



Summit **TIMES**

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Palestine recalls Pak envoy after India issues demarche

NEW DELHI, DEC 30 (PTI): India today issued a strong demarche to Palestine on the issue of presence of its ambassador to Pakistan at an event of JuD chief and Mumbai terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed, terming it as "unacceptable".

India's Secretary (economic relations) Vijay Gokhale in the external affairs ministry called Palestinian ambassador here Adnan Abu Al Haija to the South Block after which the ministry said, "the concerns were conveyed both in New Delhi to the Palestinian Ambassador and in Ramallah to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, State of Palestine."

"Government of India has strongly conveyed to the Palestinian side that the Palestinian Ambassador in Pakistan's association with terrorist Saeed, who is proscribed by the United Nations, at an event in Rawalpindi on 29.12.2017, is unacceptable," the ministry said in a release.

It said the Palestinian side has conveyed "deep regrets" over the incident and assured India that they are taking serious cognisance of their ambassador's presence at this event.

"They have said they will deal with this matter appropriately. It was also conveyed that Palestine highly values its relationship with India and stands with us in the war against terrorism, and will not engage with those who commit acts **turn to pg02**

2017, a year when Sikkim's location and locals came to the fore

TSHERING EDEN GANGTOK, 30 DEC:

Year 2017 began with people across the country struggling to cope with demonetization and its after-effects; and cope we did. As the year comes to a close, we are yet to know if demonetization succeeded in achieving what it sought to deliver as promised by Modi. For Sikkim though, this year was about Darjeeling. The revival of the Gorkhaland demand in the neighbouring hills, like in the past, troubled Sikkim more than the Centre.

Among the many incidents that happened during the Gorkhaland agitation of 2017, what stands out is the West Bengal police's incursion, at least that is what it looked like, into Sikkim in the South district. On 01 Sept, a

team of West Bengal police carried out an "operation" to round up Gorkha Janmukti Morcha leaders, purportedly in hiding in the district, without informing their counterparts in Sikkim. During the WB police's operation, a GJM supporter was shot dead near Bhanjyang near Namchi in South Sikkim. An FIR was filed against the Kalimpong SP for murder while the West Bengal police accused Sikkim and its police department of shielding GJM supporters and leaders. In the mêlée what people and the administration have forgotten is that a life was lost that day, and as of now, there is no clarity on what fate awaits the accused hit-squad.

While in the midst of the Gorkhaland agitation, trouble started brewing on another

front for Sikkim.

In June, a military standoff occurred between China and India at the Doklam plateau near the Sikkim-Bhutan-Tibet tri-junction. As China attempted to extend a road on the Doklam Plateau southwards near the Doka La pass, Indian troops moved in to prevent the Chinese. Gorkhaland faded into the background as rumour mills worked full time to fuel fears of another Sino-India war. After a few months of tense exchanges between the two nations, the matter was resolved diplomatically, or so we are told.

Meanwhile, in a direct fall-out of the standoff was the cancellation of the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra through Nathula. Ninety-one pilgrims from India had to return from Nathula on 25 June

as Chinese authorities refused them entry into the Tibetan Autonomous Region citing, at that time, bad road conditions as reason for the refusal. What we now know is that Chinese hospitality had evaporated with the heating of the Doklam situation. It remains unclear whether this pilgrimage will be possible through Sikkim even next season.

What also made news this year was Bollywood, and now also Hollywood, actor, Priyanka Chopra's remarks about Sikkim being 'troubled with insurgency' during an interview with ET Canada when she was talking about her new film 'Pahuna', a Sikkimese Nepali film produced by the actor's production house. As Sikkimese expressed their anger and dismay on social media platforms, the Infor-

mation and Public Relations Department even wrote to the actor demanding an apology. Her Sikkimese fans gave in only after she tendered a second apology after the first one failed to impress.

Sikkimese or 'genuine' Sikkimese also took to the streets rallying for re-verification of Sikkim Subject Certificates/Certificates of Identification and the institution of proper checks and balances to guard against issuance of these documents to bogus claimants. The rally was also to register gratitude and support for the PIL filed by Biraj Adhikari and Delay Namgyal Barfungpa against fake SSC/COI.

Speaking of PILs, another case that must be mentioned is the one filed by a group of Sikkimese women married to Non-Sikkimese challeng-

ing the Sikkim Succession Act 2008. The PIL challenged the Act as being unfair to women by divesting them of rights to own ancestral property if married to a Non-Sikkimese. Hearing the PIL, the High Court disposed of the case after it was informed that the Act was never enforced in the State. Even as the petitioners' counsel hailed this as a positive outcome, we do not know if things have indeed changed for women married to Non-Sikkimese.

As issues of identity made news, so did religion, the two obviously closely linked. Controversy erupted mid-August when some Sikh religious items housed at the Dharmastal on the shores of Gurudongmar were shifted to the Chungthang Gurudwara. The

turn to pg02

Free sports coaching camp for East district concludes

NANGKHA LONGKUMER GANGTOK, 30 DEC:

The free winter sports coaching camp 2017 for Under 16 years boys and girls of East district which started on 01 Dec officially ended today here at Paljor Stadium. The month-long camp was organized by the Department of Sports & Youth Affairs.

The concerned department organised the winter coaching camp for East district this time in different venues of Gangtok, while for North, West and South districts the camp will be held in the month of January 2018. Around 800 children were expected to turn out for the camp where records of each child will be maintained.



The camp was held in different venues around Gangtok in various disciplines like Athletics,

Archery, Boxing, Basketball, Cricket, Football, Table Tennis, Tae-Kwondo, Karate, Wu-Shu, and

Weight Lifting. The main purpose of organising the winter camp was to create awareness about

sports as well as to bring forth talents from the East district and also **turn to pg02**

IHC resolution condemns attack on freedom of speech

KOLKATA, DEC 30 (PTI): The 78th session of Indian History Congress (IHC) today passed resolution condemning the attack on freedom of speech and urged historians and common people to defend the cause of objectivity in history.

The IHC also passed another resolution criticizing the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) for declining assistance to the IHC and announcing a project to prove that Adam's Bridge was not natural but made by human hands.

The first resolution, "In Defence of the Objective Method in History"

which was read by Irfan Habib, stated that recently there has been a tendency among responsible persons including ministers and legislators to speak as if they can "change" history by a fiat.

It said there have been particular attempts to run down figures like Akbar and Tipu Sultan while fictitious achievements are attributed to favorite or fictional heroes.

"It has been even suggested that the history of Mughal Empire be removed from text books and the Prime Minister has spoken of Akbar in a derogatory context," the **turn to pg02**

Attacks on Christmas celebrations mar the season of joy and giving

IN SIKKIM AND THE REGION, THE FAITHFUL PRAY IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PERSECUTED

DAVID LALHMACHHUANA GANGTOK, 29 DEC

While the world was busy gearing up for Christmas, a season mostly associated with 'love, giving, and joy', it was a completely different story here in various parts of India. The holiday season was overshadowed by a series of bleak incidences in various states where Christians faced the onslaught of religious intolerance from right wing Hindu groups.

In Pratappgarh town of the northern state of Rajasthan, members of Vishwa Hindu Parishad allegedly disrupted a Christmas programme organized for an indigenous community. The group snatched microphones, threw away Christmas calendars and books on the gospels and accused organizers of carrying out reli-



Carol singers in Gangtok

gious conversions under the pretext of celebrating Christmas.

In Mathura, seven Christians were arrested by police while praying inside a home while in Satna district of Uttar Pradesh, a

group of 30 Christians were arrested on grounds of trying to "lure" Hindus to Christianity - a serious crime in the hard line northern Indian state. They were attacked and their car was set on fire. Instead of

holding perpetrators to account, authorities charged the Christian group for outraging religious feelings under the state's anti conversion law.

Persecuted Christians' watch-

dog, 'Open Doors', said warnings have been issued to schools in Aligarh, against holding Christmas activities by the Hindu Jagran Manch (HJM) terming it as "essentially a ploy to lure and convert Hindu children".

Sonu Savita, city president of the HJM had reportedly said that they would decide on the course of action after receiving the school's response.

Christianity aims at spreading the word of love as instructed by their Lord. Just like lighting an incense stick early in the morning, preaching gospel is a tradition for the Christians.

For Christians the primary charge is "forced conversions"; it means putting pressure on people to convert, sometimes physically. According to alt-Right Hindu groups which adhere to the conviction that India's culture and institutions ought to reflect an inherent Hindu nature, it could mean anything from praying for Jesus to heal you, to offering to put you in a Christian hospital or school, pro-

viding financial aid, etc. In practice any kind of activity in the presence of Hindus, particularly the scorned untouchables who "regularly threaten to abandon Hinduism", can attract attention.

These incidents have disturbed people across religious divides across the country and responses have veered from anger to compassion. Here is a sampling of how the Church elders of Sikkim and the region view the latest round of persecution.

PASTOR PHILIP of Hebron Pentecostal Church, Gangtok:

"In the end of days, there will be persecution. This is just proof that God's Word is coming true as written in the Bible. Matthew chapter 24 talks about the signs and symptoms of the last days.

India is a secular country. I believe in Jesus Christ. He is our Lord. Whatever is happening right now should not affect our faith. This is a time for filtering out the real Christians, real churches. Those **turn to pg06**

Kamala mills fire: Public relations body starts campaign

MUMBAI, DEC 30 (PTI): The Public Relations Council of India (PRCI) has launched a communication drive to focus attention on the appalling lack of fire safety in public places, in the wake of a devastating blaze at a Mumbai pub which claimed 14 lives.

The PCRI, a non-political, not-for-profit body of public relations, media, social media, advertising, human resources, marketing professionals, mass communication academicians and students, has started the campaign 'we are playing with fire', popular on social media by the hashtag -- #vrplayingwithfire.

"Communicators and people in general must raise their voice, use the powerful tool of media and social media to work on mass awakening about the death traps that we encounter daily," PCRI's national president BN Kumar said.

"Don't we see that the restaurants, hotels, multiplexes etc that we visit have narrow passages that could be death traps in case of accidents?" PCRI Chairman Emeritus and Chief Mentor M B Jayaram said.

One of the tweets read: "#vrplayingwithfire Do our homes, eateries, cinemas, offices, clubs, rly stations, airports etc have fire safety norms? Raise ur voice, ask questions, post here and other platforms. No lessons learnt from past disasters? Act now, else repent later. Join @PRCI-NOW campaign."

The tweet has tagged the Prime Minister's Office as well urging Prime Minister Narendra Modi to look into the issue.

IHC resolution condemns attack...

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Resolution read. It said such efforts to "change" history go hand in hand with increasing attacks on liberty and freedom of speech.

In the second resolution, "On Grants from Governments and Semi-Government Organizations", said the authorities in command of public money are tending to discriminate against organisations that do not necessarily support the currently favorite official credos.

It came down heavily on the ICHR for declining to assist the IHC and taking up a project to prove that Adam's Bridge was man made.

Adam's Bridge, a chain of shoals also known as Ram Setu, connects Pamban island in Tamil Nadu with Sri Lanka's Mannar island.

"Not only is such a project an insult to human intelligence but would involve a huge waste of public funds, should it be undertaken," the resolution stated.

Prominent participants of the IHC included Irfan Habib and Romila Thapar.

Namsong Festival at Namprikdang concludes

WANGCHUK BHUTIA DZONGU, 30 DEC:

The final day of the Namsong festival cum State Level Tribal festival today was attended by Minister for Health, AK Ghatani as chief guest, who along with other dignitaries also visited the traditional stalls of different communities.

Delivering the welcome speech, president Namprikdang Namsong celebration committee, Nezing Lepcha highlighted the history of Namprikdang Namsong festival which is being celebrated since the last 41 years.

Addressing the function, the chief guest stressed that we should be aware of the history of



our sacred places and said that we should learn from nature. He also added that the government has con-

structed infrastructure in all the religious places of Sikkim under the good governance of our Chief

Minister and further stated that Sikkim is the only state having an Ecclesiastical department.

The Minister further warned people that some political party from outside are manipulating our

innocent people for their vested interests and urged everyone not to believe them. The Minister further urged all the farmers to opt for organic farming in order to promote it.

Highlighting health related issues, the Minister said that the government is providing a medical grant of Rs. 3 lakh for patients under BPL category who would be referred outside for treatment and Rs. 2 lakh for the APL category.

Responding to the demand for staff in the district hospital at Mangan, the Minister said that the demand will be given priority.

Also in the function two prominent figures of Dzongu, footballer OT

Lepcha and film maker Dawa Lepcha were felicitated by the Namsong celebration committee.

A colorful cultural programme was also presented by the representatives of different communities.

The function ended with the vote of thanks delivered by Coordinator, Namprikdang Namsong celebration committee, JJ Lepcha.

Also present today were Deputy Speaker SLA cum Dzongu MLA, Sonam Gyatso Lepcha, Zilla Adhakshya North, Namdey Lepcha, Chairperson SNT, Pintso Namgyal Lepcha, SDM Dzongu, Tshering Dorjee Bhutia and CMO North, Barun Subba.

Festival of dance 'Nriyotsav' begins in Gangtok

SAGAR CHETTRI GANGTOK, 30 DEC:

Sikkim is all set to host the festival of dance, Nriyotsav, from 30 Dec to 02 Jan here at Manan Kendra auditorium. The four-day dance festival will be inaugurated by Governor Shrinivas Patil on 30 Dec.

The festival is being organised by Sangeet Natak Akademi, National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama, New Delhi, in collaboration with Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department, Government of Sikkim. The festival will have performances by twelve renowned national-level dancers of the country.

Addressing a press confer-

ence on Friday, Sangeet Natak Akademi Dance Division Head, Helen Acharya, informed that the festival will have performances by national-level dancers of the country who are the recipients of prestigious Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar. She added that all artists have been accompanied by their musicians and will be performing live music and orchestra. She added that the festival will have more than 46 experienced artists of the country.

The festival will also feature Bharatanatyam by Uma Sathyanarayanan from Chennai, Satriya by Mridusmita Das and Seupriya Borthakur from Gu-

wahati, Chhau by Satish Kumar Modak from Seraikella, Manipuri by Sijagurumayum Nimita Devi and P Bilash Singh from Imphal, Kuchipudi by Boby Chakraborty from Udaipur, Kathakali by Kalamandalam Pradeep Kumar from Palakkad, Odissi by Lingaraj Pradhan from Bhubaneswar, Kathak by Monisa Nayak and Gauri Divakar from Delhi and Kutiyattam by Sangeeth Chakkar from Thrissur.

Ms Acharya mentioned that the dance festival by renowned dancers of the country is being held for the first time in Sikkim. She added that the festival is also a platform for dancers from different parts of the country to perform together. She further

added that the aim of the festival is also to promote different forms of dances in all corners of the country. She spoke about various activities of the Akademi. She stated that the Akademi is always ready to promote local groups and artists of Sikkim.

OSD Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department, Jagdish Sharma, mentioned that the festival also aims to encourage local youth and artists to move ahead in their field and to take it up professionally. He informed that local artists and groups of the State have been invited for the festival. He also appealed to the people to be a part of this national-level event in the State.

Rajya Sabha MP visits winter coaching classes underway at TNSS

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 30 DEC:

Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, Hishey Lachungpa, on Friday paid a visit to TNSS School where the Winter Coaching Classes for underprivileged students appearing for class X and XII are being undertaken by the Sikkim Lepcha Youth Association, informs a press release.

While addressing the students, Mr Lachungpa spoke about the importance of education and its implications in the development of society. He encouraged the students to devote most of their time to preparing themselves for the examination and also keep themselves healthy and fit.

Considering the present employment scenario within the government sector he further stressed that the students should try to inculcate the idea of job provider rather than job seeker, where the present government also facilitates opportu-



nities for innovators and entrepreneurs.

In order to motivate students to perform better in their studies the MP also declared cash prizes for students who secure top position during the winter coaching classes.

Mr Lachungpa expressed his deep satisfaction and happiness on the coaching classes being conducted for underprivileged students and further committed to extend every possible help to the organisation in conducting such noble programmes. Besides, as discussed with the members of the Sikkim Lepcha Youth Association about the necessity of the

Lepcha Cultural Centre, the MP also consented to provide logistical support in developing a Lepcha Cultural Centre at the roof-top of Kurmoolie.

Mr Lachungpa also extended financial support of Rs 1 lakh and some rations for the hostellers and further asked the organisation to approach him if any kind of help is needed. Overwhelmed with such benevolent gesture, the Sikkim Lepcha Youth Association expressed their sincere gratitude towards the MP for his constant support towards the organisation and its programmes, the release mentions.

Sanitation Ministry official inspects Singtam Bazaar

SUMMIT REPORT SINGTAM, 30 DEC:

An officer from the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation Department from Quality Council of India inspected the wards of Singtam Bazaar on Friday to take account of activities helmed by Municipality/Urban Local bodies regarding proper implementation of instructions and guidelines released by the Central Government to the ULBs in support of Swachh Mission.

The inspection was carried out to check whether every household in Singtam bazaar has constructed a proper toilet in order to control open defecation on the river side or in open places.

The inspection was conducted under the guidelines of Swachh Mission which was introduced in 2014 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and its achievements during its three-year run so far.

"Under Swachh Mission it is mandatory to

check every household to find out whether they have constructed a proper toilet or not and according to that implementation and success the Ministry and the council will be giving a score to name the best Urban Local Bodies," informed the visiting officer from QCI's Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) under Ministry of drinking Water and Sanitation Department, Government of India, Md. Aurangzeb.

The officer also visited private and government schools to check proper maintenance of toilets. During the inspection, the officer also inspected the Pay and Use toilets and its rate of use and clearances.

The officer was accompanied by the Municipal cum Sanitation Inspector, Birendra Rai along with Supervisor, Raju Bardewa of Singtam Nagar Panchayat.



Singtam to welcome 2018 with grand tambola night

SUMMIT REPORT SINGTAM, 30 DEC:

The Sunflower Self Help Group of Swaney, West Pandam is all set to organize a grand tambola night as part of Christmas and New Year celebrations here at Singtam bazaar on 01 Jan 2018.

The grand tambola night was scheduled to be held on 29 Nov 2017 but was postponed due to the Panchayat election and as directed by the Superintendent of Police, East Sikkim.

"We feel sorry for the delay but cannot disobey the Police department. However we are organizing it soon and we thank the department for their full support and cooperation. We have announced

that a part of the earnings will be provided to the maintenance and development of the village and it will also support our SHG," informed the working president of the SHG, Suren Subba.

Further, the total prize money for the grand tambola is Rs 2,06,000 and the winner will be provided a taxi along with police escort for safety measures regarding which we have already informed the SHO, Singtam PS, Ajay Rai, informed treasurer of the SHG, Raju Bantawa.

This is the first time that an SHG is organizing such a grand event in Singtam and we hope the SHG will be organizing such events in the future as well.

2017, a year when Sikkim's location and locals...

contd from pg01

Dharmastal was slated to undergo renovations and religious paraphernalia had to be taken out. While the Buddhist items housed there were taken to Lachen Monastery, the Sikh items were taken to the Chungthang Gurudwara. A video purportedly showing the Sikh items kept on the road sparked outrage among the community. Thankfully the matter was brought under control after clarifications from the local administration. The matter has also made it to the Courts.

Coming to politics, while we did have the Panchayat elections this year, there were

no surprises there as Sikkim Democratic Front swept the elections. Bigger news was the High Court upholding the conviction of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha president, PS Golay on 28 June in a corruption case dating back to his tenure as Animal Husbandry Minister of the first SDF Government in Sikkim in 1994-99. Out of station at the time, Mr Golay surrendered before a Sessions Judge on 10 Aug. As per Section 8 of the RP Act a person convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for varying terms under Sections 8 (1) (2) and (3) stands disqualified from the date of conviction and

shall continue to be disqualified for a further period of six years during which he cannot contest elections. Later in the year, the Supreme Court also upheld the conviction. The fate of what was the main opposition party of the State now looks uncertain with their leader serving time and seven of their elected MLAs having shifted allegiance to the ruling party last year.

This year, Sikkim also lost one of its most towering political stalwarts, former Chief Minister [1979-94], NB Bhandari, who passed away in a Delhi hospital on 16 July following complications after a spinal cord surgery. The State

Government observed a seven-day period of State mourning from 17-23 Jul and the day of the departed leader's funeral, 19 July, was declared a State holiday by the Government to allow for people to attend the funeral.

The Pakyong airport, always in the news since its construction began, resurfaced but this time with good news. Local and national media reported that the airport was to be inaugurated on 30 Nov while there were no official statements to this effect. A press release from Lok Sabha MP, PD Rai had said that in a meeting between the MP, Minister of Tourism

Sikkim, Ugen Gyatso Bhutia and Secretary of Tourism Sikkim, C. Zangpo and Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Jayant Sinha, the MoS had said that the airport would be operational by November 2017. The airport was to be completed by 2012, the 30 Nov deadline is over and 2017 is also over; and the much awaited Pakyong Greenfield Airport is yet to be operational.

As this piece and the year come to an end, how can we forget the bombshell that Chief Minister Pawan Chamling dropped on 22 Nov of banning import of vegetables from outside the state.

The announcement, made during the State level Panchayat Sammelan, took all by surprise and has since been the favourite chai-pe-charcha topic. The response has been mixed, with farmers mostly pleased while others wary of the propriety and practicality of such a measure. The ban is to be implemented in a phased manner with the first phase coming into effect on 31 Mar 2018.

The ban on 'outsider' veggies a certainty in the New Year, let's hope that flying in and out of the State also finally materializes in 2018 and on that note, a very Happy New Year to all our readers.

Gangtok on Sunday, 31 Dec

Temp: 21°C / 06°C
Forecast: Pleasant with plenty of sunshine whole day.
Sunrise: 06:24 AM
Sunset: 4:50 PM

New Year beach parties start in Goa; better footfall this year

Panaji, Dec 30 (PTI): The 105-km long coastline of Goa has turned into a party zone since last night with revellers pouring into the coastal state to ring in the New Year.

While the beaches are already crowded, casino operators have reported 40 per cent rise in the footfall compared to the last year.

Though the New Year is still a day away, tourists -- mostly Indians -- have started partying on beaches.

Tourism minister Manohar Aigaonkar termed the tourist arrivals this year as "overwhelming". "We are happy with the arrivals and all arrangements have been made to ensure that tourists have safe and enjoyable New Year celebrations," he said.

Casinos, especially the off-shore ones, have benefited from the Electronic Dance Music (EDM) festival which ended in the state yesterday.

"There is almost 40 per cent increase in footfall since December 24, thanks to the EDM festival which attracted crowds," said Shrinivas Nayak, Director of Casino Pride group.

Last year demonetisation had acted as a dampener, he noted. "There is no effect of demonetisation this time."



Cosplay comes to Gangtok



DAVID LALHMACHHUANA GANGTOK, 29 DEC:

A group of young anime fans addressed as their favorite anime character were spotted at MG Marg this afternoon. This process of dressing as anime characters is called Cosplay. Characters like Inuyasha, Asuna and Kirito from Sword Art Online (S.A.O), Kaneki from Tokyo Ghoul etc. were some of the characters being cosplayed. The event attracted the

attention of pedestrians, many of whom were seen taking pictures with the cosplayers. This is the first anime cosplay event in Gangtok where 15 cosplayers are participating.

"Our main goal is to show the people of Gangtok that people from our generation are interested in anime," said Gyatso Lepcha, one of the cosplayers.

The event is going to last for two days with the hope of attracting more audiences.



Gov flags solo marathon, launches table calendar 2018

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 30 DEC:

In a series of engagements at Raj Bhavan, Governor Shrinivas Patil today launched a new table calendar for 2018, published by the Postal Services, Sikkim Region. Postmaster General, Sikkim Region, Amitabh Kharkwal and Assistant Superintendent of Postal Services Sikkim, Dawa Sherpa were present on the occasion, a press release informs.

The Governor lauded the personal initiative of the Postmaster General in promoting Sikkim and expressed that it will strengthen the emotional



bond between the local populace and the postal services in general. Earlier on the day, the Governor flagged off the solo marathon run of

Abhishek Prasad Gupta, a prolific long distance marathon runner from Singtam, East Sikkim, who aims to complete a solo marathon run from Sikkim to New Delhi starting today.

Mr Gupta is running to promote 'Swachh Sikkim Swachh Bharat, Organic Sikkim and Fight against Child abuse' and is expected to reach New Delhi before Republic Day 2018.

The Governor, while flagging off the ambitious run, extended his blessings and good wishes for the accomplishment of solo marathon, reads the release.

Palestine recalls Pak...

contd from pg01

of terror against India," it said. The government takes note of the assurances given by the Palestine envoy, who informed India that his government had decided to recall its Ambassador to Pakistan Walid Abu Ali.

Talking to PTI after his meeting, Haija said Ali has been recalled for attending the rally organised by Saeed.

Asserting that Ali's action was not "acceptable" given the close and friendly ties between India and Palestine, the top

envoy said Ali has been given couple of days to pack and return from Islamabad. "The Palestine government has told Ali that he was not its envoy to Pakistan anymore," Haija said.

Palestinian ambassador to Pakistan Ali reportedly attended the Difah-e-Pakistan Council-organised rally in Li-aquat Bagh in Rawalpindi on Friday.

Difah-e-Pakistan Council is an association of religious and extremist groups in Pakistan, headed by Saeed.

Food & Civil Supplies Minister attends fourth day of Namsoong Fest

SUMMIT REPORT MANGAN, 30 DEC:

The fourth day of the State Level Tribal Festival/Namsoong celebration at Nampriddang in Dzongu, North Sikkim was attended by Minister for Food & Civil Supplies, NK Subba, as chief guest.

Delivering the welcome speech, Director of Tribal Research Institute, KL Lepcha, underlined the motive behind organising the festival and also informed that Tribal Research Institute will be working further for the upliftment of



tribal communities. Minister for Food & Civil Supplies, Mr Subba, while addressing the gathering, stressed on the history of Dzongu and added that the govern-

ment has always worked for the protection of Dzongu and Article 371F. He stated that Sikkim Democratic Front government has always taken its stand for the protection of BL

seats. Bhutia, Lepcha and Limboo languages have been introduced at University level after SDF came to power, he added. During the event, tribal achiever in the field of Bhutia literature, Pema Rinzing Bhutia, was felicitated by Tribal Research Institute while Karma Samten Bhutia was presented a letter of appreciation by Namsoong Celebration Committee for his constant support in organizing Namsoong Festival since the past 25 years.

A colorful cultural programme was also

presented by the representatives of different communities.

Also present were Deputy Speaker [Sikkim Legislative Assembly] cum Area MLA, Sonam Gyatso Lepcha, Chairman-Sikkim Nationalised Transport Department, Pintsong Namgyal Lepcha, Secretary, Social Justice Empowerment & Welfare Department, Sarala Rai, president Nampriddang Namsoong Celebration Committee, Nezing Lepcha, and Sub Divisional Magistrate Dzongu, Tshering Dorjee Bhutia.

Free sports coaching...

contd from pg01

provide a platform for showcasing their skills.

"The main motive of the camp is to identify young talents and to give a platform to express it," said Deputy Director Sports Department, Thupden Rappyal while talking to SummitTimes. He further added that the camp will help children develop or discipline, respect and sportsmanship and will act as an investment for bringing out promising sportsmen from the district. Citing the example of Bhaichung Bhutia, the lauded torchbearer of Indian football, he also mentioned that outstanding talents will be noted for

future training and sports opportunities.

The concluding ceremony of the camp was attended by the Secretary, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, SD Dhakal as the chief guest. The day was also attended by Mr Rappyal, officials from the concerned department and parents.

Addressing the closing day, the Secretary urged the parents to support and encourage their children towards sports. He also thanked the coaches for successfully holding the camp. Further, appreciation certificates were also given to all the coaches and students.

SIKKIM INFORMATION COMMISSION LOWER SECRETARIAT OPP. SUPER MARKET, GANGTOK-737101

No. 591/SIC/2017 Dated: 27/12/2017

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed Tender are invited from registered firms in Sikkim for supply of office items in the office of Sikkim Information Commission, Gangtok.

The tender documents shall be issued against payment of Rs. 2000 vide Bank Draft from State Bank of Sikkim OR any Nationalised Bank, payable to Under Secretary cum D&DO Sikkim Information Commission. Tender documents to be issued from the office of Sikkim Information Commission Old Secretariat, NH 31A, Gangtok.

Start date of issue of Tender Documents	-	29-12-2017
Last date of issue of Tender Documents	-	13-01-2018
Last date of submission of Tender Documents-		15-01-2018 12.30 p.m.
Tender opening date	-	15-01-2018 2.00 p.m.

For Details of Tender visit website cicsikkim.gov.in
 For further enquiry Phone No: **03592-205465(O)**
 Email: sicosikkim@gmail.com

Sd/-
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R.O. No. 477/IPR/PUB/Class/17-18 dt. 29/12/17

SummitTIMES

Quotaed into Lethargy

Time to ask the right questions
and demand better

Reservation, quotas, local protection... These remain strong political constituencies to this day in the country, 70 years and counting since the day India became Free and its people equal! The exclamation mark because the stop-gap arrangement of quotas, put in place while long-term policies were kick-started to make equal opportunity and equal access realities for communities that had remained underprivileged, subjugated and sidelined for centuries, appears to have mutated into a permanent fixture. This reality perhaps deserves a double exclamation mark because the nation continues to discover more communities which require a reserved slot and special treatment to come at par with the mainstream. Yes, this is an inexplicable situation teetering at risk of short-term gains becoming long-term liabilities.

Fact remains that reservations have made people lazy and segregation can never deliver either unity or equality, but this is not a statement supporting the end of quotas and reservations, in fact, it is an attempt to get those in the reserved lot to ask the more important questions and reach beyond the chips hammered into their shoulders. What has arguably flawed the reservation regime is its institutionalization, which requires its reinforcement at every level through overt displays – from the makeup of bureaucracy to the Cabinet. Merit, as a result, gets not only sidelined, but even compromised at times because harmonised composition becomes the desired trait. One cannot blame the first leaders of Independent India for this measure, they did after all, plan to have a more concrete solution in place before the idea outlived its utility. Later leaders did not allow that to happen and preferred to secure captive vote-banks instead. And only they (such leaders) appear to have gained. Look around, there are many examples of individual members from the reserved categories having benefited from the policy, but has reservation delivered what it promises to the community as a whole? At least in the same scale as it has fed political careers which require people to remain underprivileged and denied at some levels to remain relevant. Such ideologies have problems with real reform and actual progress and examples of such self-centered profiteering from the miseries of others abound.

The limitations of a reservations-only approach to lift communities up started manifesting with the second generation itself and the benefits have not spread as uniformly, and only very rarely to the grassroots level. Make no mistake, we are still a country of such massive inequalities and astounding privilege that quotas and reservations are still required, unfortunately not because the model is perfect, but because this has remained the only route opened. The carrot of quotas makes people lazy and soon people enjoying this benefit [at least on paper] forget that this was to undo the damage of centuries of discrimination and subject themselves to more humiliation by themselves believing that they are feeding on a sop, when they are actually being compensated for historical wrongs. This makes them refrain from asking the right questions.

Quotas are fine, but they are limited. What should be given is access to the best grooming, an education that prepares them to compete with the best... aspire for the "open" category, not snuggle into the slivers offered as quota. Reserved quotas are add-ons, the plan-B's, and not the constricting pigeonholes they have now become to stifle ambition. Things can improve only when the educational infrastructure in villages and "backward" areas is strengthened, made at par with "city" institutes; when the best teachers take classes in basti schools and a generation of eager competitors replaces those who set their ambitions with one eye on their surnames and what it accrues them.

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Mail us at: letters@summittimes.com

Read this before you go sales shopping: the environmental costs of fast fashion

PATSY PERRY
theconversation.com

It's tough to love our clothes and keep wearing them for longer when we are faced with a tempting array of newness on offer in the shops. But before you head out into the January sales for those irresistible deals, spare a thought for the impact of fast fashion on the environment.

Fast fashion focuses on speed and low cost in order to deliver frequent new collections inspired by catwalk looks or celebrity styles. But it is particularly bad for the environment as pressure to reduce cost and the time it takes to get a product from design to shop floor means that environmental corners are more likely to be cut. Criticisms of fast fashion include its negative environmental impact, water pollution, the use of toxic chemicals and increasing levels of textile waste.

Vibrant colours, prints and fabric finishes are appealing features of fashion garments, but many of these are achieved with toxic chemicals. Textile dyeing is the second largest polluter of clean water globally, after agriculture. Greenpeace's recent Detox campaign has been instrumental in pressuring fashion brands to take action to remove toxic chemicals from their supply chains, after it tested a number of brands' products and confirmed the presence of hazardous chemicals. Many of these are banned or strictly regulated in various countries because they are toxic, bio-accumulative (meaning the substance builds up in an organism faster than the organism can excrete or metabolise it), disruptive to hormones and carcinogenic.

Polyester is the most popular fibre used for fashion. But when polyester garments are washed in domestic washing machines they shed microfibres that add to the increasing levels of plastic in our oceans. These microfibres are minute and can easily pass through sewage and wastewater treatment plants into our waterways, but because they do not biodegrade, they represent a serious threat to aquatic life. Small creatures such as plankton eat the microfibres, which then make their way up the food chain to fish and shellfish eaten by humans.

The devastating impact of toxic chemical use in agriculture for growing cotton was shown in a documentary called *The True Cost*, including the death of a US cotton farmer from a brain tumour and serious birth defects in Indian cotton farmers' children. Cotton growing requires high levels of water and pesticides to prevent crop failure, which can be problematic in developing countries that may lack sufficient investment and be at risk of drought.

Most cotton grown worldwide is genetically modified to be resistant to the bollworm pest, thereby improving yield and reducing pesticide use. But this can also lead to problems further

down the line, such as the emergence of "superweeds" which are resistant to standard pesticides. They often need to be treated with more toxic pesticides that are harmful to livestock and humans.

There is growing interest in organic cotton, with H&M and Inditex, the parent company of Zara, featuring among the world's top five users of organic cotton by volume in 2016. But overall use of organic cotton represents less than 1% of the world's total annual cotton crop.

HUNGER FOR NEWNESS

Textile waste is an unintended consequence of fast fashion, as more people buy more clothes and don't keep them as long as they used to. The international expansion of fast fashion retailers exacerbates the problem on a global scale. Wardrobes in developed nations are saturated, so in order to sell more products, retailers must tempt shoppers with constant newness and convince them the items they already have are no longer fashionable.

Increasing disposable income levels over recent generations means there is less need to "make do and mend", as it's often cheaper and more convenient to buy new than have an item repaired. Busy lifestyles make many people more time-poor than previous generations, and with the loss of sewing and mending skills over time, there is less impetus to repair our garments. The rise of supermarket fashion that can be purchased alongside the weekly shop and the regular occurrence of seasonal sales make clothing seem "disposable", in a way it didn't used to be.

There is interest in moving towards a more circular model of textile production which reuses materials wherever possible, yet current recycling rates for textiles are very low. Despite a long-established national network of charity shops and increasing numbers of in-store recycling points in UK high street stores, three-quarters of Britons throw

away unwanted clothing, rather than donating or recycling it.

WHAT SHOPPERS CAN DO

So, can consumers reduce the environmental cost of fast fashion when out shopping? Choosing an eco-friendly fabric is complex as there are pros and cons to all fibre types. Garments which are labelled as being made from natural fibres are not necessarily better than synthetic, as fibre choice is only one part of a complex picture. Fibres still have to be spun, knitted or woven, dyed, finished, sewn, and transported – all of which have different environmental impacts.

For example, choosing organic fabrics is better than choosing non-organic fabrics in terms of the chemicals used to grow the fibres, but organic cotton still requires high amounts of water and the impacts of dyeing it are higher than the impacts of dyeing polyester.

Recycled content is often best of all, as it reduces the pressure on virgin resources and tackles the growing problem of waste management. For example, Patagonia was the first outdoor clothing brand to make polyester fleece out of plastic bottles. In 2017, it decided to rationalise its T-shirt ranges and from spring 2018, will offer only two fabric options of either 100% organic cotton or a blend of recycled cotton and recycled polyester, recognising that even organic cotton has a negative environmental impact.

The Love Your Clothes initiative from the charity WRAP gives information for consumers on each stage of the purchase process, from buying smarter, to caring for and repairing items, to upcycling or customisation, and finally responsible disposal. Ultimately, the best thing we can do is to keep our clothing in use for longer – and buy less new stuff.

[The writer is Senior Lecturer in Fashion Marketing, University of Manchester]



Why most of us lean to the right when we kiss

Michael J. Proulx, A.K.M. Rezaul Karim & Alexandra A. de Sousa
theconversation.com

Your brain is an organ of two halves – the left side and the right side. And there are many brain functions, such as language skills or which hand you write with, which are organised mostly in one side of the brain or the other.

Simple behavioural tests have now allowed us to see how this organisation is revealed through biases in how we see and interact with the world – and each other – often without us being aware of it.

Examining how people perceive a diagram of variously orientated lines and angles provided clues that people typically have a subconscious bias for seeing things set out in clockwise orientations.

We then realised that this might also be related to a number of physical instincts that people have, such as which way they turn their heads. After looking at recent research in visual psychophysics and visual neuroscience, we saw various perceptual and behavioral phenomena in which humans can have a directional bias.

Many of these turning behaviours are seen early in life. For example, infants have an initial bias for turning the head to the right (and consequently extending the left arm outward to compensate for that movement).

Some previous research found that such an instinctive turn to the right extends to adulthood – when an adult kisses another on the lips, their heads tend to automatically lean to the right. But is this an extension of the bias that humans are born with, or do people simply learn to kiss that way?

In Western societies it is commonplace to see people kiss in public, on



television, and in films. But are these screen kisses reflecting society, or do they influence how people behave? The prior research on the subject was all conducted with kissing in what are known as "W.E.I.R.D." – Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic – societies. So the conclusions might not reflect what humans naturally do in the absence of learning through observation.

Bangladesh seemed like an interesting non-W.E.I.R.D. country to examine this. It is a conservative Muslim country where kissing is prohibited in public, and even censored from television or films. So, whereas similar results from the W.E.I.R.D. countries could be attributed to social learning or socio-cultural factors, the same cannot as easily be said in Bangladesh.

In our study, we asked a number of married couples in Bangladesh to kiss privately in their own homes.

They then went into separate rooms to report on various aspects of the kiss independently of each partner.

A KISS IS STILL A KISS

The results showed that more than two thirds of the kissing individuals had a bias for turning their heads to the right. When initiating a kissing "move" (men were 15 times more likely to initiate the kiss) right-handed people leaned right and left-handed people leaned left.

The person being kissed, regardless of whether they were left or right handed, responded by matching the partners' head leaning direction. It felt awkward to go the other way as reported by most of the kiss recipients and kiss initiators in our study.

It turns out that humans are similar, even if our social values, and the habits we are exposed to, differ. This bias in the act of kissing is likely innate and determined by the brain splitting up tasks to its different

hemispheres, similar to being either right- or left-handed. It is perhaps specifically concerned with the functions in the left cerebral hemisphere, located in the emotion and decision-related areas of the brain.

Different hormone levels (such as testosterone) in each hemisphere and neurotransmitters might be unevenly distributed to each hemisphere (such as dopamine, involved in reward behaviours) and give rise to a bias to turn right.

If you do lean in for a kiss to the left, you may be in the minority. But don't worry – if the person you are kissing wants to be kissed, they will likely go left, too.

[Michael J. Proulx is Senior Lecturer in Psychology, University of Bath; A.K.M. Rezaul Karim is Professor of Psychology, University of Dhaka; Alexandra A. de Sousa is Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Bath Spa University]

BSF told to keep close vigil on Bangla border: Tripura CEO

AGARTALA, DEC 30 (PTI): The BSF has been told to keep a close vigil on the 856-km long Indo-Bangla border in Tripura, to prevent entry of unwanted elements into the state, where assembly elections are due early next year, an election official said.

Tripura Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Sriram Taranikanti held a meeting with top Border Security Force (BSF) officials regarding the close vigil on the border.

"A meeting was held with Inspector General (IG) of BSF couple of days back. All polling stations along the border were mapped using Global Positioning System (GPS). I hope close vigil will begin in the coming weeks", Taranikanti told reporters here last evening.

The CEO said Central paramilitary forces would start arriving in the state soon and the Central government has agreed to send security forces as required by the Election Commission.

He said Indian voters, living in other side of the barbed wire fencing along the border would be able to exercise their franchise without any problem.

The fencing was erected 150 yards away from the international zero line to adhere to Indira-Mujib pact, 1971 and border management agreement signed in 1975.

In an effort to reduce distance and increase ease of voting, 44 more polling stations would be set up in the state for next year's assembly election.

"We had 3,170 listed polling stations in Tripura. Our exercise revealed that their average distance from nearby habitations was often high, so we have decided to reorganise.

"In total, 3,214 polling stations would be utilised in assembly polls this time", Taranikanti said. The CEO said, after reorganisation, all polling stations would be located within a range of 3.5 km from nearby habitations.



Police stop JAP youth protest march in Delhi

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 30 DEC: Jan Andolan Party youth organized the March to Parliament at

New Delhi on Friday. The march, to demand justice for Gorkhas, started from Jantar Mantar but was stopped by Police barricade

near Parliament gate No. 2. According to JAP spokesperson, Tashi Sherpa, over 200 JAP protesters broke the barriers.

They were lathi-charged and arrested while proceeding towards the Parliament. They were taken to Mandir Marg PS.

Last-gasp goal helps Neroca hold East Bengal 1-1

IMPHAL, DEC 30 (PTI): Neroca FC scored a last-gasp goal through Nedo Turkovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina to hold heavyweights East Bengal 1-1 and jump to the third spot in the I-League table here today.

Katsumi Yusa gave the visitors the lead in the 12th minute and the Kolkata side were on the verge of sealing a victory before Turkovic struck the equaliser in the 89th minute to the wild cheers of the home supporters at the Khuman Lampak Stadium here.

Despite the draw, East Bengal are on top of the league table with 14 points from seven matches while I-League newbies Neroca are on third with 11 points from six games.

Both teams started on a cautious note and put in more effort to hold their own half. East Bengal took the lead from the spade-work of Willis Plaza who went



through the right side of the box and sent a defence-splitting pass to Japanese midfielder Katsumi who volleyed it home to silence the 28,000 strong home crowd.

The first half belonged to East Bengal, who outplayed the home side by adopting an aggressive approach. Though Neroca FC had a few good chances,

they were found wanting to give the finishing touches inside the box.

To provide more thrust in the attacking third, Neroca coach Gift Raikhan brought in Turkovic in place of Israilov Akholidin in the first half.

After the change-over, Neroca were looking more hungry for the equaliser and the Orange outfit kept the Red and Golds defenders on their toes throughout.

Neroca had a chance in the 60th minute when a corner kick from Saran Singh was well-timed by Fabien Vorbe at the goal-mouth but eventually he failed to convert it into a goal.

Finally, the moment of madness came for the Imphal-base side when Turkovic found a ball near left area of the 18-yard box and volleyed it past Luis Barreto to send the crowd into a delirium.

Centre, Odisha play blame game over delayed railway projects

BHUBANESWAR, DEC 30 (PTI): The Centre and the Odisha government today entered into a blame game over the delay in execution of railway projects in the state.

Union Minister of State for Railways Rajen Gohain, who is on an official visit here, alleged in a press conference that several railway projects could not progress in the state due to non-availability of land.

Stating that the Centre has this fiscal sanctioned Rs 5,100 crore for railway infrastructure in Odisha, the minister said: "Though works progressed in many projects, some others are delayed due to non-availability of required land for the purpose. The state government has not provided the land for those delayed projects."

The minister also said that there was no paucity of funds for the railway projects.

"We are not able to progress only due to lack of land and nothing else," Gohain said adding that the state government should expedite land acquisition and hand

them over to railway for speedy progress of different projects.

Gohain also appealed to the state government to provide land for different projects. He said there are several new projects for Odisha in the pipeline for development of railway infrastructure.

Odisha's commerce and transport minister Nrusingha Sahoo, on the other hand, questioned the sincerity of the railways in completing the projects in the state. "The (Railways) have not completed works on the projects even after getting adequate land. The railway ministry is now trying to shift its responsibility on others.

They are not sincere," Sahoo said.

Sahoo, however, admitted delay in land acquisition for certain projects. "This delay is due to different land acquisition acts.

The Centre has made a new land acquisition act in 2015.

Earlier, there was a special land acquisition law for railway projects," Sahoo said.

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Dzongu Football Federation wins Dzongu MLA Cup

SUMMIT REPORT DZONGU, 30 DEC: The Dzongu Football Federation won the final match of Dzongu MLA football challenge cup 2017 held at Namprikdang ground in Upper Dzongu, North Sikkim defeating North East United in a penalty shoot

out. The tournament which had started on 15 Dec had 22 teams from different football clubs participating.

The winner of the tournament was awarded with the cash prize of Rs 1,05,000 along with the trophy while the runner-up team was awarded with the cash prize of Rs 55,000 respectively.

Abdul Ansari of North East United was adjudged man of the match.

The final match today was adjudged by Rashmi Chettri as umpire and Nima Diki Bhutia and Subash Tamang as linesmen.

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'Padmavati' is now 'Padmavat', CBFC suggests 5 modifications

MUMBAI, DEC 30 (PTI): The censor board has decided to give Sanjay Leela Bhansali's "Padmavati" a UA certificate without any cuts but has suggested that the director change the film's title to "Padmavat" besides making four other modifications.

There were reports doing the rounds that the board had suggested 26 cuts to the film, but in a statement, Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) chairman Prasoos Joshi clarified that they have only advised five modifications, including the title change, but "no cuts".

The board has also suggested modifications in disclaimers, pertinently adding one regarding not glorifying the practice of "Sati" and also relevant changes in the song 'Ghoomar' to befit the character portrayed, he said.

Joshi added that the producers and the director of the film are "completely in agreement" with the proposed modifications.

The board had a meeting of their examining committee on December 28 and decided to give the film a "UA certification along with some modifications and likely change of the film's title on the basis of the attributed material/creative source".

Bhansali, who appeared before a parliamentary panel, had said his lavishly-mounted Rs 150 crore period drama, featuring Deepika Padukone, Shahid Kapoor and Ranveer Singh, is based on the 16th century epic poem "Padmavati" by Malik Muhammad Jayasi.

Besides Joshi, the meeting was also attended by regular examining committee members, along with other censor board officials.

Considering the complexities and concerns around the film, the CBFC appointed a "special panel to add perspective to the final decision of the censor board's official committee".

The special panel included Arvind Singh from Udaipur, Chandramani Singh and professor K K Singh of the Jaipur University.

An Ordinary Football Fan of extraordinary passion

**SAURABH RAI
KALIMPONG, 29 DEC:**

During this time of the year, I would be sitting with him at the balcony of our village home in Rongo. He used to share stories of how he fell in love with the game of football at a very young age. He used to tell me how, as a kid, he would always carry his small rubber ball everywhere he went, sometimes even following his grandma through the tea gardens of Thorbu and losing his ball along the way. At the Mirik market he used to then cry and beg his grandma to buy him another ball. Most of the times, the old lady, due to her love for him, would oblige him. On the rare occasion, his requests would be turned down.

He moved to Rongo, a Cinchona Plantation which now falls in the new West Bengal district of Kalimpong as a young man after getting a job as a teacher and spent the rest of his life there with his wife, and, of course, the beautiful game.

A group of them got together and formed a team and



played in local tournaments and whenever they won, a goat used to be ready for the team to feast on sponsored by my grandfather. On match days, he would have lunch comprising of pork and rice and after taking a pinch of khaini, he used to walk to the field in full kit!

He also went as far as Kolkata to watch a match with a friend and struggled to cross the road in the big city. After having lunch, his friend drank the lime and water brought to wash the hands, we were often told to loud guffaws. That was in the 1950s, and if I remember

my grandfather's narrations correctly, they had watched Mohammedan Sporting play some other team.

A Gold Cup tournament was held in Rongo in the 1990s and I remember my grandfather buying momos for players of the winning team as his way of encouraging them and later getting scolded by my grandma as she found no logic in treating boys whom he didn't even know.

During the World Cups and other important matches before the television arrived, his Murphy radio was a constant companion. I remember him even watching recorded 1990 World Cup games years later in a VHS player in Kalimpong.

Every year, he used to travel to Gangtok to watch the All India Governor's Gold Cup. I remember going to matches with him. One such match was when Bhaichung Bhutia burst into the Indian Football scene as a young schoolboy and later, as we all know, he went on to become a legend of Indian Football.

Football fans come in all shapes and sizes. I have always felt like a dwarf when I see the passion of the fans which surrounds football. My grandfather was an ordinary football fan, the quiet one who just loved to enjoy a good match.

I thought my grandfather's love for football would continue for many more years, but it was cut short when he passed away in 2001. I regret that I have forgotten many of the stories he shared with me, but I will never forget what my aunt told me. As his end was nearing he went into a sort of trance we call "Dhataunu" in Nepali. He would suddenly get up and sit ramrod straight on his bed and when asked what he was doing, he looked pleased and said, "I am watching a football match... the boys are really playing well".

My grandfather's name was Prakash Rai and I hope he is happy up there. I still remember him whenever I watch a football match. Thank you, Baba for introducing me to this beautiful game.



FIR against wrestler Sushil Kumar, supporters for brawl

NEW DELHI, DEC 30 (PTI): Olympic-metallist Sushil Kumar was today booked by the Delhi Police in connection with his supporters clashing with those of rival wrestler Parveen Rana at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium here, police said.

Kumar and his supporters have been booked under IPC section 341 (wrongful restraint) and 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), the latter attracting an imprisonment of up to one year or a monetary fine of Rs 1,000 or both, police officials said.

The supporters of the two wrestlers yesterday engaged in an ugly clash and came to blows during the selection trial for the Gold Coast Games, to be held in April next year.

Kumar had won all his bouts but things took an ugly turn when Rana, after losing to the former in the semifinal clash, claimed that the decorated wrestler's supporters beat him and his elder brother "for daring to take the ring" against him.

This triggered a clash between the followers of the two which was even captured on cameras, leading to the police today registering a case against Kumar and his supporters, senior police officials said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Mandeep Singh Randhawa confirmed that an FIR has been lodged but the reason behind the brawl was being probed.

He said the police have not received any complaint against Rana or his followers from Kumar or his camp.

Kumar had yesterday claimed that he was bitten by Rana during the bout.

"... he bit me but no problem, it might be his tactics to stop me from performing well. All this is a part of sports," Sushil had told reporters after the bouts.

"Whatever happened here was wrong. I condemn it. There was mutual respect after the fight ended," he added.

Incidentally, the 34-year-old Kumar had beaten Rana in the Commonwealth Championships final in South Africa a few weeks back.

Also, Rana was among the three wrestlers who gave a walk-over to Kumar in the National Championships last month owing to the "respect" they had for the veteran.

Rana yesterday alleged that Kumar's supporters gave death threats to him and dared him to participate in the upcoming Pro Wrestling League.

India rises, Kohli rises higher; run-machine rules 2017

**ABHISHEK HORE
NEW DELHI, DEC 30 (PTI):**

The eyes of the world turned to India but cricket's habitual record-breaker, Virat Kohli, remained the cynosure of her eyes as his exploits, bit by bit, put in shade the frenzy around the FIFA U-17 World Cup and feats in other big-ticket sporting events.

Run-machine Kohli was at the forefront of a spectacular streak of wins that further enhanced his aura of invincibility, while providing succor from administrative wrangling that reared its head sporadically.

Looking back, the Indians had rubbed their hands in delight at the variety of marquee events at home the sporting calendar of 2017 offered, and they now look forward, with optimism and anticipation, to a challenging 2018.

Fans rejoiced the victories of PV Sindhu, and the ones by her rapidly rising fellow shuttlers led by Kidambi Srikanth, the men and women's hockey teams continental triumphs, and not to forget the maiden outing of a few spirited footballers in a global meet.

Many enjoyed the successful return of two-time Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar to wrestling after a three-year hiatus, a rare World Championship gold medal by Mirabai Chanu in weightlifting, the comeback of the great M C Mary Kom that culminated



in another Asian Championship gold, and last but not the least cueist Pankaj Advani's unprecedented 18th title at the big stage.

Boxer Gaurav Bidhuri's bronze at the World Championship also stood out simply for the fact that he wasn't even there in the original squad.

And as if giving a perfect sign off to the year, Viswanathan Anand quite literally turned back to clock to claim the rapid world title to make up for several disappointments of the recent past.

Another heartwarming take-away from this year was the women's cricket team's gutsy World Cup campaign, during which it managed to step out the shadows of their male counterparts and claim their own moment under the spotlight. Mithali Raj and Co. finished runners-up but the lion-hearted campaign had India sit up and take note of

the other cricket team.

However, nothing or no one could come close to the high pedestal on which the men's cricket team remained.

Even as the team scaled new heights on the field, the stepping down of coach Anil Kumble following reported differences with Kohli could not be averted, despite nine consecutive victories engineered by the duo.

Ravi Shastri was reinstated at the helm by the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), comprising Sourav Ganguly, VVS Laxman and Sachin Tendulkar.

While the loyalists remained loyal to the unofficial national sport, there were legions that thronged the football stadiums across the six venues, where the stars of tomorrow displayed their skills during the FIFA under-17 World Cup.

After months of training and

exposure tours to different parts of the world, players representing India's U17 team were ready to show the world they belonged.

In the first outing against USA, they got a taste of what top-notch football means, raised hopes of something special with a spirited performance against Colombia, only to be blown away by Ghana in their last appearance.

On expected lines, India were out early, but the crowds still flocked the stadiums for the remainder of what was termed a "game-changer" for Indian football. The jury is still out on that one.

Badminton grabbed the eyeballs as the shuttlers flew home with flying colours from top global meets, including the World Championship, in which Sindhu and Saina won India an unprecedented silver and bronze respectively.

Shooting did not quite set the stage ablaze either but the emergence of young talent such as Elavenil Valaviran, Mehuli Ghosh, Shapath Bharadwaj, Anish Bhanala held out hope for better times.

The steady progress by Jitu Rai -- India's best bet in Olympics after the retirement of Abhinav Bindra --, Gagan Narang, Ravi Kumar and Ankur Mittal in seniors also bode well for the sport.

Attacks on Christmas celebrations mar the season of joy and giving

contd from pg01

who have a burden for Jesus they will come freely without fear in freedom. Those whose faith is weak will hide. This shows the true identity of the believers. This is a test. In my opinion this is necessary.

We believe in God. He will give you the strength, the power and we will overcome that situation. If God is for us then who can be against us? We can pray. A prayer in faith can do anything. Christmas is not a festival. It is a historical event."

ARTHUR PAZO of Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Sikkim:

"In Sikkim, the government allows Christians, Muslims, Hindus to enjoy and build their own churches,

temples, etc. Unlike the mainland, people can do whatever they want and worship any God. People are allowed to practice any religious activities and even the people in Sikkim are not offended.

Meanwhile, persecution has always made the church stronger. It separates the wheat from the chaff. It drives away the nominal, worldly attenders, and separates disciples from the world... it drives the church to prayer. It unites the church in brotherly love. It often causes the church to expand numerically, as seen in China under communism. We need to know how to respond to persecution. We have all faced opposition but not all of us have been beaten or imprisoned or had everything taken

away just because of our faith. These principles also apply to the subject of how to respond to trials in general. We do not have an adequate theology of suffering. When trials come, we rage at God, rather than submit to Him. We resent the people who mete out the persecution. Peter and John had been arrested, put in jail and then threatened by the Jewish leaders because they had healed a lame man and had preached the resurrection of Jesus Christ to the crowd.

Respond to persecution by affirming our commitment to God, to His people, and to His work in the world. Persecution will either drive you away from God and cause you to become bitter or it will drive you closer to God and

cause you to become better. We affirm our commitment to God by knowing and applying His word and by looking to and imitating Jesus as God's holy servant.

Respond to persecution by affirming our commitment to the Lord's people. The Lord's people should be committed to unity.

2 Timothy 3:12 God's Word says that all godly people will be persecuted.

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. We are supposed to learn to endure persecution without retaliation as a necessary part of following the Lord. Learning to do so is an important way of demonstrating that we believe that God is our sufficiency. It is a

sad reality that most humans who are guilty of persecuting or abusing others are just perpetuating evil perpetrated upon them. Victims of child abuse, abuse their own children and so on. Unless we learn to forgive in the depth of our hearts and bless those who have persecuted us, we will unconsciously continue their practices and create victims in our own wake."

SOLOMON RAI, Church member of Caanan Christian Fellowship:

"Even though the world which we are living in has persecuted Christians, we should not be flustered by it as our Lord and savior Jesus Christ has already been persecuted in this world. We

need to understand that we are just following the path of Jesus Christ. We must accept what is happening as a fact. Jesus had already preached what is going to happen. He also told us that the gospel we are preaching is 'love'. The Christian community in Gangtok feels sorry for the persecuted Christians all over India and prays for them so that they may have the strength to endure the pain that they are going through."

REV. DR. LALBIAKMAWIA, Ex-Executive Secretary of Mizoram Synod:

"India being one of the largest democratic countries, the government should be concerned about the rights of people and there should be freedom to choose and

practice any religion. The government does not want the Christians to preach the Gospel as their aim is "conversion". But we have been seeing the right wing party do a lot of things to promote Hinduism for the past three years. What the right wing party did was wrong and every individual can follow any religion as it is their right. As Christians, we should not use violence to solve the problem. We should show more love and affection.

The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) representing 14 million Protestant and Orthodox Christians wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister hoping he would condemn the persecution but no such action was taken by the Government."

SIKKIM STATE LOTTERIES

SIKKIM NEW WEEKLY

Draw No:5 DrawDate on:30/12/17
1st Prize Rs.2.02 Crores/- G 1240
(Including Super Prize Amt)
2nd Prize Rs.16.50 Lakhs/- C 3758
(Including Super Prize Amt)
3rd Prize Rs.11 Lakhs/- D 9494
(Including Super Prize Amt)
4th Prize Rs.5.50 Lakhs/- H 3340
(Including Super Prize Amt)
5th Prize Rs.9000/- 0090 0682 2634 3948 6354 6371 7448 7502 8499 9691
6th Prize Rs.5000/- 1767 3436 3618 4173 4335 4385 4387 8598 9046 9751
7th Prize Rs.2000/- 0692 2154 4737 4810 4820 5462 7073 7293 7421 9047
8th Prize Rs.1000/-
0042 0147 0206 0361 0661 0793 0887 0957 1005 1006
1037 1078 1097 1098 1129 1199 1228 1274 1318 1629
1787 1831 2135 2346 2382 2447 2583 2714 2867 3145
3449 3490 3522 3547 3700 3763 3776 4041 4087 4096
4316 4359 4454 4500 4560 4572 4715 4768 4803 4855
4950 4960 5101 5158 5198 5199 5490 5499 5568 5633
5748 5843 5921 5973 5989 6010 6012 6174 6258 6498
6529 6828 6876 6934 7028 7115 7257 7304 7378 7411
7506 7682 7739 7769 7878 7892 8325 8420 8498 8623
8685 8722 8854 8999 9132 9312 9485 9804 9924 9975

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KINDLY CHECK THE RESULT WITH THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE

Nirbhaya Fund not being used for women: Mother

BALLIA (UP), DEC 30 (PTI): The mother of a woman whose gang-rape in a moving bus and subsequent death in 2012 triggered a nationwide outrage has alleged that the Nirbhaya Fund set up in her daughter's name was not being used for security and empowerment of women.

"The Nirbhaya Fund should have been used for women security and empowerment but it is being for works like road construction," Asha Devi said at a programme in her village Maderwa Kala to mark the conclusion of the Nirbhaya Jyoti Yatra which had started from Lucknow.

Egypt's Morsi sentenced to three years in prison

CAIRO, DEC 30 (AFP): An Egyptian court sentenced ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi to three years in prison along with 19 other defendants today for "insulting the judiciary," his lawyer said.

Morsi had already been sentenced to a total of 45 years in prison in two other trials after the military ousted him in 2013. The defendants had all been charged with making statements deemed insulting to the judiciary.

Morsi was also ordered to pay two million pounds to the head of the judges' syndicate and another judge, while 22 other defendants were ordered to pay one million pounds to the head of the syndicate.

US considering withholding USD 255 mn aid to Pak: NYT

NEW YORK, DEC 30 (PTI): The Trump administration is strongly considering to withhold USD 255 million in aid to Pakistan, reflecting dissatisfaction with Islamabad's inaction against terror networks, a media report said.

The Trump administration's internal debate over whether to deny Pakistan the money is a test of whether Trump will deliver on his threat to punish Islamabad for failing to cooperate on counterterrorism operations, the New York Times reported.

It said the relations between the US and Pakistan, long vital for both, have chilled steadily since the president declared that Paki-

stan "gives safe haven to agents of chaos, violence and terror."

The US, which has provided Pakistan more than USD 33 billion in aid since 2002, said in August that it was withholding the USD 255 million until Pakistan did more to crackdown on terrorist groups.

"Senior administration officials met this month to decide what to do about the money, and American officials said a final decision could be made in the coming weeks," the daily said.

The New York Times report comes days after US Vice President Mike Pence said in Kabul that the Trump administration

has put Pakistan on notice.

Pakistan, according to the daily, has refused to give the US access to one of the abductors of the Canadian-American family who were freed early this year, the latest disagreement in the increasingly dysfunctional relationship between the countries.

"Now, the Trump administration is strongly considering whether to withhold USD 255 million in aid that it had delayed sending to Islamabad, according to American officials, as a show of dissatisfaction with Pakistan's broader intransigence toward confronting the terrorist net-

works that operate there, the New York Times report said.

Pakistan's military on Thursday warned the US against the possibility of taking unilateral action against armed groups on its soil, in its strongest response yet to tensions between the two allies.

Pakistan military spokesman Major-General Asif Ghafoor rejected the notion that Pakistan is not doing enough to fight armed groups.

He said Pakistan would continue to fight armed groups in the region in Pakistan's self-interest, rather than at the behest of other countries.

India facing possible mental health epidemic, warns President

BENGALURU, DEC 30 (PTI): President Ram Nath Kovind today said India was facing a possible "mental health epidemic" and stressed the need for providing access to treatment facilities to those suffering from mental disorders by 2022.

Speaking at the 22nd convocation of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences here (NIMHANS), he called for addressing the shortage of mental health professionals.

"For those who are getting their degrees at the convocation, the real challenge has just begun. They are going into a world where their skills are acutely needed more than ever before," the president said.

"India does not simply have a mental health challenge... it is facing a possible mental health epidemic," he said.

Pointing out several reasons for this, he said the country was experiencing technological, economic and demographic changes that were transforming the nature of diseases.

Kovind said in 2022, India would be celebrating its 75th anniversary of Independence and it

should be ensured that by then at least those suffering from serious mental disorders have been diagnosed and have access to treatment facilities.

"Let us take this up as a national mission," he said.

The government, non-government sectors and all related public and private institutions need to contribute to this effort, he said, and asked the NIMHANS, as the country's premier health institute, to draw a road map and to be the navigator towards achieving this goal.

Observing that the shortage of mental health professionals was another major gap that the country has to address, Kovind said there were just about 5,000 psychiatrists and less than 2,000 clinical psychologists in the country.

These numbers were very small, he said.

"Especially for the purpose of diagnosis of mental illnesses, it will be advisable to use (the services of) physicians, psychologists who teach in colleges and educational institutions as well as auxiliary nurses and midwives who are at the front line of public health system across the country," he said.



YEAR IN PICTURES 2017: An Eritrean Orthodox Christian pilgrim was baptised, during Epiphany, at the Qasr El-Yahud baptism site on the west bank of the River Jordan. The site is where Christians believe Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist. Due to the sensitivity of the area, an agreement to allow visitors to the site was reached between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority alongside seven Orthodox denominations.

192 Pak pilgrims denied visa by India for Nizamuddin's Urs: FO

ISLAMABAD, DEC 30 (PTI): Pakistan today claimed that India has denied visas to nearly 200 pilgrims who wanted to visit the country to participate in the death anniversary ceremony of Hazrat Khawaja Nizamuddin Auliya.

The Foreign Office said in a statement that "Pakistan regrets the last minute postponement and non-issuance of visas by India" for the visit of 192 devotees to participate in the Urs ceremony (death anniversary) in New Delhi from January 1-8.

"As a result of this Indian decision, the Pakistani Zaireen (devotees) would be deprived of the opportunity to participate in the Urs, which is of special significance," the statement said. The visit was to take place under the provisions of the 1974 Pakistan-India Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines and is an annual feature.

"This is unfortunate and runs counter to the letter and spirit of the 1974 Protocol and objective of people-to-people contacts," it said. The statement said that besides being

violative of the bilateral Protocol, and the basic human right to religious freedom, such measures also undermined the efforts aimed at improving the environment, increasing people-to-people contacts and normalising relations between the two countries.

"It is ironic that this was done on the occasion of Urs of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya who was a symbol of bringing communities closer to each other," the FO added.

BHARAT SANCHAR NIGAM LIMITED (Government of India) O/o G.MTD, GANGTOK, SIKKIM NOTICE INVITING TENDER...

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NAGALAND STATE LOTTERIES DEAR TENDER MORNING Draw Time: 11:55 am onwards Draw No.4 DrawDate on:29/12/17...

NAGALAND STATE LOTTERIES DEAR ADMIRE Draw Time: 04:00 pm onwards Draw No.22 DrawDate on:29/12/17...

NAGALAND STATE LOTTERIES DEAR VULTURE EVENING Draw Time: 08:00 pm onwards Draw No.22 DrawDate on:29/12/17...

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NAGALAND STATE LOTTERIES DEAR OSTRICH EVENING Draw Time: 08:00 pm onwards Draw No.22 DrawDate on:30/12/17...

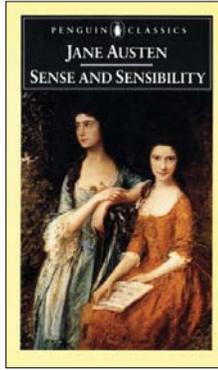
BOOK OF THE DAY

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY BY JANE AUSTEN

Jane Austen first crafted this story as an epistolary novel and titled it "Elinor and Marianne." Although the structure would change as she revised the novel over fifteen years until it was published in 1811 as Sense and Sensibility, the relationship between these two young women remained its core.

But this novel isn't about a conflict between sisters with opposing characters, one directed by Sense, the other driven by Sensibility. It's about recognizing the sense and sensibility we each possess and how to release one and harness the other when love beckons and threatens in equal measure. It is about a quest for harmony and the embrace of one's true self, about the ability to admit fallibility while still seeking personal growth. Sense and Sensibility is the Tao of Austen.

The moments of self-ac-

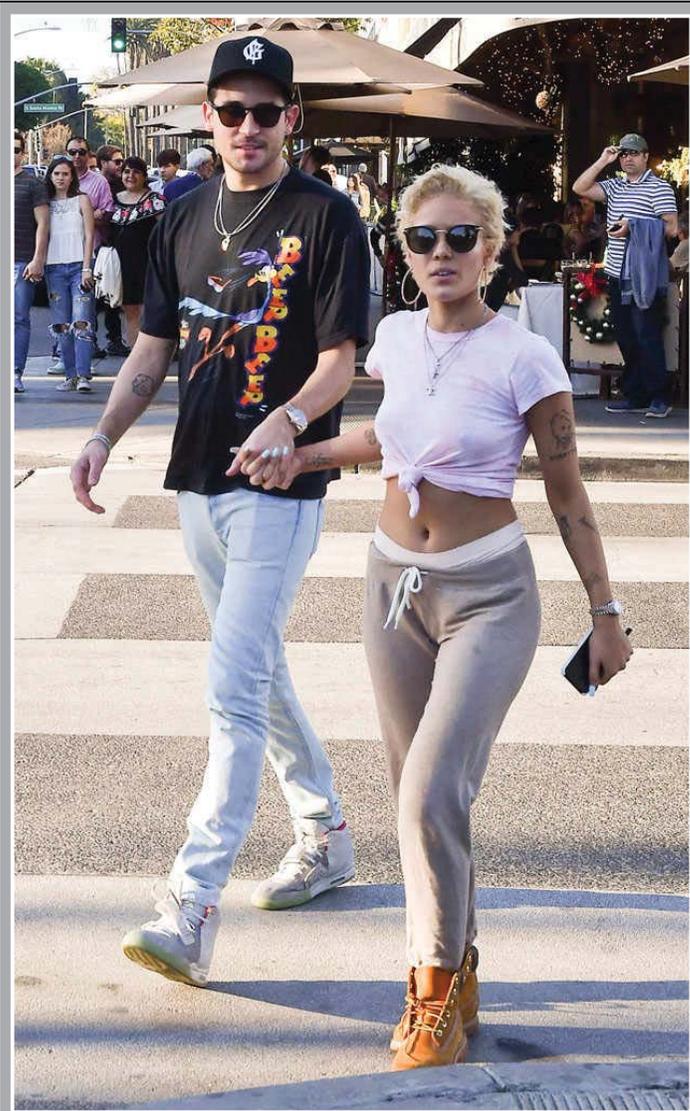


tualization are many and profound. Elinor's is the least notable because she enters and remains the most centered and stable person; Colonel Brandon's came many years before the novel takes place—we learn of it as he relates the sorrowful story of his lost love and the child he takes on as a ward; but John

Willoughby, Edward Ferrars, Marianne Dashwood—each has a period of reckoning that challenges the weakest aspects of their characters and each arrives at a resolution.

Sense and Sensibility has Austen's most rousing cast of secondary characters, with

the wicked witch Mrs. John Dashwood, effusive, lovable busybody Mrs. Jennings, sly and silly Lucy Steele, and the preposterously mis-matched Mr. and Mrs. Palmer. But it is Elinor for whom the readers turn each page, in admiration and tenderness.



POWER COUPLE: The 'Him & I' duo Halsey and G-Eazy couple holds hands after enjoying lunch at Il Pastaio in Beverly Hills.

JAY-Z'S "FAMILY FEUD" VIDEO TEASER SHOWS HIM AND BEYONCÉ IN CONFESSIONAL BOX



Jay-Z went there. On Thursday, the rapper and producer's streaming service TIDAL promoted on Twitter a teaser for "Family Feud," which features his wife Beyoncé and 5-year-old daughter Blue Ivy, the eldest of their three kids.

In the clip, Bey, who gave birth to her and Jay's twins Rumi and Sir this past June, and Jay-Z are seen on opposite sides of a confessional booth.

The track is from his 4:44 album, which many view as a response to his wife's 2016 album Lemonade, which was about love, infidelity and forgiveness.

In "Family Feud," Jay-Z raps, "Yeah, I'll f--k up a good thing if you let me / Let me alone Becky."

On Beyoncé's Lemonade track "Sorry," she sings, "He only want me when I'm not there / He better call Becky with the good hair."

Bey looks furious in the video, which features scenes of unidentified man making out with an

unidentified woman with good hair. Jay-Z's also features shots of Jay-Z leading Blue Ivy up the aisle of a church.

The full video for "Family Feud" is set for release on Friday.



THIS DAY IN HISTORY

30TH DECEMBER

1922: Vladimir Lenin the Russian revolutionary who created Leninism, an extension of Marxist theory proclaims the establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Find More What happened in 1922

1934: In Geneva the League of Nations had hoped that the U.S. would cooperate and become a member. However, President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull refused to get involved.

1972: President Nixon orders a halt to the bombing of North Vietnam above the 20th Parallel to help with peace negotiations scheduled between Henry A. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho in Paris on Jan 8

1984: Speleologists in Mexico had discovered what might be the world's deepest cave after going through a maze of

underground tunnels in the jungle. The explorations took place in the state of Oaxaca.

1994: A huge 7.5 earthquake shook northern Japan and workmen tried feverishly to repair the wreckage. Two hundred and eighty-five aftershocks occurred and the quake originated in the Pacific Ocean 300 miles northeast of Tokyo.

2006: North Korea tested a nuclear bomb in October in spite of the threat of sanctions being placed on it. The country also planned to open a nuclear power plant in 2007.

2006: Saddam Hussein has been hanged in northern Baghdad for crimes against humanity. Iraqi state TV showed images of him going to the gallows before dawn in a building that his intelligence services once used for executions. The moment of his execution was not shown, although pictures of his body wrapped in a shroud were later broadcast on TV.

VARUN DHAWAN AND SHRADDHA KAPOOR ALL SET TO COME TOGETHER ONCE AGAIN FOR A SPECIAL SONG

Varun Dhawan and Shraddha Kapoor shared some sizzling chemistry in their dance film ABCD 2. The film was very much loved by both fans and critics. Good news coming in here is that both Varun and Shraddha will once again come together in a special song for the film 'Nawabzaade' which is being helmed by Jayesh Pradhan and presented by Bhushan Kumar and Remo D'souza. High Rated Gabru, the Punjabi number, sung by Guru Randhawa has already crossed 205 million views on YouTube.



doing a film with them I knew I had to be part of it in some way. So when this song came up, Shraddha and I decided to feature in this special video." He adds, "It was a lot of fun, sharing screen space with Shraddha again. We are very comfortable with each other and High Rated Gabru is already a chartbuster."

Ecstatic Shraddha also spoke about reuniting with her ABCD 2 team. She said, "I was all charged to work again with Bhushanji, Remo sir, Varun and a few others from the ABCD 2 gang. When I got to know that we are going to be shooting a video for High Rated Gabru, I got even more excited because the song is fantastic and so loved. The

whole experience of shooting it was fun. I felt nostalgic,"

Producer Bhushan Kumar adds, "Both Varun and Shraddha had developed a fantastic camaraderie with the actors of ABCD 2. So it was not surprising that they agreed to be part of this video instantly."

Remo D'souza who has choreographed the special video mentioned, "Sometimes things just magically fall into place. It was heartening to see that Bhushan, Varun, and Shraddha were most forthcoming to give what it takes to make this number extraordinary. I am glad we could do this for my protégés from ABCD2. I am sure the song will help to create a buzz around Nawabzaade."

ing this day enjoying your friends or your favorite hobby rather than trying to make any major life decisions or commitments. **GEMINI:** Be the star of your own movie today and be proud of the role you play, Gemini. You might find yourself adopting the persona of many different characters depending on your mood of the hour. There is a special gleam in your smile today that you should share openly with others. Don't feel rushed to get anywhere. You have already arrived. Enjoy yourself in the company of those you love. **CANCER:** Take a break from your daily routine and get off the track today. Cancer. The world will turn with you for a day, so feel free to tune out for a while. Remember

that whatever path you decide to take is the right path. Regret is a useless emotion - don't even bother with it. Enjoy the present day and all the small joys that it has to offer. Communicate your dreams and bring things into balance. **LEO:** Things are flowing your way today, Leo, and you should find a great deal of pleasure in the comfort of others. You might find that there is an air of fantasy about the day that is causing your emotions to lose track of time and space. Don't bother connecting to reality if you don't have to. Go to an art museum or attend a dance performance. See a movie and go out to your favorite restaurant. **VIRGO:** Don't try to nail down any answers today, Virgo, because you'll probably just end up feel-

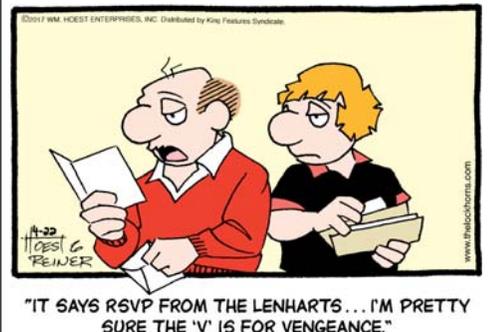
ing more frustrated than when you started. The less you try to force your will on others, the more you'll find that things just automatically go your way. Today isn't about finding solutions to problems; it's about enjoying that which you have already learned and accomplished. Keep things light. **LIBRA:** Let your childish side come out to play today, Libra. Your dreams are in full force, so let them lead the way. Enjoy lighthearted conversations with friends about the latest movies and your favorite websites. You might want to consider working out or getting a haircut. This is a good day to improve your general appearance overall. You have a much sharper eye for physical beauty on a day like today.

SCORPIO: Take a break from the trail you're on and get off the beaten path, Scorpio. Today is a day to forge ahead with ideas and dreams rather than commitments and answers. Question things and debate the facts. Whatever you do, have fun. This is the perfect day to go out and enjoy the fresh air with an outdoor activity, especially group activities. You can't go wrong with joining up with friends and chatting away about the latest events of your life. **SAGITTARIUS:** You may find it hard to take a realistic approach to your emotions today, Sagittarius. A sensitive issue is apt to be pulling on you in such a way that it's leaving you feeling like you are way out in left field in terms of the way you relate to others. You might want to consider

letting someone else take the lead for once and allow stability to form before the next decision is made. **CAPRICORN:** Question the validity of anything you find yourself in conflict with today, Capricorn. You might find that people are acting on incomplete information and that they are falsely accusing you of something you didn't say or do. Work to bring harmony to the situation by getting the truth out on the table and helping the actual motivations become known. Words may be charged with strong emotions, so be gentle with your actions. **AQUARIUS:** It may feel like something has suddenly clicked into place for you today in which you have found the missing piece of a puzzle you've been working

on for a while, Aquarius. The answers may be subtle, but they are there. Fantasy and a playful attitude will lead you to them effortlessly. Spread your ideas out to the world today and adopt an attitude that encourages others to join in your daydreams as well. **PISCES:** Things may seem a bit surreal for you today, Pisces, so don't take other people's chatter too seriously. Today is a day to reach out and touch someone, so pick up the phone and dial it. It's a good day to share your dreams with others, despite how farfetched they may sound. Others may look at you as if you have three heads, but as long as you're being honest with yourself, there's no reason for you to be shy about sharing.

LOCKHORNS - HOEST & REINER



"IT SAYS RSVP FROM THE LENHARTS... I'M PRETTY SURE THE 'V' IS FOR VENGEANCE."

ARCTIC CIRCLE - HULLATT



BABY BLUES - KIRKMAN & SCOTT



ARIES: Today is a great day for you in which you should enjoy a great deal of playful conversation with others, Aries. Fantasy is likely to play a large role in the events of the day, and you may find yourself daydreaming as you walk down the street. Don't bother with reality today if you don't have to. You're much better off keeping the tone light and playful. Enjoy your fantasy world and feel free to invite others into it. **TAURUS:** There may be a rather confusing element to the day for you, Taurus, in which you feel tempted to act but not all the pieces seem to be in place. It could be hard to make a decision about things since the facts seem to be quite clouded. You're better off spend-