwide state of emergency

COLOMBO, MAR 18 (PTI): Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena today lifted a nationwide state of emergency imposed on March 6 for the first time since the civil war following days of communal violence between majority Sinhala Buddhists and minority Muslims in the country.

President Sirisena, who returned to Sri Lanka last night from an official visit to India and Japan, removed the state of emergency as the situation in the country returned to normal.

"Upon assessing the public safety situation, I instructed to revoke the



State of Emergency from midnight yesterday, he tweeted today.

The government imposed a state of emergency on March 6 and blocked Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media sites following anti-Muslim violence in the island's central hills

Kandy and Ampara districts in which three people were killed and hundreds of Muslim-owned properties, including mosques, were damaged.

Facing flak from the Opposition for not lifting the blockade on social media despite improvement in the situation,

the government lifted the ban on Facebook on March 15 after officials from the US social media giant agreed to step up efforts to remove hate speech posted on its platform during the anti-Muslim violence.

The communal violence was triggered by the death of a Sinhalese man at the hands of a mob.

The government had deployed thousands of troops to restore peace and protect the minority Muslims and their property.

"The President decided to revoke the order in view of the improved security situation," a presi-

dential official said.

The police arrested more than 200 people for violence against Muslims.

It was the first time in seven years Sri Lanka had imposed the measure. The country was under a state of emergency for nearly three decades when the government fought Tamil rebels LTTE in the civil war that ended in 2009.

Violence has risen in the Buddhist-majority country since 2012, with some headline Buddhist groups accusing Muslims of forcing people to convert to Islam and vandalising Buddhist archaeological sites.



The Government is preparing further moves against Russia following a day of tit-for-tat action over the poisoning of former spy Sergei Skripal. Speaking at the Conservative spring forum on Saturday, Theresa May said Britain "would never tolerate a threat to the life" of its citizens, or others in the country, from the Russian government. "This act of Russian aggression is the very antithesis of the liberal and democratic values that define the United Kingdom," she said. The pledge comes as 23 British diplomats based in Russia begin packing their bags as they are expelled from the country in retaliation for Russian representatives being told to leave the UK.

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Xi's loyalist and close confidant Wang Qishan has been elected as vice president, who

like Xi is set for a lifelong tenure.

Other officials who got elected included was Yang Xiaodu director of the national supervisory commission, a newly formed anti-corruption body with statutory powers.

Xu Qiliang and Zhang Youxia were elected as vice chairmen of the Central Military Commission (CMC) headed by Xi.

The NPC which has approved a complete overhaul of the Chinese government is also expected to nominate a host of new officials including a new foreign minister and governor of the central bank, the People's Bank of China.

The NPC deputies also elected president of the Supreme People's Court, procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, and members of the 13th NPC Standing Committee.

India, US two-plus-two dialogue postponed: US official

WASHINGTON, MAR 18 (PTI): The first Indo-US two-plus-two dialogue has been postponed due to the uncertainty over the confirmation of Mike Pompeo as the new Secretary of State, an American official said after President Donald Trump fired Rex Tillerson.

The two-day dialogue, announced last summer when Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a successful meeting with President Trump at the White House, was tentatively scheduled for April 18-19.

"It has been postponed for now," an informed US official said.

The official wishing anonymity, however, quickly pointed out that it would have no impact on the bilateral relationship as the meetings this week by the foreign and defence secretaries decided to continue with their agenda.

There was no official announcement of the high-level dialogue in-

volving the foreign and defence ministers from the two countries.

India's foreign and defence secretaries were here early this week for preparatory talks with their American counterparts.

The Indian delegation landed in Washington DC amidst the firing of Tillerson as the Secretary of State by Trump.

The delegation continued with their meetings both at the State Department and at the Pentagon as scheduled, during which it was decided to hold the dialogue at a later date, which appears unlikely before the summer.

The dialogue was seen as a vehicle to elevate the strategic relationship between the two countries.

After June last year, the two countries have tried at several other dates for the dialogue to take place, including sometime in November and December.

MIZORAM STATE LOTTERIES

LABHLAXMI LIBRA

Draw No:6 DrawDate on:18/03/18

1st Prize Rs.10,000/- 6570

2nd Prize Rs.1,000/- 1780 3rd Prize Rs.500/- 5574

4th Prize Rs.300/- 5232 5th Prize Rs. 206/- 2239

6th Prize Rs.100/-

1012 1017 1024 1043 1160 1162 1214 1232 1243 1247

1260 1263 1289 1293 1297 1317 1322 1340 1385 1479

1520 1522 1574 1611 1620 1664 1669 1742 1818 1821

1868 1879 1880 1901 1910 1919 1952 1960 1965 1969

1977 1987 1994 2009 2117 2139 2211 2219 2220 2276

2289 2299 2344 2348 2375 2432 2433 2458 2464 2466

2467 2492 2496 2502 2513 2601 2602 2605 2613 2619

2633 2738 2755 2759 2761 2765 2767 2768 2769 2771

2804 2809 2810 2827 2836 2868 2899 2986 3002 3018

3066 3092 3113 3141 3161 3172 3178 3181 3185 3201

3208 3213 3234 3250 3282 3299 3342 3361 3370 3388

3400 3409 3417 3420 3430 3449 3610 3629 3640 3649

3650 3651 3697 3724 3757 3794 3877 3920 3980 3985

4006 4120 4167 4215 4230 4262 4267 4292 4294 4314

4329 4342 4449 4532 4555 4563 4607 4639 4680 4699

4702 4731 4753 4794 4808 4812 4841 4852 4933 4971

5035 5043 5068 5107 5109 5115 5119 5128 5200 5270

5276 5297 5317 5354 5366 5447 5459 5539 5613 5642

5658 5693 5754 5758 5766 5807 5846 5866 5907 5912

5948 5982 6019 6022 6059 6105 6135 6171 6194 6196

6239 6245 6253 6256 6368 6378 6394 6406 6413 6426

6435 6441 6468 6481 6482 6528 6593 6594 6634 6660

6714 6731 6745 6753 6772 6779 6826 6831 6857 6859

6862 6881 6885 6886 6893 6902 6919 6933 6946 6956

Issued by:

The Director ,Mizoram State Lotteries,

For result please visit: www.mizoramlotteries.com

ARUNACHAL PRADESH STATE LOTTERIES

MUMBAILAXMI RANI

Draw No:6 DrawDate on:18/03/18

1st Prize Rs.10,000/- 1694 2nd Prize Rs.2,000/- 4088

3rd Prize Rs. 1,000/- 4168 4th Prize Rs. 506/- 3853

5th Prize Rs.200/-

1041 1047 1185 1192 1203 1263 1331 1443 1444 1472

1480 1487 1500 1547 1708 1743 1790 1901 1903 1952

1985 1997 2013 2026 2097 2110 2111 2114 2149 2229

2261 2272 2295 2296 2304 2416 2458 2477 2488 2553

2585 2651 2699 2705 2762 2768 2795 2843 2987 3080

3148 3189 3202 3233 3276 3291 3333 3343 3392 3410

3485 3487 3523 3524 3533 3539 3848 3850 3912 3962

3976 4148 4198 4231 4250 4407 4425 4748 4911 5000

5026 5066 5167 5171 5177 5178 5198 5214 5254 5294

5322 5336 5360 5409 5456 5490 5753 5778 5796 5841

6th Prize Rs.100/-

1003 1106 1115 1169 1222 1251 1260 1277 1298 1317

1325 1327 1332 1398 1411 1441 1450 1461 1530 1550

1593 1628 1648 1662 1672 1695 1706 1809 1823 1828

1851 1871 1914 1916 1929 1942 1948 1969 1977 2008

2009 2022 2030 2059 2073 2075 2116 2128 2131 2173

2178 2179 2219 2221 2250 2284 2347 2399 2412 2457

2460 2491 2494 2496 2499 2501 2513 2519 2537 2538

2549 2558 2571 2613 2618 2621 2627 2655 2678 2720

2763 2764 2766 2781 2792 2814 2839 2884 2909 2912

2949 2985 2993 3007 3041 3074 3178 3099 3104 3107

3110 3157 3187 3217 3230 3236 3240 3267 3275 3288

3298 3320 3349 3360 3401 3406 3440 3445 3493 3503

3518 3543 3563 3580 3620 3621 3673 3678 3732 3745

3747 3780 3782 3840 3857 3867 3885 3897 3898 3913

3920 3922 3950 4003 4037 4044 4059 4155 4177 4281

4285 4322 4336 4366 4415 4436 4448 4504 4526 4581

4607 4678 4749 4759 4839 4856 4871 4883 4912 4965

4982 4985 5011 5012 5090 5118 5131 5159 5174 5208

5273 5310 5315 5413 5441 5485 5587 5607 5618 5649

5676 5712 5771 5808 5830 5837 5890 5958 5961 5999

Issued by:

The Commissioner,

ARUNACHAL PRADESH STATE LOTTERIES,ITANAGAR.

NAGALAND STATE LOTTERIES		NAGALAND STATE LOTTERIES		NAGALAND STATE LOTTERIES	
DEAR AFFECTIONATE MORNING		DEAR RESPECT		DEAR HAWK EVENING	
Draw Time: 11:55 am onwards		Draw Time: 04:00 pm onwards		Draw Time: 08:00 pm onwards	
Draw No:15 DrawDate on:18/03/18		Draw No:15 DrawDate on:18/03/18		Draw No:33 DrawDate on:18/03/18	
1st Prize Rs.26 Lakhs/- 901 49287		1st Prize Rs.26 Lakhs/- 936 11929		1st Prize Rs.26 Lakhs/- 64H 77308	
(Including Super Prize Amt)		(Including Super Prize Amt)		(Including Super Prize Amt)	
Cons. Prize Rs.9500/- 49287 (REMAINING ALL SERIALS)		Cons. Prize Rs.9500/- 11929 (REMAINING ALL SERIALS)		Cons. Prize Rs.9500/- 77308 (REMAINING ALL SERIALS)	
2nd Prize Rs.9000/-		2nd Prize Rs.9000/-		2nd Prize Rs.9000/-	
00250 20469 31383 35341 42576		07332 25654 44194 44625 45022		03269 12788 43913 59846 69846	
59242 66791 80873 94013 95183		48557 59849 78662 79008 81211		80575 86893 88957 93376 96525	
3rd Prize Rs.500/- 2743 4174 4608 5276 5417 6367 8099 8773 9423 9988		3rd Prize Rs.500/- 1487 1570 1864 2420 3301 3574 4539 6421 7982 9101		3rd Prize Rs.500/- 0025 0805 1016 2275 3540 4184 5768 8415 8789 9877	
4th Prize Rs.250/- 0357 2431 4483 4793 5915 6559 6681 6825 8619 8699		4th Prize Rs.250/- 1073 1176 2119 2241 2401 3942 5004 5315 6542 7005		4th Prize Rs.250/- 0447 0542 1026 2109 2502 5017 6225 8915 8925 9809	
5th Prize Rs.120/-		5th Prize Rs.120/-		5th Prize Rs.120/-	
0029 0231 0232 0334 0341 0372 0506 0534 0552 0605		0041 0174 0317 0740 1052 1106 1144 1220 1381 1407		0117 0428 0580 0918 1098 1108 1458 1465 1501 1935	
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1445 1558 1745 1833 2035 2185 2395 2526 2598 2792		2788 2829 2871 2975 2985 3140 3264 3330 3340 3555		2829 2855 3016 3052 3081 3082 3100 3189 3361 3426	
2796 2877 3080 3111 3184 3212 3296 3306 3437 3482		3590 3651 3653 3752 3758 3862 3952 4013 4094 4208		3471 3574 3601 3685 3793 4185 4220 4272 4281 4334	
3726 3784 3796 3861 3875 3891 3892 3923 3956 4683		4296 4424 4553 4565 4686 4699 4718 4835 4856 5452		4607 4620 4633 4759 4761 4914 4922 4958 4967 5133	
4773 4774 4799 5125 5217 5266 5482 5608 5732 5797		5546 5577 5623 5820 6166 6364 6391 6406 6428 6546		5293 5432 5600 5866 6054 6083 6098 6171 6263 6276	
5873 6067 6097 6171 6173 6235 6377 6439 6635 7174		6563 6598 6608 6702 6736 7056 7131 7143 7237 7309		6123 6325 6727 6766 6836 6873 7154 7217 7235 7411	
7530 7533 7636 7727 7749 7763 7769 7788 7793 8047		7355 7471 7520 7578 7687 7837 7870 8077 8156 8251		7436 7558 7636 7700 7701 7750 7921 8058 8216 8282	
8069 8146 8164 8565 8606 8685 8771 8806 8860 8870		8489 8503 8526 8652 8674 8678 8864 8917 8926 8960		8328 8565 8652 8659 8709 8753 8770 8800 8809 9286	
9049 9348 9420 9478 9528 9545 9621 9680 9807 9856		9084 9192 9196 9319 9507 9601 9644 9672 9924 9959		9325 9378 9484 9561 9600 9605 9633 9657 9771 9847	
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SMILING SELENIA The 'Wolves' songstress shows off her new haircut while running errands in Beverly Hills.

HANSAL MEHTA TO MAKE A BIOPIIC ON LATE SRIDEVI, APPROACHES VIDYA BALAN TO PLAY THE LEAD

Call her the first female superstar of Bollywood and there will be no denying the same. Bollywood icon Sridevi who passed away on February 24 due to accidental drowning in a bathtub in Dubai left millions of her fans in deep sorrow. She was every filmmaker's dream, every actor's inspiration and heart-beat of her fans. While some actors and directors had the privilege of working with her, some just missed this great opportunity. Amongst those is director Hansal Mehta who regrets not approaching the late superstar for a film that he had in his mind. And now it's because of this reason that Mehta wants to make a biopic on the late actress and will be



approaching Vidya Balan for the same.

Sharing his grief on Sridevi's sudden demise, Hansal Mehta said, "There will never be another Sridevi. I was about to approach her for a film. That film will now be dedicated to her. If it finds an actor."

Adding to that he spoke about the project, "I will always regret that I didn't ap-

proach her and could not make a movie with her. But I will make a film on her. It will be made. There are actors (who I have in my mind). I might approach Vidya Balan. I will make the film."

Meanwhile, Hansal Mehta is also gearing up for his next - Omerta which stars Rajkumar Rao in the lead playing a terrorist.

SNAPCHAT LOOSES MILLIONS AFTER INSULTING RIHANNA

Here's a revolutionary idea: Don't mess with Rihanna, ever. After Snapchat posted a tone-deaf ad referencing Chris Brown's conviction for assaulting Rihanna, the singer and beauty queen slammed the app. As a result of its egregious blunder, Snap's market value has dropped a tad bit — by \$800 million, to be exact. While Snapchat said the ad was never meant to be published, many users saw it before it was taken down last Monday. Meant to advertise a game called, "Would You Rather?", the ad asked users, "Would you rather slap Rihanna or punch Chris Brown?"

After the ad was pulled from the platform on Monday, Snapchat apologized in a statement that read, "The advert was reviewed and approved in error, as it violates our advertising guidelines." But that wasn't enough. The same morning,



Rihanna took to Instagram to vent her disgust. "Now SNAPCHAT I know you already know you ain't my fav app out there! But I'm just trying to figure out what the point was with this mess!" she wrote. "I'd love to call

it ignorance but I know you ain't that dumb. You spent money to animate something that would intentionally bring shame to DV victims and made a joke of it."

And according to CNN Tech, just a day after Rih-

called out the ad, Snapchat stocks dropped 4 percent, costing the app those hundreds of millions of dollars. Will Snapchat be able to weather losing the support of Kylie Jenner and Rih? Only time will tell.

RUPAUL IS FIRST DRAG QUEEN TO GET HOLLYWOOD STAR

The 57-year-old host of RuPaul's Drag Race said he was "overcome with so much emotion" to get the honour he'd dreamed of since he was a child.

"This is absolutely the most important moment in my professional career," the television presenter said.

Fans lined the Hollywood Boulevard to cheer RuPaul on and thank him for all he's done for the LGBTQ community.

"As a kid we'd come up here to Hollywood Boulevard.

"I'd look at all the stars and dream that one day, I could be one of the stars on Hollywood Boulevard," he said.

"I feel like I'm being knighted."

Oscar-winning actress Jane Fonda presented RuPaul the honour.

She said getting to know him has been "one of the big pleasures of my life" and that it "should be at least three sizes bigger than any other star".

"He created an industry that has given hundreds and hundreds of jobs and



dreams to so many."

RuPaul was with his husband Georges LeBar and family, who he thanked along with his inspiration, Jane Fonda, as well

as his high school teacher Bill Pannell.

RuPaul said Mr Pannell gave him the "best advice I could ever gotten" while a student. "Don't take life too seriously."

SALMAN KHAN'S BAJRANGI BHAIIJAAN MINTS RS 825 CRORE AT THE GLOBAL BOX-OFFICE

Kabir Khan's Bajrangi Bhaijaan starring Salman Khan, Kareena Kapoor Khan is leaving no stones unturned in winning its box-office game. After impressing the audiences in the domestic markets, Bajrangi Bhaijaan is achieving new milestones in the Chinese markets. The film is setting new records in China and has already minted Rs 200 crore there, bringing it to a total of Rs 827 crore.

With those digits, the film has become the fifth highest grosser internationally Bollywood film after Dangal, Baahubali 2, Secret Superstar and PK. Unlike Aamir Khan, Bajrangi Bhaijaan is Salman



Khan's first film to hit the Chinese markets and still has managed to win the audiences there. While Bajrangi Bhaijaan released in 8000

screens, Dangal had opened to 6000 screens and Secret Superstar 5000 screens.

Helmed by Kabir Khan and produced under Sal-

man Khan Films and Eros International, the film also stars Harshali Malhotra and Nawazuddin Siddiqui in pivotal roles.

ARIES: You may feel as if people have turned against you today and that they've suddenly lost interest in what you have to say, Aries. Maybe this is a reflection of your own inability to truly listen to someone else talking. Look at the collective picture and open your eyes to the world around you. Get involved in the community instead of only focusing on you all the time.

TAURUS: Let your emotions play with your imagination today, and feel free to discuss your findings openly with others, Taurus. Don't get caught up in so rational a frame of mind that you refuse to acknowledge any other way of viewing a current situation. Put away your analytical side in order to dis-

close a more abstract, intuitive perspective. Exercise that part of your brain that doesn't normally get used.

GEMINI: Trust that you have all the facts you need today, Gemini. You should be feeling quite good, emotionally. Use this self-confidence to make great strides in whatever you want to accomplish. Have fun letting your mind drift to a fanciful world where it can explore your imaginative proclivities. Feel free to use your strong hold on facts as a base to take off into a highly creative and intuitive realm.

CANCER: You may find yourself emotionally challenged today by a strong force demanding your attention, Cancer. Your hyperawareness to every situa-

tion might be driving you a bit crazy. Perhaps you just need to tone things down and relax. Enjoy rather than question the fun-loving energy of the day. The more you simply let loose and explore, the better off you'll be.

LEO: You have the opportunity to do some intense self-healing today, Leo, so you communicate more directly with your core self without the distractions of other people. Do what you can to hone in on the internal issues that require your attention. It's key that you learn how to address these issues yourself instead of relying on other people to take care of these needs for you today.

VIRGO: You might be a bit confused with the mood of the day,

Virgo, which fosters quick action and a sporadic approach to things. More than likely, this approach isn't exactly in line with your usual methodical protocol. Do what you can to merge with this energy in order to add a more spontaneous spark to your daily routine. Take a walk on the wild side today.

LIBRA: Feel free to match your plaid pants with your paisley shirt today, Libra. Accessorize with wild sneakers and a striped jacket. Let the oddball within you shine brightly! This is a terrific day for you, and you should feel free to express yourself openly and loudly to the world. You should experience a great deal of self-confidence. Take full advantage of it at this time.

SCORPIO: Feel free to enlist your own creativity today to solve any problem that may come your way, Scorpio. Don't feel like you absolutely need to take a rational and methodical approach. This sort of frame of mind has already been tried. Now it's time to explore a more intuitive way to complete any task that you wish to tackle now. Exercise more of your sensitive nature.

SAGITTARIUS: The energy of the day is electric, and you could find yourself bouncing from task to task and person to person, Sagittarius. Things are apt to happen when you least expect them, so be prepared for surprises. There's an element of genius to the day that might inspire you to be some-

one much greater than you ever thought you could be. Join with people who share your same zest for life.

CAPRICORN: You might feel as if your heart is playing tricks on you today, Capricorn. Perhaps you're coming up against a strong force that's causing you to doubt yourself in some way. Don't be conned by loud, obnoxious talk. Seek the true meaning behind the words. You'll find that most of your strength is internal. Be prepared for stubborn will to make a powerful presence in your world today.

AQUARIUS: There is a great deal of unexpected communication coming your way today, Aquarius, but be careful about the people you trust. There's

an element of fantasy factored into the picture. This might cause some disruption if you automatically accept everything at face value. Make sure you check your sources at least twice before proceeding. You'll be much better off if you prepare for the worst.

PISCES: You may find that people aren't necessarily very sympathetic to your feelings today, Pisces. It's quite possible that they're more responsive to facts and information than emotions. It could be that you need to enlist some sort of translator in order to get through to a person with whom you're trying to communicate. Don't hesitate to ask for more clarification on something if you need it.