

SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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19-seater Dornier 228 lands successfully at Pakyong Airport

PAKYONG, 05 MAR [IPR]: First fixed wing aircraft of IAF Dornier 228 [19-seater] successfully landed at Pakyong in East Sikkim today.

Chief Secretary, AK Shrivastava, said, "This is a historic day for the State of Sikkim. The Dornier 288 aircraft landed successfully at 3:25 pm at Pakyong Airport today. This was possible

after several attempts over the last few days. The aircraft came from Guwahati.

Another flight by the same aircraft will be possible in about ten days' time. The aircraft came close to ATC and it was learnt that all the systems were working well. One flight of Spice Jet is expected to land on 10 Mar. This 70-seater plane is likely to bring

high ranking officials of AAI and DGCA."

Airport Director, Pakyong Airport stated, "After several trials on 28 Feb, today IAF was successful in landing the aircraft though the visibility was not that clear. My entire team of AAI, Pakyong with the help of district authorities has made this possible. This is the beginning of avia-

tion connectivity for Sikkim and I thank the Ministry & district authorities for their support."

It may be mentioned that on 27 Feb the IAF had carried out a procedure called 'overshoot' which is part of the trial landing process. In an overshoot, the pilot evaluates approach procedures, obstacles, wind conditions and 'go round' procedure.

CM announces Rs 1 cr for best farmer and youth entrepreneur

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 MAR:

Chief Minister Pawan Chamling has announced an annual prize of Rs 1 crore for the best organic farmer of the state.

Apart from this the CM has also made other announcements to be implemented from the next financial year beginning from 01 Apr, 2018, a press release from IPR Department informs.

A youth of the State excelling in a start-up entrepreneurial project

or in the service sector will also be given prize money of Rs 1 crore every year.

Also, Home Guards serving continuously for 15 years will stand regularised as night Guards/Day Guards in the hospitals while women Home Guards serving continuously for 15 years will be regularised as Peons.

Further, honorarium of Anganwadi/AA-SHA workers is to be increased suitably. Salaries of Panchayat/Nagar

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Borong School secures first position in pre-Board test conducted by DISHA

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 MAR:

DISHA, Namchi, today conducted a meeting to analyse the results of pre-board test conducted for eight schools in South district selected under DISHA project to improve the results of Class X.

A press release from the office of the DC South informs that after winter vacation, pre-board test was conducted in the month of Feb to see the level of students be-



fore Board examination started from today. Prior to the pre-board test, diagnostic test and first

and second achievement tests were also conducted and remedial classes

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Officials inspect much-delayed bridge over Phee Khola



HAVING LOST FAITH IN GREF, LOCALS WANT ROADS & BRIDGES DEPTT TO TAKE OVER

WANGCHUK BHUTIA

MANGAN, 05 MAR:

Following the delay in the construction of Gor-Sagyong Bridge across River Phee Khola under Lum/ Gor / Sangtok GPU of Lower Dzongu in North Sikkim, a joint inspection was conducted today led by Sub Divisional Magistrate (Dzongu), Tshering Dorjee Bhutia, in the presence of officials from Roads & Bridges Department headed by Divisional Engineer, DB Subba, engineers from PMGSY, Zilla member, Tshering Gyatso Lepcha, contractor, KN Bhutia, representative from General Reserve Engineer Force [GREF], Panchayat members and the general public.

It was contended that the main cause for the delay is the fragile condition of the Dett Khola Bridge owing to which the supply of construction materials has become a major issue.

The public and Panchayats have,

however, said that they do not have faith in GREF, under whose jurisdiction the Dett Khola Bridge falls and pointed out that some bridges under GREF in Upper Dzongu which were started four years ago are still under construction.

Hence, the public and Panchayats have sought the intervention of Roads & Bridges Department to initiate the strengthening of the bridge so that the construction of the bridge at Phee Khola can be completed at the earliest.

The SDM has urged everyone to cooperate and take responsibility for the early completion of the pending works.

The Roads & Bridges Department has assured that they will undertake the strengthening of the Dett Khola Bridge within a week so that no further delay occurs.

The contractor of the said bridge informed that due to the weakness of Dett Khola Bridge, the supply of materials has been affected and further assured that he will complete the bridge as soon as possible.

Another contractor of the new road cutting of Pheedang-Sangtok road has also assured that he will complete the work within the next two months.

The public also stated that for the last 32 years, the Rongdol-Gor road has remained without carpeting.

The Zilla member urged all to be responsible and be positive so that the work is completed on time.

India echoes - but faintly - at Oscars 2018

LOS ANGELES, MAR 5 (PTI): Sridevi "actress" smiled gently from the giant screens and so did "actor producer" Shashi Kapoor as the Academy Awards 2018 remembered those who passed away in the year gone by, taking the fragile India-Oscar connect a step further.

Indian films have never won at the Oscars but that seemed to matter little today as millions of Indian fans woke up at the crack of dawn to watch the awards ceremony live from the Dolby Theatre -- and sighed wistfully at the honourable mentions of two of Indian cinema's greatest in the "In Memoriam" section.

Last year, the Academy included actor Om Puri's name in the section.

Today, it all tied up neat-



ly when James Ivory, of Merchant Ivory Productions, bagged the Best Adapted Screenplay Oscar for "Call Me By Your Name".

The 89-year-old, the oldest winner in Oscar history, mentioned his long time collaborator, the late Mumbai-born filmmaker Ismail Merchant in his acceptance

speech at the ceremony.

The two partnered with German American Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, who married an Indian architect, to make films such as "Heat and Dust", "The Householder", "Shakespearewallah" and "In Custody", which gave Shashi Kapoor his unique parallel cinema identity.

Ivory also worked with Indian stalwarts such as Dina Pathak, Zohra Segal, Utpal Dutt, Amjad Khan, Naseeruddin Shah, Ratna Pathak Shah, Om Puri and Aparna Sen in a series of films set in India.

Another India recall was through actor Ali Fazal, whose film "Victoria & Abdul", based on a book by journalist Shrabani Basu, was nominated for two awards at the ceremony.

The Stephen Frears-directed film, starring veteran actor Judi Dench as Queen Victoria, lost out to "Darkest Hour" (Best Makeup and Hairstyling) and "Phantom Thread" (Best Costume Design).

While Shashi Kapoor died on December 4 last year at the age of 79, Sridevi, known as India's first woman super-

star, passed away barely a week ago on February 24 in Dubai.

The sudden death of the 54-year-old had sent shock waves around the world.

Indian films have had little luck at the Oscars.

This year's entry for the Best Foreign Language Film category, "Newton", a dark comedy set against the backdrop of elections in the world's largest democracy, couldn't even make it to the final five.

Only three Indian films -- "Mother India" (1957), "Salaam Bombay!" (1988) and "Lagaan" (2001) -- have made it to the final five nominees of the Best Foreign Language film at the Academy Awards. None have got the award.

Last year, Indian-origin

British actor Dev Patel was nominated for the Best Supporting Actor for his performance in "Lion". The Garth Davis-directed film also featured child actor Sunny Pawar.

The movie's cast also included actors Deepti Naval, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Tanishtha Chatterjee, Priyanka Bose and Pallavi Sharda.

The big year for Indians at the Oscars was 2008 when British filmmaker Danny Boyle's Mumbai-set "Slumdog Millionaire" won eight Academy Awards, including Best Original Score and Best Original Song for music composer A R Rahman and lyricist Gulzar as well as Best Sound Mixing for sound designer Resul Pookutty.

Two years later, Rahman received two nods for the

same categories for his score in another Boyle directorial "127 Hours".

In 1992, the legendary Indian director Satyajit Ray was awarded an Honorary Oscar for Lifetime Achievement. Ray was unable to attend the ceremony due to his illness and gave his acceptance speech via live video feed from a hospital bed in Kolkata.

Before that was Richard Attenborough's "Gandhi", which won eight Oscars. Capturing the tumultuous years of India's freedom struggle, the film, starring Ben Kingsley and Rohini Hattangadi along with a host of other Indian actors, won Bhanu Athaiya an Academy Award for Best Costume.

She became the first Indian ever to win an Oscar.

5-day budget session to begin from 06 March

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 MAR:

Governor Shrinivas Patil has summoned five-day long budget session of Sikkim Legislative Assembly for financial year 2018-19 from 06 Mar. As per the provisional calendar of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly Secretariat, Governor Patil will address the house on first day of the budget session followed by the motion of thanks on the Governor's address.

In the second part of the first day of the budget session for financial year 2018-19, Chief Minister Pawan Chamling who also holds the charge of Finance and Revenue Expenditure Department will table the General Budget for the financial year 2018-19 at Sikkim Legislative Assembly.

Floor management has been given to Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, RB Subba, for smooth functioning of the house.

Borong School secures first...

Contd from pg01

were held from time to time as per result.

In the pre-board test, Borong Secondary School performed best and achieved the first position. A cheque of Rs 10,000 was handed over to the concerned Deputy Director, HRDD to motivate the staff towards further improvement.

Shudhma Chettri from Borong SS secured the first position among all the eight schools.

Further Best Students [school wise] and Best Teachers [subject wise] were also identified.

Best students include Sushma Chettri [Borong SS], Jeevan Dahal [Nehbroom School], Roshni Koirala [Salghari School], Smriti Rai [Sumbuk SS], Lata Rai [Omchu SS], Sandhya Rai [Pabong SS], Muskan Sherpa [Pabong Daring SS] and Wangdup Tamang [Kateng SS].

Likewise, teacher of English, Science & Social Science from Borong SS achieved highest marks among all the eight schools. Teacher of Math & Vernacular from Salghari SS came out on top in both subjects.

CM announces Rs 1 cr for best farmer and youth entrepreneur

Contd from pg01

Panchayat, etc., members along with salaries of MLAs and Ministers will also be increased suitably from the next financial year.

Additionally, study centres for the Scheduled Castes, Sherpa, Bhujel and Tamang communities will be constructed.

The concerned departments have been directed to immediately make necessary provisions, the release adds.

CM attends 4th centenary celebration of Mahamati Prannath

BERMIOK, 05 MAR [IPR]: Chief Minister Pawan Chamling attended the 4th centenary celebrations of Mahamati Prannath at Sri Krishna Pranami Mangal Dham Mandir in Namping Bermiok today. Organized by the Sikkim State Shri Krishna Pranami Dharma Seva Samity, the programme had the presence of area MLA cum Minister, GM Gurung, Chairpersons, officials, Guruji 108 Sri Mohan Prichaya Maharaj, Dharma Gurus from various places and a large gathering of devotees and public.

Addressing the gathering, the CM extended congratulatory wishes on the 4th centenary celebration of Mahamati Prannath. He also lauded the Sri Krishna Pranami Jagni Rath Yatra which started from Jamnagar, Gujarat on 21 Sept, 2017 and which has reached Sikkim at present.

The CM spoke in brief about the rath yatra which aims to promote universal brother-



hood, peace, prosperity and non-violence and advocated the assembled to imbibe these noble components in order to live a life of contentment. He highlighted about the various distinct communities in our

country and updated that these communities are shaped by our exceptional cultural background, unique geography and diverse demography.

He also detailed how religion and spirituality is one

of the essential institutions of any society and is responsible in bridging the gap between different communities. He accentuated that the state government has at all times practised secular and democratic

process of upholding the rights for all religious communities present in Sikkim.

The CM reiterated that he will be touring villages from April onwards wherein he will also hold a jan sabha in which the queries of the villagers will be attended to. With regards to the Chief Minister's Startup Scheme [CMSS], the CM said that innovative entrepreneurs will be provided with awards annually.

Speaking about the significance of organic farming, the CM articulated that organic farming is about safeguarding of the environment, reducing global warming and creating a natural environment for the biodiversity to thrive in. He also urged progressive organic farmers of the locality to avoid leaving the farmlands fallow and preserve the practise of organic farming as it builds and maintains soil fertility.

He restated that from 31 Mar, 2018, the state govern-

ment will discourage import of certain vegetables from outside the State. He further informed that the state government will be granting Rs 1 crore to progressive organic farmers who will produce the most number of organic produce.

He also enlightened the assembled that the state government through the years has given special focus to upgrading the education sector. Education in Sikkim is free up to the college level and that the state government has consistently worked towards improving the educational standards, he added.

The CM was also felicitated by the organizing committee for his notable endeavor in uplifting the State in various fields. The CM along with the dignitaries released a book written by Dillu Dahal. The book details the historical background and development of Sri Krishna Pranami Mangal Dham Mandir.

Hissey Lachungpa takes oath of office as Rajya Sabha MP

NIRMAL MANGAR

GANGTOK, 05 MAR:

Rajya Sabha MP from Sikkim, Hissey Lachungpa, took the oath of office for his second term today in the Upper House. He took Hindi language as the medium to record his oath.

Mr Lachungpa expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, Legislators of Sikkim Assembly and people for their consistent faith in him.

"I strive to pursue pending issues of the State with the Central government and other matters raised by the party and leadership," said Mr Lachungpa while talking to SummitTimes over phone.

Former Minister and three-time MLA, Mr Lachungpa has been elected as MP Rajya Sabha for the second time.

SDF thanks all for successful SDF Day celebration

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 MAR:

Sikkim Democratic Front has thanked the people of Sikkim for their participation and contribution for the grand success of the historic 26th foundation day celebration at Mining Ground in East Sikkim on 04 Mar.

The celebration, which was chaired by SDF president, Pawan Chamling, witnessed the participation of lakhs of SDF supporters from across the State, informs an SDF press release issued by its publicity secretary, Chur-

amani Mishra.

The release informs that a total of 571 leaders and workers of SKM and other political parties from different parts of the State officially joined SDF on Sunday. The release adds that these people have joined without any condition and are committed to work as per the policy, principle, programme and discipline of the party.

The release mentions that the party has passed eight resolutions in the interest of the people of Sikkim during the celebration.

Chamling has nothing new to offer, contends SKM

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 MAR:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has alleged that the address of the Sikkim Democratic Front president, Pawan Chamling, on SDF's 26th foundation day celebration was full of lies.

An SKM press release states that Mr Chamling just repeated his earli-

er addresses and that it is a shame that the ruling party does not have any new direction for the people even after 26 years of its establishment. The release further alleges that the SDF government has not carried out any concrete work for the State during its long rule and failed to fulfill its promises.



CONSTRUCTION OF FLYOVER TO SINGTAM HOSPITAL ON FULL SWING

SINGTAM, 05 MAR: Construction of the flyover that will connect Singtam Bazaar and Singtam District Hospital is on full swing. After completion of the repair works and replacement of the weak base of the flyover, workers have today started with the construction of the protection wall supporting the old metal bridge. *[Yogen Thatal]*

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China building helipads, other infra in Doklam area: Nirmala

NEW DELHI, MAR 5 (PTI): Indian and Chinese troops have "redeployed" themselves away from the face-off site in Doklam, and China has undertaken construction of helipads, sentry posts and trenches for its army personnel there, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said today.

"Post disengagement from the face-off in 2017, troops of both sides have redeployed themselves away from their respective positions at the face-off site. The strength of both sides has been reduced," she said replying to a question on the issue in Lok Sabha.

"In order to maintain these troops during the winter, People's Liberation Army (PLA) has undertaken construction of some infrastructure, including sentry posts, trenches and

helipads," she said.

Last week, junior Defence Minister Subhash Bhamre had said that the situation along India's border with China is "sensitive" and it has the potential to escalate.

Sitharaman's reply today came in response to a question on whether satellite images have revealed that China has constructed seven helipads in Doklam besides deploying tanks and missiles in the area.

On whether India has taken up the matter with China, she said issues relating to the border are regularly taken up with the Chinese side through diplomatic channels and at Border Personnel Meetings, flag meetings and meetings of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border

Affairs.

Troops of India and China were locked in a 73-day-long standoff in Doklam from June 16 last year after the Indian side stopped the building of a road in the disputed area by the Chinese Army. The face-off ended on August 28. Sources said China has been keeping its troops in north Doklam and significantly ramping up its infrastructure in the disputed area.

In January, Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat had said the time had come for India to shift its focus from borders with Pakistan to the frontier with China, indicating the seriousness of the situation.

To a separate question on a Pentagon report which said China was setting up a military base in Pakistan, Sitharaman said the govern-

ment keeps a constant watch on developments having a bearing on India's security and takes measures to safeguard it.

"Government is aware of China's stated objective of becoming a 'maritime power'. As part of this strategy, China is developing ports and other infrastructure facilities in the littoral countries in the Indian Ocean Region, including in the vicinity of India's maritime boundary," she said.

She said India and China have, on several occasions, reiterated that as large neighbours following independent foreign policies, the relationship pursued by the two nations with other countries must not become a source of concern for each other.

Gangtok on Tuesday, 06 Mar

Temp: 21°C / 07°C
Forecast: Times of sun and clouds with shower in the afternoon.
Sunrise: 05:55AM
Sunset: 5:39 PM

Section 144 imposed in SLA vicinity

GANGTOK, 05 MAR [IPR]: The East District Administration has imposed Section 144 around the Sikkim Legislative Assembly for the Assembly session which begins from 06 Mar.

The order is issued to ensure smooth proceedings inside the Assembly and to maintain the sanctity and decorum of the House and to ensure maintenance of law and order in the vicinity of Sikkim Legislative Assembly complex.

The order shall come into force from 9 a.m. on 06 Mar and shall remain in force till the end of sitting unless withdrawn earlier.

Section 144 Cr. PC, 1973 prohibits people from assembling in groups outside the Assembly complex in order to prevent any untoward incident which is likely to disrupt or adversely affect the sanctity and decorum of the Assembly and may further lead to disturbance to the public peace and tranquility.

It also prohibits any assembly of five or more persons sologaneering, shouting, rioting, protesting, staging a dharna or demonstration, picketing, postering, wall writing or carrying out any other activity whatsoever it may be, which may cause disturbance to the public peace and tranquility in the area falling within 300 meters radius from the outer boundary of the Assembly Secretariat.

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Fieldwork in Anthropology

REBAKA RAI

Anthropology is a field science, and fieldwork is an integral part of the discipline.

The early anthropologists, especially classical evolutionists, were armchair anthropologists and they depended upon missionaries, traders and travellers who supplied them information on the curious customs of "savages" and that's why their data was based on secondary sources and their findings were mostly conjectural.

However, when anthropology started as a separate discipline in European and American universities in the late half of the 19th century,

the importance of carrying empirical fieldwork became compulsory.

Fieldwork is a skill developed by anthropologists as a method for collection of relevant data from a society.

Going to the people, living with them for a reasonable period of time and to learn the language of the natives and to know the knowledge about customs, traditions, and their beliefs is part of fieldwork.

Fieldwork is the firsthand systematic exploration of a variety of research.

To know the customs, practices, and culture spread over the world and to know the behavior of humans;

anthropologists like other natural sciences do not have controlled experiment methods. So in order to get information, collect data, and to test hypothesis, anthropologists go

VIEWPOINT

to the field and they study, observe, and record data as in natural sciences.

The field is the laboratory for anthropologists.

Bronislaw Kasper Malinowski likened fieldwork to being a fly on the wall. One needs to go to the field,

observe how she/he has been placed and to actively seek information.

Malinowski had three approaches for fieldwork:

1. To know the language of the people
2. To know the native's point of view
3. To describe the social system of society

There is no particular way of doing fieldwork in anthropology and each anthropologist comes up with her/his own findings during research.

Fieldwork allows us to seek information and discover the regularity and separate them from irregularity to know the social

systems of society.

Our fieldwork should be scientific, and it becomes scientific if we are able to verify the same. It needs to be reliable; when we say reliable all the people do not believe what we have done and cross checking is required because all the people from the village do not give the same information and we have to build trust in order to get the right information.

We do fieldwork to write ethnography and ethnography only happens when we do fieldwork.

[The writer is a IVth Semester student, Dept. of Anthropology, Sikkim University]



Project Inclusion begins in Sikkim with teacher training

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 MAR:

Project Inclusion, a project by Sri Aurobindo Society, has formally marked its beginning in the State with the commencement of teachers training today. The project on strengthening inclusion and empowering teachers to understand the challenges faced by children with neurodevelopment disorders [NDD] has been launched in Sikkim by the state government. The project is an effort by the government to take a leap forward towards a better education structure, a press release informs.

The project in its first phase will be instrumental in empowering 1,206 teachers of 10 blocks of Gangtok. After its successful stint in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh,

Bihar, Uttarakhand and Puducherry, this project has helped in developing an environment of support for such children at school and home.

It may be mentioned here, Project Inclusion is part of Sri Aurobindo Society's nationwide programme, Rupantar, to improve the quality and reach of education in government schools. Project Inclusion sensitizes and trains teachers to identify students with 'hidden' disabilities using simple and easy to use checklists.

At a meeting held at West Point Senior Secondary School, State Project Director, MT Sherpa, said, "Equality, inclusion and quality should be the key features of the kind of education structure we need to provide to students with learning disabilities, so that they

can look towards a better future."

It is informed that this project with the Sikkim government will also help provide mainstream education for children with special needs.

On this occasion, Project Head, Dr Simmi Mahajan, said, "I really hope that we are able to create an environment of support and inclusion that would benefit numerous children with special needs. We are really hopeful that through Project Inclusion we would be able to contribute to the efforts of the Sikkim government."

The improved learning outcomes of children with NDD have brought incredible success stories to the forefront. Project Inclusion intends to repeat the same story in Sikkim as well.

SUSA & SRC express solidarity with Sikkimese students of NERIST

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 MAR:

Sikkim University Students' Association [SUSA] and Students Representative Council [SRC] from Sikkim have expressed solidarity with the Sikkimese students of the North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology [NERIST], Arunachal Pradesh, who have been protesting against the institute since 27 Feb, demanding that the Ministry of Human Resource Development [MHRD] appoint a permanent director at the earliest, a press release informs.

NERIST students from Sikkim, Deepti Pandey and Srijana Gurung, informed that the Students Union of NERIST [SUN] along with All Arunachal Pradesh Student's Union [AAPSU] launched an indefinite strike after the expiry of the deadline given to MHRD on 24 Jan to appoint a regular director.

It may be mentioned here that students began their protest in 2014 since they were facing major problems regarding projects, lab equipments and syllabus.

The students from NERIST are not being able to compete with students from other universities, they added.

Upset over the negligence of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Kiran Rijuju, the students shut down the main college gate from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

protesting against the government.

Sikkim Students' Welfare Association of NERIST [SSWAN] had also written a letter to Mr Rijuju demanding the same giving a year's ultimatum to the government for which they received no reply.

SUSA president, Lalit Pokhrel Sharma, and SRC Tadong president, Nishant Chettri, today conducted a meeting with NERIST students. They expressed that the organisations fully support and demand justice for the students at the earliest.

"Sikkim's HRDD Minister, RB Subba, is one of the board members of NERIST. There are many seats reserved for Sikkim students under NERIST Entrance Exam [NEE]. The state government has not shown concern regarding the matter. The institute was formed 34 years ago and is one of the cheapest engineering colleges of India. Most people have not even heard about the institute so far. SUSA demands that the state government look into the matter at the earliest and come up with a permanent solution for the future of the students from Sikkim. We also demand that Mr Rijuju take the matter seriously as it is hampering the long-term career of the students," expressed SUSA president, Mr Sharma. It may be noted that there are about 70-80 students from Sikkim in the institute.

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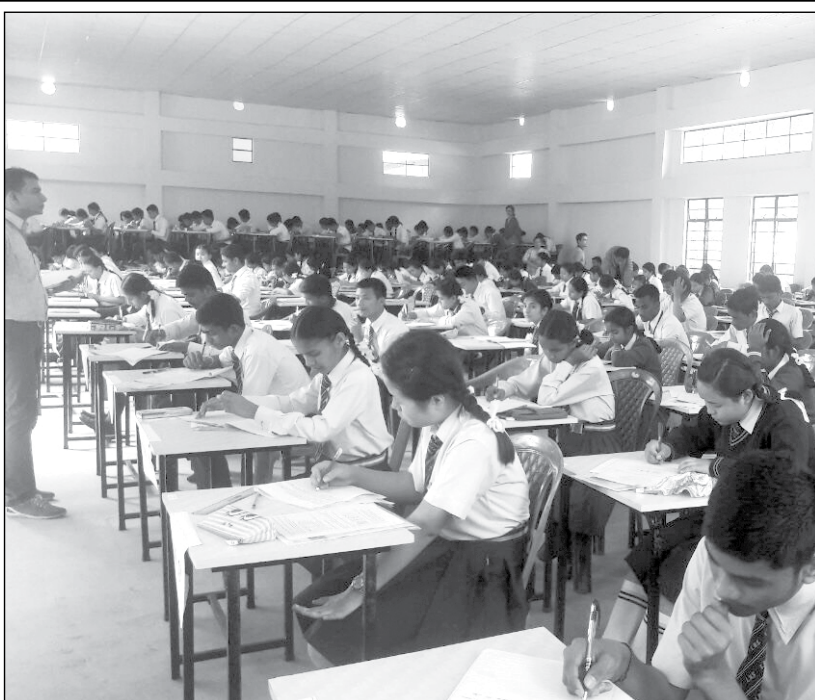
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BOARD'S BEGIN: Today was the first exam for the CBSE Boards for classes X and XII. Students at Rangpo School (pic above) joined class X and XII students across the state in beginning their exams. *[from REBYNA RANA]*

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Chinese Whisper

Understand Frontiers before Strategic Planning

Now that the dispensation which sits in office at the Centre is also in government and in significance presence in the North East as well, expect more talk about our Look East Policy. In fact, this aspiration and the promise it holds was also raised often in the run-up to the recent elections in the NER. Expect these promises to resume afresh and it thus becomes worthwhile to go over how the Centre looks at the neighbours. This is relevant for Sikkim as well because it sits on a frontier which even though strategic and of late vexed has not received any consistent planning or strategy.

Some years ago, a document prepared by an independent group of established scholars, former diplomats, soldiers and public figures was released. "Non-Alignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy of India in the Twenty First Century" had introduced itself as "an attempt to identify the basic principles that should guide India's foreign and strategic policy over the next decade". A decade has almost lapsed since, but one spies neither a strategic policy nor any real planning in how the nation engages with even the neighbourhood. The document had addressed relations with China in detail, and even though it was panned for being too superficial and impractical by critics and people in the "security" sector, the document did succeed in flagging important strategic issues which will confront the nation in the coming decades and suggested foreign policy course corrections on how best to address these challenges, many of which are have since unfolded.

China's economic and military capabilities growing at a smarter clip than India's was a clear matter of concern for the analysts who pointed out that the power differential is likely to widen in the coming years. And we see that coming true now with China's ever increasing muscle-flexing in several theatres. Since it is universally accepted that India cannot catch up with China's military clip in the foreseeable future, the document had called for an "asymmetric strategy" towards China. One of the proposed asymmetric strategies recommended accelerated "integration of the frontier regions and its people by speeding up and improving communication infrastructure with the mainland". This suggestion should find unanimous endorsement throughout the "frontier regions" like Sikkim, where even though the border regions are kept out of bounds even for locals and traditional residents of the land in the name of national security, little or no genuine effort is expended towards reaching either effective development or even infrastructure to these parts or even taking the people into confidence. And no, sending kids from the border regions to excursions to Delhi does not count.

The ambiguity with which India engages China definitely needs to be addressed, not only to serve the nation's strategic and foreign policy requirements, but also to reflect more pride [by showing some spine] and to reassure the people who live in the frontier regions that policy-makers in the "mainland" have their back and understand them. One of the suggestions included in the document, although it does not explicitly say so, does address this quotient of a "mainland" which understands the "frontier regions".

"Our Tibet policy needs to be reassessed and re-adjusted," the document suggests in a section devoted to China in the first chapter title, "The Asian Theatre". What Delhi appears to have overlooked all these years is that India's Himalayan ring around Tibet is populated by followers of Tibetan Buddhism, all of whom hold the Dalai Lama in high reverence, and while they might not be expressing themselves vocally, they are disconcerted by the increasing consistency with which Delhi and even mainstream media has been sidelining and even stifling the Tibet issue not just in matters of politics, but even on issues of faith. What is worse, most of this disquieting attitude is pushed by hawks and their poorly informed speculations. The analysts had called for an attempt to "persuade" China to seek reconciliation with the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetan community. Although they admit that such a move might attract a "hostile reaction" from conservative sections of the PLA, the authors underline that "the Dalai Lama's popular legitimacy among his own people is a fact that the Chinese government must acknowledge".

Over the years, and especially in the last decade and a half, China has consistently worked towards increasing its influence in South Asia and even enjoys Observer status in SAARC now. It gets this access through its occupation of Tibet and now, with Climate Change and water having emerged as important regional resource management issues, India should leverage the arrival of these new equations to recalibrate its posture on Tibet. It is obvious that overlooked aspects like thinking of the nation's own peripheries before strategising for beyond that needs to be taken into consideration for an effective strategic and foreign policy. That is still not happening. Maybe when the BJP juggernaut comes calling on Sikkim in the next election cycle here, this commitment should be extracted.

Amazonian dirt roads are choking Brazil's tropical streams

CECILIA GONTIJO LEAL
theconversation.com

The first time I traveled to the Amazon, in 2010, I had no idea what to expect. A doctoral student from the far-off Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte, I imagined that my field work – studying fish habitats in the largest tropical forest on Earth – would be all boat rides on immense rivers and long jungle hikes.

In fact, all my research team needed was a car. That's because the Brazilian Amazon isn't just a rainforest: This 1.6 million square mile area is also home to villages, farming, logging and even mining. That means there are roads, most of them dirt.

Scientists have long known that roads contribute to deforestation, both in the Amazon and in other rainforests. But my research reveals that these transportation networks also harm Amazonian waterways, affecting the fish that thrive in this delicate habitat and endangering local communities.

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE BUT NOT A BRIDGE IN SIGHT

Our original 2010 study examined water conditions and fish diversity in 99 small streams – called "igarapés" – in the Amazonian state of Pará. To reach them, we drove long distances past pastures, large plantations and small villages, through dense virgin forests and young regenerating jungle.

We also crossed a lot of rivers and streams – the waterways that nurture this rich tropical ecosystem. Rarely did we use a bridge, though.

Instead, we discovered, most Amazonian igarapé crossings are an informal affair. Streams are narrowed with packed dirt, and water is channeled underneath via a metal pipe.

Most of the makeshift culverts we saw were either too narrow for the water flow or were installed too high – "perched" such that they created a sort of mini waterfall on the downstream side of the crossing, visibly disrupting the water flow.

A fish would really struggle to get through a perched culvert, we thought. Clearly, these informal stream crossings must be affecting local fish populations in other ways, too. I've spent the past eight years documenting how.

ROADS THREATEN AMAZONIAN FISH

The Amazon's rivers and streams contain a brilliantly diverse array of fish – so many thousands of species that scientists are still finding new fish families. We counted 44 species of fish in just one small Amazonian stream. That's more than live in all of Denmark.

After many hours measuring various attributes

of small streams – including water depth, channel width, water flow, temperature and types of substrate – and sampling the fish that lived there, the data from our 2010 study confirmed that dirt roads are ravaging Amazonian streams.

We found that makeshift road crossings cause both shore erosion and silt buildup in streams. This worsens water quality, hurting the fish that thrive in this delicately balanced habitat.

The ill-designed road crossings also act as barriers to movement, preventing fish from finding places to feed, breed and take shelter. This can lead to what's called "faunal homogenization" because the most vulnerable aquatic species die out, leaving a less diverse fish community.

Disrupted water flows particularly affect carnivorous species, which tend to hunt across long distances. The dogtooth fish, or *Acestrorhynchus falcatus*, for example, typically hunts in many different streams, swimming from one to the other in search of prey.

We don't know yet what happens to carnivorous Amazonian fish whose range is shrunk by road crossings. But malnutrition, inbreeding and even species endangerment seem like likely outcomes.

FRACTURING THE AMAZON'S WATERY NETWORK

Amazonian streams are interconnected, a natural network perfectly calibrated to transport nutrients and organic matter downstream, control water flow and regulate water quality. In short, igarapés are the essential interface between forests and the Amazon's big rivers.

Informal stream crossings create blockages in this water network. I estimate that there are some 3,000 informal stream crossings in Paragominas municipality alone – and that's just one small part of one state of the nine states that comprise the Brazilian Amazon.

Taken together, these makeshift "bridges" – some belonging to roads built illegally – have profoundly fragmented the Amazon's freshwater ecosystem.

In the Curuá-Una River basin, for example, pri-



or studies document one impoundment for every 4.7 miles of stream. In the upper Xingu River, a southeast tributary of the Amazon River and one of the largest clearwater rivers in the Amazon basin, there are some 10,000 road crossings. There, water temperatures have risen up to 3 degrees Celsius, in part because shoreline trees are cut down to make way for crossings, allowing sunlight to penetrate.

Cattle ranchers across the Amazon tend to construct similar dirt crossings. Since that's private property, though, it's hard to know how many or measure the impacts.

BUILDING FISH-FRIENDLY ROADS

What an unnecessary problem for the fragile, embattled Amazon to have.

Brazilian farmers who live in the Amazon do need roads to get around and to transport their crops. But unlike logging, mining and agriculture – activities that profoundly threaten this fragile rainforest – road-stream intersections don't have to harm Amazonian waterways. It's a question of design.

The Amazon's transportation infrastructure is built so poorly because Brazil lacks federal guidelines for constructing rural roads in a technically correct and environmentally sensitive way.

Existing environmental regulations simply don't account for the negative impact of roads on waterways. We even found culverts choking off streams inside the protected Tapajós National Forest.

This doesn't just hurt fish. Many Amazonian stream crossings are built during the dry season, between April and September. When the six-month-long rainy season comes, the igarapés fill and swell, leading undersized culverts to rupture. Routine flash floods endanger the people who live downstream and lead to more frequent road repairs.

Other countries – including Sweden, the United States and Canada – have all developed good technical guidelines for building and monitoring ecologically friendly road-stream crossings. Elevated bridges and fish-friendly culverts, for example, can minimize impacts on aquatic habitats.

Well designed bridges would also dramatically diminish rainy-season washouts, saving money by reducing the need for such frequent rebuilding.

Brazil would, of course, need to adapt these technical guidelines to work in the Amazon, a tropical forest unlike anything in Europe or North America. But it's an environment well worth the investment.

[the writer is Post-doctoral researcher in Applied Ecology, Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi, Belém]

‘Beast from the East’ and freakishly warm Arctic temperatures are no coincidence

PETER INNESS
theconversation.com

During the past week, bitterly cold weather has engulfed the UK and most of Northern Europe. At the same time, temperatures in the high Arctic have been 10 to 20°C above normal – although still generally below freezing.

The co-occurrence of these two opposite extremes is no random coincidence. A quick climate rewind reveals how an unusual disturbance in the tropics more than a month ago sent out shock-waves thousands of kilometres in all directions, causing extreme weather events – not only in Europe and the Arctic, but in the southern hemisphere too.

The outbreak of cold weather across the UK was publicly forecast at least two weeks in advance. In early February, meteorologists noticed a large-scale weather event developing 30km high in the Arctic stratosphere, whose effects on our less lofty weather systems are well understood.

The strong westerly winds, known as the Polar Vortex, that normally circle the Arctic at this altitude had begun to weaken and change direction. Extremely cold arctic air – usually entrapped by this 360° barrier – was able to spill out to lower latitudes, flooding across Siberia.

Meteorologists refer to this type of event as a Sudden Stratospheric Warming (SSW) because the air in the stratosphere above the North Pole appears to warm rapidly. In fact, the cold air isn't itself warming up so much as flooding south and being replaced by warmer air from further south.

Changes to wind directions and temperatures 30km above the ground initially went unnoticed to those on the ground – both in Europe and in the Arctic. But over a period of several



weeks, the influence of this weather event moved gradually downwards through the lower region of the atmosphere, eventually changing weather patterns near the surface.

One such change was the development of high pressure across Scandinavia, which generated easterly winds across the whole of Northern Europe, pulling cold air from Siberia directly over the UK. Out over the Atlantic Ocean the same area of high pressure resulted in southerly winds allowing warm air from the Atlantic to move northwards into the Arctic basin. Research shows that these weather shifts tend to be fairly persistent once they do occur – hence the unusual length of the cold spell we're experiencing, and the warmth in the Arctic.

But what caused the stratospheric Arctic warming event to happen in the first place? For this we need to look thousands of kilometres away to the atmosphere above the tropical West Pacific Ocean. In late January, a vast area of thunderstorms, as large and strong as have ever been

recorded, were disturbing the atmosphere across this region. The effect of these storms was equivalent to the dropping of a large boulder into a pond – they caused waves of alternating high and low pressure to spread through the atmosphere, particularly into the northern hemisphere. It was these waves bumping into the vortex of winds around the North Pole that caused the Sudden Stratospheric Warming event in early February.

The very same area of thunderstorms across the tropical Pacific acted as the birthplace for the less-reported Cyclone Gita, which tracked through the South Pacific, causing damage in Tonga and Samoa and even leading to unseasonably stormy weather across New Zealand at the end of their summer.

The near simultaneous occurrence of all of these extreme weather events is a perfect meteorological illustration of the butterfly effect. While we usually talk about weather in local and regional terms, the atmosphere is one continuous fluid expanse. Disturbances in one

region are bound to have consequences to the weather in other parts of the world – and when they are severe the shock-waves can be immense.

Many have linked the severity of these events with climate change. But, particularly for this event, its importance for us meteorologists to exercise caution. The occurrence of this particular stratospheric warming event is not itself a consequence of climate change, as one extreme weather event on its own does not tell us anything about long-term trends in the Earth's climate.

What's important is to look at how often these events occur – and how severe they are when they do. However, the series of events that lead to cold weather over Europe are complex and have only been well understood for the past 20 years or so. Without a few more decades of data, it is difficult to say whether either the stratospheric warming or the intense tropical storms are part of a pattern that falls outside of what we would normally expect – though limited research does already suggest that Stratospheric Sudden Warming events are becoming more frequent.

For other extreme weather events, the story is clearer – evidence increasingly suggests that hurricanes, storms and wildfires are becoming both more frequent and more severe than they once were. Time will tell if it's the same story for Stratospheric Sudden Warming and tropical disturbances. Evidence from these recent temperature extremes will certainly help researchers to understand this question. But if we do what we can to minimise the damaging impacts of climate change, we may never need to find out.

[the writer is Lecturer in Meteorology, University of Reading]

Nagaland: BJP snaps 15-year-old ties with NPF, to go with NDPP

KOHIMA, MAR 5 (PTI): The BJP today said it would form the government in Nagaland with its pre-poll alliance partner NDPP and ruled out extending support to its 15-year-old ally the Naga People's Front (NPF), which emerged as the single largest party in the Assembly polls.

After meeting senior NDPP leader and former chief minister Neiphiu Rio here, BJP leader and Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told newsmen that his party was no longer in alliance with the NPF that had been in power in the state since 2008.

"Today, I can officially say that we have no truck with the NPF and there is no question of going back to the NPF in forming the government. We will go with the NDPP," Sarma said in reply to a question.

Asked if any official letter was given to outgoing chief minister T R Zeliang on the breaking of ties, Sarma said, "In politics, we don't go by too many letters. Politics goes on signals and we are sending enough signals to Zeliang that we cannot be friend with NPF."

The BJP had a pre-poll alliance with the NDPP and the

people has given us the mandate, he said.

The NDPP was formed just before the February 27 election with then NPF leader Neiphiu Rio as its head.

"We (BJP and NDPP) had detailed discussion on the architecture and representation of the two parties in the government. The details will be disclosed by Rio in due course of time," the BJP leader said.

Rio later said the details of the agreement between the BJP and the NDPP cannot be revealed at this moment.

He said the coalition would be named the People's

Democratic Alliance.

The BJP bagged 12 seats, while its ally NDPP won 17 seats in the 60-member Assembly. It is also supported by the lone JD(U) MLA and an Independent legislator.

Sarma advised incumbent Chief Minister T R Zeliang of the NPF to "resign gracefully respecting democratic norms, as the Constitution has many other provisions".

Zeliang has not resigned yet, with the NPF claiming that the party would form the government again with the support of the BJP.

Commenting on Sarma's statement, the NPF said it

was a "unilateral decision" of the BJP.

Asked whether the BJP's decision to sever ties with the NPF would impact their relationship in Manipur, where four NPF legislators are part of the BJP government, party spokesperson Achumbemo Kikon said, "The NPF will have to revisit the decision."

Kikon said the incumbent Chief Minister Zeliang was in close touch with the BJP high command as the party wanted to continue the alliance "in the interest of the peace process."

Sarma, however, said it would not be proper for Ze-

liang to meet central BJP leaders at this stage as it would send a wrong signal to the people of Nagaland. He can surely meet them after the formation of the government."

Kikon said the people electing 27 NPF candidates is a clear indication that they support the leadership of Zeliang over Rio as the NDPP had won only 17 seats.

"Being a national party, if the BJP does not consider the possibility of providing a stable and strong government by continuing the alliance with the NPF, it is up to them," the NPF spokesperson said.

Yesterday, both Rio and Zeliang had met Governor P B Acharya and claimed to have the support of majority of MLAs.

Acharya had told reporters yesterday that Rio and Zeliang have claimed to have majority support, but "I have not invited anyone to form the government as of now. I have given them 48 hours time to submit the signatures of the elected members supporting them".

Meanwhile, in Dimapur, the BJP Legislature Party today unanimously elected former home minister Yanthun-g Patton as its leader.

TMC Youth Wing takes out bike rally

SUMMIT REPORT

SILIGURI, 05 MAR:

The youth wing of the Trinamool Congress took out a bike rally today from Khoribari on the Nepal border to Baghajatin Park in Siliguri today. Thousands of supporters participated in the rally.

The TMC Youth president, Mr Sarkar said, "The rally was organized to motivate the youth of our party and to make us stronger. We also want to spread the message that the BJP government at the Centre is indulging in communal politics. And we have to prove everyone in the upcoming election that our CM, Mamta Banerjee, and our party is the only one which can develop our State."

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Pak PM Abbasi arrives in Nepal; meets Oli

KATHMANDU, MAR 5 (PTI): Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi today arrived here on a two-day visit during which he will hold talks with Nepal's top leadership as part of his country's efforts to engage with regional nations.

Abbasi, who is visiting Nepal at the invitation of Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli, was received by Finance Minister Dr Yuvaraj Khatriwada at the Tribhuvan International Airport.

He was accorded the guard of honour at Army



Pavilion at Tundikhel Ground in presence of Prime Minister Oli.

Abbasi is the first high level foreign leader to visit Nepal after Premier Oli assumed office

last month.

Prime Minister Abbasi met his Nepalese counterpart Oli and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest,

according to Nepal Foreign Ministry sources.

He will also call on President Bidyadevi Bhandari at Rastrapati Bhawan, Sheetal Niwas, Kathmandu tomorrow and will meet other high officials of Nepal.

Abbasi is the first Pakistan prime minister to visit Nepal after an interval of three years.

Former premier Nawaz Sharif had visited Nepal to attend the 18th SAARC Summit. Oli will host a dinner tonight in honour of Abbasi.

His visit will provide an opportunity to further expand and strengthen

bilateral relations across all areas of mutual interest including trade, education, tourism, defence and people to people contacts, Pakistan's Foreign Office said in a statement.

The visit is a part of Pakistan's "pro-active and outreach efforts" to engage with regional countries, the Foreign Office said yesterday.

It said ways of invigorating the South East Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) as an important regional organisation will also be discussed.

Traumatic Board exam start for Narayana School students

SMRITA KHAWAS

SILIGURI, 05 MAR:

Narayana School, Siliguri, has been in a controversy of late regarding its claims of affiliation with the CBSE Board. Parents of the students have now alleged that the school misled them with these claims when in fact it is not a CBSE-affiliated institution.

Adding to the controversy, a new issue came to light today as buses hired by the school refused to ferry students to their examination centre at Bethels School in Raiganj owing to pending payments.

Students of Narayana School appearing for their Class X CBSE Board exam this year along with their guardians

gathered at the school campus this morning to protest against the school management.

Around 100 students appearing for their Boards were stranded back at the school. Eventually, after an agreement with the school, the bus owners agreed to take the students to Raiganj.

As per information from Bethels School, the students appearing for Class X CBSE exam will not be debarred from the examination this year although Narayana School is not affiliated to CBSE. This decision has been taken so that the future of the students is not hampered, however, this will not be allowed next year, it was informed.

Arunachal to fast track cases of crime against women: Dy CM

ITANAGAR, MAR 5 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein has asserted that the state government will fast track cases of violence against women and children, an official release said here today.

His statement comes a day after a delegation of Arunachal Pradesh Women's Welfare Society (APWWS) met him in his office, urging him to ensure provisions for quick justice for women victims.

Responding to the plea of the APWWS delegation, the deputy chief minister, who also holds the finance portfolio, said his department would consider the suggestions for inclusion in the Budget and may also place it before the cabinet for consideration, the release said.

The Budget session in the state is set to commence on March 9.

The delegation, led by APWWS president Dipti Bengia Tadar, also requested the gov-

ernment to involve women in major policy decisions of the state, it said.

Chief Secretary Satya Gopal, who was also present during the meeting, asked the APWWS team to generate awareness on work culture among the government employees, it added.

Earlier, APWWS had submitted a memorandum to the government, seeking safety and security measures for children and women of Arunachal Pradesh.

Committed to winning back trust of people in NE: Rahul

New Delhi, Mar 5 (PTI): Breaking his silence on the party's defeat in three northeast states, Congress president Rahul Gandhi today said he respected the mandate of people in the region and was committed to winning back their trust.

Gandhi's reaction came two days after results for assembly elections in Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland were declared on Saturday. The Congress lost Me-

ghalaya and failed to score a single seat in Tripura and Nagaland.

The party won 21 seats in Meghalaya, where it was in power, and could not garner the support of regional outfits to cobble together a coalition government.

Top party leaders Ahmed Patel and Kamal Nath rushed to Shillong to talk to regional parties but to no avail.

"The Congress party respects the mandate of the people of Tri-

pura, Nagaland and Meghalaya.

"We are committed to strengthening our party across the North East and to winning back the trust of the people.

"My sincere thanks to each and every Congress worker who toiled for the party," Gandhi said on Twitter.

Gandhi had announced on Thursday that he would visit his 93-year-old grandmother in Italy over the Holi weekend.

Sarkar blames money power, media onslaught for LF debacle

AGARTALA, MAR 5 (PTI): Outgoing Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar has blamed the "unimaginable money power" and "continuous onslaught of media" as the reason behind the party's debacle in the just-concluded Assembly polls in the state.

The poll result was "unexpected" and people of the state and the country has noticed how the BJP used its all-out effort to oust the Left Front government, Sarkar said in an interview to 'Ganashakti', the party's mouthpiece in West Bengal on Sunday.

The Centre, he said, had in fact created an "economic blockade" against the government by reducing the central allocations in MGNREGA and housing schemes, among others.

In the interview, which was also published in the CPI-M mouth piece 'Daily Desherkatha' here to-



day, Sarkar, also a CPI-M Politburo member, said "The Left parties had fought the elections with all their might and the people were their main force to fight against the unimaginable money power and continuous onslaught of media".

He said that the CPI-M would review the causes of its debacle in the just-concluded Assembly elections in the state after all the information is made available.

"It is observed that the BJP-Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) (alliance) could manage to win the major portion of the

anti-Left forces into their fold.

"We (Left Front) have secured 45 per cent votes. It is also a fact that a portion of votes that we secured earlier has also gone in favour of the (BJP-IPFT) alliance. We will review why it had happened," Sarkar said.

He said, the CPI-M's movement for ideology and alternative principle would continue and never stop.

Sarkar claimed that the incidents of attack on Left workers and setting fire to the party offices has started coming in and added that the people who had voted for the BJP responding to their call for change perhaps did not want such atmosphere after the elections.

"I think these should be stopped henceforth. We hope their (BJP-IPFT) party leadership will take a positive step to stop these," he added.

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Tata Motors to have 25% women workforce in 4-5 yrs

MUMBAI, MAR 5 (PTI): Country's largest auto-maker Tata Motors is turning more women-friendly, and hopes to have a quarter of its total workforce as women over the next four to five years. It can be noted that Tata Motors's Pune plant was the first manufacturing plant in the country to have a female engineer on its assembly line way back in April 1974 when the late JRD Tata had personally hired Sudha Murthy, the wife of Infosys co-founder NR Narayana Murthy.

"We have substantially increased the number of women in our workforce over the last four-five years and we aim to increase it to 20-25 per cent over the next four to five years," Gajendra Chandel, chief HR officer at Tata Motors told PTI today.

As of January this year, the company had 2,628 women on its rolls, of which 1,952 were on the shop-floor, which accounts for about 5 per cent of its total factory workforce of 41,390, he added. The company employs a total of 55,159 people.

"Over the years, we have been steadily hiring more women from the campuses. This has gone up from 13 per cent in 2016 to 19 per cent in 2017 and a target of 25 per cent for 2018 batches," Chandel informed.

Blue-collared women workforce increased by 16 per cent through focused hiring from smaller towns and villages and training under the National Employability Enhancement Mission, he said, adding 70 per cent of those trained in the TML-ASDC run-skilling programme in August 2017 were women.

"We are slowly but steadily working to-

wards building gender diversity where women work shoulder to shoulder and have the same opportunities as men anywhere in the company," Chandel said explaining the rationale for this new approach.

As part of this new HR initiative, where the objective is to have gender diversity, the Tata Group has launched 'Tata LEAD Initiative' in March 2014. This lead to a modest start by inducting five women at the assembly line of Tata Motors in Pune.

"This modest shop-floor attempt gave us very encouraging results and the stage was set with culture building, training of all on the shop-floor, mindset change, etc," Chandel said, adding later the company converted the door line and trim line II to all-women, with no compromise on productivity and quality parameters.

To take this forward and across all the plants, Tata Motors recently launched a mission to "create a brigade of Women in Blue," by enrolling, educating and skilling girls especially from economically deprived areas.

Another initiative that the company has embarked is Women@Work that encompasses all facets including support systems, policies, infrastructure, cultural and mindset change apart from getting statutory clearances wherever required.

"The agenda focuses on three pillars: Becoming an employer of choice for women, transformation of culture and mindset to create a positive cultural momentum and development and retention," said Chandel.

Football flows like blood in the veins in Northeast, says Renedy Singh

NEW DELHI, MAR 5 (PTI): Northeast has been the hub of Indian football for over two decades and former India international Renedy Singh says the sport "flows like blood in everyone's veins in the region".

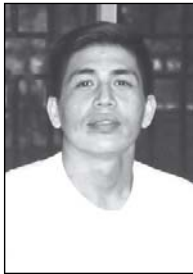
Aizawl FC took it one step beyond when they were crowned champions of Hero I-League in 2016-17, their debut season, thus reiterating the fact that football is an integral part of the culture in the land of the 'seven sisters'.

"Football flows like blood in everyone's vein in the region," Renedy said with a grin.

"Football is the number one sport in the region and there is no denying that everyone just wants to play football.

It is very important for the kids to engage in competitive environment from early on," he added.

As part of developing



a grassroots culture, All India Football Federation's (AIFF) philosophy on Baby Leagues has been implemented in the state of Meghalaya and Mizoram.

Even as Aizawl FC captured the imagination of entire country by winning the I-League, Renedy said Shillong Lajong FC's self belief enabled others to dream in the region.

"Lajong's performance in the Hero I-League and their consistency enabled others to dream. Lajong are the pioneers of giving young



players inspiration in the region. They have set the tone for clubs from the region," he said.

"And Aizawl FC proved that it is very possible that a champion can be crowned from the Northeast. Aizawl FC took

Shillong Lajong's example and moved forward."

Reflecting on NEROCA FC's dream outing, Renedy feels the club's run has been nothing short of "inspirational".

"NEROCA FC's run for the Hero I-League title

this season has been inspirational for everyone in the state of Manipur and the northeast of India. They have done well and I hope they do well in their last match (against Kingfisher East Bengal)," he said.

"The Northeast has the potential of being a stronghold of football in India when it comes to club level and the effects of Aizawl FC and NEROCA's dream run are being seen in the entire region," he stated.

Anand wins Tal Memorial Rapid Chess

MOSCOW, MAR 5 (PTI): World rapid champion Viswanathan Anand continued his fine run in the faster version of the game and annexed the Tal Memorial rapid chess title here after an easy final round draw against Boris Gelfand of Israel.

Anand finished with six points out of a possible nine, scoring four wins and four draws. His solitary loss came at the hands of Shakhriyar Mamedyarov of Azerbaijan in the third round but thereafter the Indian ace showed his superb form.

Anand defeated Ian Nepomniachtchi, Alexander Grischuk and Daniil Dubov of Russia and Hikaru Nakamura of United States enroute to his final score.

The most crucial was his victory over Grischuk in the penultimate round that sealed



the title for Anand. It was a Sicilian defense where Anand employed the Rossolimo variation with his white pieces.

The players castled on the opposite wing and the king hunt was on from the early middle game stages. Anand

sacrificed a pawn to open up the position and Grischuk erred by going for counter attack when he had to defend precisely.

What followed was a treat for the spectators as Anand came up with a startling knight

and a rook sacrifice to force checkmate. The game lasted 30 moves.

While it was a neck-and-neck battle with Mamedyarov till the start of the penultimate round, the Azerbaijani missed the thread and went down to young and enterprising Dubov in the eighth round.

Mamedyarov, Sergey Karajkin of Russia and Nakamura finished in a tie for second spot with five points apiece, while Gelfand and Grischuk ended on 4.5 points to tie for the fifth spot in the 10-player round-robin tournament.

Dubov and Vladimir Kramnik of Russia scored four points and the Russian duo of Peter Svidler and Nepomniachtchi ended in the ninth spot.

For Anand this was another fine victory to add to his

world rapid title won in Riyadh just over two months ago. The Indian will now try to repeat his performance in the blitz tournament that will see a few players added to the present list.

Results after final round: Boris Gelfand (ISR) drew with Vishwanathan Anand (IND), Sergey Karjakin (RUS) beat Vladimir Kramnik (RUS), Daniil Dubov (RUS) drew with Peter Svidler (RUS), Alexander Grischuk (RUS) drew with Hikaru Nakamura (USA), Ian Nepomniachtchi (RUS) drew with Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (RUS).

Final Standings: 1. Anand (6); 2-4: Mamedyarov, Karjakin, Nakamura (5 each); 5-6: Grischuk, Gelfand (4.5 each); 7-8: Kramnik, Dubov (4 each); 9-10: Svidler, Nepomniachtchi (3.5 each).

New festival to bring to life Delhi's cultural character

NEW DELHI, MAR 5 (PTI): A new festival will bring to life the cultural character of Delhi, by portraying the city through the eye of an artist.

'Dilli Nayi Purani - Kalakar Ki Nazar Se', organised by Kaladrishti and NDMC, will showcase the co-existence of the past and present of Delhi, offering a kaleidoscopic

view of the national capital from March 7.

"We have the broken walls of the Purana Kila alongside the Trade Fair Authority on one side and Delhi Geological Garden on the other.

"The high rise buildings of Connaught Place co-exist with the Agrasen ki Baoli. The event aims to project this unique

feature of Delhi," organisers said.

The medium used will be street art. From hand-painted film hoardings giving a trip down the memory lane to graffiti on walls; from colonial era sketches of the city to vintage images from the time bygone, the mela promises to be a one-stop junction for those who

wish to know Delhi better.

Exhibits will also include installations and sculptures, along with a special section dedicated to children, as well as decorative art on human body -- body painting, nail art, hair art et al.

The event, scheduled to be held at Palika Park here, will come to a close on March 11.

Paes returns to top-50, singles players slid

NEW DELHI, MAR 5 (PTI): Leander Paes returned to top-50 with a six-place jump following his runners-up show at the ATP Dubai event while India's top singles players slid in the latest rankings, issued today.

Paes, who reached the final in Dubai with Jamie Cerretani last week, jumped to 46, two places behind Divij Sharan (44), who gained one place. Rohan Bopanna was un-



changed at number 20.

Purav Raja was next best at number 62 (loss Ramanathan (135, -2),

of one place) while Vishnu Vardhan reached a career-best doubles rank of 99 as he gained one place.

In the singles, Yuki Bhambri lost five places to slide to 110 and was followed by Ramkumar (135, -2),

Sumit Nagal (223, -3) and left-handed Prajnesh Gunneswaran (235, -3).

In the women's rankings, Ankita Raina also lost five places to be placed 255 and was followed by Karman Kaur Thandi, who moved up three places to career-best 278.

In the doubles, injured Sania Mirza was unchanged at number 13 while Prarthna Thombare dropped two places to 141.

Will defend my essays, but never novels: Arundhati Roy

NEW DELHI, MAR 5 (PTI): What gives Arundhati Roy utmost happiness? These days it is the Hindi and Urdu translations of her second novel.

Her novel 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness' has already been translated into over 40 languages and its Hindi and Urdu versions will be out on April 20 this year.

The announcement was made by the novel's publisher at the 69th foundation day of Rajkamal Prakashan Samuh held at the India Habitat Centre here recently.

Praising the publisher for coming out with the translations of her novel in Hindi and Urdu simultaneously, Roy said considering the times "we are living in", it makes for a big statement.

Recalling a conversation with her Kashmiri friend who told her that her work was closer to an Urdu novel than an English one, Roy said,



"The challenge is to write a novel in a language when you know it is imagined in many languages, which is what I did with my novel 'Ministry of Utmost Happiness'.

Notably, this is the first time that the author has taken an active

part in the translation of her book.

Roy in June will also deliver the WG Sebald annual lecture in the UK on literary translations.

Speaking at a session titled 'Waqt ki Aahat', Roy, who is often seen taking a firm stand on is-

sues across the spectrum, said she would argue about her essays, but will never defend what she writes in her novel.

"The claim to truth cannot be made by the writer but must be felt by the reader. The whole thing to a novel is its fragility and openness to interpretation," said the acclaimed author.

Roy said there are truths that only fiction can tell as everything is not evidential. In this context, she gave the example of Kashmir, saying "no human rights report" can give you the understanding of that place.

"Large part of my book is set in Kashmir and nothing of that could be told in a human rights report because the understanding of what happens with people when the air is seeded with terror, whatever negotiations that are made, there are no easy

moralties to draw. So to paint a picture, you have to have fiction," she said.

Roy, for whom experimentation is key, said the idea behind writing 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness' was to explore what a novel can do.

Roy said she was clear that she did not want to write just another book. Because if that would have been the case, Roy said, she could have easily penned 'Sons of The God of Small things or The God of Small Things part 2'.

The God of Small Things was Roy's first novel, which also won her the Booker prize in 1997. She came out with her second novel after a long hiatus of 20 years.

"Ministry of (Utmost) Happiness is no baby food. It is not a book that you will consume in 10 minutes and rush for a judgement and tell everybody what it is about.

"With this book, I am creating a universe and I'll walk you through it because I love you...you will get lost but you will find yourself," she said.

Though elated with the soon-to-be-out translations of her novel in Hindi and Urdu, Roy rued that the certain things lose their real meaning in the process.

Names of plants, animal, birds are lost in translation as some of them don't have a name in Hindi or Urdu, she said.

"Arrey Gibbon langur nahi hai jaise Jaguar sher nahi hai (Gibbon is no langur; just as Jaguar is not a lion)," said Roy.

"I am very particular about birds, plants, animals. But then we don't have their names in our languages. I don't know why the white folks have to come and name the plants, trees, birds and animals for us," she rued.

Indian Embassy telephone lines in US spoofed by fraudsters

LALIT K JHA
WASHINGTON, MAR 5 (PTI): Indian Embassy telephone lines have been spoofed by fraudsters in the US to cheat people for money, according to an advisory issued by mission which warned against entertaining any suspicious calls.

The Indian Embassy here has informed the US Government about it and launched its own internal investigation.

It also issued a rare public advisory on such fraud calls that has cheated people with money, thus

bringing bad name to the diplomatic mission.

“These fraudsters either seek personal information like credit card details etc. or try to extort money from Indian nationals by inter alia claiming that there are errors in their passports, visa forms, immigration forms etc. which could be rectified by paying money, and at the same time warning that the so called errors, if not rectified, could result in deportation of the individual to India or their imprisonment in USA,” the Indian Embassy said in

its advisory.

Some of the Indian nationals living in the US, who received such call, brought to the notice of the Embassy that some fraudsters are spoofing Embassy of India telephone lines to make calls aimed at cheating people.

Some of these calls are shown as being from the Embassy telephone numbers while others simply use Embassy identity.

In some cases, these fraudsters also claimed that they received such information from the Embassy or other authorities in India.

Visa applicants have also received such calls purporting to be from the Embassy.

The Indian Embassy has started collecting information from the public, including details of the Western Union account number or bank account details where the money was transferred.

In its advisory, the Indian Embassy said that none of its officials make any telephone calls seeking personal information from any Indian or foreign nationals.

In case of any additional documentation is required from an

existing applicant, it is sought only through emails originating from the official domain, it said.

It urged people living in the US not to entertain any suspicious telephone calls made in the name of Embassy of India. It also advised people not to reveal any personal information or transfer any money in response to such calls.

This is for the first time probably that fraudsters have been spoofing Indian Embassy phone numbers.

According to informed US government officials, in the past they

have received similar complaints from other diplomatic missions as well, in particular those from the European nations.

Officials said while the spoofing technology is easily available, it is tough to get to the origin of such phone calls.

Americans have been frequent victims of such phone calls from call centers in India on behalf of the US Internal Revenue Service. In several joint operations in the last one year, Indian authorities have arrested scores of people making such fraud calls.

Skorean envoys arrive in North to meet leader Kim: Seoul

SEOUL, MAR 5 (AFP): A South Korean delegation arrived in Pyongyang today on a historic trip to meet the North's leader Kim Jong Un, Seoul said.

The group, the most senior officials from the South to go North for more than a decade, landed at Pyongyang's Sunan airport, said the South's presidential spokesman Kim Eui-kyeom.

"It was agreed... that they would attend a meeting and dinner with Kim Jong Un," he added.

The South Korean delegation will push for talks between the nuclear-armed North and the United States, the group's leader said.

An intense rapprochement saw athletes from both sides of the divided peninsula march together at the South's Pyeongchang Winter Olympics last month, with the North's leader Kim Jong Un sending his sister as a special envoy to the event.

Kim Yo Jong's trip was the first visit to the South by a member of the North's ruling dynasty since the end of the Korean war, and her appearance at the Games' opening ceremony made global headlines.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has sought to use the Pyeongchang Games to open dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang in the hopes of easing a nuclear standoff that has heightened fears over global security.

Kim Yo Jong invited him to a summit in the North on her brother's behalf, but Moon did not immediately accept, saying that the right conditions were necessary first.

Chinese leaders in the past have vowed not to ape the western political systems.

Xi was speaking at a joint panel discussion yesterday with "political advisors" from the China Democratic League and the China Zhi Gong Party, those without party affiliation and those from the sector of returned overseas Chinese, at the first session of

President Xi praises CPC rule, says multiparty democracy promotes nasty competition

BEIJING, MAR 5 (PTI): As Chinese President Xi Jinping is set to solidify his rule with an unlimited tenure, he was all praise for the one-party system furthered by the ruling Communist Party saying that it prevented rotation of power and "nasty competition" among political parties in a multi-party democracy.

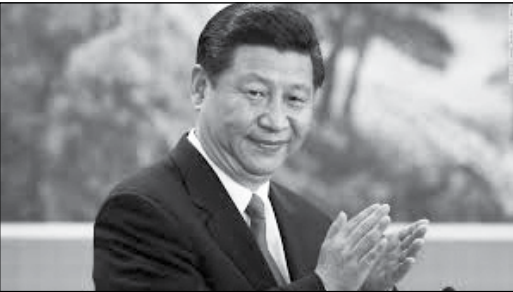
The system of multi-party co-operation and political consultation led by the Communist Party of China (CPC) is "a great contribution to political civilisation of humanity," Xi told delegates from some of the small political parties which functioned in low key manner under the shadows of the CPC.

The Chinese system is new, Xi said, because it unites all political parties and people without party affiliation toward a common goal, effectively preventing the flaws of the absence of oversight in one-party rule, or "power rotation and nasty competition among multiple political parties," state-run Xinhua news agency reported today.

It steers away from another weakness of the old-fashioned party system, in which decision making and governance, confined by interests of different political parties, classes, regions and groups, tears the society apart, he said.

Chinese leaders in the past have vowed not to ape the western political systems.

Xi was speaking at a joint panel discussion yesterday with "political advisors" from the China Democratic League and the China Zhi Gong Party, those without party affiliation and those from the sector of returned overseas Chinese, at the first session of



the advisory body the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the Xinhua report said.

His comments came as the Chinese Parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC), began its two week long annual session today with a legislative agenda which included ratifying a constitutional amendment removing the two-term rule for the President and Vice President.

The rule followed by the CPC for over two decades to prevent dictatorial ruler emerging from the ranks as well as to promote collective leadership effectively removes the last hurdle for 64-year-old Xi to continue beyond the end of his second term in 2023 and possibly for life.

Xi is already regarded as the most powerful leader of China after Chairman Mao Zedong as he held the posts of head of the CPC, the military and the Presidency.

The NPC was also expected to endorse another draft constitutional amendment to enshrine Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era in the fundamental law.

This would ensure that Xi's name is written into the Constitution making him on par with Mao.

The draft suggests Xi Jinping thought be juxtaposed with Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and the Theory of Three Represents as a new guiding theory in the preamble of the Constitution, Xinhua said.

The name of Xi and his thought figured numerous times in the annual work report read out Premier Li Keqiang today at the opening session of the NPC, which observers said conferred to Xi the status and authority which was enjoyed by Mao during the heydays of China's revolution which brought CPC to power in 1949.

Since then CPC remained the only ruling party. In the subsequent years, it permitted eight non-Communist parties which functioned under the shadows and authority of CPC.

Xi said the Chinese system is new because it combines Marxist political party theories with China's reality, and truly, extensively and in the long term represents fundamental interests of all people and all ethnic groups and fulfills their aspiration, avoiding the defects of the old-fashioned party system which represents only a selective few or the vested

China increases defence budget to USD 175 bn

BEIJING, MAR 5 (PTI): China today announced a 8.1 per cent hike in its defence expenditure for this year to a whopping USD 175 billion, which is over three times higher than India's defence budget, as it seeks to further advance an ambitious modernisation drive for its military.

The 8.1% increase is higher than last year's announcement, when China upped military spending by 7% over the previous year.

According to a budget report to be submitted

to the National People's Congress (NPC) today, the 2018 defence budget will be 1.11 trillion yuan (USD 175 billion).

China last year increased the defence budget to USD 150.5 billion. China is the second largest spender on defence after the US. The Pentagon has requested a budget of USD 686 billion in 2019, up USD 80 billion from 2017.

The increase of China's defence budget by 8.1 per cent this year, is three times higher than India's latest defence budget of about USD 46

billion.

China's budget announcement comes as President Xi Jinping, the commander in chief of the country's armed forces, focuses on increasing both the sophistication and reach of the country's military.

Though China announced its military spending at about USD 150.5 billion last year, observers say it is considerably higher, considering it is now building two more aircraft carriers in addition to the one already in service as well as addition of new

jet fighters, including stealth fighter J-20.

The Chinese Navy also expanded its global reach with flotilla ships sailing through the far-off oceans to expand China's influence.

The official media justified the increase to USD 175 billion, saying although slightly higher than the previous two years, the growth rate is the third time to dip into the single digit since 2013, following 7.6 per cent in 2016 and 7 per cent in 2017.

China's defence budget takes up a smaller

share of its gross domestic product (GDP) and national fiscal expenditure compared with other major countries, Zhang Yesui, the spokesperson of the NPC told the media here yesterday.

"A large part of the growth of the defence budget is to make up for the low military spending in the past and is mainly used to upgrade equipment and improve the welfare of servicemen and women and the living and training conditions of grassroots troops," he said.

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'Shape of Water' triumphs at Oscars amid call for inclusivity



"THE SHAPE OF WATER", a fantasy drama about a mute cleaning lady who falls for a sea creature, turned out to be the big winner at the politically-charged 90th Academy Awards, bagging four trophies, including Best Picture and Best Director for Guillermo del Toro.

In a tight best picture race, the inter-species romance triumphed over award season favourites "Get Out" and "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri". The film also won Best Original Score for Alexandre Desplat and Best Production Design.

Del Toro's double win as director and producer once again underscored the domination of Mexican filmmakers at the Academy Awards. His win is the fourth time a Mexican has taken home the prize in the last five years, after Alfonso Cuarón won in 2014 for "Gravity" and Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu in 2015 and 2016 for "The Birdman" and "The Revenant".

Del Toro acknowledged

as much in his acceptance speech while taking a potshot at President Donald Trump's comments about building a wall between Mexico and the US.

"I am an immigrant like Alfonso and Alejandro, my compadres. Like Gael [Garcia Bernal], like Salma [Hayek] and like many, many of you... Because I think that the greatest thing our art does and our industry does is to erase the lines in the sand. We should continue doing that when the world tells us to make them deeper," he said.

The activism of the post-Harvey Weinstein era, which led to celebrities making a statement through wearing black or "Time's Up" pins at award shows this season, shifted to the Oscar stage on Sunday. Host Jimmy Kimmel, returning for the second time, as well as winners and presenters addressed the seismic shift in Hollywood's race and gender politics.

Best Actress winner Frances McDormand, who

bagged the award for "Three Billboards...", emphasised the need for good roles for women and asked "all the female nominees in every category" to stand with her in the room with a special shout-out to fellow nominee Meryl Streep.

"Okay, look around everybody. Look around, ladies and gentlemen, because we all have stories to tell and projects we need financed. I have two words to leave with you tonight, ladies and gentlemen: inclusion rider," she said.

She explained backstage that while negotiating a contract one can demand an "inclusion rider which means that you can ask for and/or demand at least 50 percent diversity in not only the casting, but also the crew".

In a break from tradition, the Best Actress award was given not by last year's Best Actor winner Casey Affleck but Jennifer Lawrence and Jodie Foster.

Old timers Jane Fonda and Helen Mirren teamed up to present the Best Actor

award.

Kimmel kept his hosting light and fun-filled except for the opening monologue where he targeted disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, while lauding the Time's Up and Me Too movements.

"What happened with Harvey and what's happening all over was long overdue. We can't let bad behaviour slide away. The world is watching us and we need to set an example here. And the truth that if we are successful here, we can work together to stop sexual harassment at workplace," he said.

Gary Oldman won the Best Actor Oscar for drastically transforming himself to play Winston Churchill in "Darkest Hour". The Joe Wright-directed period drama also won the Make Up and Hairstyling Oscar.

The Best Supporting Actor went to McDormand's co-star Sam Rockwell for his role of a racist-yet-redeemable cop in "Three Billboards..."

Allison Janney bagged the

SHASHI KAPOOR AND SRIDEVI REMEMBERED AT OSCARS 2018

The Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences [AMPAS] paid its tributes to Indian stars Shashi Kapoor and Sridevi in the In Memoriam section of the Oscars.

The In Memoriam segment of the annual Academy Awards remembers artists who died in the past one year.

Kapoor was primarily known as the charming, classic actor in Bollywood for his roles in the '70s and '80s commercial films such as "Deewar", "Kabhie Kabhie", "Namak Halal" and "Kaala Patthar".

The veteran actor, who died on December 4 last year at the age of 79, was, however, one of the few cross-over stars who went on to play a proactive role in presenting India on the world map through Ivory-Merchant productions such as "The Householder", "Shakespeare Wallah", "The Guru", "Bombay Talkie" and "In Custody" [Muhafiz].

Kapoor, along with his wife, actor Jennifer, revived his father actor Prithviraj Kapoor's Prithvi Theatre in Mum-



bai in 1978. In the same year, he set up his production house, Film Valas, which produced acclaimed projects such as "Junoon", "Kalyug", "36 Chowringhee Lane", "Vijeta" and "Utsav".

Sridevi, inarguably India's first female superstar, was also remembered at the 2018 Oscars. The actor, whose sudden death at the age of 54 on February 24 in Dubai sent shock waves around the world, was a rare artiste whose career spanned for 50 years across multiple languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Malayalam.

Sridevi ruled the commercial cinema space in the '80s and '90s like no heroine had done before and was a force to

reckon with both in terms of her craft and box office appeal.

Bill Paxton, who passed away on January 25 last year due to stroke following a heart surgery for aortic aneurysm repair, was not mentioned in the homage section. He had died last year a day before the Oscars ceremony. Though his picture did not feature in the montage, Jennifer Aniston did pay homage to him while introducing the segment.

Fans, however, were expecting the Academy to feature his picture this year but he was left out, leading social media users to criticise the Academy for ignoring the "Aliens" actor yet again.

James Bond star Roger Moore, actor Mary Goldberg, Icelandic composer Johan Johansson, John Heard, Sam Shepard, Jerry Lewis, Don Rickles, Harry Dean Stanton, Chuck Berry and Idrissa Ouedraogo, were among the artistes who were remembered for their contribution across spheres of acting, music, editing, cinematography, etc.

Best Supporting Actress for playing an unforgiving mother in "I, Tonya".

Though there was visible support for women-led stories, Greta Gerwig missed out in the Best Director and Best Original Screenplay categories for her critically-lauded "Lady Bird". Steven Spielberg's "The Post" also had to leave empty-handed.

In one of the biggest surprises, Jordan Peele became the first black screenwriter ever to win the Best Original Screenplay Oscar for "Get Out".

The Best Adapted Screenplay winner James Ivory also made it to the record books by becoming the oldest Oscar winner at the age of 89 for his adaptation of the gay coming-of-age romance "Call Me By Your Name".

"Coco", Pixar's Mexico-set drama about an aspiring musician Miguel, won Oscars for the Best Animation Feature Film and Best Original Song for "Remember Me".

Chilean film "A Fantastic Woman" was named Best Foreign Language film, triumphing over front-runner "The Square" [Sweden].

Christopher Nolan's war epic "Dunkirk" won three awards for Film Editing, Sound Mixing and Sound Editing, Paul Thomas Anderson's "Phantom Thread" won in the Costume Design category. "Blade Runner 2049" was recognised for Cinematography and Visual Effects.

"Icarus" was adjudged the Best Documentary Feature while "Heaven Is a Traffic Jam on the 405" won in the Docu-

mentary Short category.

Animated Short Film Oscar went to Kobe Bryant's "Dear Basketball". Live Action Short Film went to "The Silent Child".

Last year's "envelopegate" -- when "La La Land" was wrongly announced as Best Picture and the award actually went to "Moonlight" -- loomed large over the evening.

"Some of you will be going home tonight with an Academy Award. This year, when you hear your name called, don't get up right away," Kimmel said.

Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway, at the centre of last year's goof-up, returned to present the Best Picture award.

"It is so nice seeing you again," Beatty joked.



SO SMITTEN! Singer Miley Cyrus, 25, put on a loved-up display with her handsome fiancé Liam Hemsworth, as they posed on the red carpet for the Vanity Fair Oscar Party at the Wallis Annenberg Center.

ARIES: Take your leadership abilities to a new level, Aries. Gather some friends and plan a trip that you've long been considering but were reluctant to act on. People will naturally look to you for leadership and guidance, as you always seem to know how to keep things fun and positive. When it comes to your workplace, this might be a good time to ask for more responsibility - and a raise.

TAURUS: There may be a stalemate when you're unwilling to express your feelings, Taurus. You might automatically assume that things will go smoothly if you leave the decisions up to someone else. Unfortunately, that plan will likely backfire if the decision is made by someone who doesn't necessarily have your best interests at heart. You may try to go

back and reverse what has been done, thus fouling up the plan that has been set in motion.

GEMINI: Decisions don't have to be as hard as you make them, Gemini. You may feel as if a strong force is pulling you in a clear direction, so don't resist it. You'll only drive yourself crazy trying to list all the reasons why you should or shouldn't go the way you're destined to go. Make things easier on yourself by going with the flow instead of letting your mind interfere with constant chatter and resistance. **CANCER:** Look at things from a more philosophical perspective, Cancer, instead of seeing everything from such an intensely emotional one. You may have a constant fear that everyone is out to get you. More than likely, you're blowing small instances

out of proportion in your mind. Use your friends as a sounding board for your thoughts. More than likely, you'll understand the situation better by introducing this fresh perspective.

LEO: This is your day, Leo, so don't waste it. Being the helpful, friendly person you are, you may find yourself catering to other people's needs and desires. Some could see you as the good Samaritan who can offer advice with a friendly attitude. Be careful of draining away all your energy on others. This day might be better spent by catering to you. Even though this seems selfish, you'll love yourself for it. **VIRGO:** Reward yourself for all the great things you've done for you and other people, Virgo. You deserve to be treated like royalty, so make sure that you

do. There are many times when you get so critical of the things you do that you end up punishing yourself unnecessarily. Give yourself a treat for being good instead of chastising yourself for being bad. At all times, however, you must remember that you're perfect just the way you are.

LIBRA: Put your wisdom into action, Libra. There is no good in accumulating knowledge and then letting it sit, collecting dust like an old book on a shelf. Put your thoughts into motion and watch as magical things begin to manifest before your eyes. You have incredible opportunities today that only come when you're expressing yourself in your truest form. Wear something outlandish to remind yourself and others what an outrageous person you are.

SCORPIO: Enjoying the good times may be fun, but it may also get you into trouble down the road, Scorpio. Be careful of spending all your resources on pleasure without setting something aside for leaner times. The company you keep could encourage your self-destructive behaviors. Since they know you'll always be in for a good time, you could get swept away by the energy of the crowd. Better to stick close to those who support healthier habits.

SAGITTARIUS: The surge of power within you is going to let others know that you mean business, Sagittarius. Make good use of this fantastic boost of energy by conquering your own goals and demons instead of using it to wage war on anyone else. Other people should know to get out

of your way when you have your mind set on doing something. If they don't, politely ask them to move instead of steamrolling over them.

CAPRICORN: Be more adventurous than usual, Capricorn. Feel free to take a trip somewhere without bringing a map or having any specific destination in mind. The sheer excitement of the unknown should thrill and enthrall you, not frighten and confuse. Your enjoyment of the situation has to do with your attitude toward it. You may not be able to control the hand you're dealt, but you can certainly control how you play it.

AQUARIUS: You might find yourself in a difficult situation when faced with a person who doesn't necessarily approve of how you're handling yourself,

Aquarius. It could be that someone misinterpreted one of your offhand remarks, and now is violently overreacting. Be careful of shooting back caustic remarks that could only aggravate the situation and elevate it to a damaging level. Your words will be taken more seriously than you think. **PISCES:** Your interest in certain off-the-wall topics may be encouraged when you're engaged in a conversation with someone who shares similar thoughts, Pisces. Perhaps you exchange ideas about UFOs and life on other planets. Suddenly you're looking at your life as if you were a character in a science-fiction novel. Exchange books and other literature with those of a similar mindset. You may not be the only one who thinks there is a conspiracy against them.