

SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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SDF cements panchayat hold in South, allows face-savers only for Independents

SUMMIT REPORT
NAMCHI, 05 NOV:

Out of the 28 Zilla Territorial constituencies in South Sikkim, SDF had secured only seven uncontested and the remaining 21 went to poll on 03 November. Following the counting process today, Sikkim Democratic Front has increased its stranglehold at the Zilla TC level to 27. It won 20 of the 21 remaining seats today and the solitary non-SDF member of the Zilla Panchayat in South Sikkim is an Independent.

Independent Candidate Lalita Devi Sirupali is the only independent candidate to secure a Zilla TC in South Sikkim. She won from Temi Tarku Zilla Territorial Constituency.

Independent candidates fought valiantly in the GPU ward elections, winning 42 seats out of the 135 that went to



polls. SDF had already bagged 148 panchayat wards uncontested in the district and its tally now stands at 241 panchayat wards out of a total of 283 wards.

At the ward level, Independents secured the most seats from Temi GPU where they won nine seats, followed by

Yangang where they won eight, Ravangla (07), Namthang (06), Sikkip (05) and Namchi (04).

SDF reigned supreme in all the GPUs of the district securing 16 wards at Temi, nine at Namchi, 18 at Namthang, 19 at Yangang, 19 at Ravangla, 05 at Sumbuk, 04 at Jorethang and 03 at Sikkip GPU.

Independent candidates from Sumbuk GPU failed to win any seats as all the five seats were won by SDF candidates.

Opposition parties drew a blank at both levels in the district. Sikkim Krantikari Morcha had fielded three Zilla Panchayat candidates and 3 ward level candidates here.



SDF sweeps North panchayats, Independents come second with One Zilla and 11 Gram panchayat wards

SUMMIT REPORT
MANGAN, 05 NOV:

Sikkim Democratic Front completed its clean sweep of panchayat polls in North Sikkim winning 12 of the 13 Zilla territorial constituencies which had gone to polls on 03 November. The party had already tied

up seven Zilla Panchayats uncontested. Now, it holds 19 of the 20 Zilla Panchayat wards in North Sikkim. The Opposition parties drew a blank in North district as well with the lone Zilla ward that did not go to SDF being won by an Independent candidate.

Independents put up a stronger show in the GPU ward elections, winning 11 of the 22 gram panchayat wards that went to polls in North district. SDF had already won 90 of panchayat wards in the district uncontested and its tally at the ward level now stands at 101 out of

112 panchayat wards in the district.

At the Zilla level, voters of Ramthang-Tangkey Zilla TC chose the only independent candidate winner in the district's ZTC elections. And even this was an extremely close contest. Phurjay

turn to pg03

BJP congratulates the victors, accepts the people's verdict

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 05 NOV:

Bharatiya Janta Party Sikkim Pradesh, in a press release issued today, has said that it has heartily accepted the mandate given by the people in the Panchayat Election. The party did not win any wards, although in some contests, its candidates received a respectable number of votes.

The party has assured that it would continuously work for the people by following the policies, principles and programmes of the party.

Accepting the results of the Ward and Zilla Panchayat Election, the party has also congratulated the people for their participation in the election. Sikkim posted a handsome 76 voter turnout, it may be recalled.

A press release from the BJP state president, DB Chauhan says that the number of votes that the party received in the elections has 'only proved that the presence of our party is there in the State'.

The party has further called on the victors to work for the people and rise above party-politics in their service of the public.



SDF makes clean sweep of East Zilla Panchayats

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 05 NOV:

Voters in East district did not indulge Independents with even a token representation at the Zilla Territorial Constituency level and elevated an all-SDF team to this tier of the panchayats

today. All 24 Zilla TC seats which went to polls on 03 November and were counted today, went to the Sikkim Democratic Front. The party had already secured eight Zilla TC seats uncontested.

Independents, however, made a presence felt at the gram

panchayat level where they won 24 of the 132 Gram Panchayat Wards that went to polls. SDF had already won 163 of the wards and with the 108 which came to it today, the party's tally at the ward-level stands at 271 out of the 295 gram panchayat

wards in the district.

Opposition parties drew a blank in East Sikkim as well.

Meanwhile, a press communiqué received from the Returning Officer, East, informs that the counting was held at the Modern Senior Secondary

School auditorium at Tathangchen, starting at 8 AM in the presence of the Observer, Rinzing Chewang Bhutia.

The counted EVMs have been resealed and kept in safe custody in the strongroom at Modern Sr Secondary School.

West Sikkim stays with SDF too, but also accommodates Independents and SKM

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 05 NOV:

Of the four districts, West was where the most number of candidates were in fray and where the panchayat poll was expected to be the most keenly contested.

The district almost lived up to its billing, but in the end, although it allowed for an Opposition party in Sikkim Krantikari Morcha to open its panchayat account here and also sent up more Independents (in comparison to other districts), it remained firmly ensconced



with Sikkim Democratic Front which took 23 of the 26 Zilla territorial constituencies which went to

poll and Independents took three. SDF had already won five Zilla TCs uncontested.

Independent candidates won the Yangtey, Deythang and Buriakhop Zilla territorial constituencies. Everything else in the district, as mentioned, wears the SDF colours at the Zilla TC level.

The Opposition SKM, which had fielded 10 candidates in Zilla polls drew a blank at that level, but saw four of its 64 ward panchayat candidates win, thus officially debuting in the panchayati raj institutions in

Sikkim.

There were 70 candidates in the fray for the 26 Zilla TCs which went to polls in West Sikkim, the highest of all districts.

At the ward level, of the 211 wards which required elections (136 having already gone to SDF uncontested), SDF won in 172 with Independents coming second with 35 panchayats from among them and SKM winning in four wards.

West Sikkim had posted a 75% voter turnout on 03

SKM happy with the election results

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 05 NOV:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has expressed its happiness on the Panchayat Election results and has congratulated the party and independent candidate winners, a press release from the party informs.

The party has said that it was 'a good sign' that people are accepting its policies.

"The results are encouraging and we are motivated to go out there to the people and function more strongly in the coming days," the release reads.

The party has also congratulated all the winners from SDF party as well and has urged them to dedicate their work for the development of the people.

LOST: Miss, Monoti Hangma Limboo D/o Deoman Limboo has lost her class XII CBSE certificate bearing Roll No. 3642700 in and around Geyzing and Dentam road few days ago. If anybody found please contact 9733195471.

CALL Summit
TIMES@
9832556698
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GAC congratulates all on successful panchayat elections

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 05 NOV:**

Gorkha Apex Committee in a press release issued by its Chief Con- venger Passang Sherpa has congratulated all the candidates of the panchayat election, State Election Department, State Administration, Police Department and the general public for the successful completion of the election.

The committee has send a 'big congratulation' to the opposition parties and the independent candidates for standing firmly 'against the undemocratic forces trying to trying to alienate the people from democratic participation in the election.'

Urging the unsuccessful candidates to not lose hope, GAC has said that their participation in the election has set an example for the people.

GAC has urged the winners to work for the people and focus on the development of villages in all the corners of the State.

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SDF sweeps North panchayats...

contd from pg01

Lepcha, the Independent candidate secured 301 votes against the 299 bagged by Pinto Lhamu Bhutia of SDF here.

The electoral rolls of panchayat wards are rather slim in Sikkim and contests are invariably very close. In North Sikkim, the closest contest was witnessed at Upper Lingchom ward of Kabi Rongpa GPU where the winner was decided by a coin toss! Here, Independent candidates Tsewang Phurba and Tshering Sherpa had both received 78 votes each and Mr Phurba won by toss.

Independent candidates contesting for Gram Panchayat Wards have secured a foothold in the wards of Gaikhana, Kabi, Upper Lingchom, Upper Tingda, Labi, Phamtam, Lower Lingdong, Upper Barfok, Lower Barfok, Sangtok and Gor while the SDF candidates have

secured their power in Tingmoo Youngyang, Lower Lingchom, Gairee, Upper Paney, Lower Chawang, Lower Rongong, Tangyek, Deythang, Upper Lingdong, Bringkatam Ravong and Tarayank /Gor Tarayang Gumpa.

Meanwhile SDF has maintained its supremacy in Zilla Territorial Constituencies by securing 12 seats at Kabi Tingda, Phensang, Men Rongrong, Rongong Tumlong, Namok Swayem, Ringhim Nampatam, Shipgyer, Sakyong Pentong, Lingdong Barfok, Hee Gyathang and Lum Gor Santok.

The entire counting process was carried out under the supervision of General Observer, Sonam Y. Lepcha and Panchayat Returning Officer [North], Karma R.Bonpo. The elected victors were handed their Certificates of Election by the PRO.



Runners rally at Goechala for Kanchenjunga Marathon

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 05 NOV:**

The last group of runners for the Kanchenjunga Marathon 2017 left for Goechala base camp

from Yuksom in West Sikkim on Sunday.

The second edition of the Kanchenjunga Marathon has 58 long distance runners from dif-

ferent parts of India and abroad.

Four runners from Kenya and one from Manipur left for the camp today and will join the

other participants at Goechala.

The marathon will be flagged off tomorrow morning at 6.30 a.m. It is informed that

the participants need to complete the full marathon of 42 KMS in eight hours and the half marathon of 21 KMS in four hours.



Sitharaman visits forward army posts in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, NOV 5 (PTI): Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman today visited forward army posts in remote Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh bordering China to take stock of the defence preparedness.

The minister, in her maiden visit to the state, was accompanied by General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Command Lt Gen Abhay Krishna and other senior Army officers.

She was briefed on the situation and defence preparedness along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Defence Spokesman Lt. Col. Sombit Ghosh said in a release.

Sitharaman, who arrived in the state on a two-day visit yesterday, interacted with the troops at forward army posts at Kibithu in Anjaw district and lauded their dedication to the service and their efforts in such a remote and inhospitable

terrain, he said.

She also visited the key air force base in Chabua in Tinsukia district of neighbouring Assam, where she was received by Senior Air Staff Officer (HQ), Eastern Air Command, Air Marshal Rajesh Kumar and Air Commodore George Thomas.

The minister took stock of the operational preparedness and infrastructure development at the base, the release said. The strategic base

presented a static display of the combat assets to the minister, which included the Sukhoi 30MKI fighter aircraft and advanced missiles. She also interacted with Air Force personnel there.

Sitharaman had yesterday inaugurated the Buddha Mahatsava at Bomdila in West Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh and held a security meeting with Chief Minister Pema Khandu in Itanagar.

Kolkata's creativity will be on show at KIFF: British diplomat

KOLKATA, NOV 5 (PTI): British Deputy High Commissioner Bruce Bucknell today said he was happy with the UK being chosen as the focus country for the 23rd Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF) which kicks off from November 10.

"I am happy that this festival is being used to celebrate India's connections with Britain. I am happy the focus country is UK this time.

"Basically, it is a celebration of your culture which had been first creatively showcased in the Durga Puja pandals over a month back and the subsequent Red Road Durga puja Carnival and the wonderful hospitality extended during the Under-17 FIFA World Cup," Bucknell said at the KIFF curtain raiser press meet.

He said Kolkata's creativity will be on show

yet again at the third event in two months -- the upcoming KIFF -- after the Durga Puja carnival and U-17 World Cup "to make it a triple whammy."

On the recently concluded U-17 world Cup, Bucknell said, "May be you had supported Brazil but that does not matter. Brazil is the second most favourite nation in the football world after all. But the England team was touched by the hospitality and warmth of the people of the city, the top class facilities and never felt uncomfortable."

At the KIFF, the Satyajit Ray Memorial Lecture will be delivered by Rachel Dwyer, a professor of Indian Cultures and Cinema at SOAS, University of London.

There will also be a retrospective of six films by prominent British director Michael Winterbottom.

Deregistered cos deposited Rs 17,000 cr post note ban: Govt

NEW DELHI, NOV 5 (PTI): Cash deposits involving over Rs 17,000 crore were made and later withdrawn post demonetisation by as many as 35,000 companies, which are now deregistered, the government said today.

As it steps up the fight against illicit fund flows, so far names of around 2.24 lakh companies that have been inactive for long have been struck off from the official records and 3.09 lakh directors have been disqualified.

To keep a tab on dummy directors being appointed to the boards of corporates, work is on to put in place a mechanism wherein new applications for directorship would be linked with PAN and Aadhaar numbers of the individual concerned.

Stating that around 2.24 lakh companies have been struck off till date for remaining inactive for two years or more, an official release said restrictions have been imposed on operation of their bank accounts as well as on sale and transfer of their properties.

"Preliminary enquiry on the basis of information received from

56 banks in respect of 35,000 companies involving 58,000 accounts has revealed that an amount of over Rs 17,000 crore was deposited and withdrawn post demonetisation," the release said.

In one case, a company which had a negative opening balance on November 8, 2016, deposited and withdrew Rs 2,484 crore post demonetisation, it added.

Last November, the government cancelled old Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currency notes as legal tenders as part of larger efforts to fight the black money problem and corruption.

According to the government, one company was having as many as 2,134 accounts.

With respect to deregistered companies, state governments have been advised to disallow registration of properties of such entities.

The government has initiated steps to disqualify directors who are on the boards of the companies that failed to file annual returns for three financial years -- 2013-14 to 2015-16.

While noting that about 3.09 lakh directors have been affected by the action, the government

said preliminary enquiry has shown that over 3,000 disqualified directors are "directors in more than 20 companies each, which is beyond the limit prescribed under the law".

"With a view to checking the problem of dummy directors, action is underway to seed DIN with PAN and Aadhaar at the stage of DIN application through biometric matching for new applications. The same may be extended to legacy data in due course," the release said.

Director Identification Number (DIN) is a unique number assigned to an individual under the Companies Act that allows him or her to serve as a director on the board of a company.

"A high level committee has been constituted for suggesting revamp of the disciplinary systems for chartered accountants, company secretaries and cost accountants.

"Further, steps are underway for setting up National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), an independent body, to check financial statements, prescribe accounting standards and take disciplinary action against errant professionals," the release said.

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Mama, Godmother of crime calls it a day: police

SALONI BHATIA

NEW DELHI, NOV 5 (PTI): Mama, as she was known, inspired terror in the urban ghetto where she lived. But the undisputed godmother of Sangam Vihar, who also led her sons into crime, is now planning to call it a day and lead a quiet life, police here said.

, 62, and her eight sons have been accused of bootlegging, murder, robbery, snatching and other such crimes in a total of 99 cases.

The queen of crime of Sangam Vihar, a locality in southwest Delhi, was released from Tihar Jail a couple of months ago. Some of her sons are still lodged in Tihar, the police said.

Now that she is out, Basiran is planning to sell off her three-storeyed house -- said to worth Rs 50 lakh -- and move to Faridabad on the outskirts of Delhi to lead a simple life, the police said.

Basiran is named in three cases of bootlegging. Her son Shamim Gunga is

an accused in 38 cases, including those related to murder and robbery. Sons Shakeel and Vakeel are involved in 29 cases, Rahul in three, including one of murder.

Three other sons, Sunny, Sohil and Faisal, have been named in 17 cases, the police said.

For long years, Basiran and her family evaded arrest. But in the last 10 months, the police began cracking down on the family and arrested her and her seven sons.

The eighth is a juvenile and was sent to a juvenile home.

Basiran had moved to Delhi from Rajasthan in 2000 with her family. She took to crime by selling illicit liquor, a police official said.

"There are no thekas (liquor outlets) in the area. She started manufacturing liquor and selling it to people in nearby Faridabad and in the area where she stayed," recalled a police officer.

Gradually, her her sons took to crime, too, and dropped out of school. Soon, they were involved in robbery and snatching cases.

A police officer said Basiran's empire started expanding.

She gave patronage to other criminals, bought and sold stolen items and gave shelter to criminals when they were on the run.

Such was her terror she wielded that even the police could not touch her. She slowly came to be known as 'Mama' in the area.

"If the police would go to arrest her or any of her accomplices, she would start tearing off her clothes and threaten to accuse them of molesting her. Scared, the policemen would retreat," said a police personnel.

The crackdown on the family began soon after inspector Upender Singh was posted to the Sangam Vihar police station as Station House Officer.

Earlier this year, the police started its operations against the family. When they went to arrest her or her accomplices, they made sure they went in a police party of not less than 20 personnel, including women constables.

"We would only go whenever we had a specific tip-off and would surround her house from all sides to close any escape route. We also started videographing the entire event so that she could not use her tactics," the officer added.

Basiran, who was arrested in February, has four daughters apart from her eight sons. Her daughters and husband do not have any criminal links. Two of her daughters are married.

Her husband, Malkan Singh, rears goats. He leaves home in the morning and returns only in the evening. He has been a mute spectator to his wife and sons' crimes, said the official.

Gangtok on Monday, 06 Nov
Temp: 23°C /09°C
Forecast: Sunny and not as warm but pleasant.
Sunrise: 05:49 AM
Sunset: 4:49 PM

Farmer, 50, dies after ‘assault’ by bank collection staff in TN

TIRUVANNAMALAI (TN), Nov 5 (PTI): A 50-year-old farmer collapsed and died after he was allegedly hit in the chest by the collection agent of a nationalised bank following an argument over loan dues here today, police said.

Gnanasekaran of Pondhai village in the district swooned after the alleged assault and was rushed to the Medical College Hospital here, where he did not respond to treatment, police said.

According to the family, the farmer had taken a loan of Rs 4.5 lakh from the Sathanur branch of the bank and had repaid Rs 2 lakh through equated monthly instalments (EMIs).

However, he could not pay the EMIs for the last two years due to crop failure, they claimed.

Quoting family members, the police said, the recovery agent had come to the farmer's house today to enquire about the dues and seize a tractor, hypothecated to the bank in connection with the loan.

The farmer had asked for the ID card of the agent, triggering an argument during which he was allegedly hit in the chest and fainted, they said.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

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Soil-less farming technique turns Raj farmer’s fortune around

ABHISHEK SONKAR UDAIPUR, Nov 5 (PTI): Four years back, Nand Lal Dangi was growing just 20 tonne of cucumber a year on his 2-acre land at Maharaj ki Khedi, a remote village in south Rajasthan, before he brought in the soil-less cocopit farming technique.

The new farming technique has quadrupled his farm output to 80 tonnes in a year and zoomed his annual income, the farmer said.

However, there was a time when it was hard for him to even recover labour cost due to crop damage and low produce.

Beside arid and hot cli-

mate, the region, around 425 km from Jaipur, is fighting with a common problem of nemetode, the 40 -year-old said.

Nematodes are worm like pests that feed on the root of the plants.

“After facing so much of crop damage I even invested Rs 10 lakh and purchased new soil for my farm but the problem of nemetode did not go. Against my expectations of 40-45 tonne cucumber my yield remained around 10 tonne, rest was damaged due to various reasons from pests to unfavourable weather conditions,” Dangi said.

Finally in 2013, the Israe-

li technique, about which he got to know during a visit to Gujarat, gave him a reason to smile.

The farmer got a breakthrough in Himatnagar municipality in Sabarkantha district of Gujarat where he saw a company called Asian Agro company growing vegetables in cocopits.

Cocopit farming is a soil-less farming used to grow crops in coconut husk.

Dangi, who had never heard the concept of soil-less farming, was so much moved by the technique that he gave up the traditional way of farming in open fields and switched to cocopit farming.

Besides, he moved to polyhouse for plantation of crops and also gave up the traditional way of irrigating the fields through tubewells. He now uses drip irrigation method.

With the new technique of farming, his output has grown four-fold to 80 tonnes on the same area.

“I started producing Turkish cucumber variety Yuskel 53321 Hybrid with the new technique in my polyhouses. My output jumped four-fold and as production has gone up my income has also gone up,” Dangi told PTI.

On 1 acre of land, the total input cost comes around Rs 3

lakh for one harvest. The seed and cocopit are bought from a Gujarati seed company for a total cost of 1 lakh.

Another Rs 70,000 is spent on fertiliser, Rs 30,000 on pest-controlling medicines and Rs 1 lakh on labour, he said and added he mixes the nutrients with cocopit and puts 1.5 kg of mixture in polybags.

Nematodes fail to enter the bag.

“I cultivate my land twice a year. So, it costs me Rs 6 lakh a year to produce 80 tonne cucumber every year. And the return I get is Rs 18 lakh,” Dangi said.

Earlier the input cost was

comparatively less, but the annual produce was 1/4th of it, he added.

Even the fruiting period has gone up, he said, adding during summers the fruiting period begins between 35-40 and in winters 45-50.

During summers it lasts for 120-130 days whereas when the seeds were sown in open field the crop cycle was of 90 days.

For winters, he said the number varies.

Earlier, where there was no guarantee that a particular plant will be able to produce a single cucumber, today each plant is producing minimum five cucumbers.

South Asian writing going global: A trend in DSC Prize shortlist

NEW DELHI, Nov 5 (PTI): More and more writers based outside of South Asia are writing about the region, finding interest in its life and culture, and this trend can be seen in the books shortlisted for this year’s DSC Prize.

The shortlist of five novels for the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature is strongly representative of the globalisation of South Asian literature.

Three of the five shortlisted authors are based in the US and the U whereas their novels are strongly set in the South Asian region and poignantly bring alive the challenges and conflicting emotions in the lives of the protagonists.

Anjali Joseph is an Indian author living in the UK and her short-listed novel “The Living” is a story of two lives - a young Englishwoman working in a shoe factory in England, and a middle aged man in Kohlapur making handmade chappals and the relationship they

share.

Anuk Arudpragasam is from Colombo but now lives in Columbia, US and his novel “The Story of a Brief Marriage” set in war torn Sri Lanka depicts the horror and despondency of the situation.

Karan Mahajan hails from New Delhi and currently lives in Austin in the US. His novel “The Association of Small Bombs” relives the physical and psychological scarring of a bombing that happened in New Delhi in 1996.

On the other hand there is American author Stephen Alter on the shortlist who has lived his life in India and has brought out a fictional account of Jim Corbett in his book “In the Jungles of the Night”.

The fifth book in the shortlist is Aravind Adiga’s “Selection Day”.

Writings about South Asia are not just confined to writers based in the region who wrote about this region. Over the last decade or so, South Asia has gained importance

in the global scheme of things and this has extended to the writing about this region as well.

As a result one has seen a significant evolution in the South Asian literature landscape. These span authors based in the West like in the UK, the US and Canada - including authors of non South Asian ethnicity as well as authors of South Asian origin, and the latter especially has led to a rich vein of diasporic South Asian writing.

And what is interesting and commendable in these diasporic writings is the grasp and understanding of the nuances of South Asian life that these novels bring to life.

While remaining true to the South Asian socio-cultural ethos, these writings are also able to bring in a new global perspective in which the world sees and appreciates the lives, cultures, fears and aspirations of the people living in this region.



Street plays, folk songs to help raise Dengue awareness

KOLKATA, Nov 5 (PTI):

In the wake of multiple Dengue cases in the state, the West Bengal government has decided to take help from folk artists to enact street plays and folk songs to raise the awareness levels among the public about the vector-borne disease.

“We have used these artistes very successfully for spreading information about the various government schemes earlier. Keeping that in mind, we have decided to employ them for the cause of raising awareness in fighting Dengue,” a senior official at the secretariat said today.

These artists will be

performing at different locations throughout the state starting from big towns to the remotest of villages to spread the awareness regarding the disease, he said.

The script for the street dramas, as well as the songs and poems related to fighting Dengue will be penned by officials of the Health Department.

“Our health officials have been employed to write scripts for the dramas keeping in mind the disease. They are also writing songs and poems for the purpose. The scripts will be handed over to the artists who will decide on their per-

formance,” the IAS officer said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had on October 30 said 13 Dengue deaths were reported in the state, but there was no need to “panic”.

However, sources at the state health department said more than 21,000 Dengue cases have been reported from different parts of the state since January.

Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi had on Thursday wrote to Banerjee over cases of Dengue, Chikungunya and malaria and requested her to ensure treatment of those affected.

West Sikkim stays with SDF too, but also accommodates...

contd from pg01

November. The contest was tied in three wards of West Sikkim and had to be decided by draw of lots carried out under the supervision of the Returning Officer and the Election Observer.

Under Chakung GPU's Durpinye Rumbuk (Chakung Gumpa) Ward, Bhim Bdr. Gurung of SDF won in this fashion against Man Bdr. Rai of SKM. Similarly, in Chumbong GPU's Asyong Sabjotey Ward, Ranjit Rai of SDF and Yogesh Rai, an independent, were tied on votes and Ranjit Rai emerged winner by Draw of Lots. At Buriakhop GPU's Ghattey Ward, Narmaya Gurung, an Independent won against Sharmila Gurung of SDF after draw of lots when both polled the same number of votes.

Shirshendu, Nabaneeta shortlisted for ‘Big Little Book Award’

KOLKATA, Nov 5 (PTI): Bengali writers Nabaneeta Dev Sen and Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay were among the shortlisted authors nominated for the ‘Big Little Book Award’ for children’s literature in Bengali this year.

Amarendra Chakravorty and Kartik Ghosh were the two other shortlisted writers, a statement by Parag said today.

The ‘Big Little Book Award’ was instituted by ‘Parag’, an initiative of Tata Trusts.

In the second year of the award, the language in focus is Bengali. Last year, the language in focus was Marathi.

The awards will be conferred on November 19.

Nabaneeta Dev Sen, recipient of the Sahitya Academy Award and the Bharatiya Bhasha Pari-

shad Award, has been writing for children as well as general readers since 1979.

Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay has also extensively written both for children and for adults with many of his books adapted for films by acclaimed directors.

He is the recipient of Sahitya Academy Award and Ananda Puroshkar. Amarendra Chakravorty is a poet and writer whose ‘Hiru Dakat’ and ‘Shada Ghora’ are well known fictions for children.

Ghosh has been the recipient of the National Award for Children s literature for his book Ekta Meye Eka, the statement said.

‘Parag’ is a decade old initiative to give recognition to authors and illustrators and create awareness on role and importance of children’s literature.

Construction workers’ funds spent on laptops; SC anguished

ABHISHEK ANSHU

NEW DELHI, Nov 5 (PTI): Laptops and washing machines were bought out of a whopping Rs 29,000 crore fund meant for the welfare of construction workers and less than ten per cent spent on the actual purpose.

Terming this as a “shocking” and “extremely distressing” state of affairs, the Supreme Court has said the funds, collected by the government through a cess under the construction workers law, were being “frittered away” and diverted, instead of being spent on welfare of the beneficiaries.

While making these observations, a bench of Justices Madan B Lokur and Deepak Gupta have directed the Union Labour Secretary to appear before it on November 10 “to understand how the act was being implemented and why it was being misused, if not abused.”

The “astounding” details were given in an affidavit by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) that the funds meant for construction workers’ welfare were spent to buy laptops and washing machines for them, that shocked the Supreme Court.

The apex court had earlier asked the



CAG to file a report on how crores of rupees meant for welfare of construction workers was being spent.

It was hearing a PIL filed by NGO, National Campaign Committee for Central

Legislation on Construction Labour, which has alleged that the statutory cess levied on real estate firms for the welfare of construction workers was not being utilised properly as there was no mechanism to

identify the beneficiaries for extending the benefits.

Asserting that there should be no further exploitation of construction workers by the states or welfare boards, the top court observed that the CAG has revealed a “shocking state of affairs” with regard to the utilisation of the cess collected under the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996.

“For example: we have been shown expenditure having been incurred for payment of entry tax/value added tax; expenditure incurred for purchase of washing machines for construction workers; expenditure incurred for purchase of laptops for construction workers etc. This is really astonishing,” the bench noted in its order.

“It is quite obvious from the above that the amounts are just being frittered away, if not defalcated by the concerned welfare boards,” it said.

“Apart from the above, we find that huge amounts have been spent towards administrative expenses while the statute permits only five per cent expenditure towards administrative expenses,” it said.

The top court observed that the law was “being misused” as the beneficiaries, who were construction workers, were not given benefits they are entitled to and the money collected was being diverted to the labour welfare boards or the state governments for other purposes.

“We may note that huge amounts have been collected in the region of Rs 29,000 crore and not even 10 per cent has been spent for the benefit of construction workers. The amounts, whatever has been spent, appear to have been spent for the purposes other than for the benefit of construction workers,” it said.

Observing that this must be rectified at the earliest, the bench sought the presence of the Secretary of the Union Labour Ministry before it on November 10 to understand how the act was being implemented and why it was being misused, if not abused, to the detriment of the construction workers.

The court had in 2015 expressed displeasure over non- utilisation of a whopping Rs 26,000 crore (the amount then) by the Centre and various state governments, saying “it cannot get worse than this.

SummitTIMES

Back to Corruption

In hopes of walking propriety back

Diwali, which had become more about sound & noise instead of the Festival of Lights that it was originally celebrated as, has been reclaimed to some extent. This happened in Sikkim before the firecrackers were also burnt out (partially) of celebrations elsewhere. Also noticeably missing from Diwali this year was Laxmi, snatched out of homes and banks by the double-whammy of demonetization and GST. Extravagance hobbled out of Deepawali, so we take this opportunity here to walk back some talk about wealth of the ill-gotten type.

Corruption in the context of this piece is the one which involves use of public office for private gain. The prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 defines bribery as "a public servant taking gratification other than legal remuneration in respect of an official act; a public servant obtaining a valuable thing, without consideration from the person concerned in proceeding or the business transacted by such a public servant; and criminal misconduct".

As in India, so in Sikkim too, corruption has become the most effective shortcut in the journey from rags to riches. A State where (local) industrialization is negligible and where trade & commerce do not generate enough employment, corruption has turned out to be the least risky route to social influence and affluence. Lack of private enterprise has also led those on a treasure hunt to the plunder of the State treasury. It's actually a catch-22 situation. If the State was to pull away from its current role as the largest consumer of services (by way of contracts and supplies), then there would be no commerce either and if it is to continue, then so does the plunder. What one should bear in mind is that it is not just the bureaucrat-politician combine that is corrupt. Also in the nexus are private people. From the truck driver who siphons away bits of the consignment, to the supplier who inflates the invoice and short-supplies on the order, all are guilty of plundering the State treasury. Agreed, there is a much bigger game afoot in bigger projects which one does not even hear of, but the fact remains that the plunder goes on at every level. Every Sikkimese who uses her/his contacts to win the award of some free GI sheets for his/her greenhouse is guilty of contributing to the corpus of corruption. In doing so she/he also dulls the right to protest against corruption unless willing to also share the blame/punishment.

It goes without saying that corruption cannot survive without political patronage, but blaming the politicians alone will not suffice. Since it is the electorate which makes them influential enough to sidestep rules and hoodwink due process, it is also the electorate's responsibility to keep them honest. No politician will continue being corrupt if the voters send out a clear signal that they will not tolerate it. Okay, maybe they won't turn honest overnight, but they will at least begin by toning down the flamboyance with which ill-gotten gains is flaunted at present. Even that would be beginning and from there could start the process of addressing corruption in more practical terms as against the rhetoric [which inflames passions but does not resolve] or the equally disconcerting chest-beating which speaks of corruption in comparative terms [as if being less corrupt was a virtue of some sorts].

How digital technology can help reinvent basic education in Africa

ROHEN D'AIGLEPIERRE, AMÉLIE AUBERT & PIERRE-JEAN LOIRET
theconversation.com

African countries have worked hard to improve children's access to basic education, but there's still significant work to be done. Today, 32.6 million children of primary-school age and 25.7 million adolescents are not going to school in sub-Saharan Africa. The quality of education also remains a significant issue, but there's a possibility the technology could be part of the solution. The digital revolution currently under way in the region has led to a boom in trials using information and communication technology (ICT) in education – both in and out of the classroom.

A study carried out by the French Development Agency (AFD), the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), Orange and Unesco shows that ICT in education in general, and mobile learning in particular, offers a number of possible benefits. These include access to low-cost teaching resources, added value compared to traditional teaching and a complementary solution for teacher training.

This means that there's a huge potential to reach those excluded from education systems. The quality of knowledge and skills that are taught can also be improved.

THE IRRESISTIBLE DIGITAL REVOLUTION

Access to means of communication is now a key part of daily life for the vast majority of people living in Africa. Mobile telephone prices and the cost of communication have dropped. Mobile telephone use has increased from 5% in 2003 to 73% in 2014. There are 650 million mobile phone owners on the continent (more than the US and Europe combined) and 3G mobile networks are growing rapidly.

Costs are falling and rural areas will soon be reachable thanks to a number of developments. These include undersea cables connecting Africa to other continents, fibre-optic cables that provide connectivity within the continent and recent satellite connection plans. Access to wired Internet remains low with 11% of households connected. But access to mobile Internet is already helping the region catch up. Smartphone penetration levels should reach 20% in 2017.

This rapid expansion of mobile Internet services is already contributing to the region's economic and social development. This is particularly the case in areas such as financial inclusion (mobile banking), health (mobile health) and farmers' productivity.

Given the features of mobile telephones (voice calling, text messaging) and smartphones (reading texts and documents, MP3, images and video) and their wide availability, their potential for improving access and quality of educational services is also boundless.

M-learning (or m-education) – educational services via a connected mobile device – is the main lever for growth in educational information and communication technology and for making content available. This could be for learning (teacher training, learner-centred teaching, tests) or making up for the lack of data for education system management.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR LEARNING

Mass communication technology has been used as a principal driver of education in Africa since the 1960s. Countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Senegal developed major programmes using radio and then television to promote basic education,



improve teacher training and even teaching pupils directly. These programmes reached a high number of pupils at a relatively low cost. But results in terms of academic performance remain difficult to evaluate.

The mass distribution of computer hardware then took over in the 1990s. Many national and international programmes started to concentrate on equipping schools with computers to facilitate digital education and offer new educational media in the form of educational software and CD-ROMs. Use was mainly centred on schools. But trials were often launched without clear pedagogical objectives and state-defined policy frameworks.

The arrival of personal computers in the 2000s facilitated the individualisation of school ICT. The US One Laptop per Child project, launched in several African countries in 2005, aimed to equip schools with laptops at low cost.

Nearly 2 million teachers and pupils are involved in this programme across the world. More than 2.4 million computers (at a cost of around \$200 including an open teaching platform) have been delivered. Evaluations show that the use of portable or fixed computers in the classroom has only a limited effect on pupils' academic performance. But it may have a positive impact on certain cognitive abilities if pupils can use their computers at home in the evening.

CONTENTS AND USES

Since 2010 the large-scale diffusion of mobile communications technology has transformed practices with easier access to educational resources in and outside school. The arrival of low-cost, low-consumption smartphones and tablets allows ICT in education to gradually move out of the school environment.

There has been a shift from a tool-based approach to one that's centred on content and use. These mobile tools, particularly tablets, offer important opportunities to tackle the lack of books and textbooks. The distribution of Kindle-style readers to 600,000 children in nine African countries has seen a considerable impact on reading and on pupils' results in educational tests.

The sending of text messaging containing short

lessons, multiple choice tests or audio recordings have also been shown to have an important effect on teachers. This is also true of MOOCs (massive open online courses) adapted to African countries' needs and capacities.

The cross-fertilisation of teaching models and tools has broadened the potential of information and communication technology in education. Some technologies, perceived as outdated, are undergoing a partial revival thanks to the combination of media that can be used in any single project. For example radio and television programmes are inexpensive and attract a considerable audience. Combined with Internet and mobile phones they provide promising educational results.

The BBC's Janala English-instruction programme for the people of Bangladesh is a good example of cooperation between very diverse actors.

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS?

Most African countries are showing an interest in technology in education. But a range of conditions must be satisfied to ensure that they are deployed efficiently within the educational landscape. This includes:

- Responding to technical and economic constraints
- Responding to users' needs and strengthening their capacities
- Finding sustainable funding models
- Facilitating effective multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Although the time for innovation and experiment will never end, now is the moment to put systems and strategies in place for moving to the next level, particularly by setting up stakeholder coalitions. ICT will not resolve all of Africa's education problems. But it can help to fundamentally change the current paradigm of skills development systems.

[Rohen d'Aiglepierre is PhD, chargé de recherche « Capital humain », AFD (Agence française de développement); Amélie Aubert is Chef de projet « Éducation, formation, emploi », AFD (Agence française de développement); Pierre-Jean Loiret is Responsable du numérique éducatif, Agence universitaire de la francophonie (AUF)]

As wildfires expand, fire science needs to keep up

ALBERT SIMEONI
theconversation.com

In the month of October nearly 250,000 acres, more than 8,000 homes and over 40 people fell victim to fast-moving wildfires in Northern California, the deadliest and one of the costliest outbreaks in state history. Now is the time to wrestle with hard questions. Why did communities that were deemed safe suffer major damage? Should they be rebuilt in the same way? Are there better ways to fight extreme fires and limit their impact? How can emergency planners prepare better for scenarios where full evacuation is not possible?

This is a global challenge. Brazil, Indonesia, many parts of Africa and Canada typically experience larger wildfires (measured by area burned) than the United States on a yearly average. This year Chile and Portugal have also suffered enormous losses. Australia's Black Saturday fires in 2009 were its worst fire event ever.

Fire is part of ecosystems in much of the world, so societies must learn to live with it. But key issues are still poorly understood. What is the right degree of fire management to decrease the impact of catastrophic fires? What is the most efficient way to protect the wildland-urban interface – the area where houses meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland vegetation? And what is the best way to



evacuate?

In my view and that of other researchers, many countries, including the United States, are underfunding research designed to answer these questions.

MOVING INTO HARM'S WAY

Wildfires are increasing and affecting more areas worldwide. One cause is urban sprawl and the dramatic expansion of the wildland-urban interface. In the 1990s this

zone increased by almost 11 percent in California, Oregon and Washington, adding over 1 million housing units – mostly in areas of moderate to high fire risk. At the same time, climate change is creating worse and more frequent wildfire conditions.

No one can control the weather, which is likely to become more extreme, but it is critical to do more to understand vulnerabilities that exist at the wildland-urban

interface. Research has identified some factors that create these risks, including the ease with which homes ignite and the spread of fire between structures. Developing solutions will require quantifying the risks. It is also important to evaluate how vegetation treatment, structure hardening and better community design can decrease the likelihood of structural ignition and fire spread.

WINDS, FLAMES AND FUELS

U.S. building and fire protection standards and regulations have improved in the last 10 to 15 years, particularly in California, but many communities are still extremely vulnerable. Best practices, such as the National Fire Protection Association's Firewise USA program and California's Fire Safe, are a good start but should be expanded, based on research.

Understanding of vulnerabilities at a structural level is improving but not sufficient yet. Once fire moves from wildlands into developed areas, flames are fueled by engulfed homes and structures, creating conflagrations. For example, the California fires consumed entire neighborhoods as flames spread unhindered from one flammable element to another. This pattern has also been observed in many other locations.

Better community design could help prevent this domino effect, averting massive property losses and evacuations. Communities should contain patchworks of flammable fuels such as vegetation, houses and cars, interspersed with less flammable and nonflammable areas such as parking lots and areas cleaned of vegetation. This strategy can decrease fire intensity, slow down fires and break down large fire fronts into smaller fingers that are easier to fight.

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Elephants go on the rampage in Odisha's Sundargarh district

ROURKELA, Nov 5 (PTI): A herd of wild elephants has damaged the boundary walls of a police station and a primary school and ransacked the kitchen of a CRPF camp in Odisha's Sundargarh district, police said today. patasahi kumarposh

The incident occurred when forest officials and local people were trying to chase the stray elephants out of their patasahi kumarposh villages in the district on Saturday.

Instead of moving towards the jungle, more than 20 jumbos stormed the K Balang area, damaging the boundary walls of a police station and a school, said Inspector Somnath Jena, adding that no one was injured during the movement of the pachyermes.

K Balang police station is an advanced stationing ground for the CRPF men engaged in anti-Maoist operations in the area. While escaping, the animals also raided a kitchen meant for the security personnel, police said.

Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Rourkela, Sanjay Swain said efforts were on to drive them deep into the jungle, away from human settlements.

CONTACT

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India should augment water storage capacity in NE states: experts

NEW DELHI, Nov 5 (PTI): India should augment its water storage capacity in the north-eastern states to tackle any shortage in case China undertakes a project diverting water from the Brahmaputra river, experts have recommended.

The recommendation came amid reports that Chinese engineers were testing techniques that could be used to build a 1,000-km-long tunnel to divert water from the Brahmaputra river in Tibet close to Arunachal Pradesh to the parched Xinjiang region.

China, however, has rejected these media reports as "false and untrue".

While some experts felt India might not be affected in a big way in flood seasons even if China went ahead with the tunnel project, former Central Water Commission chairman A B Pandya differed on the extent to which the tunnel project would affect India.

Uttam Sinha, fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), a strategic think tank, said, "We are a little fortunate that compared to China, we get much of the

Brahmaputra water (due to heavy rains in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam). So, it (the tunnel project) will not affect India much, particularly during the flood season."

The level of water in the Brahmaputra, known as the Yarlung Tsangpo river in southern Tibet, may go down during lean periods if China diverts water from it "creating some problems downstream", he said.

Sinha stressed India should augment its storage capacity, particularly in Arunachal Pradesh, to tackle

the ensuing shortage of water during the lean period.

A former senior official from the Union water resources ministry, who did not wish to be named, seconded Sinha's opinion.

"When the river enters India, it is called Siang and not Brahmaputra. When several other rivers including Siang, Lohit and Dibang come together, Brahmaputra is born in Assam," he said.

Even if China diverts the water through the tunnel project upstream, the Siang will get 30-40 per cent of the

total water being received now which is still a "huge quantum", he said.

Agreeing with them, South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP) coordinator Himanshu Thakkar also said the possibility of the river becoming dry did not arise.

The SANDRP is an informal network of organisations working on issues related to the water sector, particularly on issues associated with large dams.

However, Pandya differed with these experts on the ex-

tent to which the tunnel project would affect India.

"If we consider the remote possibility of China undertaking that project, the flow of river water will go down substantially in the north-eastern states. That may also lead to excessive problems during the flood season," Pandya said.

India should enhance its storage capacity to deal with any problem arising out of the possible construction of dams by China in the Brahmaputra Valley, especially in Arunachal Pradesh, he added.

No new projects without completion of land acquisition: Rlys

NEW DELHI, Nov 5 (PTI): For the first time, no new rail lines will be built without completion of land acquisition to ensure that work does not get stuck midway because of non-availability of land, Railways has said.

Under a new policy, the national transporter has virtually forbidden the issuance of tenders or start of work on any new project without land in hand or a written assurance from the state government guaranteeing land to the railways within a specific time frame.

"The (Railway) Board has decided that issue of tenders or commencement of physical work for new line projects shall be taken up only after completion of land acquisition," the new policy says.

Currently, only 70 per cent of the land needed to be acquired to start a project, which often led to stoppages and delays because of non-availability of land or earmarked



land being caught in litigation.

Officials said that the existing policy did not define the acquired line needed to be linear, so problems arose when projects would start having issues when part work begins and the next section of land was not available.

"This new policy also puts the onus on state governments to ensure that land is made available to the Railways if they want a new railway

line. We end up losing on investments if land is not available," said an official.

An official gave the examples of the new line between Tindivanam and Nagari in Andhra Pradesh (179.2 km) sanctioned in 2006, and the 36-km-long route from Morappur to Dharmapuri, sanctioned at a cost of Rs 134 crore which have seen very poor progress primarily because of non-availability of land.

Officials said that

there is cost escalation of around 10-15 per cent, every year due to such delays.

However, the policy makes certain concessions for the general managers and given them some discretionary powers. The policy says that the GMs may invite tenders if they are reasonably certain of the possibility of land acquisition in a reasonable time frame.

"A written assurance from the state govern-

ment in this regard can be considered by the GM.

"Large projects can be divided into phases by GMs, however, after ensuring that each phase on completion yields commercial returns for railways," the policy stated.

This means that the GMs have the discretion of starting a project if a stretch of land is available in a commercially viable section of the entire project so that railway does not lose out on revenue.

The policy also said that projects where local support or state support is not forthcoming resulting in poor or no progress as well as old projects that have not made any headway to projects that are unlikely to give any tangible benefits to the railways would need to be continuously reviewed.

The board has said that this new policy shall be followed in case of new projects or old projects where tenders have not yet been finalised.

Sonowal rolls out carbon free tourism project in Majuli

GUWAHATI, Nov 5 (PTI): Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today rolled out a carbon free tourism project in the world's largest river island Majuli.

The project 'Majuli Sustainable Tourism Development Project' is aimed at encouraging a carbon free tourism experience in the island along with creating an environment protocol for the tourism industry, an official release said.

Sonowal launched the ambitious sustainable tourism project at a function in Majuli this morning.

"As part of the project, Sonowal launched modern orange cycle tours resembling the colour of the magnificent sun set in the island to add a new dimension to carbon free travel experience in Majuli.

"These cycles will be up for rent for the tourists from the circuit house campus itself," the statement said.



Initially, 30 orange cycles high-end BTWIN rockrider cycles with gear will be put in service.

The project also envisages different levels of interventions, starting from promoting carbon free travel to capacity building programmes and creating environment protocol for tourism industry to act as catalyst in funding for women and indigenous communities.

The project is a joint initiative between Assam Tourism Development Corporation and the NGO Root Bridge Foundation.

27 dead as Typhoon Damrey batters Vietnam

HANOI, Nov 5 (AFP): At least 27 people have died and nearly two dozen are missing after Typhoon Damrey barreled into Vietnam, authorities said today, just days before the country welcomes world leaders to the APEC summit.

The storm, which made landfall yesterday, is the worst in decades to strike the southern coastal region



-- an area normally spared typhoons that usually hit further north.

More than 40,000 homes were

destroyed as heavy rains and 130 km/h (80 mph) winds tore through the region, leaving 27 dead and 22

missing, according to Vietnam's disaster management office.

Coastal Khanh Hoa province, home to the popular white sand Nha Trang beach, was hardest hit with 16 dead and 10 injured, the government said. More than 30,000 people, including foreign tourists, were evacuated from the area ahead of the storm.

Photos showed residents wading through knee-deep floodwaters, as toppled electricity poles and trees blocked roads.

A dozen flights were cancelled and railway services were suspended, while local authorities in Phu Yen province said Tuy Hoa city "has never suffered such devastation".

There were also reports of minor damage around 500 kilometres north in Danang, the coastal city where Vietnam will host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit next week. The week-long gathering will bring together leaders including US President Donald Trump and China's Xi Jinping.

Vietnam has been pummeled by a dozen major storms since the start of 2017, with at least 240 people reported dead or missing in floods and landslides. Some 80 were killed in the weeks after Typhoon Doksuri battered central provinces with rain in September, destroying thousands of homes and triggering severe floods.

As wildfires expand, fire science needs...

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Another priority is the role of flammable building materials. Structural ignition often starts with firebrands – pieces of burning wood that are lofted by winds, and can spread wildfire past barriers and firebreaks – but scientists are still working to quantify their impact.

Many interacting factors influence whether and how wildfires will spread, including fire intensity, wind intensity, the quantity of firebrands that land on structures, the heat that impacts structures, how structures ignite, the distance between structures and vegetation, and the distance between structures. Researchers should aim to design suites of engineering solutions that will be versatile enough to adjust to specific scenarios and quantified exposures. They should include small-scale steps, such as removing flammable vegetation, pruning trees, using less-flammable construction materials, and dealing with

identified vulnerabilities such as fences. And they should extend to larger-scale strategies, such as breaking up wildfire fronts, slowing down fire spread and redesigning communities.

MAJOR COSTS, MOD-EST FUNDING

U.S. fire research is funded by the U.S. Forest Service, the National Institute of Standards and Technology and other federal agencies. Universities receive funding through the Joint Fire Science Program, which is jointly funded by the Interior Department and the Forest Service, and indirectly through other agencies such as the National Science Foundation, the Defense Department's environmental research programs and NASA.

Federal funding for fire research pales compared to the cost of fighting wildfires and the economic damage they cause. For example, in 2017 the Forest Service received about US\$27 million for the National Fire Plan Research and Development

Program and the Joint Fire Science Program, while the Interior Department received about \$6 million for the Joint Fire Science Program. President Trump's 2018 budget request would terminate Forest Service's participation in the Joint Fire Science Program and reduce the Department of the Interior's funding for the program to \$3 million, which would mean no new projects and topics funded. Many members of the research community are concerned about this lack of investment.

For comparison, the Forest Service and Interior together spent nearly \$2 billion in 2016 fighting wildfires. The Forest Service alone has spent over \$2 billion in this fiscal year on wildland fire suppression. And preliminary damage estimates for the California wildfires range from \$1 billion to \$6 billion or more.

Similar pressures undercut funding for wildfire prevention

in Portugal after its 2011-2014 recession. And the European Union stopped funding basic science related to fire dynamics and wildland-urban interface fires almost a decade ago, focusing instead on applied technological projects and more general research on natural disasters. Funding for firefighting has also declined in Russia, where environmental groups claim that the number of fires is significantly underreported.

Fire conditions are constantly evolving, and basic research coupled with engineering solutions must keep up. Designing more resilient communities and infrastructure and protecting people more effectively are not onetime goals – they are constant. Currently nations are failing to meet the challenge, and impacts on communities are increasing.

[the writer is Professor of Fire Protection Engineering, Worcester Polytechnic Institute]

Maha govt directs schools to observe Nov 7 as 'Students' Day'

MUMBAI, Nov 5 (PTI): The Maharashtra government has directed its schools and junior colleges in the state to observe November 7 as 'Students' Day', to mark Dr B R Ambedkar's entry into school education 117 years back in 1900.

A Government Resolution (GR) issued by the state school education and sports department on October 27 in this regard has described the Dalit icon's enrolment in school as the dawn of a new era.

It was because of the Constitution given by Dr Ambedkar to the nation that the values of freedom, equality, brotherhood and rule of law took roots in the society, said the GR.

"Hence the enrolment of Dr B R Ambedkar as a student in the school is a landmark event and proves to be one that changed the course of our history. Dr Ambedkar was a life-long student and cultivated his interest to

learn throughout his life," it further said.

Every student is the future of the country and education is the only means for progress, said the GR.

"In order to make the students aware that hard work alone can ensure their progress, November 7 should be observed every year as 'Students' Day,'" it said.

The GR directed all the schools and junior colleges to organise essay writing, elocution competitions, poetry reading and other such events to mark the occasion.

As per the GR, Dr Ambedkar enrolled as a student on November 7, 1900 at Pratapsingh High School in the state's Satara district. He was enrolled with serial number '1914' in the school register with his signature against his name.

The school has preserved the historic document.

Donkeys named after Ram Rahim, Honeypreet sold at Rs 11,000 in Ujjain fair

UJJAIN (MP), Nov 5 (PTI): At the annual donkey fair held in this temple town in Madhya Pradesh, a pair of donkeys named after disgraced sect leader Baba Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh and his close aide Honeypreet was sold for Rs 11,000.

According to organisers, sellers usually give 'fancy' names to sell donkeys although their breed and physical features count a lot in cutting a deal. Some traders had named their donkeys after GST, 'Sultan', Bahubali and Jio.

The pair of donkeys with names of Singh--convicted in two cases of rape, and his adopted daughter Honeypreet Insan, booked for inciting violence after his arrest--written on them was purchased by a Rajasthan-based trader yesterday, the last day of the five-day-long fair.

The seller Hariom Prajapat, who had brought the pair of donkeys from Gujarat, today said he wanted to close the deal for Rs 20,000, but eventually settled at the lower price.

"I couldn't find the buyer who was ready to pay Rs 20,000 for the donkeys. Finally, I had to sell them at Rs 11,000," he said.

When asked why he chose to name the donkeys after the jailed Dera Sachha Sauda chief and Honeypreet Insan, Prajapat said he wanted to send out a message that the duo had to pay for their acts.

In the annual fair, held near the banks of Kshipra river, the beasts were brought for sell from the states like Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Gujarat besides from Madhya Pradesh.

Organisers of the event said around 2,000 donkeys were brought for sale this year.

The Ujjain Municipal Corporation (UMC) provided various facilities at the event.

Satbir, Manorama win in Elite category at Cyclothon

NEW DELHI, Nov 5 (PTI): Satbir Singh and T Manorama Devi emerged victories in the Elite Men's and Elite Women's events of the National cycling championship at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here today.

Rounding out the elite men's podium were Arvind Panwar from RSPB and SSCB's Krishna Naikodi, while Manipur's Sonali Chanu and Kerala's Amritha Ragunathan finished with silver and bronze respectively in the women's elite race.

"I would like to congratulate all the medallists at the National Cycling Championship. The 2017 edition had a strong field of the best 180 elite cyclists in the country," said Onkar Singh, Secretary General, Cycling Federation of India.

The 2017 edition of the National Championship was hosted by Saksham Pedal Delhi India's Premier Cyclothon and it saw over 4500 cyclists participate in an atmosphere of gaiety and revelry.

Based on the distance to be covered, the Cyclothon featured four categories Elite (Men 45 km/women - 27 km), Amateur



(27 km), Open and the popular Green Ride.

While the Elite and Amateur categories were for serious cyclists, the 9 km Open and the 5 km Green Rides allowed participants the experience the joy of cycling.

Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Dharmendra Pradhan also participated in the 5 km Green Ride.

The Cyclothon attracted participants from all walks of life including officials from various ministries, sports personalities, celebrities Farhan Akhtar, school and college children cycling professionals, amateurs and housewives.

The Cyclothon under the banner of Saksham Pedal Delhi was organized by Petroleum Conservation & Research Asso-

ciation (PCRA), and supported by the oil companies viz. IOCL, BPCL, HPCL, ONGC, GAIL, OIL, MRPL, CPCL, NRL and IGL with technical guidance from Cycling Federation of India.

Another 76 such cyclothons are planned Pan-India over the next 2 months to sensitize the country to adopt the ideology of conservation for a greener environment.



Sarita, Sonia and Lovlina enter semis of Asian boxing meet

HO CHI MINH CITY (VIETNAM), Nov 5 (PTI): The seasoned L Sarita Devi (64kg) along with two other pugilists advanced to the semifinals and assured themselves of medals as India enjoyed another fruitful day at the Asian Women's Boxing Championships here.

Apart from Sarita, world championships silver-medallist Sonia Lather (57kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) also entered the semifinals.

Sarita, a former world champion eyeing her sixth medal at the Asian meet, defeated

Maftunakhon Melieva of Uzbekistan, while Sonia edged past Kazakhstan's Nazym Ichshanova in the quarterfinals.

Borgohain defeated Erdenetuya Enkhbaatar of Mongolia by an unanimous decision.

Sarita, who returned to the amateur fold after trying her luck in the professional circuit earlier this year, took full advantage of her opponent's reluctance to attack and connected some lusty right hooks to take the upperhand early in the bout.

At the very beginning

of the second round, Melieva faced a standing eight count after a flurry of combination punches from the Indian left her dazed. Melieva gave a better account of herself in the final three minutes but Sarita was up for the challenge and displayed some fine ringcraft to dodge the attacks.

Sonia, on the other hand, had to stove off a stiff challenge from Kazakhstan's Nazym Ichshanova in a split verdict to enter the last-four stage, assuring herself of her second medal at the event.

She is a former silver-medallist at the continental meet.

A very aggressive Sonia had Ichshanova on the backfoot early on, the sheer ferocity of her punches standing out.

Although Ichshanova tried her best to match the power, the Indian did just about enough to get a split verdict in her favour.

Earlier, India were not off to a great start as Nation's Cup gold-medallist M C Mary Kom (48kg), Priyanka Choudhary (60kg) and Shiksha (54kg) had advanced to the semifinals.

The Haryana boxer was decidedly off-colour even though her right hook did come off well occasionally.

However, that was never going to be enough against a resolute rival, who did not miss any opportunity to connect on counter-attack. In the end, it wasn't a surprise when the judges gave a unanimous verdict in favour of the Taipei boxer.

Yesterday, Olympic medallist M C Mary Kom (48kg), Priyanka Choudhary (60kg) and Shiksha (54kg) had advanced to the semifinals.



India women win Asia Cup, qualify for World Cup

KAKAMIGAHARA (JAPAN), Nov 5 (PTI): Goalkeeper Savita produced a stunning save in a tense shootout as India won the Asia Cup to secure qualification in next year's hockey World Cup following a nerve-wracking win over China in the final here on Sunday.

The team broke a 13-year-old jinx when skipper Rani scored the final goal and Savita foiled an attempt from the rivals to ensure a 5-4 win.

India had failed to qualify for the last World Cup and finished ninth in the 2010 edition.

Rani scored twice while Monica, Lilima Minz and Navjot scored a goal each in the shootout.

Earlier, it was Navjot Kaur who scored India's lone goal in the 25th minute while China found a late equaliser through Tiantian Luo, who converted a penalty corner in the 47th minute.

It was in 2004 when the Indian women's team had clinched the Asia Cup trophy by beating Japan 1-0.

It was advantage China right at the start as a stick check in the circle saw India concede a penalty corner in the second minute of the game.

However, Savita was at her best and padded it away while an alert Deep Grace cleared the ball. Soon after, Indian forwards launched a swift attack with Navneet Kaur and Vandana working in tandem to find space in the Chinese D but an attentive Wang Na averted danger.

China, meanwhile, won their second PC but Savita was spot on yet again to pad away Meiyu Liang's flick.

With the first quarter ending in a stalemate, India came back look-

ing determined to find a breakthrough. The Indian forwards kept the pressure on China as they made brave forays into the striking circle.

Navjot came close to converting a field goal in the 17th minute but her diving effort was blocked, even as skipper Rani made a quick attempt to find a deflection.

It was not until the 25th minute when India found their first breakthrough as Navneet and Rani played give-and-take before penetrating the circle, only to assist Navjot, who took a clear shot on goal.

Though China launched a counterattack soon after, Indian defenders were up to the task.

India began the third quarter rather positively as they stayed resistant with an aggressive attack. They dominated ball possession with accurate passing, rotating the ball and testing China's patience.

Neha Goyal and Lilima Minz showcased good dribbling skills to steer past Chinese defenders but a second goal remained elusive even as the clock ticked away.

On China's part, they stayed disciplined in their defence to deny India a chance to score through a PC.

The final quarter was tense as China won a PC through successful video referral in the 47th minute. Tiantian Luo kept low as she improvised from the injection to find the right corner of the post, scoring a sensational equaliser.

The following minutes saw both teams play at par with each other and not allowing either of them to stay in control.

BJP mustn't be "one-man show, two-man army": Shatrughan Sinha

PATNA, Nov 05 (PTI): Actor-politician Shatrughan Sinha today said the BJP would be able to live up to the expectations of people only if it ceased to be "a one-man show and a two-man army".

Sinha said the youth, farmers and the traders were dissatisfied with present policies of the saffron party.

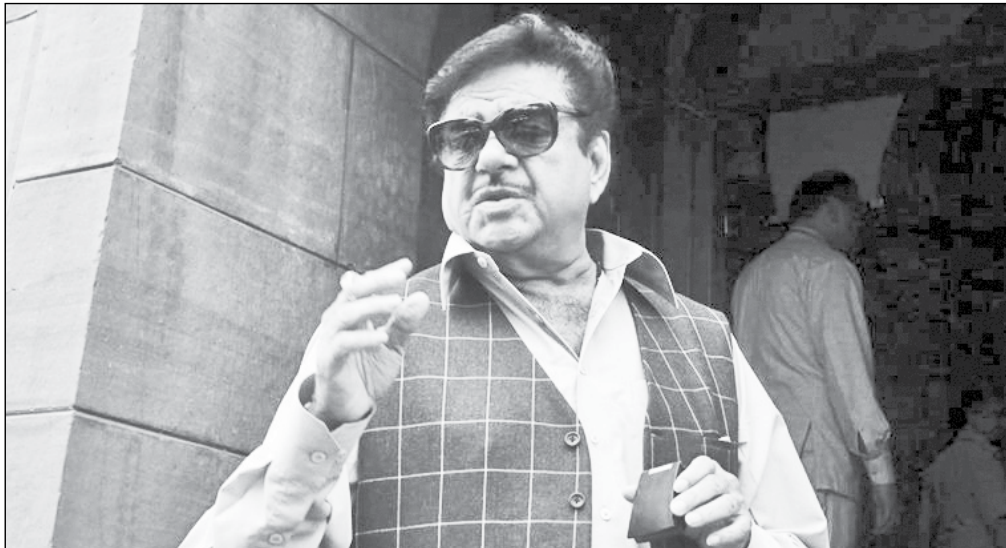
"I feel we face a great challenge in both of Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh in view of the dissatisfaction among the youth, farmers and traders. We must see the writing on the wall and avoid taking our opponents lightly", Sinha told PTI here.

Sinha, who is also a Lok Sabha MP, rubbished speculations that he was looking for an alternative to the BJP.

"I had not joined the BJP to leave it. But I would not mince words when I say that we cannot meet our challenges if we continue to be a one-man show and a two-man army," he said in a clear indication to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah's hold on the party.

The former Union minister said the party should stay united and fight boldly with the blessings of veteran leaders who have made enormous contributions to its growth.

"I cannot understand the fault of veterans like Lal Krishna Advani, Murli Mano-



har Joshi, Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie. Why were they sidelined or allowed to become estranged. We all have been like a family. If there were any mistakes, why were there no efforts at reconciliation?"

While Advani and Joshi, both founding members of the BJP, have been made members of the party's Margdarshak Mandal, virtually signalling the end of their active political life, Yashwant Sinha and Shourie -

both former Union ministers - have of late been vocal against the policies of the Narendra Modi government.

Sinha also stressed on the need for "taking an honest look" at the failures" and

pointed out that the party should not deny that many lost their jobs after demonetisation.

"The move to ban high-value notes last year has hardly weeded out black money from the system. GST has also come across as a complicated taxation system that seems to have benefitted only Chartered Accountants. Then we have rising oil prices despite fall in international rates of crude," he said.

The BJP leader also blamed "arrogance" on the part of the party leadership for crises such as the Patidar agitation in Gujarat.

"We failed to win over Hardik Patel who was ideologically closer to the BJP. Had we handled him properly, it would have been a stitch in time which would have saved nine," he asserted.

Sinha also criticized the BJP government in Rajasthan for proposing a bill that barred the media from reporting on allegations against public servants and lawyers without prior sanction.

"We have more examples which smack of growing arrogance in the party. The bill recently tabled in the Rajasthan Assembly, which could have serious ramifications with regard to the right to freedom of expression, is a case in point", Sinha added.



Saudi Arabia arrests princes, ministers in sweeping purge

RIYADH, Nov 5 (AFP): Saudi Arabia arrested 11 princes, including a prominent billionaire, and dozens of current and former ministers, reports said, in a sweeping crack-down as the kingdom's young crown prince consolidates power.

Separately, the head of the Saudi National Guard, once a leading contender to the throne, as well as the navy chief and the economy minister were replaced in a series of high-profile sackings that sent shock waves in the kingdom.

The crackdown was reported immediately after a new anti-corruption commission, headed by powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, was established by royal decree late yesterday.

Saudi-owned Al Arabiya television reported that the princes, four current and dozens of former ministers were arrested as the commission launched a probe into old cases such as floods that devastated the Red Sea city of Jeddah in 2009.

SEOUL, Nov 5 (AFP): North Korea today warned Donald Trump against making "reckless remarks" as the US president began a marathon Asian tour dominated by the nuclear threat from Pyongyang.

Ruling party newspaper Rodong Sinmun said Americans were pressing for the president's early impeachment because tough remarks by a "spiritually instable" Trump could bring about "nuclear disaster to the US mainland".

After arriving in Tokyo on Sunday, Trump warned that "no dictator" should underestimate the United States, in a thinly veiled reference to



North Korea.

Trump, who will also visit South Korea this week, has

been engaged in an escalating war of words with the North's leader Kim Jong-Un, trading threats and personal insults. In his maiden address to the UN General Assembly he threatened to "totally destroy" the North if it attacked the US or its allies.

Rodong Sinmun cited Bob Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and former officials as saying Trump was pointlessly escalating tensions with the North.

But the president has not come to his senses and instead is "seriously stimulating the DPRK (North Korea) by making foolish remarks",

the paper said in a commentary carried by the KCNA state news agency.

"If the US misjudges the DPRK's toughest will and dares to act recklessly, the latter will be compelled to deal a resolute and merciless punishment upon the former with the mobilisation of all forces," it added.

Tensions are high after the North's sixth and most powerful nuclear test in September, along with a series of ballistic missile launches in recent months. The North says it now has the ability to launch nuclear strikes on the US mainland.



US President Donald Trump has warned that "no dictator, no regime" should underestimate the US. His words came as he spoke to US and Japanese service personnel at the Yokota Air Base near Tokyo, at the beginning of his Asian tour. He told the crowd: "No one, no dictator, no regime... should underestimate American resolve." Every once in a while in the past, they underestimated us and it was not pleasant for them, was it? "We will never yield, never waiver and never falter in defense of our people, our freedom and our great American flag." Mr Trump's tour of Asia will take in five countries; with his second stop being South Korea. He is also likely to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin while in Vietnam.

UK rejects 2 Indian extradition requests

ADITI KHANNA

LONDON, Nov 5 (PTI): A British court currently hearing the extradition case of embattled liquor baron Vijay Mallya has rejected two extradition requests by the Indian authorities in recent weeks.

Judges at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London ruled in favour of UK-based alleged bookie Sanjeev Kumar Mallya on October 16 and also discharged a fraud case against a British Indian couple, Jatinder and Asha Rani Angurala, on October 12.

The rulings come just weeks before the extradition case against Mallya, wanted in India on loan defaults to several banks amounting to about Rs 9,000-crore, comes up for its next case management hearing on November 20 to determine the course of the extradition trial scheduled to start on December 4.

The case against Chawla, the key accused in the cricket match-fixing scandal involving former South African captain Hanse Cronje in 2000, was discharged by District Judge Rebecca Crane on human rights grounds over severe conditions in Tihar Jail in Delhi where he was to be held on being extradited.

The judge said she was satisfied there was a prima facie case against Chawla over his role in the fixing of "cricket matches played between India and South Africa during the tour of the South African Cricket Team to India under the

captainship of Hansie Cronje in February-March 2000".

However, on hearing expert evidence from Dr Alan Mitchell, a licenced medical practitioner and a former medical officer at a Scottish prison, she ruled in favour of Chawla on the grounds that his human rights would be violated in Tihar Jail under Section 87, Article 3 relating to "prohibition of torture, or inhuman or degrading treatment".

"[There are] strong grounds for believing that the RP [Requested Person: Chawla] would be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in the Tihar prison complex, due to the overcrowding, lack of medical provision, risk of being subjected to torture and violence either from other inmates or prison staff which is endemic in Tihar," Judge Crane noted in her judgment.

In the case of the Anguralas, Senior District Judge Emma Ar-



buthnot also presiding over the Mallya case ruled that it would be unjust to extradite them after nearly a quarter of a century since the fraud was alleged to have taken place when Jatinder was a branch manager at the Bank of India in Jalandhar.

The Anguralas were wanted for fraud dating back to between 1990 and 1993 against the public sector bank, causing a total loss of about 24,000 pounds.

Jatinder Angurala was accused of fraudulently sanctioning and paying out loans

to himself, his wife and co-conspirators during that period. He later admitted irregularities and promised to repay the bank and deposited some money but did not repay all the money taken.

The couple, who are now British citizens, were arrested on an extradition warrant in June 2015 at a shop owned by them in south-east London and remanded on conditional bail. The judge was critical of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for considerable delays in the case and for failure to arrest the accused years ago despite being aware of a series of addresses associated with them.

"I find I am not sure he is a fugitive and his extradition is barred by reason of passage of time as I find it would be unjust and oppressive to extradite him by reason of the quarter century that has passed since the alleged offence," Judge Arbuthnot said in reference to Jatinder.

"He is aged 69, not in the first flush of youth, he has minor health issues it is just too late and it would be wrong to extradite him now," she notes.

In relation to his wife's extradition, she ruled that "there will be prejudice and oppression" were she to be extradited and barred her extradition by reason of the passage of time as well.

India and the UK have an Extradition Treaty, signed in 1992 and in force since November 1993, under which Bangladeshi national Mohammad Abdul Shakur wanted in the UK on murder charges was to be extradited from India most recently.

Besides Mallya, there are now five Indian extradition requests pending in UK courts involving fugitives Rajesh Kapoor, Tiger Hanif, Atul Singh, Raj Kumar Patel and Shaik Sadiq, based on a government statement made in the Rajya Sabha earlier this year.

All-women crew sailboat of Indian Navy leaves Australia

MELBOURNE, Nov 5 (PTI): The all-women crew of the Indian Navy sailboat, which is on a challenging expedition of circumnavigating the globe, today left port city of Fremantle in Western Australia for its onward journey to New Zealand.

The six crew of the Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini, led by Lieutenant Commander Vartika Joshi, started their maiden voyage on September 10 from Goa and is expected to complete it in about eight months.

"The Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini left Fremantle, Australia this morning (05 Nov 17) for its onwards journey to Lyttelton, New Zealand," Indian Navy Spokesperson Capt D K Sharma said.

On October 23, the sailing vessel arrived at Fremantle Port, its first and only stopover in Australia, after completing the first leg of its maiden voyage to circumnavigate the globe.

The crew was officially welcomed to Western

Australia (WA) by Tourism, Defence Issues and Citizenship and Multicultural Interests Minister Paul Papalia and Women's Interests Minister Simone McGurk on November 1.

Federal MPs from Western Australia, Madeline King and Dr Anne Aly, visited the vessel. Chief of Royal Australian Navy Vice Admiral Tim Barrett also visited the vessel on November 1 to welcome the crew, Capt Sharma said.

Vice Admiral Barrett handed over a personal message from Australian Minister for Defence Marise Payne for the crew.

The crew had several engagements during its stay in Fremantle, including call-on meetings with Governor of Western Australia Kerry Sander-son AC and Deputy Mayor of City of Fremantle Cr Ingrid Waltham.

President of WA Legislative Council Kate Doust also hosted the crew at WA Parliament for an interaction with female MPs from all major parties.

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Draw time: 08:00 pm onwards

Draw No:14 DrawDate on:05/11/17

1st Prize Rs.26 Lakhs/- 82D 43081
(Including Super Prize Amt)
2nd Prize Rs.9500/- 43081 (REMAINING ALL SERIALS)
3rd Prize Rs.9,000/-
06379 18481 45183 58925 59353
71725 75098 81680 83598 91481
4th Prize Rs.500/- 0321 1451 1668 1726 1998 4296 5569 7536 7953 8049
5th Prize Rs.250/- 0140 1339 2786 4814 5953 6238 6463 6836 6949 7302
6th Prize Rs.120/-
0064 0134 0203 0298 0398 0471 0499 0563 0646 0706
0859 0876 0898 1081 1198 1230 1235 1316 1342 1350
1415 1461 1486 1646 1884 1899 2131 2167 2561 2865
2885 2896 2919 2963 2990 3104 3231 3675 3753 3788
3816 3884 4062 4214 4537 4556 4710 4886 4935 5005
5054 5125 5244 5312 5326 5449 5598 5783 5867 5931
6111 6118 6276 6341 6385 6467 6471 6650 6654 6774
6788 6799 6861 7001 7049 7265 7283 7344 7477 7541
7741 7974 8013 8174 8320 8341 8360 8384 8579 8673
8751 8882 8905 8909 8910 9071 9272 9324 9475 9610

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KINDLY CHECK THE RESULT WITH THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE

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32901 59834 60422 69671 87460
4th Prize Rs.500/- 0419 1399 2959 3482 3516 3549 3578 6664 7372 9425
5th Prize Rs.250/- 3287 5110 6343 6386 7277 7556 8213 8538 9349 9631
6th Prize Rs.120/-
0012 0029 0189 0407 0417 0585 0940 0987 1021 1094
1101 1130 1227 1228 1239 1266 1299 1375 1395 1396
1720 1727 1863 1906 2036 2398 2468 2471 2480 2627
3053 3215 3462 3534 3562 3794 3815 4021 4084 4171
4204 4416 4783 4849 5187 5202 5411 5423 5459 5530
5674 5735 5749 5858 5950 5963 6080 6150 6491 6554
6614 6650 6704 6736 6940 7001 7004 7077 7098 7136
7243 7371 7433 7467 7575 7617 7659 7719 7773 7809
7862 7864 7952 7953 8228 8255 8423 8424 8446 8857
9145 9250 9500 9555 9726 9734 9757 9780 9832 9897

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KINDLY CHECK THE RESULT WITH THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE



HEROES ALL IN: Jason Momoa [Aquaman], Ezra Miller [Flash], Gal Gadot [Wonder Woman], Henry Cavill [Superman], Ray Fisher [Cyborg] and Ben Affleck [Batman] are all smiles posing for a selfie during the Justice League photocall in London.

JUSTIN BIEBER AND SELENA GOMEZ SPARK MORE ROMANCE RUMORS AT HILLSONG CONFERENCE

Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez continue to spend time together, fueling rumors of a possible romantic reconciliation following her breakup with The Weeknd.

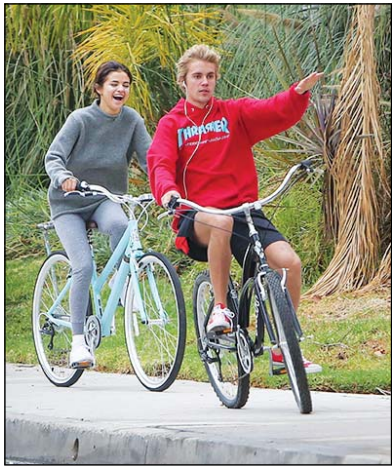
A source close to Justin Bieber says that the "Sorry" singer is waiting for Gomez to tell them when they're officially back together — but he knows he still has to win over her family.

On Friday, Bieber and Gomez enjoyed another date night together. After they both attended a church event at the Microsoft Theatre, the pop stars went to a private dinner at Morton's Steakhouse in downtown Los Angeles.

The pair arrived at 10 p.m. and stayed until midnight, and according to an onlooker, Bieber, 23, arranged for the private dinner after the restaurant had closed, so he and Gomez, 25, could have the place to themselves.

Justin, 23, and Selena, 25, have spent quite a lot of time together since many news outlets confirmed on October 30 that Selena and The Weeknd had split after dating for at least 10 months.

The two have not commented on the nature of their relationship. However, some sources say that while they're not "official" or fully back together, "they



are more together now than they were a year ago."

Selena and Justin dated on and off for three years until 2014. That year, he was arrested on suspicion of DUI and drag racing. He avoided a jail sentence when he reached a plea deal, pleading guilty to reduced charges of misdemeanor careless driving and resisting

arrest. In a separate incident, he was charged with misdemeanor vandalism for pelting a neighbor's home with eggs. He got probation and paid the neighbors \$80,000.

Also in 2014, video footage of him urinating in a bucket while cursing out former President Bill Clinton went viral. Bieber later apologized.

Bieber's turmoil led to much public mockery. This past September, his manager Scooter Braun talked to The Wall Street Journal about Bieber's turbulent year, saying, "It was worse than people realized. I failed him day after day. We were living in hell because he was in such a dark place."

Despite his personal and legal turmoil, fans remained loyal. Bieber's music career started soaring again the following year with hit singles such as "Where Are Ü Now" and "What Do You Mean?" In 2016, he embarked on his Purpose world tour. He canceled it abruptly this past July, angering many fans.

DEEPIKA PADUKONE SIGNS ANOTHER BHANSALI FILM, TO PLAY AMRITA PRITAM IN SAHIR LUDHIANVI BIOPIIC?

Priyanka Chopra may be Sanjay Leela Bhansali's lucky charm, but it is Bhansali's current favorite muse Deepika Padukone who benefits from her loss every time. After the Quantico star turned down Bhansali's next project, poet Sahir Ludhianvi's biopic, for reasons best known to her, the movie has landed in Deepika's kitty. Director Jasmeet Reen shall make her directorial debut with the film while it marks Padukone's fourth collaboration in a row with SLB.

The Bajirao Mastani actress shall essay the role of Amrita Pritam, Sahir Ludhianvi's muse. Abhishek



Bachchan has been roped in to play the well-known poet-lyricist, who is still remembered for his immortal lines as Main pal do pal ka shayar hoon, Dekhi zamane ki yaari amongst others.

A source was quoted by an online news portal

saying, "Abhishek has begun preparing for his Sahir biopic. He will begin rigorous interaction with Sanjay Bhansali after Padmavati releases. But his groundwork on Sahir has begun in right earnest. He is regularly listening to the immortal

repertoire of Sahir's lyrics from Guru Dutt's Pyasa to Yash Chopra's Trishul. Abhishek's father had the good fortune to interact with Sahir when he worked in Kabhi Kabhie and Trishul. So Bachchan Saab is able to provide plenty of invaluable inputs to Abhishek's preparation."

Abhishek opted out of JP Dutta's Paltan a day before the shoot and he won't be taking up any other project for now to dedicate his full attention to Bhansali's ambitious project. Meanwhile, Deepika Padukone is busy garnering praises for her role in Bhansali's forthcoming magnum opus, Padmavati.

with whom you're very anxious to get together. You might hop in the car to meet this person somewhere familiar in your community. Don't wear your voice out talking on the phone!

LEO: Money matters may need attention today. Bills need to be paid, checks deposited, or contracts executed. The relief you get from handling this should lift your spirits considerably. Get out in the fresh air, take a walk, and work off some of your energy. Get the endorphins going. Phone a friend and spend the evening on the town. You've worked hard and you deserve it.

VIRGO: You're in a great mood,

and you're raring to go at just about anything. Your physical energy is high, so some exercise is indicated, possibly sports. You might want to take a short trip out of town or embark on a new course of study or try your hand at writing. Your enthusiasm and optimism are high, so the sky's the limit.

LIBRA: Today you might feel a strong psychic link with a friend who lives far away that you haven't seen for a long time. You might wonder what this person is up to and this could be a bit worrying. Don't be shy. Call! One way or another, you should know what's happening. It could be that your friend is just having a bad day.

LORD OF THE RINGS TV SHOW UNDER DISCUSSION AT AMAZON

The trilogy which came to a close nearly 15 years ago could now be making its way to the small screen

Amazon is reportedly in talks with the estate of J R R Tolkien to develop a TV show based on The Lord Of The Rings trilogy.

Although no deal has yet been reached, several industry magazines have reported Warner Bros Television wants Tolkien's seminal work to be adapted to the small screen, 15 years after the end of the film franchise.

According to Variety, Amazon Studios' CEO Jeff Bezos is "personally involved" in the project which would align with Amazon's push for more mainstream genre programming and fewer new indie shows, like Transparent and I Love Dick.

The Hollywood Reporter has also quoted sources who say the main obstacle to the show's production is a rights issue with the Tolkien estate.

Earlier this year, Warner Bros and the legal body which manages the writer's work settled an \$80m (£61m) lawsuit over profit participation in regards to the film franchise.

For five years, the two bodies were embroiled in court proceedings, after the author's estate said the studio overstepped the mark and made millions selling unauthorized merchandising.

Priscilla Tolkien, daughter of the famed British author, said the deal made with Warner in 1969 did not cover merchandising like video games or mobile apps, which the studio had profited from.

The family also claimed Warner "outraged" Tolkien fans by using his characters in online gambling games and casino slot machines.

With the case settled out of court, though, it could mean the two parties are back on good terms.

Peter Jackson's The Lord Of The Rings trilogy made a total of nearly \$3bn (£2.2bn) at the box office when it was released in three installments between 2001 and 2003.

All three films got an Os-



car nomination for best picture with the last film, The Return Of The King, winning the gong. Jackson has since done another, less profitable,

trilogy based on The Hobbit, and there are no reports of him being attached to this project as yet.

Since the news broke on Twitter, fans have been voicing their discontent with such an "unnecessary" adaptation of a trilogy which premiered not that long ago.



THIS DAY IN HISTORY

06TH NOVEMBER WORLD HISTORY

1956- Suez Canal - - Allies Take Control: Allied forces took control of the Suez Canal with British and French parachute troops holding the Mediterranean key to the Suez Canal at Port Said.

1967- Philippines - - Typhoon Emma: The death toll caused by Typhoon Emma continues to rise after the typhoon ravaged the Island leaving 140,000 homeless and the death toll rising above 300.

1996- U.S.A. - - Bill Clinton: Bill Clinton wins a resounding victory over Republican Bob Dole and will be the President of the United States for four more years in the White

House.

2002- U.S.A. - - Saddam Hussein: New U.S.-Iraq resolutions were made. Concern arose about whether or not new negotiations between these two countries would upset Saddam Hussein, which would lead to war.

2008- United States - - World Leaders Send congratulations to Barack Obama: World leaders send congratulations to Barack Obama on his presidential win, including the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. This is the first ever official message of goodwill that has been presented to an American leader by Iran. Mr Obama has offered unconditional dialogue with Iran about its nuclear programme, and Mr Ahmadinejad called for the US president to implement a foreign policy of "non-interference"

LOCKHORNS - HOEST & REINER



"LEROY NEVER CAUGHT ANYTHING WITH IT, SO HE HAD IT MOUNTED."

ARCTIC CIRCLE - HALLATT



BABY BLUES - KIRKMAN & SCOTT



ARIES: Job stress might be getting to you. Drinking a lot of water would be a good idea. Moderate amounts of exercise and rest are also indicated. Don't eat very spicy foods. This is a good day to catch up on reading, studying, or research. Your physical self may not be what it should be, but your brain is sharp.

TAURUS: Today you should feel romantic and passionate and want to get together with your love partner. You'll probably do that, but it may be difficult and only arranged at the last minute. Don't panic if you can't reach your friend during the early part of the day. Don't give up. You'll have a great

evening.

GEMINI: A woman, perhaps a colleague who's very bright and sometimes annoying, could visit you today. If you aren't careful, this person could lead you into a heated discussion or arouse your insecurity. Try to distance yourself. This person has issues of her own to deal with that have little if anything to do with you. Be polite and understanding and then show her the door!

CANCER: A lot of calls could come your way today. Some involve people who live far away, some are from friends with heavy emotional difficulties, and one could come from a romantic partner

with whom you're very anxious to get together. You might hop in the car to meet this person somewhere familiar in your community. Don't wear your voice out talking on the phone!

LEO: Money matters may need attention today. Bills need to be paid, checks deposited, or contracts executed. The relief you get from handling this should lift your spirits considerably. Get out in the fresh air, take a walk, and work off some of your energy. Get the endorphins going. Phone a friend and spend the evening on the town. You've worked hard and you deserve it.

VIRGO: You're in a great mood,

and you're raring to go at just about anything. Your physical energy is high, so some exercise is indicated, possibly sports. You might want to take a short trip out of town or embark on a new course of study or try your hand at writing. Your enthusiasm and optimism are high, so the sky's the limit.

LIBRA: Today you might feel a strong psychic link with a friend who lives far away that you haven't seen for a long time. You might wonder what this person is up to and this could be a bit worrying. Don't be shy. Call! One way or another, you should know what's happening. It could be that your friend is just having a bad day.

Provide a sympathetic ear!

SCORPIO: Group activities or meetings could prove fraught today as those around you get pulled into discussions about which they feel strongly and on which they don't all agree! This isn't a good day to get involved in heated discussions even if you find the idea tempting. Stay out of it! Find someone who's also staying out of it and talk to that person.

SAGITTARIUS: The possibility of impending changes in your personal or professional life could have you feeling worried and insecure. Don't be. If anything, you'll benefit from these changes. There could be a lot of tension

and stress in the air, and it will be hard to avoid picking up on this energy. Try to relax! Let yourself be carried along by the current.

CAPRICORN: You may have been making plans to take a long trip or return to school for an advanced degree. Until now you may have put it off. You've finally stepped over the line and made the decision to do it. There's no stopping you! You may spend a lot of time on the phone gathering information and making preliminary arrangements.

AQUARIUS: Legal papers regarding money that you may have been working on for a while should finally be done today. This

should lift your spirits if for no other reason than to have it all out of the way! You should feel especially talkative, enthusiastic, and passionate. You may want to schedule a romantic evening with your partner. Have fun!

PISCES: Some bad experiences regarding career, family, travel, or education could have a friend, colleague, or love partner in an explosive mood today. This person could be unpredictable now - happy one minute and in the depths of gloom the next. Don't try to give advice or cheer up him or her. It will only result in anger. Stay out of the way and let your friend work through it.