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COMICS,
ACTIVITIES,
HOROSCOPE,
TIMEPASS



SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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FAITH RECYCLES! Buddhism is all about compassion and the monks at Gurung Gumpa, Lower Burtuk, exemplify this by bringing together their compassion for Mother Nature and innovation in this unique collection of garden artifacts that they have put together at the monastery's premises. Who would've thought that a pair of denims could be recycled like this! Another show of creative genius is the plastic oil jerry cans that they have turned into elephant shaped planters.



Rains bring Mumbai to its knees; flood situation improves in Bihar, Assam, WB

NEW DELHI, AUG 29 (PTI): Torrential rains threw normal life out of gear in Mumbai and triggered a landslide which derailed an express train while the flood situation improved slightly in Bihar with no fresh deaths reported today.

Heavy rains lashed south Gujarat and parts of Saurashtra too, disrupting normal life, with the MeT department predicting heavy to very heavy rains in the region over the next two days.

The flood situation improved in West Bengal and Assam, as rail services for transporting goods to the flood-ravaged northeastern region resumed and passenger train services are expected to restart from September 3.

A landslide caused by heavy rains led to the derailment of the Nagpur-Mumbai Duronto Express' engine and nine coaches between Vasind and Asangaon stations in Maharashtra, but no casualties were reported in the incident.

Torrential rains accompanied by strong winds pummelled Mumbai, disrupting rail, road and air services, uprooting trees, swamping homes, and bringing the

turn to pg02

Talks held between Bengal govt and hill parties; no decision yet on bandh

KOLKATA, AUG 29 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today held talks with political parties of Darjeeling hills and requested them to withdraw the indefinite shutdown, which entered the 76th day.

After the meeting, GJM convenor Binay Tamang said any decision on the shutdown would be decided at a meeting of the GJM central committee to be convened in Darjeeling along with Gorkhaland Movement Coordination Committee, which is spearheading the agitation in the hills.

Besides Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, major political parties in the hills like Gorkha National Liberation Front and Jan Adolan Party participated in the dialogue.

Addressing newsmen at the secretariat, Banerjee said the talks were

"cordial and positive."

"We requested for withdrawal of the bandh as tea gardens, schools, tourism, transport - everything is closed.

"Dialogue has started and it will continue. It will end the deadlock in Darjeeling," she said, adding the next meeting will be held at Uttarkanya secretariat in north Bengal on September 12. "They (the hill parties) raised the Gorkhaland issue but we did not agree. They can raise their voice, it is their prerogative. It is a democratic set-up.

"They said that the agitation is because of their demand for Gorkhaland. We (government) have clarified our position.

Government has its own jurisdiction, some constitutional obligation and bindings and we will continue our work

through these."

Asked whether the hill parties sought tripartite talks, she replied in the affirmative. "But we said it is not in our hands."

Elaborating on the meeting, the chief minister said, "Everybody raised their voice and it is good that instead of bulldozing or imposing anything on anybody as there is freedom and right. It is democracy. So discussion was very fruitful, very positive and constructive."

"But everybody has agreed that we should start working towards normalcy and the restoration of peace," Banerjee said.

To another question on distribution of rations in the hills, she said "That is why we are asking for withdrawal of the bandh."

Tamang said that the hill parties welcome the state government's call for the meeting to restore normalcy and to resolve the political deadlock. "We take this as an initial step to a journey for the fulfilment of our dreams and also show our commitment to peace, democratic values and the constitution ... But we must say that peace and normalcy must be restored because dialogue has been started.

"We wish to stress that the present imbroglio centres around the century-old constitutional demand of the hill people for Gorkhaland. All parties share the same sentiment and aspiration and stand united on the issue."

He also demanded a CBI or judicial inquiry into the deaths due to po

turn to pg02

Assembly passes Supplementary Demands for Grants for Rs 69,078.63 lakh



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 AUG:

The Sikkim Legislative Assembly today passed First Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2017-18 which includes the demands of Grants for 36 Departments to the tune of Rs. 69078.63 lakh comprising of Rs. 25359.32 lakh on Revenue Account and Rs. 43719.31 lakh on Capital Account.

The Supplementary Demands for Grants voted and passed by Sikkim Legislative Assembly is slightly higher than the annual budget of Rs. 690 crore of 2000-2001 financial year.

Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling who is also in charge of Finance, Revenue & Expenditure department said that the supplementary demands for grants was passed with the aim of completing various on-going projects such as the 1000-bedded multi speciality hospital at Sokaythang which is expected to be completed by March next year, completion of Organic Vegetable Mart at Gangtok, completion of Bhaichung Stadium at Namchi, various school buildings which are under constructions, pending drinking water projects and beautification of bazaars and tourism projects.

The Supplementary budget has also earmarked Rs. 20 crore for establishment of Gyan

Mandir (Community Library at Gangtok), Rs. 7 crore for establishment of Folk Healer centre at Assam Linzey, Rs. 7 crore for construction of Aastha Siddhi Hanuman Mandir at Namthang, South Sikkim, Rs. 15 crore for alternative highway for decongestion of traffic from Ranipool to Sichey, Mr Chamling said.

He also urged all members of the Legislative Assembly to monitor all on-going projects without compromising on the quality of works.

While replying to the points raised by the members during the two-day Assembly session including the passing of four new legislations and four amended legislations, Mr Chamling said that Sikkim has set an example in the country by passing the Sikkim Prevention of Cow Slaughter Bill.

The first ever Gausshala in the state is going to be established soon at Daramdin, West Sikkim for which budget of Rs. 2 crore is earmarked in this Supplementary Demands for Grants, he informed.

It is informed that the government run Gausshalas will take care of old and unproductive cows.

ON SIKKIM SUBJECT CERTIFICATE/COI ISSUE:

In its 23 years of governance, Sikkim Democratic Front has preserved the distinct iden-

tity of Sikkim and will not allow its dilution at any cost, the Chief Minister said.

He went on to recall the several initiatives taken by his government on several occasions for protection of Sikkim's unique identity during his vote of thanks on the conclusion of the summer session of the Assembly.

The CM further stated that unwarranted provocation on the issue of Sikkim Subject Certificate and Certificate of Identification may be counter-productive.

He urged political parties not to bring such a sensitive issue from court to street and said that the government is ready to abide by the decision of the High Court and has already earmarked Rs. 1 crore in the Supplementary budget for digitization of SSC and CoI.

ON SIKKIM SUCCESSION ACT 2008:

The Government is examining the decision of the High Court and will take appropriate decision to give justice to Sikkimese daughters married to non-Sikkimese, Mr Chamling said.

ON DARJEELING:

Sikkim wants peace in the neighbourhood, said Mr Chamling and also ruled out the possibility of Sikkim-Darjeeling merger. The issue of merger created by a handful of people will demean Sikkim's dignity and integrity, he stated.

A constructive beginning, now push for normalcy

SUDIPTA CHANDA SILIGURI, 29 AUG:

The ice has broken. The ball is now firmly on Bimal Gurung's court.

That is the long and short of the meeting vis a vis the Darjeeling situation between the state government and the hill parties in Kolkata on Tuesday.

As expected, the hill parties present in the meeting namely GJM, GNLF and JAP raised the Gorkhaland issue. The state government steered clear of it stating it did not have the authority to discuss the subject.

The hill parties would,

however, go back home with one recognition under their belt. Chief minister Mamata Banerjee, who supervised Tuesday's meeting, conceded that the Gorkhaland aspiration was a long-standing one and it was within the hill parties' right to voice their demand.

She, however, in the next breath underlined that it was not within the state government's jurisdiction to discuss the separate state issue.

The next important issue, the ongoing bandh was discussed, but the hill parties understandably could not come up with a decisive reply on it. Coming to their rescue, a mag-

nanimous Mamata gave out the reason why: "Let them go back to the hills, take time to discuss it within their respective parties and then come up with a solution," was her line saver.

So now the hill parties would go back to their base and thrash out Tuesday's development within their respective organizations and come up with an agenda for the next round of bi-party meeting to be held in Siliguri on September 12. Till then everything remains fluid.

All eyes would now remain trained on what the GJM chief, Bimal Gurung does. The GJM is suffering an erosion of authori-

ty with Gurung running the risk of being eclipsed by the party's new face Binay Tamang.

Tuesday's meeting, if anything was not in sync with Gurung's latest instructions. The state government's hands off approach on the Gorkhaland issue made it just another subject discussed in the meeting among other issues. That is not what Gurung had wanted.

So what happens now? The chief minister has already declared that the next meeting between the hill parties and the state government would be held on September 12, and that regular interaction should follow after Tuesday.

If the GJM accepts the suggestion it would mean the current phase of the Gorkhaland movement is practically over.

And that could be the crunch issue for Gurung and the hawks within the party. Will they accept it, or would they reject the proposal and go back to the agitation path? The GJM representative Binay Tamang, who was present in Tuesday's meeting, came up with an important observation at the end of the meeting. Criticizing those behind the recent IED explosions in the hills Tamang, said: "Restoration of peace and normalcy in the hills is necessary."

A sensible observation, which also reveals that there are many more like Tamang who are tired with the uncertainty the mode of the agitation has ushered in the hills and want an end to it. But then, the million rupee question, how would Bimal Gurung and his confidants react to it?

Tuesday's meeting has served one purpose though. The deadlock has been broken and now the long arm of the Centre might come in the picture. The Centre had made it a pre-requisite for the hill parties to hold talks with the state government first. That condition has been fulfilled.

Break-in and theft at Yangtam

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 AUG:

On 28 Aug, some unknown miscreants broke into the residence of one Ram Kumar Subba at Yangtam in East Sikkim and made away with two pairs of gold earrings, one gold ear top, two gold rings and cash of approximately Rs 40,000. Jewelry shops of Pakyong and Ranipool have been sensitized to inform the investigating agency if any person approaches them to sell gold ornaments.

SKM team tours West Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 AUG:

A team of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party led by its working president, MP Subba, met the people of different villages of Maneybong-Dentam and Gyalshing-Bermiok constituencies.

An SKM press release issued by its publicity secretary, Abhishek Sharma, informs that the team found that benefits of Organic farming schemes have been going only to a few supporters of Ministers and MLAs but genuine farmers have been facing lots of problems.

The release also accuses the state government of indulging in nepotism, favoritism and partiality in the implementation of various schemes in the villages.

Singtam School prohibits students from leaving campus during lunch break

YOGEN THATAL

SINGTAM, 29 AUG:

Singtam Senior Secondary School in East Sikkim has initiated a new rule which prohibits students from leaving the school premises for lunch, making it mandatory for the students to either bring lunch from home or use the school canteen.

Speaking to SummitTimes, Principal of Singtam SSS, KB Chettri, said, "We have been receiving frequent complaints and criticism from people and guardians who have seen students in school uniform during lunch time roaming around town and engaging in unwanted activities. During the lunch time, some students including girls and boys were seen smoking at alleys or at friend's rooms. This regulation is being immediately implemented."

The parents and guardians of the students are satisfied with the new rule and have expressed gratitude to the Principal for taking an initiative to help them guide children towards the right path.

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KVK Namthang conducts Sankalp Se Siddhi programme

SUMMIT REPORT

NAMCHI, 29 AUG: Krishi Vigyan Kendra-Namthang observed the 'New India Manthan-Sankalp Se Siddhi' today here at Namthang in South Sikkim on 27 Aug. The meeting was inaugurated by Member of Parliament, PD Rai, accompanied by Area MLA, Tilu Gurung. A pledge was taken on the occasion to achieve the programme launched by the Central Government aimed at doubling farmers' income by 2022.

Addressing the gathering, Joint Secretary [Food Security & Agriculture Development,

Government of India], Dinesh Kumar, spoke on the various policies of the Central Government to double farmers' income.

He highlighted on 'Sankalp Se Siddhi' and informed that this campaign was launched by the Central Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has given a clarion call to observe 'Sankalp Se Siddhi' from 2017 to 2022 to commemorate the 76th anniversary of the Quit India Movement and the 75th anniversary of Independence.

Mr Kumar also high-

lighted to adopt new technologies for increasing production and productivity from agricultural lands. Under the proactive leadership of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, Sikkim has become the first Organic State of the country. Likewise, 'Sankalp Se Siddhi' programme can also be achieved by Sikkim, he added.

Chief guest PD Rai, in his address, said that the policies for doubling farmers' income will be successful only when farmers of the State will take it positively and work for self development. He urged the farmers' organizations to work collective-

ly so that they can avail more benefits.

Highlighting the important role played by Panchayati Raj of Sikkim, Mr Rai urged all grass-root farmers to choose their representative for next Panchayat from their area wisely who can work for the development of their area.

Secretary [FS&ADD], Mr Kansal, said that the state government has always been serious and concerned in agriculture and horticulture sector of the State. He highlighted various policies and schemes of the state government.

He further stressed

that Sikkim has been adjudged as an Organic State of the country but farmers will be benefited only when the State will meet the demand of organic products market. Organic production in the State is very low and there is an unorganized marketing system. He appealed to all progressive farmers to cultivate their land in groups so that there is an increase in production.

During the programme, the progressive farmers who initiated the training in Organic and mushroom cultivation from KVK Namthang were provided with certificates.



SMTWA begins preparing for Biswakarma puja celebration

WANGCHUK BHUTIA

MANGAN, 29 AUG:

A meeting was convened today here at Dikchu Bazaar by Sikkim Motors Transport Workers Association [SMTWA], Dikchu branch, for the grand celebration of Biswakarma Puja. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Advisor-SMTWA, Jigme Tongden Lepcha,

and attended by all the members and executive members.

President [SMTWA, Dikchu], Arjun Rai, presented a detailed report of last year's celebration along with the account of expenditure and fund collection. During the meeting, various responsibilities for organizing the celebration were distributed among the members.

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

Govt circular on patriotic rock shows an insult to youths: Cong

NEW DELHI, AUG 29 (PTI): The Congress said today that the HRD Ministry's circular asking IITs and central universities to organise "patriotic" rock shows was an "insult" to the country's youth.

Congress spokesperson Manish Tewari said the government seemed to have presumed that nationalism needed to be inculcated through rock bands.

"If this is the vision the government has for the young people of this country, then all that I would like to say is, 'God help us,'" he told reporters.

"It is a very funny circular to say the least," he added.

The Congress also accused the BJP government of "subverting" the mandate of the National



Film Development Corporation.

"It does not have the mandate to hire rock bands and send them across the country. There seems to be subversion of the very remit of the National Film Development Corporation," he said.

As part of the programme named "Yeh India ka Time Hai", the government has identified certain bands which will be

visiting campuses across the country and perform patriotic songs.

The programme has been organised to celebrate 70 years of India's Independence and 75 years of the Quit India Movement

this year.

He said there was no problem with promoting nationalism or patriotism and that there were enough musical groups, literary societies, clubs and debating platforms available in every such institution than "subverting the mandate of NFDC to hire rock bands of allegedly spurious quality to promote patriotism

and nationalism".

Tewari said the government talks about ushering a "New India" by 2022, but India is still a democratic country and the term of this government ends in 2019.

"Till the time they have already decided to subvert democracy and not hold elections in 2019, (the time frame of) 2022 does not make any sense," he added.

"Nobody has a monopoly over patriotism and nationalism; least of all the government and least of all the BJP. We do not think that they either have the credentials or the moral right to lecture the Congress or any other party on patriotism and nationalism," he said.

Rains bring Mumbai to its knees; flood situation improves in Bihar, Assam...

contd from pg01

megapolis and satellite towns to their knees. But there were no casualties.

People's woes were compounded by the high tide that prevented natural drainage of water into the sea.

Meteorological department sources said Mumbai recorded copious rain of 65 mm in just three hours.

Trains were running late or stopped on all three suburban railway lines as tracks were submerged at several places.

Traffic crawled at snail's pace on important roads.

"The metropolis has received heavy rainfall since last night. Between 8.30 am and 12 pm today, the city received 85 mm rainfall," Sudhir Naik, Deputy Municipal Commissioner, told PTI.

Many flights had to be diverted to other cities and aircraft had to do go-arounds through the day.

Charan Singh, Director, India Meteorological Department, said a 'Red' warning has been issued for the next 24 hours for the city and adjoining areas, indicating there could be very heavy rainfall. He said the city and surrounding areas would continue to receive heavy rainfall over the next 2-3 days.

Due to the heavy rainfall, at least 39 dams in Gujarat are overflowing,



while another 31 dams have received 99 per cent water. Seventeen dams are 80-90 per cent full.

As flood waters were receding in some places of Bihar, many people have returned to their homes and only 116 relief camps are functioning now in which 1.38 lakh people are staying.

The toll remained at 514 while

1.71 crore people are affected in 19 districts, a report of state disaster management department said.

In Assam, 1.02 lakh people were still affected by floods in four districts in the state as one more person died in Morigaon district taking the toll in the third wave of floods in the state to 74.

The total number of people killed

in this year's flood-related incidents in Assam has gone up to 158.

According to an Assam State Disaster Management Authority report, Morigaon is the worst-affected with more than 55,500 hit, followed by Nagaon with nearly 43,000 people affected in the deluge.

Currently, 288 villages and

12,000 hectares of crop area are still inundated, the ASDMA said, adding the authorities are running 70 relief camps and distribution centres across five districts, where 21,049 people are taking shelter.

The northern parts of West Bengal, some of which are yet to recover from the impact of flood, are again likely to receive heavy rains from August 31.

The flood-situation in the six north Bengal districts improved a lot and the toll remained 90.

Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri, Malda, South Dinajpur and North Dinajpur districts are still recovering from the depredation of flood caused by heavy rains earlier this month.

So far, close to 1.5 crore people have been affected in the floods in the state which has lost an estimated Rs 14,000 crore in the deluge.

The flood-like situation in the three southern districts of Odisha, which were lashed by incessant rains yesterday, has improved slightly as water began to recede, though the road connectivity remained affected.

The water levels of the rivers, which have inundated six villages, were going down as the intensity of rain, triggered by a low pressure, decreased, officials said.

However, the IMD has forecast more rains in the state.

Talks held between Bengal govt and hill parties; no decision yet on bandh

contd from pg01

lice action during the ongoing agitation and compensation to the family of the victims and also for the injured.

"We also demand withdrawal of all cases old and new filed against agitators and release of those taken into judicial custody during the agitation. Besides, there should not be any political victimisation against employees and tea workers. We have submitted a memorandum to the chief minister stating our demands."

Later, Jana Andolan Party presi-

dent Harka Bahadur Chhetri said that during the meeting the government was asked to repel the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council a semi-autonomous body.

"Some of the articles of the DGHC is still operative.

Article 242 M for which two-tier panchayat is still functional though the state government is aiming to hold a three-tier panchayat election there.

"We want the state to repel the DGHC as well as the GTA which the people from the hills have dismissed," he added.

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Sunrise: 05:13 AM
Sunset: 05:59 PM

IIM-A develops matrimonial website for HIV positive people

AHMEDABAD, AUG 29 (PTI): The Indian Institute of Management here has developed a matrimonial website for HIV positive people to help them to find partners and facilitate social integration.

A team of researchers at the Centre for Management of Health Services (CMHS) of the IIM-A developed the web portal for the people living with HIV (PLHIV) as part of a project for an NGO, Gujarat state network of positive people (GSNPP).

The team today handed over the website to for its launch and management, the institute said in a release.

The GSNPP maintains a file of the PLHIV seeking marriage.

But with around 500 registrations, the scope of the initiative is limited. The web portal will be scaled up in coming times to cover the entire country, the researchers and the members of the GSNPP said.

"The design of the platform was finalised after extensive deliberations of the socio-cultural issues related to PLHIV.

The team adopted a co-design process, involving all the relevant stakeholders in the design process," The CMHS chairperson and a faculty member Rajesh Chandwani said.

Founder-member of the GSNPP, Daxa Patel said the website has been developed keeping in mind the needs of the PLHIV which will help make registration process easier.

"Marriage bureau is one of the ways to contribute to their wellbeing as well as to encourage positive living. It will enable the PLHIV in enjoying life with a life partner, care for each other and act as a support system," she said.

First entrepreneurship Master-class in Sikkim concludes

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 29 AUG:**

The first entrepreneurship Masterclass in Sikkim, organized by IEF Entrepreneurship Foundation in partnership with local entrepreneur community, Start-Up Harbour, concluded today with a graduation ceremony held at New Orchid Hotel in Development Area, Gangtok.

The felicitation was preceded by an open and in-depth discussion with Member of Parliament, PD Rai, on building a robust entrepreneurship ecosystem in the state.

A press release informs that 15 local entrepreneurs were felicitated for completing the Essential Module of the IEF Masterclass by entrepreneur, Bjorn Noel Deniese, and chairperson/founder of IEF, Bhairavi Jani, in the presence of IEF



faculty members, Alok Divatia [Marketing and Sales] and KN Srinivasan [Finance].

Ms Jani opened the ceremony with a warm welcome and said, "IEF was founded with a belief that Indian business is not limited to large corporates in big metro

cities. The Indian economy is driven by millions of small scale enterprises that play a pivotal role in GDP growth, job creation and building a sustainable livelihood for people locally. We heard about the huge potential and aspirations of entrepreneurs

of Sikkim and decided we had to come here to support their journey of enterprise and help them in realizing their dreams."

Addressing the gathering, co-founder of StartUp Harbour, Rewaj Chhetri, who was also part of the Masterclass,

said, "The future development of the state of Sikkim lies in the hands of entrepreneurs. Being a skilled entrepreneur is a must to build a successful venture. We at Startup Harbour are collectively working to build an ecosystem here in Sikkim to make startups sustain and grow."

It may be mentioned here, IEF Entrepreneurship Foundation is a non-profit initiative that is creating a collaborative entrepreneurial ecosystem across the country and is bringing all stakeholders onto one platform. Through its three-pronged strategy of action, advocacy and awareness, IEF is committed to empower Indian small-scale entrepreneurs to scale new heights in their business and further enrich the Indian economy.

Par panel members seek redrafting of report on demonetisation

NEW DELHI, AUG 29 (PTI): Several members of a parliamentary panel today sought redrafting of its draft report on demonetisation as RBI has not provided some crucial details including on the quantum of junked Rs 500/1000 notes, sources said.

The acceptance of the report was deferred as member MPs across parties in the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance said it needs to be "redrafted" while some of them stated that it "lacks punch," according to the sources.

As the term of the panel headed by Congress MP Verappa Moily ends on August 31, the report on demonetisation may now get accepted only after the re-constitution of the committee, sources added.

During the panel's meeting today, two members Nareish Agrawal and Nareish Gujral were in favour of redrafting the document, while BJD MP Bartruhari Mahtab said the draft lacks punch, they said.

Besides, they added, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (a member of panel) was

of the view that digitisation should not be thrust upon following demonetisation.

BJP MP Nishikant Dubey noted that since the Reserve Bank has not provided all details and replies to the questions asked by the members of the panel, the document is not complete, the sources said.

RBI governor Urjit Patel had appeared before the panel twice, but the central bank is yet to share details about the number junked notes submitted to banks during demonetisation, announced in November.

The panel had also called all top finance ministry officials while deliberating over the note-ban issue.

The members also objected to, and demanded redrafting of, the panel's report on NSSO data and GDP numbers.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government in November last year had demonetised the Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes. The move had led to immediate shortage of currency in the system leading to long queues at banks and ATMs all over the country.

BSNL to set up 1 lakh wi-fi spots by March 2019

NEW DELHI, AUG 29 (PTI): State-owned telecom firm BSNL will set up 1 lakh wi-fi spots across India by March 2019, Chairman and Managing Director Anupam Shrivastava said today.

"We have plans to set up 1 lakh wi-fi by March 2019, which include 25,000 for rural areas. The USOF (Universal Service Obligation Fund) will provide financial support for rural wi-fi hotspots," Shrivastava told reporters on the sidelines of launching a GST application for BSNL customers.

The BSNL CMD said the company will invest about Rs 1,800 crore in setting up 70,000 wi-fi hotspots and the USOF is providing a fund of Rs 900 crore, including three years of operation and maintenance for set-

ting up 25,000 hotspots.

"We will set up another 5,000 wi-fi hotspots on revenue share basis and BSNL is not required to invest capital... we are only providing bandwidth," Shrivastava said.

As for the GST app, he said BSNL has selected Masters India that will provide software to customers of the state-run firm.

"At a time when a new entrant has changed the dynamics of doing business in the telecom sector, tariffs are going to rock bottom, we need to explore other models for generating revenue. The GST filing service that we are providing in partnership with Masters India will be on revenue sharing basis and it will attract customers to our network," Shrivastava said.



Lynching result of competitive communalism by TMC, BJP: Yechury

KOLKATA, AUG 29 (PTI): CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury today condemned the lynching of two men in Jalpaiguri district for carrying cows in a pick-up van and alleged such incidents are a result of "competitive communalism" practised by the TMC and the BJP. He also criticized the West Bengal government's decision not to allow immersion of Durga idols on October 1, the day of Muharram.

Yechury said he could never think of incidents of lynching taking place in Bengal.

"It is very painful to see such incidents happening.

Actually, these incidents are a result of competitive communalism that is being practised by the TMC and the BJP in Bengal to create communal polarization," Yechury told a press conference here.

"The TMC is pursuing the politics of

appeasement of minorities and the BJP is trying to fan majority communalism.

Both are helping each other grow," he said.

The incident had taken place on Sunday. A mob allegedly lynched the two men after dragging them out of a pick-up van carrying cows at Barharia village.

Three persons were arrested in connection with the incident the day after.

On the state government's decision not to allow immersion of Durga idols on October 1, he asked why was it "differentiating and interfering?"

"If you differentiate, it sends out a wrong message. Let the leaders of the two groups or communities sit together and decide a way out.

"Last year also, the state government had tried to do the same thing. Such decisions are actually helping the BJP in the state," he added.

SummitTIMES

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Let's Play Politics

The next Assembly elections are not far away

The next Assembly election is barely a year and nine months away. That is not very deep in the future. Twenty-one months, after all, provide barely enough days to smoothen disgruntlement of five years [for the ruling party] or lead time to recover eroded voter base of 25 years [for the Opposition parties]. Yes, the SKM rode a strong anti-incumbency ripple in 2014, but the political space has been drastically rearranged since then and the Opposition has still not found its rhythm even though it has been looking at issues to leverage. Criticism of the government and the ruling party, after all, even if much more aggressive, is not enough at this advanced stage to translate into meaningful votes because to make a serious play for things, it will have to expand its voter base beyond the already disaffected and disgruntled. Similarly, for the ruling Front, it cannot afford to rest easy on its five terms in office because it did receive a scare in the last elections and saw its vote-share shrink the moment an organized and concerted challenge was mounted. It does not enjoy the luxury of going aggressive and belligerent like the Opposition because that would end up distracting voters from the achievements of the past 25 years and deliver Sikkim a stronger anti-incumbency factor. These confusions and conflicts will make for an interesting round of politicking which can be expected to gather steam as early as the end of the year which has been coming up as the phase when "politics" begins happening in Sikkim. Unfortunately, no fireworks can be expected for the panchayat elections which will come earlier but are unlikely to see any committed Opposition mobilization.

The mutual distrust between the ruling party and coalition of Opposition parties is well established and hardly surprising. As far as the voters are concerned, this requires no further reiteration. The criticisms and condemnations and denials and counter allegations that the two sides have remained obsessed with thus far were expected in the first four years of the present term as routine, predictable stances. For politics and the wooing of the voters, much more than press releases are required. Maybe the voters don't even expect it anymore, but would definitely be hoping that the level of political debate now improves at least a notch to become more about policies and visions. In Sikkim, politics normally picks up pace only when elections are a year away, and may be that is why there is too much clutter and deal-making instead of informed debates and sustained positions. Those with a stake in politics should now consider getting active much more in advance... like when there's only a year and nine months left. And from hereon at least, any party keen on making a contest of the next elections would be well advised to share its plans for Sikkim if they were given a chance to run it for next five years. Their plans for their "enemies", okay "opponents" to keep things politically correct, will only please individuals who share their hatreds; elections however are not won by individual dislikes. To win votes, one needs to speak to the people, about issues that concern the people and offering solutions to problems being faced by the people. For that, vision is required, not targets.

The focus here is on what the Opposition needs to do because the odds still do not favour it. It would be wise on their part to stop believing that a "silent wave" is in the making – too many others have made that mistake in the past for there to be the need for a repeat. Look at things from the voter's perspective, the Opposition is not even offering new faces yet. The political debate thus has to improve into becoming one about contesting ideologies, different plans of actions, differing courses for the State. Then the voter might then think there is a choice, otherwise a contest will be too much to expect.

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

Mail us at: letters@summittimes.com

In Vietnam poverty and poor development, not just floods, kill the most marginalised

JASON VON MEDING & HANG THAI T.M.

theconversation.com

Flooding and landslides in north-west Vietnam have caused widespread devastation since the start of August. The disaster crippled the provinces of Son La, Dien Bien, Yen Bai and Lai Chau, situated within one of the most disadvantaged regions of the country.

Tragically, at least 27 lives have been lost, many more are missing and almost 1 trillion Vietnamese Dong (US\$43m) of damage has been reported. The already poor infrastructure of the region has been badly impacted.

Pictures and videos posted online and across different media channels have shown terrifying and dramatic scenes. In some footage we can see the rapidly moving flood water sweeping through residential areas.

Disasters are widely misunderstood in Vietnam – as they are elsewhere – as "natural" occurrences. As a consequence of this, there is little open discussion about the social, political and economic factors that are inextricably linked to the issue. It is of particular concern that the voices of those most affected, Vietnam's ethnic minorities, are not heard.

MINORITY GROUPS MOST AFFECTED

Ethnic minority groups, predominantly the Tay, Thai and Hmong peoples, compose approximately 80% of the population in the region. It is one of the poorest parts of the country. The poverty rate among ethnic minorities in the region is 73% and the extreme poverty rate 45.5%. By comparison, the extreme poverty rate among the Kinh majority (88% of population) nationwide is 2.9%.

Ethnic minorities in Vietnam are terribly disadvantaged due to the lack of access to education, infrastructure, transportation, health care and other services. These factors have contributed to wide-ranging social and economic disadvantage – and therefore, increased vulnerability.

In the northwestern part of Vietnam, these groups are also often subsistence farmers – crops are critical to their existence and flooding brings devastation.

Beginning in June, forecasts indicated that serious flooding was likely in the region, and there were widespread instances of flooding in early July. These messages were disseminated across media platforms. However, it is unclear whether this message was actually received by those most at risk.



Even more problematic is the way in which disasters are perceived and discussed in Vietnam. The focus is invariably on the "natural" quality of disasters, as referred to by the Law on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control (No. 33/2013/QH13), which to an extent defines the scope of narrative regarding disasters in Vietnam. This language, repeated by the media, leaves many people blind to the social and political aspects of catastrophes.

THE OFFICIAL NARRATIVE

When disasters happen, the focus of Vietnamese media is consistently on reporting the death toll, loss and damage figures, and stories involving search and rescue operations by the government and non-government organisations.

In the wake of this tragedy, the government initiated a major disaster relief fundraising campaign.

Lieutenant Lo Thi Sao Chi, who was organising the military response to the disaster, told the VOV5 news site that the government "participated in the search for missing people, relocated households in dangerous areas, cleared soil and rocks from the flood and helped people resettle their lives."

But the media has failed to actually ask the right question: why were the victims living in such unsafe, vulnerable living conditions in the first place?

How come the poverty and inequality issues plaguing ethnic minorities have not been addressed? Little progress has been made among these most marginalised groups, despite significant improvements across the country as a whole.

Unfortunately, a serious critique of the root causes of disasters like this one is almost completely absent in the media.

DEVASTATING DEVELOPMENT

What has been conveniently forgotten is the fact that communities affected by flooding are often particularly vulnerable because they have been

subjected to forced resettlement due to development agendas.

Over the past 30 years, the government has been developing hydropower capacity in the affected region. Hydropower projects in Lai Chau (completed 2016) and Son La (completed 2012) were designed to maximise profit. Unfortunately, in many cases of such development, environmental and social impacts are secondary concerns.

The projects have displaced numerous communities. International Rivers reports that the Son La project alone, in the north-west of the country and 320km from Hanoi, may have displaced 91,000 people.

Those forced to move have been thrust into ever more vulnerable living conditions.

In many cases they have lost access to the river that sustained livelihoods and essential services such as water and electricity. As a result, poverty and inequality have been exacerbated.

REDUCE RISK, LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE

Yet, people in northwest Vietnam continue to demonstrate a remarkable level of resilience in spite of systemic disadvantage. Those who had been displaced by flooding almost immediately began to clean up the area after this latest tragedy, salvage materials and rebuild their lives.

Although rural Vietnam has historically experienced extreme disaster impacts, climate change threatens to act as a risk multiplier.

The government officially advocates for the decentralisation of disaster risk management, but Dutch NGO CORDAID reports that, "the involvement of vulnerable groups is still limited and in effect the plans are still managed in a top-down manner."

It is possible to reduce disaster risk through policy decisions and development plans. However, in reality the more common outcome of development is the creation of additional risk.

More often than not, vulnerable people are ignored and decisions are made based on the potential for economic gain.

Those on the margins of society always suffer in disasters. If we truly aspire to build a better society, their needs must now be prioritised.

Change cannot come quick enough. Northern Vietnam continues to suffer this summer, most recently as Typhoon Hato brought further flooding to the already stricken region.

[Jason von Meding is Senior Lecturer in Disaster Risk Reduction, University of Newcastle; Hang Thai T.M. is Research assistant, University of Newcastle]

The world protests as Amazon forests are opened to mining

BEATRIZ GARCIA

theconversation.com

The Amazon, often described as the "lungs of the Earth", is the largest rainforest in the world. Its extraordinary biodiversity and sheer scale has made it a globally significant resource in the fight against climate change.

But last week the Brazilian president Michel Temer removed the protected status of the National Reserve of Copper and Associates, a national reserve larger than Denmark.

The reserve, known as "Renca", covers 46,000 square kilometres and is thought to contain huge amounts of copper, as well as gold, iron ore and other minerals. Roughly 30% of Renca will now be open to mining exploration. Renca also includes indigenous reserves inhabited by various ethnic communities living in relative isolation.

The decision, which has been denounced by conservation groups and governments around the world, comes as the unpopular Temer struggles with a crushing political and economic crisis that has seen unemployment rise above 12%.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TURBULENCE

Brazil is currently in the middle of the largest corruption scandals in its history. Since 2014, an ongoing federal investigation called Operation Car Wash has implicated elite businesspeople and high-ranking politicians, uncovering bribes worth millions of dollars exchanged for deals with the state oil company Petrobras. According to the BBC, almost a third of President Temer's cabinet is under investigation for alleged corruption.

There is no doubt that Brazil needs to find ways out of recession and unemployment. As the minister of mining and energy has said, "the objective of the measure [to allow mining] is to attract new investments, generating wealth for the country and employment and income for society."

However it's not clear that this



Open pit gold mines, like the massive Yanacocha mine in Peru bring grave social and environmental impacts to traditional peoples, whose rights are frequently ignored. Photo credit: First Peoples Worldwide

move will benefit ordinary Brazilians. This is not the first gold rush into this area, and the Amazon still has high indices of poverty and many other challenges.

During the 1980s and 90s tens of thousands of miners flocked to gold deposits in the Amazon, driven by high international prices. One of the most famous examples, "Serra Pelada," saw 60,000 men dig a massive crater in the Amazon Basin.

These mining operations typically provided little economic benefits to the local populations. Instead, they attracted thousands of people, which led to deforestation, violent land conflicts and mercury pollution in the rivers.

In reality the Amazon and its people deserve a sustainable model of development, which takes advantage of the outstanding biodiversity and beauty of its standing forests. The historical record shows mining is likely to lead to a demographic explosion, and further deforestation, pollution and land conflicts.

THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-REGRESSION

One important aspect of international environmental law is called the "prin-

ciple of non-regression". The principle states that some legal rules should be non-revokable in the name of the common interest of humankind. Essentially, once a level of protection has been granted there is no coming back.

This principle is reflected in article 225 of the Brazilian constitution, which lays out the right to a healthy environment:

"All have the right to an ecologically balanced environment [...] and both the Government and the community shall have the duty to defend and preserve it for present and future generations."

The Brazilian constitution also describes the Amazon forest as a "national heritage". It must then be treated accordingly.

While the Amazon is a fundamental part of Brazil's history, it's also an essential part of the global battle against climate change. The Amazon contains half the world's tropical rainforests, and its trees absorb and store vast amounts of carbon dioxide.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, land use, including deforestation and forest degradation, is the second-largest

source of global emissions after the energy sector.

Developed countries around the world have committed resources to help Brazil offset the costs of safeguarding their forests. One example is the Amazon Fund, created in 2008. It has received billions of dollars from foreign governments such as Norway and Germany, to combat deforestation and to promote sustainable practices in the Brazilian Amazon.

But with 14 million Brazilians unemployed, further assistance is required to ensure that they can protect their forests.

As well as governments, companies have also committed billions of dollars to fight climate change and support projects that reduce carbon emissions and promote energy efficiency. Most businesses have also created self-regulatory standards to ensure compliance with international laws and ethical standards.

The decision of the Brazilian government leaves us with two questions. How will the international community honour their commitments to keep global warming below 2°C, if countries begin rolling back their environmental protections? And how will companies involved in mining projects in the Amazon honour their social responsibility commitments and moral obligation towards present and future generations?

The degradation of the Amazon will affect the entire world. The clearing of the Amazon for mining will lead to the emissions of thousands of tons of greenhouse gases, furthering global warming and causing the irreversible loss of biodiversity, and water resources, as well as damage to local and indigenous communities.

Let us not take a step back towards more destruction. Rather, let us strengthen the protection of our remaining forests.

[the writer is Lecturer, Western Sydney University]

No differences with Bimal Gurung, says Binay Tamang

KOLKATA, AUG 29 (PTI): Amid reports of rifts within the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), its convener Binay Tamang today said he has no differences with party supremo Bimal Gurung and the Gorkhaland issue will be the focus of talks with the West Bengal government scheduled to be held today.

Tamang's comment comes in the backdrop of Gurung's allegation that there is a con-

spiracy by some hill leaders to frame him.

"I have no differences with our party president Bimal Gurung. An audio clip was circulated in the media, but it is not clear against whom he has made those allegations.

"Every decision was taken after the approval of the party's central committee. I don't want to react on whatever my party president has said, but yes some of us have felt insult-



ed," he said.

In an audio message on Sunday night, Gurung had warned the leaders that if they

discussed with the state government, any other issue other than 'Gorkhaland', they would not be allowed to return to the hills.

When asked whether the issue of a separate state of Gorkhaland will come up in the talks, Tamang said, "For us the issue of Gorkhaland is of prime importance and will come up in the talks. We want peace to be restored in the hills."

He, however, said even if

the talks are successful, there were little chances that the indefinite shutdown, which today entered its 76th day, will be called off as the final decision will be taken by the party's central committee.

"Even if the talks are fruitful, decision to call off the strike cannot be announced today. The final decision in this regard has to be approved by the party's central committee," Tamang said.

Nepal's Constitution to be implemented after polls

KATHMANDU, AUG 29 (PTI): Nepal is committed to hold the provincial and parliamentary elections by November 26 for the effective implementation of the country's Constitution, a senior minister said today.

Mohan Bahadur Basnet, Minister for Information and Communications said the Constitution would come into full implementation after conducting third phase of local polls, provincial and parliamentary elections.

The government is committed to holding provincial and parliamentary elections by November 26, Basnet, who is also the government spokesperson said.

"The Constitution would be amended as per the need as it is a dynamic document," he said while addressing a programme organised to mark the 21st anniversary of Educational Consultancy Association of Nepal.

"The country would move towards the path of economic prosperity once the Constitution is fully implemented," the minister said.

Millions of Nepalese on May 14 voted in the country's first local-level polls. The second phase of local polls was held on June 28. The third phase will be held on September 18.

Local-level elections could not be held after 1997 largely as a result of the decade-long Maoist insurgency that claimed more than 16,000 lives in Nepal.

Some Madhes-centric parties had opposed the elections until the new Constitution is amended to accommodate their views, more representation in the Parliament and redrawing of provincial boundaries.

The Nepal government has tabled a new Constitution amendment bill in the Parliament to address the demands of the agitating Madhesis.

Madhesi, who are mostly of Indian origin, had launched a prolonged agitation between September 2015 and February last year against the implementation of the Constitution.

ATK to begin ISL-4 preparation on September 8

KOLKATA, AUG 29 (PTI): Two-time champions ATK will begin preparation for the upcoming Indian Super League with a pre-season camp with national players here from September 8.

The Teddy Sheringham-coached outfit said in a media statement that it's a pre-season camp for the ISL season 4, which is expected to kick off on November 17.

Having parted with their Spanish partners Atletico de Madrid, ATK's pre-season camp which earlier took place in Dubai, may now shift to Dubai.

The team is expected to leave for Dubai in the second week of October for the final round of preparations to play friendlies for their new look side to get into rhythm ahead of the competition.

ATK have roped in former Tottenham and Liverpool striker Robbie Keane as their marquee signing while among the Indian players, they have retained Debjit Majumder and Prabir Das and in the draft, they have picked up the likes of Eugeneon Lyngdoh, Robin Singh, Ashutosh Mehta and Jayesh Rane among others.

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Bhutan welcomes end of Doklam standoff

NEW DELHI, AUG 29 (PTI): Bhutan today welcomed the end of the 73-day standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in Doklam and hoped it would help in ensuring peace and tranquillity at the tri-junction.

"Bhutan welcomes

the disengagement by the two sides at the face-off site in the Doklam area," the Bhutanese foreign ministry said.

In a major diplomatic breakthrough to end the prolonged standoff between their troops, India and China yesterday

disengaged their border personnel at Doklam.

"We hope this contributes to the maintenance of peace and tranquillity and status quo along the borders of Bhutan, China and India in keeping with the existing agreements between the

respective countries," the Bhutanese foreign ministry said.

Troops of the two countries had been locked in a standoff in Doklam since June 16 after Indian troops stopped the Chinese Army from building a road in the dis-

puted area. India had deployed about 350 Army personnel in the area.

Bhutan and China have a dispute over Doklam, a strategically key area at the Bhutan-India-China tri-junction in the Sikkim sector.

Railways resume goods train services for NE states

NEW DELHI, AUG 29 (PTI): Rail services for transporting goods to the flood-ravaged northeastern region have resumed today while passenger train services is expected to restart from September 3, the railway ministry said.

Due to floods in Bihar, West Bengal and Assam, the rail link with the

northeastern states was disrupted since August 12.

All trains between the northeastern states and the rest of the country pass through New Jalpaiguri in north Bengal and Katihar division in Bihar.

"The rail route connecting North Eastern region has been opened for

goods traffic today. Member, traffic reviewed the position with the General Manager and Board officials and directed that rakes loaded with essential commodities for NE be moved on priority.

"Passenger trains are expected to start from September 3," the railway ministry said in a series of tweets.

According to officials, the floods caused extensive damage to rail tracks, bridges, culverts, communication systems and other infrastructure, with the worst affected being between Sudhani and Telta in Kishanganj district under Katihar division of the North Frontier Railways.

If goods trains pass on the repaired tracks without facing any problem, then passenger train services will be resumed, officials said.

They said it is not clear how much revenue loss the railways has incurred so far, but it had lost an estimated Rs 150 crore in the first seven days of the deluge.

Fake call centre duping US citizens busted, 6 held

SHILLONG, AUG 29 (PTI): The police have busted a fake call centre that was allegedly duping US citizens and arrested six persons from here.

Impersonating as Internal Revenue Service (IRS) agents of the United States, these people called up people there saying they did not pay their taxes, East Khasi Hills SP Davis Marak said today.

IRS is the tax collection agency of the USA.

These call centre people asked the US citizens to pay tax or face jail terms, Marak said adding their tax details had been collected from certain websites.

It appeared that the call centre asked the intended victims to pay their 'tax' in a particular way, and after they paid, half of the money is brought to India via hawala channel and a share of it was given to these people operating in Shillong.

The lion's share, however, would go to the main heads of the racket based in Ahmedabad, he said.

Following a tip off, the police started raiding a rented premises near the RBI here and some other places last night and busted the fake call centre, Marak said.

Over 100 computers, a server, seals and documents were seized during the raids.

A full fledged investigation is on into the case, the SP said.

Mobile Internet remains suspended in "sensitive" parts of Haryana

CHANDIGARH, AUG 29 (PTI): Mobile Internet services will remain suspended in "sensitive" parts of Haryana till tomorrow to prevent any disturbance following the sentencing of Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh.

While mobile Internet services will be restored in other parts, it will continue to remain suspended till 12 PM tomorrow in seven districts of Haryana, considered as "sensitive", officials said today.

The seven districts are Ambala, Kurukshetra, Sirsa, Fatehabad, Jind, Hisar and Kaithal, they said.

Authorities had last week suspended services to prevent spread of rumours ahead of the court appearance of the Dera chief, who was convicted by a CBI court in

Panchkula on Friday in the case.

Yesterday, the CBI judge awarded 20 years in jail to the Dera chief for raping two of his followers.

The Haryana government had earlier said it has extended the suspension of mobile Internet services, including 2G, 3G, 4G, CDMA and GPRS, all SMS services and all dongle services provided on mobile networks, except voice calls, in the State till 11.30 am on August 29, which will now remains in force until tomorrow in seven districts.

The orders have been issued under the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017, to prevent any disturbance of peace and public order in the State in view of the Dera case.

Experts for trans-boundary cooperation on Brahmaputra basin

DURBA GHOSH BANGKOK, AUG 29 (PTI): Trans-boundary collaboration and sound water management are key to mutually beneficial water utilisation and flood control in India and three other riparian countries of the Brahmaputra basin, experts have said.

The Brahmaputra basin spreads over China, Bhutan, India and Bangladesh and has a total area of 5,80,000 square kilometres.

The river, one of the major rivers in Asia, flows 50.50 per cent in Tibet, 33.60 per cent in India, 8.10 per cent in Bangladesh and 7.80 per cent in Bhutan. India and Bangladesh constitute more than 95 per cent of the total population of the Yarlung Zang-

bo-Brahmaputra-Jamuna basin, which bears the brunt of the floods.

"Water utilisation in the Yarlung Zangbo-Brahmaputra-Jamuna river is a challenge due to its narrow width and high drainage density which produces high flood wave causing severe flood damage in the lower riparian countries of the basin", said Arup Sarma of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati at a workshop on 'Water and Neighbourhood' organised by the Third Pole here recently.

Data sharing among the riparian countries was the need of the hour to minimise the effect of flood damage and ensure the benefits of a technically sound and mutually beneficial holistic basin management programme are taken up in a collabora-

tive way, Sarma said.

Floods are a way of life in the Brahmaputra valley and timely sharing of data with the countries can help in evacuating people and livestock, Sarma said.

He said taking necessary safety precautions can prevent loss of lives and minimise flood damage.

Heavy flooding since May has so far claimed 157 lives and affected nearly 20 lakh people in Assam. The Brahmaputra and its tributaries submerged more than 2,500 villages, destroyed 1.06 lakh hectares of cropland, damaged infrastructure by breaching embankments and overrunning roads and bridges.

Nearly 75 per cent of Kaziranga National Park, a world heritage site, had been inundated.

An understanding ex-

ists between four countries - China, India, Bhutan and Bangladesh - but a multilateral body comprising the four countries can go a long way to address the trans-boundary issues of the river basin and ensure its proper management, said Anamika Barua of IIT Guwahati.

All riparian countries must realise the importance of collaboration leads to ecological benefits that come from sound water management and a healthy eco-system, Barua said.

She said the benefits to societies by using water to produce services and intra-basin relations lead to trade agreements and regional integration.

The Brahmaputra basin has the highest water resources potential but its utilisation percentage is low mainly due to its

high temporal variation of more than 75 per cent in four months leading to severe floods, erosion and drought.

"With climate change and anthropogenic impacts, temporal variation may further increase, increased intensity of rainfall and high sediment load add more complexities to the system but it is the concept of Ecological Management Practices (EMPs), if applied at large scale, that can help maintaining ecological balance of the basin", Sarma said.

Increasing basin storage by EMP application and well designed mutually beneficial multipurpose reservoir project can help improve the present scenario of disastrous flooding, erosion, landslide and poor water utilisation, he said.

SIKKIM STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY
DEVELOPMENT AREA, GANGTOK : SIKKIM
PHONE: 03592- 207753, FAX: 03592- 207753

INFORMATION

This is for information of all concerned that as per the directions of Hon'ble Executive Chairperson, Sikkim State Legal Services Authority, legal aid clinics manned by trained student Para-Legal Volunteers are functioning in the following University/College:

- Sikkim University at 5th Mile, Tadong** every Wednesday & Friday from 03:00 p.m – 05:00 p.m.,
- ICFAI University at Lower Sichey** every Tuesday & Thursday from 10: 00 a.m. – 01:00 p.m. and
- Sikkim Government Law College at Burtuk** every Thursday from 02:00 p.m. to 04:00 p.m. and Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 01:00 p.m.

Who are PARA-LEGAL VOLUNTEERS (PLVs)?

Under the NALSA Scheme for Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs) introduced during the year 2009, Para-Legal Volunteers act as intermediaries bridging the gap between the common people and the Legal Services Institutions to remove impediments in access to justice by making legal services accessible to people who are in the villages and in geographically inaccessible areas.

PLVs are trained on basic laws and legal system of our country and provide basic legal assistance to those who approach the legal aid clinics for legal advise.

Who are entitled to free legal services?

Section 12 of the Legal Services Authority Act, 1987 prescribes eligibility for free legal aid to the following persons to file or defend a case, if that person is –

- a member of a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe;
- a victim of trafficking in human being or begar as referred to in Article 23 of the Constitution;
- a woman or a child;
- a mentally ill or otherwise disabled person;
- a person under circumstances of undeserved want such as being a victim of a mass disaster, ethnic violence, caste atrocity, flood drought, earthquake, or industrial disaster; or
- an industrial workman; or
- in custody, including custody in a protective home within the meaning of clause (g) of section 2 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, or in a juvenile home within the meaning of clause (j) of section 2 of the Mental Health Act, 1986; or in a psychiatric hospital or psychiatric nursing home within the meaning of clause (j) of section 2 of the Mental Health Act, 1987; or
- in receipt of annual income less than rupees one lakh as may be prescribed by the State Government, if the case is before a Court other than the Supreme Court, and less than rupees one lakh or such other higher amount as may be prescribed by the Central Government, if the case is before the Supreme Court.

Any person living in the vicinity of the Legal Aid Clinics detailed above may approach these clinics for legal aid advice and free legal advocate.

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Some followers says faith shaken, others still revere Dera head

BUNTY TYAGI

SIRSA (HAR), AUG 29 (PTI): The were mixed reactions from the followers of Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, who were leaving the sect headquarters today after a court awarded a 20 year jail term to the self-styled godman in two sexual exploitation cases.

Fateh Singh (51), who had been working in the Dera headquarters for three years, said that he had "lost faith" in "guru ji" after the verdict.

Singh, a Dera follower who left the sect headquarters on Tuesday, alleged, "the staff at Dera headquarters were not allowing me to leave, but somehow I left it. Today, I am going to my native place in Punjab."

However, another follower Kulbeer Singh said that "Dera followers were sentimentally attached with guru ji (Ram Rahim Singh). I have full faith in him."

70-year-old Almat, who left the headquarters on Tuesday, said the allegations against the Dera chief had left him shocked. Almat had been staying at the sect headquarters for 17 years.

A large number of followers, who had come to Dera headquarters before the conviction of Ram Rahim to show solidarity with him, have now left the place.

There are only 200 followers, most of them employed at the sect headquarters, according to officials. Authorities said that law and order prevailed in the area.

After the conviction of Ram Rahim Singh by a CBI court in Panchkula on August 25, six Dera followers were killed in Sirsa while 60 were injured in violence.



Unicorn FC are B Division S-League Champions

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 AUG:

Unicorn Football Club, Gangtok has become the champion of the Sikkim Football Association B Division Sikkim-League 2017 here at Paljor Stadium.

Sports Authority of India [SAI], Namchi finished the league as the runners-up. Both teams have also been promoted to Sikkim Football Association premier division league 2018.

In the last match

of the second division league today, Howlers Football Club, Singtam edged past SAI Namchi 2-1. Niwang Tamang and Kewal Pradhan scored a goal each for Howlers FC, while a goal for SAI Namchi was scored by

Gideon Lepcha.

Unicorn FC lifted the Champions trophy along-with a cash prize of Rs. 20,000.

Five clubs had participated in the second division league this year. After playing four

matches each, Howlers FC stood in third position with 6 points, Pendam Football Academy on fourth position with 4 points and Brotherhood Football Club, Gangtok on fifth position with 3 points.

Glad I changed the medal colour to silver: Sindhu

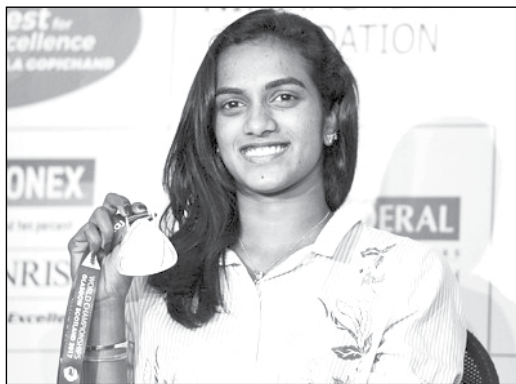
HYDERABAD, AUG 29 (PTI):

Shrugging off the disappointment of losing the epic final, former bronze medallist P V Sindhu today said she is happy she could at least change the colour of the medal by bagging a silver at the World Championship.

Sindhu went down fighting 19-21 22-20 20-22 to Japan's Nozomi Okuhara in a nail-biting marathon summit clash on Sunday that lasted for an hour and 50 minutes at the Emirates Arena at Glasgow.

"After the final match, I felt upset but I thought 'never mind'. I thought it is over now; from next day it was normal," said Sindhu, who twice won bronze in the 2013 and 2014 editions, told reporters here after returning home.

"It is one of the best after Rio (Olympics). World Championship is something different. It was bronze earlier. I am happy



that I changed the colour to silver," she added.

Talking about the World Championships final, the Olympic silver medallist said: "It was tiring mentally and physically.

You think you have to get a point (any way) she (Nozomi

Okuhara of Japan) was also tired. It was not my day."

Asked if a new trend of longer duration matches emerged in badminton, she replied in the affirmative.

"Definitely, it is not going to be easy any more. We have to

fight for each point. Anything can happen (in the match)," she said.

Replying to query, Sindhu said it is great to hear that people looked up to her and many prominent personalities wished her on social media.

Chief National Coach P Gopichand expressed happiness at Sindhu and Saina Nehwal winning medals and men's players K Srikanth and B Sai Praneeth putting up good performances in the World Championships.

Gopichand also hoped Sindhu will continue her good run after winning two big medals at a young age.

"At 22, she has won big medals, hopefully this will continue," he said.

Gopichand said it was great to receive wishes from the top level in the government, including Prime Minister, for good performances in Badminton.

Dismayed by SFA's disciplinary action, SHSC demands proper explanation

SAGAR CHETTRI

GANGTOK, 29 AUG:

Sikkim Himalayan Sporting Club [SHSC] management has expressed its dissatisfaction and displeasure on the disciplinary action initiated against two of its players and coach by the Sikkim Football Association [SFA]. The club has demanded a proper explanation on the reasons behind the disciplinary action from SFA.

Further, the club has threatened to quit the upcoming SFA premier division league 2017 if the SFA does not provide satisfactory explanation within one week.

It is to be mentioned here that on the basis of a report submitted by Match Commissioner and officials deployed to assess the second quarter-final match of Independence Day Football Tournament for Chogyal Sir Tashi Namgyal Memorial Cup between SHSC and Sikkim Sports Academy on 09 August at Paljor Stadium, the disciplinary committee of SFA took disciplinary action against the coach, Pranoy Subba, goalkeeper, Bipen Bhattarai, and Sudesh Subba of SHSC.

Addressing a press conference here today, SHSC management officials alleged that such dictatorship of the SFA will not allow football to prosper in Sikkim.

"Although we are not satisfied with the decision of the SFA, if they have taken such action then they should serve us a copy of the action first instead of going to the Press," they stated.

They alleged that this was just an attempt to defame SHSC, which is one of the prestigious

clubs of the State.

"It was really shocking and disheartening to read about SFA's decision in the newspapers when we were not even informed about it," they expressed.

According to the SHSC officials, the referee had brought the situation under control during the match on 09 Aug and showed red cards to players from both the teams. No action has been taken against the SSA players involved, they said and also accused the Match Commissioner, Chamchuk Lama, of manhandling a player of the SHSC during the match.

"We reported the matter to the SFA on 10 Aug and asked for a response within two days. The SFA has not responded till date," they said.

SHSC officials have alleged that the Match Commissioner has unfairly targeted SHSC and they have further questioned why such action has not been taken during similar incidents that have occurred in the presence of the same Match Commissioner.

"SFA should be able to point out my mistakes and tell me about it before initiating such action. I am really saddened that they did not care to hear my side of the story," said SHSC coach, Pranoy Subba. He added that such action on the players would destroy the future of young players.

"We will not pay any fine until we will receive a satisfactory reply from the SFA. If they fail to do so, we will not participate in the upcoming premier division league of the State," said SHSC officials.

Gaurav assures India of medal at World Championship

HAMBURG, AUG 29

(PTI): Wildcard entrant Gaurav Bidhuri today became only the fourth Indian boxer ever to secure himself a medal in the World Championships after he defeated Tunisia's Bilel Mhamdi to enter the semifinals of the mega-event here.

Gaurav prevailed in a split decision in the bantamweight (56kg) quarterfinal contest to make the last-four stage, becoming the second from the country to do so in his debut world championship. The only other Indian to have achieved the feat was Vikas Krishan, in the 2011 edition.

"It is so surreal. I was a wildcard entry and now I am a medalist. Everything has happened so quickly for me, my brain will take some time to process all this," Gaurav told PTI after his triumph.

Besides Vikas, Vijender Singh (2009) and Shiva Thapa (2015) have been the country's only other medallists at the marquee event of the sport. But they have all settled for bronze medals and it remains to be seen

if Gaurav can better them on that.

"I am going to create bigger history now by winning a better medal than bronze. I have been dealing with a back problem for the last eight months, (but) somehow kept going and finally I have been rewarded, it is just so overwhelming right now," said the boxer, who will face American Duke Ragan in the semifinals after tomorrow's rest day.

But there was slight disappointment as well for the contingent when Amit Phangal (49kg), another impressive debutant in the event, bowed out in the quarterfinal stage.

The Asian Championships bronze-medallist went down to Olympic champion and second seed Hasanboy Dumatov of Uzbekistan in an unanimous verdict, ending what has been a fine campaign for the 21-year-old.

Gaurav, who has been battling a back niggle for the last eight months, took the ring next for India and was on the offensive from the word go.



NEW YORK, AUG 29

(AFP): Venus Williams celebrated her 20th anniversary at the US Open as the tournament celebrated 20 years of Arthur Ashe Stadium, where she claimed two of her seven Grand Slam titles.

Williams was a 17-year-old upstart with beads in her hair when she rallied to defeat Latvia's Larisa Neiland 5-7, 6-0, 6-1 in the first round of the 1997 US Open in her Flushing Meadows debut on her way to her first Grand Slam final, which she lost to Martina Hingis.

"It has been 20 wonderful years," Williams told the crowd after a 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 first-round victory over Slovakian qualifier Viktoria Kuzmova.

"I'm not sure there are going to be 20 more."

Since Williams became the first unseeded US Open women's finalist since 1958, she has won the 2000 and 2001 US Opens and five Wimbledon crowns, including her most recent Slam title in 2008.

But this season, at age 37, Williams has turned back the clock, reaching the finals at Wimbledon and the Australia Open. She lost to Spain's Garbine Muguruza on the All England grass and to her pregnant sister Serena at Melbourne last January.

She reached Arthur Ashe Stadium having played in two Grand Slam finals in a year for the first time since 2003, marveling at the largest venue in tennis from her airplane window.

"It's massive. When

I was flying in, we flew right over it," Williams said. "A certain excitement I get to play there."

It's a privilege. It's an honor. I take it quite seriously.

Everybody does."

Asked what her career timetable might be, the oldest woman in the US Open said, "I don't know. We'll see. I have no plans. Zero."

Well, she has one. With 23-time Grand Slam winner Serena giving birth in the next few weeks, Venus will become an aunt for

the first time as an adult. It's one of the few adventures the sisters haven't been able to fully share in their careers.

"It's definitely a different experience, especially for she and I, because we spent our whole lives so focused on work," Venus said. "So when you have an experience that is not work, it's pretty intense. It's a completely different experience for both of us."

Tour life without Serena has Venus spending more time down Memo-

CONTACT

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REPORTERS

NAMCHI

9832048410,

9775736596

SINGTAM

7699771651

MANGAN/

DIKCHU

9832612485/

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SILIGURI

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Dera chief's case has embarrassed religious figures: Ramdev

INDORE, AUG 29 (PTI): A day after Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh was jailed for 20 years for rape, yoga guru Ramdev today said such cases are causing an embarrassment to religious figures.

"It is true that we are facing embarrassment for such cases which have surfaced in the past two-three years," Ramdev, who was here to participate in a private programme, told reporters.

The popular yoga guru was asked about the conviction and sentencing of the self-styled godman in two rape cases.

He, however, cautioned that the entire saint tradition should not be seen in bad light if a religious figure is found guilty in a criminal case.

Ramdev advised religious and spiritual leaders to go back to history and follow the code of conduct set by Indian sages centuries ago.

"It is wrong to link the entire saint tradition with criminal activities if a person living in the guise of a saint or a religious leader commits a mistake or crime."

The 51-year-old ayurveda expert-cum-entrepreneur said in the wake of the Ram Rahim episode the entire community of religious-spiritual gurus should not be tarred with the same brush.

"There are still millions of saints in the country who are living a life full of honesty, purity and serving the common people."

He said, "Lord Ram is the greatest symbol of Indian culture. If there is any taint on a person bearing the name Ram, it only sullies the character of that particular person."

UNITED NATIONS, AUG 29 (PTI): UN chief Antonio Guterres today called on countries, including India, to ensure that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty comes into force soon, saying North Korea's continued nuclear tests demonstrate the need for a legally-binding prohibition.

In his message on the International Day against Nuclear Tests, the UN secretary general said for almost 20 years, a global norm has existed against nuclear testing based on voluntarily unilateral moratoriums. While this restraint should be applauded, it is not enough.

"More than 2,000 nuclear tests have been conducted over the past seven decades from the South Pacific to North America, from Central Asia to North Africa. They have harmed some of the world's



most vulnerable people and pristine ecosystems," he said.

Guterres' message comes as nuclear-armed North Korea fired a missile which flew over Japan, one of its most provocative missile tests in

recent years that prompted Tokyo to warn residents in its path to take cover.

"Continued nuclear tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea demonstrate that even the strongest

norm is no substitute for a legally-binding prohibition," the UN chief said.

The missile travelled around 2,700 kilometres (1,700 miles) at a maximum altitude of around 550 kilometres. No

North Korean missile had overflown Japan for years, and the launch came after a strained period on the peninsula following Pyongyang's testing of two intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) last month that appeared to bring much of the US mainland within reach.

Guterres said to ensure that no nation can conduct another test, it is essential that the CTBT, Treaty banning all nuclear explosions, finally enter into force.

Eight more Annex 2 states need to ratify the Treaty to accomplish this.

Annex 2 states are the states that must ratify the treaty and deposit their instruments of ratification with the secretary-general of the United Nations for the CTBT to enter into force.

There are eight Annex 2 states that have yet to ratify

the Treaty - China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, and the US, which have signed the Treaty, and North Korea, India, and Pakistan, which have not signed.

"I urge all countries yet to join the CTBT to do so as soon as possible," Guterres said.

Last year, the Security Council had adopted its first resolution focused solely on nuclear testing and Guterres expressed hope that it would represent a new momentum towards taking the essential next step in ridding the world of the menace of nuclear weapons.

The CTBT was negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and adopted by the UN General Assembly. It opened for signature on 24 September 1996. Since then, it has reached near-universality and 182 countries have signed it.



The engine and nine coaches of the Nagpur-Mumbai Durgam Express derailed between Vasind and Asangaon stations in Maharashtra early today following a landslide, a senior railway official and a PTI reporter on-board the train said. The accident took place at 6:36 am. No passenger is reported to be injured in the incident so far, Sunil Udasi, Chief PR of the Central Railway, said. Udasi said the derailment was caused due to a landslide. This is the fourth train derailment in the country in a span of 10 days.

China hopeful of getting support for successful BRICS summit

Beijing, Aug 29 (PTI): China today hoped that all BRICS nations will play a role for the success of the grouping's upcoming summit in Xiamen, a day after India and China agreed to disengage their soldiers to end the Doklam standoff.

India and China yesterday ended their 73-day standoff in Doklam by withdrawing their troops from the area, a diplomatic breakthrough that came just days before the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) summit hosted by China.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Xiamen to attend the summit from September 3-5.

When asked whether China halted the work on a road in Doklam to end the standoff so that the BRICS summit could be held, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said, "Peaceful resolution of

the issue through the diplomatic channels serves the common interests of all relevant parties."

"It shows the sincerity and responsible attitude of China as a major country," Hua said.

She said the summit is the common cause of all the BRICS countries and ensuring its success serves the interests of all relevant parties.

"We hope all relevant parties can play a role for the success of the summit. We hope to get the support and coordination from all relevant parties," she said.

When asked about the road construction in Doklam, Hua said China will take into consider-

ation all relevant factors, including the weather, while building it.

"In order to meet the needs of defending the borders, improving the living conditions, China has long engaged in infrastructure development including the road construction," she said.

Hua reiterated that "Chinese border troops will continue to station and patrol the Doklam area. We will continue to exercise our sovereignty with historic conventions."

She also parried a question whether China is in consultation with Bhutan, which has protested the Chinese troops' road building in Doklam.

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NOTICE

The State Civil Service mourns the passing away of Mr Tempo Gyamtso, former civil servant, Government of Sikkim on 26 August, 2017.

He will always be remembered for his positive outlook, tremendous zest for life and his encouragement for his juniors.

In his passing we have lost a good human being. We express our heartfelt condolence and extend our sympathy to the bereaved family.

STATE CIVIL SERVICE MEMBERS, GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Kutse Shegu



The 49-day Kutse Shegu of our beloved father **late Norbu Thendup Bhutia** falls on **30th August 2017 [Wednesday]**. All friends, well-wishers and relatives are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence at **Upper Samdong, Kambal, East Sikkim**. We also take this opportunity to thank everyone who stood by us during the time of our bereavement.

Tshering Doma Bhutia (Wife), Didup Bhutia, Gyalchen Bhutia, Sonam Cheda Bhutia (Sons), Kessang Bhutia, Susang Lepcha (Daughters-in-Law), Tshering Bhutia, Gyalmu Bhutia, Chum-jey Bhutia (Daughters) & all family members.
Contact: 9593386426, 9434632401, 9734973422, 9734158848

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2nd Prize Rs.9500/-
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12875 27672 33811 44343 59958
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3198 3432 3601 3667 3685 3784 3836 3847 3944 3992
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5200 5231 5434 5444 5485 5580 5696 5726 5829 5851
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6842 6956 6996 7029 7063 7064 7431 7552 7733 7922
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2nd Prize Rs.9500/-
05282 38431 39940 42452 43845
70537 81591 86153 91762 92221
3rd Prize Rs.9000/-
12298 17198 19293 25043 36601
49270 53327 79846 83605 92371
4th Prize Rs.1000/-
0551 3196 4056 7138 7205 8179 8440 8465 8468 9503
5th Prize Rs.500/-
0545 0820 1639 3804 4754 5001 5056 6773 8724 9640
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