



SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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THIS IS WHAT PRECISION LOOKS LIKE! A paraglider gracefully touches down hitting the bull's eye at the 1st Sikkim Red Panda International Paragliding Accuracy Open Championship held from 17-21 Dec.

[foto: NANGKHA LONGKUMER]

SDF downplays three ex-ministers joining BJP

GANGTOK, DEC 26 (PTI): The ruling Sikkim Democratic Front led by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling today said three former ministers joining the BJP recently will have no bearing on the SDF electorally or otherwise.

Three former ministers - RB Subba, KN Uprety and Birbal Limboo - and some middle-rung leaders had joined the BJP in the presence of Ram Madhav, the party's national general secretary and North-East In-charge, at the national capital last week.

"These ex-ministers, besides a former SDF leader Prem Karki, have had nowhere to go after leaving the parent party... it will have no bearing on the ruling party electorally or otherwise, now or ever," the SDF spokesperson KT Gyaltsen told PTI.

Observing that the new BJP recruits from Sikkim have no support base of their own, he wished the ex-ministers' all the luck in the new party.

Gyaltsen also asked Subba and others to explain their stand on BJP's

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Indian Army kills 3 Pak soldiers in cross border ops in J-K

NEW DELHI, DEC 26 (PTI): A group of five Army commandos crossed the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir and killed three Pakistani soldiers, in a swift and daring operation last evening.

The "tactical strike" in Rukh Chakri sector in Rawlakot, which brought back memories of last year's 'surgical strikes', is seen as avenging the killing of four Indian Army personnel including a Major by a Border Action Team of the Pakistan Army in Keri sector of Rajouri on Saturday.

Army sources said a "small group" of five 'Ghatak' (deadly) commandos carried out the operation 200-300 metres inside the Pakistan occupied territory from the LoC in which three Pakistani soldiers were killed and another injured.

The operation took place hours after Indian death row prisoner Kulbhushan Jadhav met his wife and mother in Islamabad.

The Pakistan Army said has confirmed the death of the three soldiers but asserted that they died in unprovoked firing and that Indian soldiers had not crossed the LoC.

The sources said yesterday's operation cannot be compared to last year's surgical strikes as it was a small team of commandos carried out the attack with a "limited aim" following orders from the local commander of the Army unit.

They said the operation began around 6 PM and the team returned to their camp within 45 minutes and that none of the commandos sustained any injury.

A temporary post of the Pakistan army was smashed in the strike. The post was under extensive surveillance much before the operation was carried out, the sources said.

On Saturday, the Border Action Team of the Pakistan Army had killed four Indian Army personnel including a Major in Rajouri.

The sources said Pakistani soldiers killed in the operation were from Pakistan Army's 59 Baloch regiment.

There were reports that the number of casualty on the Pakistani side was four but Army sources maintained that they have confirmation about three

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State level tribal festival kicks off at Namprikdang



WANGCHUK BHUTIA MANGAN, 26 DEC:

Five-day long festival-cum-State level Tribal Festival 2017-18 was inaugurated today at Namprikdang in Upper Dzongu, North Sikkim by MLA Kabi-Lungtsok constituency, Ugen Nedup Bhutia, in the presence of Zilla Adhyakshya North, Pamdey Lepcha, Chairperson Scheduled Tribe Welfare Board, Sonam Gyatso Bhutia and Chair-

person SNT Department, Pintso Namgyal Lepcha. The festival will conclude on 30 Dec.

Secretary, Social Justice, Empowerment & Welfare Department, Sarala Rai, highlighted about the tribal mela and also informed about the different schemes for tribals provided by central government. She further informed about infrastructure and institute being developed by the government for tribal communities.

Chairperson Tribal Welfare Board urged people to keep traditions and cultures alive and further informed about the safeguard of different communities of Sikkim after SDF government came to power.

A book on Tribal Carnival was also released during the function.

Addressing the function, area MLA, Ugen Nedup Bhutia, who attended the event as chief guest, extended warm wishes to

the people on the eve of the festival and encouraged organisers to keep the festival alive. He further added that the State government is always working towards safeguarding the tradition of different communities and added that people should cooperate in such efforts.

Also during the function, three tribal achievers from the State namely, BB Muringla, Pempa Norbu Sherpa and Naseeb Tamang, were felicitated.

Three former State Ministers join BJP

VISHNU NEOPANEY GANGTOK, 26 DEC:

Three former Ministers, RB Subba, KN Uprety and Birbal Limboo along with former SKM functionary, Prem Karki accompanied by State BJP president, DB Chauhan, and other executive members met Bharatiya Janta Party high command, Ram Madhav and Amit Shah, in New Delhi last week and apprised them of their willingness to join BJP.

The three former Ministers discussed Sikkim's present political scenario at length with the BJP high command and agreed to formally join BJP in Sikkim in the first week of January next year.

Mr Subba informed



Summit TIMES over the phone that the political scenario in the State has led to their decision to join a national political party. The people are whole heartedly supporting BJP and losing faith in the Pawan Chamling led Sikkim Democratic Front, he added.

He said that political aspirations of Sikkim will only be fulfilled under a BJP led government as the SDF government



is misleading people whether it be in the case of Limboo Tamang seats reservation in the State Assembly or the issue of permit to Karmapa to visit Sikkim or the provision of ST status to 11 left out Sikkimese Nepali communities.

He expressed his gratitude to the BJP central high command for their positive assurances.

With this, it is clear that the political battle



ground for the next assembly election due in April 2019 will see BJP emerging as one of the potential forces that could give a tough fight to the SDF.

As the principal opposition party, SKM has not yet lost its ground despite seven of its elected MLAs joining the ruling front. SKM is still hoping to regain support at the grassroots to fight with all its might against SDF.

Attractive pay, strong club culture way forward: Bhaichung



HYDERABAD, DEC 26 (PTI): Former Indian football captain Bhaichung Bhutia feels strengthening club culture and providing attractive pay will encourage more people to take sports as a profession in the country.

Cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar had last week raised the issue of financial security of athletes, saying it is often a challenge when any person decides to focus on sports alone as their

career.

Bhutia agreeing to the batting maestro said financial security is definitely a factor while choosing a career but also pointed out that things have improved with the advent of professional leagues in different sports disciplines.

This trend, along with the long standing football culture, has provided sportspersons

with more opportunities to earn a decent living.

"I guess the club structure in any sport has to be strong. Incentive for sportspersons when they do well at state and national levels has to be good. And corporates have to come up (in a bigger way) and sponsor", Bhutia told PTI.

He said that more than health insurance, it is good pay that will attract people to take

up sports as a career.

Bhutia also emphasised on the importance of having health insurance for national-level athletes.

It is really good if sportspersons are covered under health insurance. But more importantly, one should have good club structure, which offers attractive professional contracts to players, the 41-year-old said.

Two BJP MLAs take oath as members of Arunachal assembly

ITANAGAR, DEC 26 (PTI): Two newly-elected BJP MLAs today took oath as members of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly.

Assembly Speaker T N Thongdok administered the oath to B R Waghe, who won the by-poll from Pakke-Kessang constituency and Kardo Nyigyor from the Likabali seat, counting for which was held on December 24.

Over 68.5 per cent electors cast their votes in the by-poll, with Pakke-Kessang recording 86 per cent turnout and Likabali 51 per cent in the December 21 by-elections.

Waghe of the BJP won the Pakke-Kessang seat by a narrow margin of 475 votes, defeating his lone rival and former deputy chief minister, Kameng Dolo of the Congress.

In the Likabali seat, Nyigyor won by a slender margin of 305 votes, defeating his nearest rival, Gumke Riba of the Peoples' Party of Arunachal (PPA).

The BJP now has 48 MLAs in the 60-member House along with nine PPA legislators, one Congress and two Independents.



SKM lauds independent Panchayat candidates

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 26 DEC:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha held a co-ordination meeting in Upper Sumin ward under Namcheybong Constituency today. The programme was chaired by SKM act-

ing president, Kunga Nima Lepcha, and was attended by working president, Navin Karki, chief coordinator, Sonam Lama, vice president [In-charge East District Zone 2], Bishnu Kumar Khatiwara, vice president, PK

Subba, and Constituency level workers.

An SKM press release issued by its press & publicity secretary, Ranjana Pradhan, informs that the agenda of the meeting was to strengthen party activities in the

Constituency and also to acknowledge independent Panchayat candidates who fought against SDF party.

Co-ordinator [East], BB Sharma, praised voters who voted in favor of an independent candi-

date without fear of SDF party.

Acting president, Mr Lepcha, congratulated independent ward candidate of Upper Sumin, Lakpa Doma Sherpa, who lost by a narrow margin against an SDF candidate.

National Mushroom Day celebrated at ICAR-NOFRI

GANGTOK, 26 DEC [PIB]: An awareness-cum-training programme on organic oyster mushrooms was organized on the occasion of National Mushroom Day at ICAR-National Organic Farming Research Institute in Tadong today under the leadership of Joint Director, ICAR-NOFRI, Dr RK Avasthe.

The programme was inaugurated and chaired by Dean, College of Horticulture, Central Agricultural University, Dr SK Sharma, as chief guest.

The foreword for the event was raised with the welcome speech by Senior Scientist, Horticulture, Dr Ashish Yadav, who took the opportunity to welcome all the participants and dignitaries.

Dr Avasthe presented an overview of the current scenario and scope of mushroom production in Sikkim. He emphasized the societal and economic role which the mushroom production is expected to play in the near future in the organic state of Sikkim.

Chief guest, Dr Sharma, in

his address, remarked that with the modernization of lifestyle, there has been a drastic shift in the food habits of people. He applauded the people of Sikkim for having kept their traditions and customs intact even in this era of progressive transformations and called upon the farmers of Sikkim to take up mushroom cultivation as a good option for sustaining a healthy livelihood.

Dr Sharma expressed his congratulations to the Joint Director and the scientists of ICAR-NOFRI

for the tremendous efforts they have taken for the upliftment of the farmers of Sikkim.

During the programme, Scientist, Plant Pathology and Principal Investigator, AICRP on Mushrooms, Dr Shweta Singh, detailed the relevance of organic oyster mushroom cultivation in Sikkim and explained the mushroom cultivation technology developed at ICAR-NOFRI and its scope for livelihood and nutritional security of the people of Sikkim.

Bad roads, power cuts hamper tourism in Arunachal village

ZIRO (ARUNACHAL PRADESH), DEC 26 (PTI): A huge gate with inscription Ayapa Ato (welcome) greets visitors to the picturesque Hong Village, nestled in the rainforests of Lower Subansiri district in Arunachal Pradesh.

The hill-girdled hamlet, spanning 58 sq km, with a total population of 9,800, as per 2011 census, is known for its unique fish farming and sustainable agricultural techniques.

Of late, however, Hong village is reeling under various nagging problems, which are in many ways hampering its tourism prospects and are in need of urgent government attention.

"One of the major problems in this village is the dilapidated condition of the roads. Many tourists are not willing to visit the place that boasts of the first Kasturba Gandhi Ashram in the whole of North East," Robin Hibu, a resident of the village and a Joint Commissioner of Delhi Police, said.

Without roads nothing can move ahead here, Hibu, who is also the first IPS officer from the state, said.

Zila parishad member of Hong village Tilling Sambyo said that the unique fish-cum-paddy culture practiced by the Apatani community has drawn many tourists to this hamlet from faraway places.

"Not many visitors come to Hong village these days. We are trying our best to woo back the tourists but pathetic road condition is a major hindrance," lamented Sambyo.

Erratic power supply is another problem the villagers face here, Sambyo said.

"The village, inhabited by the hard-working Apatani community, considers tourists as their god. Four homestay facilities were established in the village to accommodate visitors. There used to be a time when these homestays would be full round the year," he said.

Sambyo further explained that the tourists, who come to the village, also visit the Talley Valley wildlife sanctuary, home to bear, tiger, leopard and hornbill.

"On an average, around 5000 foreign tourists visit the village every year," Sambyo added.

The village is inhabited by 11 clans of the Apatani community and they co-exist peacefully, head gaon burha (village headman) Tilling Duri said.

"Lack of proper road and other basic facilities, including water supply, are some of the reasons why people no longer wish to stay here," he rued.

With the Ziro cultural landscape finding a mention in the tentative list of UNESCO's World Heritage sites in 2014, the state government should take care to preserve the traditional and cultural heritage of the village, Duri said.

Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, who also holds the Finance, Planning and PWD portfolios, during a programme on November 16, had assured to provide additional funds for repair and maintenance of the roads.

Journalists challenge order gagging media in Sohrabuddin case in Bombay HC

MUMBAI, DEC 26 (PTI): Journalists from some media houses today petitioned the Bombay High Court challenging a sessions court order gagging the media from reporting the trial of retired and serving police officials accused in the Sohrabuddin Sheikh fake encounter case.

The trial court had on November 29 this year on an application by the accused persons passed an order prohibiting the media from publishing or printing or telecasting information pertaining to the trial proceedings.

Nine legal reporters from national dailies and news channels have filed the petition in the High Court challenging the order and said it was "illegal and not tenable in law".

The petition claims that the ban order has become a major road block and obstacle for the reporters in discharging their duties.

"The trial court ought to have considered that the case involves an element of public interest and our populace, therefore, has the right to know what transpires in the trial.

The accused persons, almost all of whom are former police officers are standing trial on the charges that they engaged in fake encounter killings in and around

turn to pg03

GST refund woes hit Bengal jewellery exports

KOLKATA, DEC 26 (PTI): The non-refund of Goods and Services Tax (GST) is taking a toll on jewellery makers with exports taking a hit in West Bengal, both in terms of export value and jobs.

"Even I am forced to decline orders for January due to lack of working capital. Situation is no different for other exporters and manufacturers. Till now, an amount totalling Rs 60 crore is stuck with the government as GST refund, that too interest-free for the jewellery exporters," Indian Bullion and Jewellers Association state president Pankaj Parekh told PTI.

Parekh added that the impact on business is about 50 per cent in value of exports during the last few months due to non-refund of GST and related issues.

"The last quarter is expected to be worse if things don't get resolved," Parekh said.

The former Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council state chairman said that prior to GST, direct exports

from Kolkata alone was about Rs 6,000 crore. An additional Rs 4,000 crore worth of jewellery manufactured in the state was also exported from ports like Mumbai.

Besides affecting exports, it is threatening jobs in the jewellery sector in the state.

"One lakh artisans are engaged in Kolkata in the sector," Parekh said.

West Bengal state finance minister Amit Mitra had slammed the Centre about GST refund problem for exporters and SMEs.

He had said that lack of interface in place between the Goods and Services Tax Network with the customs electronic date interchange (EDI) and the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), the Centre was using ledger for manual records for refunds, causing a delay in refunds.

Mitra termed use of manual ledger as retrograde and more "primitive" than even VAT regime.

Bengal to impart advanced vocational training in HS schools

KOLKATA, DEC 26 (PTI): The West Bengal government has decided to impart advanced vocational training in higher secondary (HS) schools for skill development, Purnendu Bose, minister for Technical Education said.

Bose said that training in vocational education was important to creating employment opportunities.

At present, nearly 2700 HS schools had been selected for impart-

ing courses in vocational training, he said while speaking at a BNCCI seminar here today.

He said that out of the 2700 schools, 700 of them had been selected for providing courses on advanced vocational training.

These advanced courses in the schools would be introduced in a phase wise manner, Bose said.

Besides vocational training, formal educa-

tion would also be given to the students.

The government was also keen to collaborate with institutions like National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Nabard and chambers of commerce.

State engagement officer Bikram Das of NSDC said that the Central government was having sponsored schemes for vocational education in government and government-aided schools.

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Gangtok on Wednesday, 27 Dec

Temp: 21°C /07°C
Forecast: Sunny with pleasant weather turning cloudy in the area in the afternoon.
Sunrise: 06:24 AM
Sunset: 4:49 PM



Sushil Ghaley sets new national record in National Shooting C'ship

SAURABH RAI SILIGURI, 26 DEC: Indian Army Marksman, Sushil Ghaley, who hails from Darjeeling, has recently won gold medal in the 50m rifle prone event during the National Shooting Championship held at Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala upsetting Olympic silver medalist, Gagan Narang, and Rio Olympics participant, Chain Singh. Sushil also set a new national record with his win.

Sushil went on to win another gold in the team event with the partnership of Chain Singh and Surendra Rathore.

Indian Army kills 3 Pak soldiers...
contd from pg01

The Indian Army had carried out "surgical strikes" in September last year, targeting alleged terror launch pads on the Pakistani side.

The Indian Army has been adopting a "tough" approach in dealing with ceasefire violations and terrorist activities in the last one year.

According to official figure, a total of 820 incidents of ceasefire violation by Pakistani troops were reported in the current year till today as against 221 last year.

A total of 61 Army personnel including three Garud commandos were killed in action in Jammu and Kashmir this year while the Army killed 210 terrorists in the same period.

Out of the total terrorists killed, 62 were killed along the Line of Control and 148 in the hinterland in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

SDF downplays three ex-ministers joining BJP...

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political agendas and whether or not they are comfortable with those issues.

On being asked whether the joining of three former ministers will bolster BJP's electoral prospects in Sikkim in 2019 assembly polls, he said that it will be decided by the people of border state as and when elections take place.

Paragliders from around the world take to Sikkim skies

NANGKHA LONGKUMER GANGTOK, 26 DEC: The 17th of December saw the eyes of Gangtokians fixed on the Ani Gumpa skyline. What exactly were they looking at, you might ask? It was not a bird, it wasn't a plane and no, it definitely wasn't Superman up in the air. Paragliders from Japan, South Korea, Kazakhstan, Switzerland and all over the world took to the air as they vied to test their mettle in the 1st Sikkim Red Panda International Accuracy Open Championship held in Gangtok which culminated on 21 Dec with South Korea dominating the entire competition. Sikkim has impressed the professional pilots so much that they are keen to return and promote the state as an adventure tourism destination.

"Sikkim is perfect for adventure tourism. Sikkim has mountains and rivers which



can be used for paragliding, hiking and rafting", said world renowned paraglider from Nepal, Sonu Babu Sunuwar.

The event was organized by the Sikkim Paragliding Association (SPA) under the theme: Eat Organic, Live Organic, Fly Paragliding. Held under Category (CAT) II, the competition was open to all paragliders. Ninety-six pilots from around the world competed in the event. Sanctioned by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI), the competition was held under three categories: men, women and team.

Spectators from around the city huddled around the Khel Gaon complex with bated breaths as they watched pilots fight the unpredictable

one would hear gasps from the crowd at the occasional 'less than graceful landings'.

Each pilot was given 6 attempts to land on the designated landing spot from a distance of 1 km as the crow flies from the take off site. Judging was done on the basis of accuracy and consistency of the landing.

Team Sky Korea placed first in the team category with Indonesia in second and Sky-Korea 2 in third position. In the women's category, Dong Hwa Yang (South Korea) placed first, Foram Pandya (India) in second and Rinzing Doma Bhutia (Sikkim, India) in third. Sungchul Shin (South Korea) stood first in the men's category, with Irvan Winarya (Indonesia) and Mitsuharu Koga (Japan) in second and third position respectively.

"I came here to experience Sikkim. I like the place, the people and the food. Sikkim is beautiful and it is very good for paragliding," said international paraglider from Banten Paragliding, Indonesia, Ari Prayago.

The competition has helped Sikkim get a destination spot for paragliding and promote tourism. With distinguished paragliders gracing the event, it has opened doors for more ventures into the sport.

"I love the sport and I want to bring it to many people around the world. Taking an example from this event, we want to set a standard for paragliding in the state and the country. We are also planning to organize more major events in the future," said publicity secretary of SPA, Manoj Chettri. He further added that the tourism department is working on a lot of programmes to boost tourism, one of them being the Red Panda Festival which is scheduled to be held from 8-18 Jan 2018.

Darjeeling will see better days next year, says GTA Chairman Binay Tamang

REBYNA RANA GANGTOK, 26 DEC: A group of journalists from Sikkim recently met with the caretaker Chairman of Gorkha Territorial Administration (GTA), Binoy Tamang, at his office in Darjeeling to discuss tourism in Darjeeling hills and its relationship with Sikkim.

In his statement, Mr Tamang said, "We are neighbors and will respect the bond forever. We have always wished for the good fortune of Sikkim when it comes to tourism. However, we have been deprived due to the last 105 days of shutdown in the hills which has badly affected many sectors like water, road connectivity, health and tourism as well. We



have given priority to tourism which has led us to the edge today. We have been working on restoring normalcy. There are many virgin spots yet to be explored in Darjeeling. We shall be working on the same. We need to maintain this bond with Sikkim so that every developmental project profits both Sikkim and Darjeeling."

Stressing on education, Mr Tamang apologized for the inconvenience and disruption caused to the students due to the shutdown and informed that the

schools in the hills will function regularly after winter break. He added that by the end of Feb 2018, every school will be receiving text books without fail.

Addressing the issue of Gorkhaland, Mr Tamang said, "Since GTA is an autonomous body, we need to move forward but not by hurting the sentiments of people. Two pieces of papers will not help achieve Gorkhaland. Intellectual forum should be set up. We need to stay united and pressurize the government while putting less pressure on people. We have also formed advisory committees in all sectors in order to work for the betterment of the hills. Everything will slowly go back to normal."

Journalists challenge order gagging media in Sohrabuddin case...

contd from pg02

Gujarat," the petition said.

The petition is likely to be heard in January 2018.

A total of 23 accused are facing trial for their involvement in the alleged fake encounter of Sohrabuddin Sheikh, his wife Kausar Bi and their associate Tulsidas Prajapati in Gujarat in November 2005.

The case was later transferred to the CBI for investigations and the trial was shifted to Mumbai.

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JAP youth leave for Delhi, will march for Gorkhaland

SUMMIT REPORT KALIMPONG, 26 DEC: About 200 youths of Jan Andolan Party (JAP) left for Delhi today to put pressure on the Parliament to discuss the demand for a separate State for the Gorkhas. This is the second time that JAP is visiting Delhi for a Parliamentary march. They had decided to visit Delhi in each Parliamentary session in their first march during the agitation.

JAP president, Dr Harka Bahadur Chettri, later said, "We have been demanding a tripartite talk in every meeting, we had talked to the state twice regarding the tripartite talk but the state is against it. The State has prepared a counter leadership in the hills to suppress the agitation but she [West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee] fails to understand people's sentiments which the 'developments' can't satisfy."

The State has created a short term solution in the form of the leaders to develop the hills, feels JAP, however, Dr Chettri says that Anit Thapa and Binay Tamang are



the State's employees and if they are uttering the term 'Gorkhaland', it is a clear white lie.

"The word Gorkhaland has now become a business term rather than a political term, and the government employees (Binay and Anit) can't work to achieve Gorkhaland as they work with the chief minister who is strictly against the concept of a separate state," said Dr Chettri.

When other political parties are trying to garner people's support in the name of Gorkhaland, JAP will go to Delhi and start their Dharna in front of the Parliament starting from 30 Dec till 04 Jan, it is learnt.

"This time we will try to meet as many ministers as possible and we would like the Parliament to discuss Gorkhaland in this [winter] session itself," said Dr Chettri.

Today the youth wing of JAP left for Delhi. The bureau and the women's wing of JAP will also be joining the Parliamentary march.

Meanwhile, Dr Chhetri termed the Tista Rangit tourist festival as a political stunt.

"In a place where 13 people have died, how can they call tourists to dance and enjoy," expressed Dr Chhetri.

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
HEALTH CARE HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES & FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT
GANGTOK

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The HC, HS&FW Department invites e-tender from Class II B enlisted contractors [SPWD] for participating in the tender for the work "Construction of Drug Testing Laboratory at Chuwater, Singtam, East Sikkim". For further details kindly visit the website www.sikkim-tenders.gov.in. Date of uploading of bidding documents in e-procurement portal will be on 15/12/2017.

Sd/-
SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, HC, HS&FW DEPARTMENT

R.O. No. 464/IPR/PUB/Classi/17-18 Dt. 13/12/17

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
URBAN DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING DEPTT.
GANGTOK, SIKKIM

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

N.I.T. NO. 188/GOS/UD&HD/DE/17 DATED: 14/12/17

For and on behalf of Governor of Sikkim, the Divisional Engineer (East), Urban Development and Housing Department, Development Area, Gangtok, East Sikkim invites sealed percentage rate tenders from eligible contractors of appropriate class registered with Sikkim Public Works Department (SPWD) within the territorial jurisdiction (as per enlistment) mentioned below for the work detailed hereunder:-

A. DETAILS OF TENDER

SL. No	Name of work	Cost of work put to tender (in Rs.)	Earnest money (in Rs.)	Cost of tender documents (in Rs.)	Time of completion	Territorial jurisdiction.
1	Construction of Parking Yard at Sang East Sikkim	99,13,500/-	2,47,837/-	5,000/-	12 months	Within the territorial jurisdiction of the Gram Panchayat/ Urban Local Bodies where work is to be executed.

B. TIME SCHEDULE

i) Date of submission of application with bank receipt/challan for issue of Tender Documents (excluding Tender Form): 19th Jan, 2017 from 10:00 Am to 3:00 PM.

ii) Date of issue of Tender form on submission of TDR (as Earnest Money): 20th Jan., 2017 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

iii) Date of submission of Tender forms & documents: 22nd Jan 2017 upto 1:00 PM.

iv) Date and time of opening of Tender: 22nd Jan 2017 at 2:00 PM.

v) No tender shall be entertained after the expiry of the above schedule date and time.

vi) Tender form/documents could be obtained from the office of the Divisional Engineer (Planning), Urban Development & Housing Deptt. Gangtok, East Sikkim.

C. GENERAL GUIDELINES & CONDITIONS

i) The prescribed Non-Transferable Tender Documents (excluding the Tender Form) can be obtained on production of requisite Bank Receipt of the State Bank of Sikkim towards the cost of tender documents (non-refundable) under the receipt Head "0045-80-800-Other Misc. Receipts, "Cost of Tender Form" and submitted the same along with attested copies of the following documents:-

a) An application signed by the contractor for availing the Tender Documents.

b) Latest Professional Tax Clearance Certificate,

c) Validated/Updated Contractor Enlistment Certificate.

Note: It is necessary to produce original copy of the above documents/certificates for verification at the time of issue of tender documents.

ii) The Tender Form shall be issued to those contractors who have obtained the Tender Documents only on submission of Temporary Deposit Receipt (TDR) as Earnest Money deposited in the State Bank of Sikkim in favour of the Chief Accounts Officer, UD&HD, Govt. of Sikkim, Gangtok.

iii) The rate (in the Tender Form) should be quoted both in figures and words and should be inclusive of Value Added Taxes and all other taxes and Levies. The incomplete, invalid and conditional tenders shall be summarily rejected. Overwriting and corrections should be avoided and if made should be authenticated with signature of the bidder for every overwriting/ correction.

iv) The completed tender form should be placed in sealed cover superscripted with the name of the bidder and the name of work tendered for.

v) The tender(s) will be opened by the committee in presence of the tenderer or their authorised representative who wish to be present tender.

vi) The Tender Offer shall remain valid for 90(ninety) days from the date of opening.

vii) In case of discrepancy in rate(s) printed in the Schedule of Quantities and Rates issued with the Tender Documents, the rates as per the approved Schedule of Rates (i.e. SOR-2012) will be taken as correct. For the item outside the SOR, the rate shall be as per the technically checked estimate/ analysis.

The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tender(s) without assigning any reason thereof.

D. ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS

i) The contractor shall also make necessary arrangement to take photographs of the work at different stages of execution as per the directives of the Department.

The other **CONDITIONS OF THE CONTRACT** shall be made available along with the tender documents.

DIVISIONAL ENGINEER (EAST), URBAN DEV. & HOUSING DEPTT., DEVELOPMENT AREA, GANGTOK, EAST SIKKIM.

R.O. No. 471/IPR/PUB/Classi./17-18 dated: 26.12.2017

SummitTIMES

At a Year's End

Looking Ahead To a New Year

Another year has drawn to a close. And before the New Year resolutions are drawn up, will come the reminiscing, a going over of what has transpired over the year. Such reminiscing proliferates all circles—among friends, on Facebook, over WhatsApp, at chaidokans (more like cafes and pubs in Sikkim now), in newspapers and in share-cabs. This exercise is about more than producing a special supplement for publications or participating in interesting conversations; in the packaging of the highlights of a year, one finds trends – even projections which could help plan ahead and learn to prepare. Even without these benefits, it is always a welcome engagement to take stock once in a while, and a year-end is as good a time as it gets to do so. This publication will also probably engage in such an exercise with the New Year, but that is not the point being made here; what is noticeable is that such discussions are noticeably muted this time around. Blame the recent wave of politicking for that which might have made conversations too current and speculative to allow time for recaps and reviews. But then again, winter months have traditionally been slow months in Sikkim, the school holidays ensuring that families command more time than the usual favourite of political gossip. These months have also traditionally been administratively (even) more lethargic with everyone preferring cosy over busy.

In itself, the year 2017 will be remembered for its ordinariness. There was nothing outstandingly remarkable that happened in Sikkim this year, and although there were many moments when people must have gasped or applauded, there was very little of lasting consequence. And that is not necessarily a bad thing because a little pause never hurt anyone. One hopes though more happens next year.

The social space was dominated, like always, by politics and its usual routine of name-calling and camp-switching, but even in that field there is nothing that commands top of the mind recall. Perhaps it is the effect of pre-election lull. Politics has a habit of running in circles, going through its motions of resurgence and calm, claims and counter-claims and these invariably find a ready audience. Attention being paid to such developments is important, but past experience also shows that investing complete devotion is ill-advised because it comes at the cost of sidelining other, more immediate to the people issues. For example, the reminiscing that should have been rippling through the past days is missed, but that is not as big a worry as the possibility that the people might get side-stepped as politics bulldozes everything else away from the public domain. And that, in way has been what 2017 has been about. The previous few years had seen people engage the public domain more with a slew of developmental debates, people's protests, elections, impressive individual successes and of course, many collective failures as well. This year has been much duller in comparison, with the public domain again swept up by 'leaders' and priorities shaped by their respective fixations. If anything has underlined year 2017, it has been the near supplicant withdrawal of people's voices from public issues, the space given up again to politics and its players who now need to hedge their positions with one eye on the elections little over a year away. Their politicking is now being dictated by the camps they find themselves in or hope to be in rather than what their political ideology is. Politics has always been about "position" and "opposition" in Sikkim, but this pigeonholing needs to end and people need to be able to see clearer ideological stands and more consistent positions.

Here, as we end a year with wishes of a prosperous new year, one sends up a prayer that 2018 will treat Sikkim to a resuscitated civil society, which, even if it stays away from confrontations, at least engages enough to flag what should be the more important issues for the people's leaders, whether in the ruling or in the Opposition camps, to take up.

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

Mail us at: letters@summittimes.com

Climate change will displace millions in coming decades. Nations should prepare now to help them

GULREZ SHAH AZHAR
theconversation.com

Wildfires tearing across Southern California have forced thousands of residents to evacuate from their homes. Even more people fled ahead of the hurricanes that slammed into Texas and Florida earlier this year, jamming highways and filling hotels. A viral social media post showed a flight-radar picture of people trying to escape Florida and posed a provocative question: What if the adjoining states were countries and didn't grant escaping migrants refuge?

By the middle of this century, experts estimate that climate change is likely to displace between 150 and 300 million people. If this group formed a country, it would be the fourth-largest in the world, with a population nearly as large as that of the United States.

Yet neither individual countries nor the global community are completely prepared to support a whole new class of "climate migrants." As a physician and public health researcher in India, I learned the value of surveillance and early warning systems for managing infectious disease outbreaks. Based on my current research on health impacts of heat waves in developing countries, I believe much needs to be done at the national, regional and global level to deal with climate migrants.

MILLIONS DISPLACED YEARLY

Climate migration is already happening. Every year desertification in Mexico's drylands forces 700,000 people to relocate. Cyclones have displaced thousands from Tuvalu in the South Pacific and Puerto Rico in the Caribbean. Experts agree that a prolonged drought may have catalyzed Syria's civil war and resulting migration.

Between 2008 and 2015, an average of 26.4 million people per year were displaced by climate- or weather-related disasters, according to the United Nations. And the science of climate change indicates that these trends are likely to get worse. With each one-degree increase in temperature, the air's moisture-carrying capacity increases by 7 percent, fueling increasingly severe storms. Sea levels may rise by as much as three feet by the year 2100, submerging coastal areas and inhabited islands.

The Pacific islands are extremely vulnerable, as are more than 410 U.S. cities and others around the globe, including Amsterdam, Hamburg, Lisbon and Mumbai. Rising temperatures could make parts of west Asia inhospitable to human life. On the same day that Hurricane Irma roared over Florida in September, heavy rains on the other side of the world submerged one-third of Bangladesh and eastern parts of India, killing thousands.

Climate change will affect most everyone on the planet to some degree, but poor people in developing nations will be affected most severely. Extreme weather events and tropical diseases wreak the heaviest damage in these regions. Undernourished people who have few resources and inadequate housing are especially at risk and likely to be displaced.

RECOGNIZE AND PLAN FOR CLIMATE MIGRANTS NOW

Today the global community has not universally acknowledged the existence of climate migrants, much less agreed on how to define them. Accord-



ing to international refugee law, climate migrants are not legally considered refugees. Therefore, they have none of the protections officially accorded to refugees, who are technically defined as people fleeing persecution. No global agreements exist to help millions of people who are displaced by natural disasters every year.

Refugees' rights, and nations' legal obligation to defend them, were first defined under the 1951 Refugee Convention, which was expanded in 1967. This work took place well before it was apparent that climate change would become a major force driving migrations and creating refugee crises.

Under the convention, a refugee is defined as someone "unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion." The convention legally binds nations to provide access to courts, identity papers and travel documents, and to offer possible naturalization. It also bars discriminating against refugees, penalizing them, expelling them or forcibly returning them to their countries of origin. Refugees are entitled to practice their religions, attain education and access public assistance.

In my view, governments and organizations such as the United Nations should consider modifying international law to provide legal status to environmental refugees and establish protections and rights for them. Reforms could factor in the concept of "climate justice," the notion that climate change is an ethical and social concern. After all, richer countries have contributed the most to cause warming, while poor countries will bear the most disastrous consequences.

Some observers have suggested that countries that bear major responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions should take in more refugees. Alternatively, the world's largest carbon polluters could contribute to a fund that would pay for refugee care and resettlement for those temporarily and permanently displaced.

The Paris climate agreement does not mention climate refugees. However, there have been some consultations and initiatives by various organizations and governments. They include efforts to create a climate change displacement coordination facility and a U.N. Special Rapporteur on Human

Rights and Climate Change.

It is tough to define a climate refugee or migrant. This could be one of the biggest challenges in developing policies.

As history has shown, destination countries respond to waves of migration in various ways, ranging from welcoming immigrants to placing them in detention camps or denying them assistance. Some countries may be selective in whom they allow in, favoring only the young and productive while leaving children, the elderly and infirm behind. A guiding global policy could help prevent confusion and outline some minimum standards.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

Negotiating international agreements on these issues could take many years. For now, major G20 powers such as the United States, the European Union, China, Russia, India, Canada, Australia and Brazil should consider intermediate steps. The United States could offer temporary protected status to climate migrants who are already on its soil. Government aid programs and nongovernment organizations should ramp up support to refugee relief organizations and ensure that aid reaches refugees from climate disasters.

In addition, all countries that have not signed the United Nations refugee conventions could consider joining them. This includes many developing countries in South Asia and the Middle East that are highly vulnerable to climate change and that already have large refugee populations. Since most of the affected people in these countries will likely move to neighboring nations, it is crucial that all countries in these regions abide by a common set of policies for handling and assisting refugees.

The scale of this challenge is unlike anything humanity has ever faced. By midcentury, climate change is likely to uproot far more people than World War II, which displaced some 60 million across Europe, or the Partition of India, which affected approximately 15 million. The migration crisis that has gripped Europe since 2015 has involved something over one million refugees and migrants. It is daunting to envision much larger flows of people, but that is why the global community should start doing so now.

[the writer is Ph.D. Candidate, Pardee RAND Graduate School]

Delhi should follow Beijing's example in tackling air pollution

ASIT K. BISWAS & KRIS HARTLEY
theconversation.com

Delhi's air pollution crisis made international headlines in early December when a cricket match between India and Sri Lanka was suspended due to poor air quality.

Smog has also led to numerous school closures and flight cancellations in India's capital and largest city. It has also been blamed for highway accidents.

Delhi is home to 20 million residents, and the city's more than 10 million vehicles are a major contributor to air pollution. Industrial emissions are also to blame. Thirteen coal-fired power stations operate within a 300 kilometre radius of the city. Conditions reach crisis level every winter, when the capital's already poor air quality is further degraded by smoke from post-harvest burning in the neighbouring agricultural states of Haryana and Punjab.

The concentration of airborne particulate matter (PM2.5) recently reached 999 in parts of Delhi. This measurement was literally off the charts of maximum thresholds for air pollutants. The alarming fact is that Delhi is not even India's smoggiest city. By one measure, four other Indian cities typically suffer even worse air pollution.

There is little evidence that either the central or Delhi government has any effective policy strategy for air pollution. Now is the time for India to peer through the smog and learn how another major city, Beijing, is taking meaningful steps to stabilise its own air pollution crisis. While China still



has progress to make, some lessons from the country's capital are a useful guide for clearing Delhi's air.

CHINA'S RESPONSE

According to the World Health Organisation, ten of the world's 20 most polluted cities are in India, and three in China. The two countries top the ignoble list of deaths related to air pollution, with more than one million each in 2015. The two are the world's most populous countries and also have among the highest proportions of deaths related to air pollution.

Nevertheless, China is making progress. The central government has taken a systematic and coordinated approach to managing air pollution. It has adopted a suite of policies that promote alternative energy and punish regulatory breaches.

The country is rapidly scaling back capacity for coal-fired power and steel, whose production is suspected of threatening respiratory health. China is also soliciting foreign investment in green energy technol-

ogies, and has intensified inspections of major polluters around Beijing.

In Beijing alone, fines for pollution topped USD\$ 28 million in 2015. To combat vehicle exhaust smoke, which is responsible for one-third of Beijing's emissions, an annual quota of 150,000 new cars was established for 2017, with 60,000 allotted only to fuel efficient cars. Beginning in 2018, this quota will be reduced by one third, to 100,000 annually. This will limit the total number of cars to around 6.3 million.

Beijing is also aiming to reduce coal consumption from the current 11 million tons per year to under 5 million by 2020.

There is some evidence that these measures are working. In the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, PM2.5 levels decreased by 27% between 2013 and 2016.

INDIA'S APATHY

By comparison, India's political inefficiency is making regional air pollution a nearly intractable problem.

Although the states of Haryana and Punjab have banned farmers from burning straw, implementation has been minimal. Policy coordination is also weak across states governed by rival political parties. For example, the leaders of Delhi and Haryana have publicly clashed about who is to blame for air pollution. They have also failed to hold discussions about the problem or to find feasible solutions.

Farmers constitute a significant voting base in Haryana and Punjab. This has led state governments to demand compensation from central government for losses farmers incur by ceasing burning. Such focus on short-term political gain is distracting policymakers from collaborating on regional solutions. The consequences of territorial grandstanding are deadly.

Another difference between India and China is the level of apathy among the government and general public. In China, years of seething public anger prompted Prime Minister Li Keqiang to "declare war" on pollution in 2014.

In India, public outrage over air pollution is still "seasonal" and rarely swells beyond social media. The central government has remained largely silent about pollution while state leaders indulge in meaningless inter-party squabbling and political theatre.

Amid this discouraging accountability vacuum, India's Supreme Court recently assumed the mantle of leadership on air pollution. It banned fireworks in the capital

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Centre releases Rs 167 cr to 9 states for border development

NEW DELHI, DEC 26 (PTI): The Home Ministry has released Rs 167 crore to nine states with international border for the development of infrastructure in forward areas, an official said today.

The states which will benefit include Rajasthan and Punjab, both having international border with Pakistan, and West Bengal and Assam, which share boundary with Bangladesh.

An amount of Rs 167 crore was released recently by the Home Ministry to Meghalaya, Punjab, Rajasthan, Bihar, Sikkim, Tripura, Assam, Himachal Pradesh and West Bengal under the Border Area Development Programme (BADP), the official said. The fully centrally funded BADP programme covers all villages which are located within 0-10 km of the International Border in 17 states.

However, priority is given to those villages which are identified by border guarding forces for speedy development of infrastructure.

The schemes permissible under the BADP include activities relating to the cleanliness mission, skill development programmes, promotion of sports activities, promotion of rural tourism, border tourism and protection of heritage sites.

Delhi should follow Beijing's example...

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during the Diwali festival and pushed for response focused action planning. While these are encouraging steps, bypassing the legislative process on such fundamental public health issues is hardly ideal or sustainable.

PROGRESS IS NEEDED

India has made remarkable progress lifting millions of people out of poverty in recent years. It aspires to be a global superpower, but has singularly failed to curb air pollution. Central government must intervene to coordinate collaborative policy among states and hold officials accountable for inaction. Central government should also reinforce state-level initiatives to minimise burning and promote sustainable farming.

More broadly, it may be time to ask whether highly argumentative democratic models are always the best solution for problems that transcend city and provincial boundaries. Sensible and informed policy leadership is needed to solve environmental challenges. India must rise above petty politics, lest the country bicker its way into smoggy irrelevance.

[Asit K. Biswas is Distinguished Visiting Professor, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore; Kris Hartley is Lecturer in City and Regional Planning, Cornell University]

2017: Dramatic political realignments hogged limelight in Bihar

NACHIKETA NARAYAN

PATNA, DEC 26 (PTI): Bihar in 2017 witnessed one of the most dramatic political realignments in recent history as Chief Minister Nitish Kumar dumped the 'grand alliance', comprising his JD(U), arch rival Lalu Prasad's RJD and the Congress, to rejoin the BJP-led NDA.

The year proved to be a bad one for Lalu Prasad as he was ousted from the grand alliance and also had to go to jail.

On December 23, a special court in Ranchi convicted him and 15 others in a fodder scam case 21 years after it had surfaced.

The court will pronounce the quantum of sentence on January 3. The 69-year-old RJD leader is now lodged in the Birsu Munda jail.

While witnessing the cataclysmic political developments, the state was also ravaged by floods which affected 19 districts of north Bihar, rendered close to a million homeless and claimed more than 500 lives.

Shortly after the installation of the new government, the Srijan scam involving fraudulent transfer of hundreds of crores from the treasury to an NGO came to light. The state government promptly ordered a CBI inquiry amid allegations from the opposition that the NGO enjoyed patronage from many top leaders of the ruling coalition.

Driven by the conviction that social evils must be eradicated for the fruits of development to reach all, Kumar also launched campaigns against dowry and child marriage, claiming that these reforms would transform the society in no smaller measure than his previous radical step of prohibition had done.

However, incidents like hooch tragedies in Rohtas and Vaishali districts and killing of a policeman by liquor smugglers in Samastipur as also frequent seizures of huge quantities of liquor across the state despite a stringent prohibition law raised question mark on the liquor ban being practical. Kumar took the drastic step of severing ties with the 'Mahagathbandhan' four years after he had snapped his 17-year-old association with the BJP in protest against the latter making Narendra Modi its prime ministerial candidate.

The sharp hostility between the two leaders began giving way to bonhomie which became evident at the "Prakash Parv" in January, when at a function held to celebrate 350th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh Modi and Kumar shared dais and showered praise on each other.

During the assembly polls in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh in February, the JD(U) gave up its earlier enthusiasm for opposition uni-

ty and maintained a studied distance notwithstanding the Congress forming an alliance with the Samajwadi Party and the RJD throwing its weight behind the coalition.

Earlier, last year, Kumar had ruffled the feathers of his coalition partners by coming out in support of Modi's demonetisation decision, which the Congress and the RJD criticise till date.

That all was not well with the "Mahagathbandhan" became more than obvious when Kumar decided to support the candidature of Ram Nath Kovind in the presidential polls. The chief minister defended his decision citing Kovind's exemplary conduct as the governor of Bihar and contended that the Congress-led UPA, by belatedly fielding



former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar, was fighting a lost battle.

However, the turning point came with the CBI filing a case in connection with the land for hotels scam against Lalu Prasad and his family members, including his younger son and the then deputy chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav.

Kumar's suggestion that Yadav give a public explanation was rejected by the RJD and he resigned from the chief minister's post citing irreconcilable differences with his alliance partner. The BJP came up with the offer of support and a new government was installed with Kumar being sworn in as the chief minister less than 24 hours after having stepped down.

The stormy developments did not leave the JD(U) unscathed, though, with the party's former president Sharad Yadav and Rajya Sabha MP Ali Anwar, an old Kumar loyalist, raising a banner of revolt.

Defying party diktats, the duo took part in functions held by the RJD and openly accused Kumar of having betrayed the mandate of 2015 assembly polls.

Kumar, who is also the JD(U) president, however, scored a few points by expelling all Sharad loyalists from the party, successfully defending a case against the rebel faction's claim over the party symbol before the Election Commission and finally getting both Sharad Yadav and Ali Anwar disqualified from the Rajya Sabha.

The collapse of the Grand Alliance also caused turmoil in the state unit of the Congress, which stands bitterly divided into

two factions, one said to be close to Kumar and the other more comfortable with the RJD.

Infighting led to the removal of Ashok Choudhary as the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee chief. The rival faction has been accusing Choudhary of plotting a split at the instance of Kumar in whose cabinet he was a powerful minister and with whom he is said to maintain good relations.

The RJD has been having its own share of woes with Prasad before his conviction routinely appearing before the CBI court in Jharkhand in connection with cases related to the fodder scam. His Rajya Sabha MP daughter Misa Bharti, her husband Shailesh and Tejashwi have been grilled by the ED in a money laundering case.

His wife Rabri Devi refused to appear before the ED in Delhi despite as many as six summonses following which Enforcement Directorate officials came to Patna to interrogate her. The couple's elder son Tej Pratap Yadav, too, faces a probe by the state vigilance bureau in a soil purchase scam.

Prasad's grip over the party which he had founded, nevertheless, appears firm. While he himself was elected, unopposed, as the party's national president for a term that ends in 2020, a resolution declaring Tejashwi as the RJD's chief ministerial candidate was passed at the party's recently-held national council.

Another key decision taken by the Nitish Kumar government was to introduce reservations in outsourced services, a move that has been described by critics as an attempt to bring quota system in the private sector through backdoor.

A new mining policy brought in July to put a check on illegal sand mining became a major bone of contention. The same has been stayed by the Patna High Court, which has also directed the state government to ensure that mining was allowed under the old provisions.

An appeal against the high court order has been turned down by the Supreme Court. Truck operators in the state went on a strike in November in protest against stringent restrictions imposed on transportation of sand while the RJD, often accused of being in cahoots with the state's sand mining mafia, has seized the opportunity to blame the government for a slump in construction activities which has rendered many workers jobless.

Another Patna High Court order stating that contractual teachers in the state were entitled to get salary at par with their regular counterparts has also left the cash-starved government in a bind.

SIKKIM STATE LOTTERIES

DERBY SUPER THURSDAY

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2nd Prize Rs.9000/-
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3rd Prize Rs.5000/-
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LABHAIXMI GEMINI	MUMBAIXMI SEETA
Draw No:3 DrawDate on:20/12/17 1st Prize Rs.10,000/- 6133 2nd Prize Rs.1,000/- 6738 3rd Prize Rs.500/- 4292 4th Prize Rs.300/- 1111 5th Prize Rs. 200/- 2089 6th Prize Rs.100/-	Draw No:3 DrawDate on:20/12/17 1st Prize Rs.10,000/- 2328 2nd Prize Rs.2,000/- 5095 3rd Prize Rs.1,000/- 5744 4th Prize Rs.502/- 1568 5th Prize Rs.200/-
1012 1074 1081 1084 1089 1156 1171 1218 1235 1331 1373 1378 1413 1465 1482 1498 1571 1519 1548 1559 1615 1631 1656 1727 1738 1809 1854 1892 1897 1935 1941 1955 1980 2009 2024 2037 2038 2069 2078 2082 2112 2147 2166 2259 2443 2457 2512 2514 2521 2529 2533 2534 2565 2602 2605 2665 2667 2702 2729 2786 2789 2792 2891 2902 2915 2926 2930 2947 2957 2997 3012 3100 3154 3175 3156 3205 3230 3280 3303 3321 3335 3448 3364 3367 3397 3460 3475 3510 3541 3572 3622 3631 3651 3669 3680 3684 3697 3732 3765 3774 3777 3786 3796 3843 3888 3929 3939 3953 4014 4027 4031 4036 4042 4048 4060 4078 4094 4118 4126 4129 4129 4130 4145 4150 4153 4174 4178 4811 4194 4219 4222 4240 4243 4271 4302 4334 4354 4409 4421 4434 4448 4452 4462 4474 4494 4504 4535 4578 4579 4589 4640 4675 4699 4713 4745 4801 4802 4817 4831 4838 4868 4869 4879 4880 4940 4947 4976 4986 4988 4990 5001 5022 5040 5045 5069 5078 5084 5104 5111 5205 5211 5225 5234 5238 5302 5349 5367 5398 5416 5429 5512 5546 5556 5572 5637 5683 5690 5703 5801 5811 5852 5865 5925 5971 5978 5997 6017 6028 6048 6107 6157 6209 6213 6249 6360 6381 6419 6466 6475 6481 6576 6615 6641 6655 6676 6706 6711 6715 6716 6776 6787 6813 6883 6885 6881 6894 6902 6926	1025 1047 1071 1077 1081 1103 1105 1134 1144 1162 1215 1222 1249 1263 1269 1295 1311 1448 1456 1467 1486 1501 1510 1530 1569 1581 1590 1611 1626 1669 1677 1705 1708 1713 1714 1755 1784 1787 1796 1807 1827 1839 1848 1868 1883 1884 1947 1955 1956 1966 1971 1986 1997 2014 2139 2162 2246 2259 2265 2325 2347 2377 2386 2389 3468 3952 3993 4143 4047 4063 4074 4092 4111 4112 4128 4128 4155 4194 4200 4231 4323 4344 4342 4429 4465 4489 4493 4503 4542 4560 4576 4615 4642 4695 4705 4720 4734 4794 4798 4819 4833 4840 4879 4913 4925 4939 4966 4970 4977 5003 5042 5043 5097 5108 5120 5133 5147 5152 5179 5205 5219 5239 5351 5352 5384 5457 5452 5525 5531 5580 5615 5652 5653 5718 5757 5771 5778 5790 5794 5816 5830 5871 5882 5885 5900 5921 5959 5968 5974
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KINDLY CHECK THE RESULT WITH THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE	

NAGALAND STATE LOTTERIES	
DEAR TENDER MORNING	
Draw Time: 11:55 am onwards	
Draw No:3 DrawDate on:22/12/17	
1st Prize Rs.26 Lakhs/- 85A 12355	
(Including Super Prize Amt)	
Cons. Prize Rs.9498/- 12355 (REMAINING ALL SERIALS)	
2nd Prize Rs.9000/-	
11388 16161 19264 43025 46251	
52936 60151 69055 70768 81154	
3rd Prize Rs.500/- 4712 5041 5679 6053 6225 7156 7297 7774 9302 9382	
4th Prize Rs.250/- 0758 1367 2576 2866 3473 4372 6126 6917 8935 9396	
5th Prize Rs.120/-	
0017 0218 0383 0636 0644 0775 0787 1004 1036 1102	
1221 1242 1404 1483 1519 1641 1721 2222 2440 2508	
2554 2575 2734 2778 2885 2941 3019 3101 3368 3392	
3419 3437 3486 3709 3797 3957 3959 4009 4225 4315	
4416 4474 4590 4818 4911 4955 5140 5220 5450 5476	
5678 5806 5831 6035 6128 6204 6401 6482 6711 6858	
6872 6953 7165 7168 7174 7193 7280 7472 7630 7729	
7913 7974 8019 8243 8253 8360 8554 8747 8970 8800	
8812 8867 9011 9216 9049 9057 9119 9127 9229 9239	
9254 9601 9078 9323 9626 9655 9708 9803 9905 9922	
KIN	

Goa down Bengal to emerge Plate champs



Warner century after no-ball reprieve hands Aust solid start

MELBOURNE, DEC 26 (AFP): David Warner posted a century after a no-ball reprieve and skipper Steve Smith was on track for four straight Boxing Day tons as Australia made a solid start to the fourth Ashes Test against England today.

Warner received a massive let-off on 90 to claim his 21st Test hundred as an Australia side chasing a series whitewash took full advantage of winning the toss on an unresponsive Melbourne Cricket Ground drop-in pitch.

The aggressive opener, who had been marooned in the 90s for over 40 minutes, was poised on 99 to bring up his century as he faced the last ball of debutant Tom Curran's fifth over.

But instead Warner top-edged a catch to mid-on and walked off to the jubilation of the England team, only for replays to detect a no-ball for Curran overstepping, meaning Warner was called back to the crease.

The next delivery Warner added further to the England team's dark mood when he raised his hundred off 130 balls with a flick off his hip and celebrated by leaping into the air and ripping off his helmet to salute the 88,172 Boxing Day crowd at the MCCG.

But Warner didn't stay at the crease for much longer after his massive let-off, as he was caught behind off James Anderson for 103.

Smith, who hasn't been dismissed in a Melbourne Test match since Boxing Day 2014, was still batting at the close on 65 with Shaun Marsh not out 31 and Australia 244 for three.

In the last three showpiece Boxing Day Tests, Smith has scored 192 against India, 134 not out against the West Indies and an unbeaten 165 last year against Pakistan.

So far in this series Smith has amassed 491 runs at a stunning average of 163.66 from five innings.

Australia have already reclaimed the Ashes after taking an unsailable three-nil lead in the five-Test series and are seeking a 5-0 whitewash over the beleaguered tourists.

The Australians free-wheeled to lunch at 102 without loss with Warner leading the charge but England's bowlers toiled away under a hot sun to restrict the home side in the remaining two sessions.

KOLKATA, DEC 26 (PTI): Santoshi Rane and Sunanda Yetrekar rattled Bengal to help Goa coast to a 37-run win and emerge champions in Plate Group of the Senior Women's One Day League at Eden Gardens today.

Defending a paltry 148, Goa bundled out Bengal for 110 in 43.5 overs with Rane (3/24) and Yetrekar (3/13) wreaking havoc, while skip-

per Shikha Pandey produced a superb bowling display returning with figures of 8-5-5-0.

The Goan skipper earlier led by example with her batting as she top scored with 66 from 89 balls (8x4, 1x6) to take them to 147/9 after Bengal opted to bowl.

Nisha Maji (3/31) and Gayatri Mal (2/20) gave regular breakthroughs but the

Goan captain and Bharati Gaonkar (32 not out from 78 balls; 1x4) ensured that they bat full 50 overs.

Recovering from a wrist injury, Bengal captain and star pacer Jhulan Goswami (1/13) could only bowl seven overs and batted lower down the order and it did not help the team's cause.

Goa medium pacer Rane gave the first breakthrough

dismissing Aparna Mondal for a duck in her first over as Bengal got off to a slow start.

Just when they looked to consolidate, leg spinner Yetrekar gave a twin breakthrough dismissing Deepti Sharma (16) and Tansuree Sarkar (0) in two balls in the 14th over as Bengal could not recover from the jolt.

Roy top-scored for Ben-

gal with 42 before being runout by Yetrekar while in the next ball Rane sealed the issue in the 44th over dismissing Goswami for seven.

Brief Scores:
Goa 147/9 in 50 overs (Shikha Pandey 66; Nisha Maji 3/31, Gayatri Mal 2/20) beat Bengal 110 in 43.5 overs (Paramita Roy 42; Sunanda Yetrekar 3/13, Santoshi Rane 3/24) by 37 runs.

Sindhu, Srikanth weaved a fairytale year for Indian badminton

AMIT KUMAR DAS
NEW DELHI, DEC 26 (PTI): PV Sindhu scaled new heights but it was K Srikanth who took Indian badminton by storm with a higher title count as male shuttlers finally came out of the shadows in a season of unprecedented success for the sport.

It was a year when the national anthem played quite frequently at stadia across the globe as either Sindhu or Srikanth stood on the podium in a series of elite badminton tournaments.

If Sindhu cemented her place among the world's very best with three titles and three silvers, Srikanth exceeded all expectations with four titles and a runners-up finish to join the big league in a truly remarkable season.

Infact, men's players managed to outshine their women's counterpart as B Sai Praneeth and H S Prannoy too shone through on the international stage.

Another memorable aspect of the year was the return of Saina Nehwal and hopes of resurgence in doubles.

The appointment of Indonesia's Mulyo Handoyo, best known for coaching Taufik Hidayat, gave a massive impetus to Indian badminton, which also saw a change of guard at the association with Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma becoming the president following the sudden demise of



Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta.

Among all the postcard moments this year, Sindhu's exhausted frame after innumerable energy-sapping matches is unlikely to be forgotten anytime soon. Her triumphs were not just a reflection of talent but also the sheer determination of the 22-year-old.

The World Championship's 110-minute epic final against Japan's Nozomi Okuhara had fans on the edge of their seats.

And the summit clashes at Korea Open and the Dubai Super Series Final were as emotionally draining if not more.

Though the teh Hyderabadi had to endure three painful final losses -- World Championship, Hong Kong Open and Dubai Super Series Finals --, she also enjoyed the high of clinching Super Series titles at the India Open

and Korea Open, besides the Syed Modi Grand Prix Gold.

On the other hand, Srikanth's ability to peak in successive weeks twice in a year made him the first Indian to win four titles in a season, a feat only achieved by the iconic Lin Dan, Lee Chong Wei and Chen Long.

After recovering from an ankle injury that nearly kept him out of action for four months last year, the 24-year-old from Guntur hit a purple patch in April as he reached three successive finals at Singapore, Indonesia and Australia.

He won the last two and it helped him regain his place in the top 10 and also grab the top spot in the badminton earnings chart.

His unbeaten streak, however, ended at the World Championship when he lost to South Korea's Son Wan in the quarters

but the Indian soon regained his touch, securing two wins in two weeks again at Denmark and France in October.

His envious run earned him the World No.2 position and a spot in the season-ending Dubai Finals.

However, non-stop badminton took a toll as Srikanth aggravated his leg injury during the National Championships, where he finished second to Prannoy and had to stay off the circuit for two tournaments.

While Sindhu and Srikanth dominated, Praneeth and Prannoy also made rapid strides with the former defeating Srikanth at the Singapore Open in an all-Indian final to lay claim to his maiden Super Series title. Six weeks later, Praneeth secured the Thailand Grand Prix Gold title.

Prannoy, meanwhile, notched up wins over Malaysian legend Lee Chong Wei and China's Chen Long on successive days to reach the semifinals at the Indonesia Open.

The 25-year-old later scooped the US Open Grand Prix Gold title beating P kashyap in another all-Indian finals.

He again outwitted Chong Wei at the Denmark Open and his rampaging run saw him reach a career-best ranking of World No.

SIKKIM STATE LOTTERIES			
LAHBAIXMI URBRA		MUMBAIXMI RANI	
Draw No.2 DrawDate on:12/12/17		Draw No.2 DrawDate on:12/12/17	
1st Prize Rs.10,00,000/- 3207		1st Prize Rs.10,00,000/- 1751 2nd Prize Rs.2,00,000/- 4079	
2nd Prize Rs.1,00,000/- 2038 3rd Prize Rs.50,000/- 4446		3rd Prize Rs.1,00,000/- 3377 4th Prize Rs.50,000/- 1421	
4th Prize Rs.30,000/- 4592 5th Prize Rs. 20,00/- 6218		5th Prize Rs.20,00/-	
6th Prize Rs.10,00/-		1009 1074 1149 1250 1251 1302 1325 1345 1352 1396	
1038 1055 1075 1146 1156 1163 1164 1198 1211 1227		1414 1419 1455 1462 1500 1503 1629 1662 1710 1760	
1276 1284 1299 1309 1340 1352 1368 1370 1410 1421		1768 1815 1831 1846 1874 1915 1927 1938 1957 1979	
1427 1493 1501 1508 1513 1568 1592 1604 1637 1697		2012 2014 2018 2081 2111 2136 2138 2207 2216 2217	
1709 1712 1734 1754 1776 1865 1893 1905 1935 1948		2229 2233 2236 2241 2244 2250 2261 2270 2281 2282	
1960 2006 2039 2042 2060 2095 2121 2176 2206 2251 2253		2400 2423 2480 2599 2527 2531 2562 2565 2574 2591	
2582 2591 2204 2318 2396 2410 2448 2452 2483 2526		2585 2602 2627 2637 2640 2648 2653 2665 2686 2695	
2648 2626 2633 2645 2702 2715 2733 2738 2817 2850		2728 2757 2773 2812 2831 2876 2886 2888 2890 2913	
2858 2862 2876 2886 2892 2901 2917 2928 2979 3016		2945 2996 3111 3143 3158 3161 3203 3213 3216 3224	
3018 3040 3049 3060 3068 3094 3104 3126 3132 3141		3225 3235 3273 3281 3291 3295 3302 3366 3371 3383	
3168 3173 3176 3188 3205 3206 3211 3216 3225 3227		3421 3434 3461 3500 3560 3578 3597 3618 3663 3704	
3604 3608 3737 3835 3934 3422 3468 3487 3507 3600		3761 3774 3797 3815 3825 3831 3855 3862 3911 3923	
3902 3941 3949 3959 3976 3705 3717 3722 3737 3792		3949 3952 3976 3983 4013 4028 4102 4700 4397 4399	
4005 3950 3888 3992 3911 3958 3960 3965 3975 4015		4307 4318 4325 4341 4381 4385 4412 4412 4442 4444	
4002 4062 4106 4166 4190 4218 4242 4251 4333 4349		4469 4502 4531 4605 4637 4649 4655 4661 4788 4813	
4158 4041 4472 4488 4499 4511 4522 4543 4558 4643		4812 4835 4832 4937 4938 4945 5002 5077 5078 5089	
4650 4679 4692 4714 4773 4815 4816 4820 4840 4853		5115 5125 5125 5142 5160 5188 5197 5199 5214 5249	
4852 4867 4876 5000 5055 5059 5085 5108 5109 5151		5207 5263 5344 3399 5421 5448 5501 5533 5338 5540	
5164 5177 5188 5195 5236 5243 5251 5303 5308 5324		5544 5546 5610 5626 5634 5653 5692 5909 5703 5707	
5140 5355 5359 5406 5408 5424 5495 5615 5622 5624		5774 5789 5859 5879 5891 5933 5940 5951 5962 5991	
5465 5681 5689 5710 5746 5819 5819 5855 5879 5900 5910			
5917 5965 6047 6049 6055 6076 6097 6108 6133 6196			
6100 6309 6301 6313 6360 6382 6387 6457 6477 6479			
6547 6566 6572 6582 6598 6630 6632 6698 6786 6787			
6796 6797 6849 6851 6856 6858 6876 6877 6900 6903			
KINDLY CHECK THE RESULT WITH THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE			

SIKKIM STATE LOTTERIES			
SIKKIM NEW WEEKLY			
Draw No:4 DrawDate on:23/12/17			
1st Prize Rs.2.02 Crores/- B 2587			
(Including Super Prize Amt)			
2nd Prize Rs.16.50 Lakhs/- K 0363			
(Including Super Prize Amt)			
3rd Prize Rs.11 Lakhs/- A 2252			
(Including Super Prize Amt)			
4th Prize Rs.5.50 Lakhs/- D 8744			
(Including Super Prize Amt)			
5th Prize Rs.9000/- 0050 1323 2781 5305 5768 6697 6911 7141 8328 9716			
6th Prize Rs.5000/- 0476 0970 3676 4035 4437 5202 5748 7737 7945 9322			
7th Prize Rs.2000/- 2028 2623 3589 4667 5525 5563 5836 6211 6300 8004			
8th Prize Rs.1000/-			
0183 0307 0322 0342 0343 0548 0680 0773 0894 0965			
0975 1013 1085 1115 1117 1214 1234 1329 1265 1333			
1341 1432 1446 1451 1530 1597 1621 1669 1708 1749			
1866 1905 1990 1995 2009 2208 2345 2363 2439 2441			
2732 2754 2852 2951 3071 3226 3367 3697 3823 3841			
3953 4043 4255 4304 4319 4382 4467 4716 4759 4854			
4907 5119 5480 5533 5599 5703 5862 5895 5920 5967			
5981 6079 6272 6297 6452 6464 6541 6652 7174 7527			
7207 7528 7871 7936 8822 8702 8787 8950 9077 9264			
9227 9433 9480 9613 9577 9702 8802 9948 9985 9986			
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The Director, Sikkim State Lotteries, Government of Sikkim,Deorali-737102, Sikkim			
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SIKKIM STATE LOTTERIES	
LAHBAIXMI VIRGO	MUMBAIXMI RAJA
Draw No:3 DrawDate on:23/12/17	
1st Prize Rs.10,00,000/- 3528	
2nd Prize Rs.1,00,000/- 2136 3rd Prize Rs.50,000/- 3737	
4th Prize Rs.30,000/- 1056 5th Prize Rs. 20,00/- 4342	
5th Prize Rs.10,00/-	
1046 1058 1071 1074 1055 1124 1146 1166 1184 1215	
1221 1228 1280 1360 1408 1429 1431 1456 1458	
1477 1478 1482 1488 1482 1500 1511 1530 1548 1558	
1585 1650 1478 1650 1684 1735 1771 1844 1892 1937	
2001 2024 2041 2050 2064 2097 2099 2101 2158 2158	
2198 2200 2239 2251 2264 2286 2311 2337 2338 2344	
2363 2375 2386 2422 2432 2456 2488 2534 2554 2557	
2602 2670 2677 2686 2694 2744 2751 2757 2768 2829	
2853 2859 2860 2861 2901 2902 2953 2956 2961 2974	
3003 3039 3109 3126 3131 3208 3209 3219 3238 3279	
3280 3287 3309 3388 3401 3446 3459 3491 3499 3500	
3402 3499 3440 3473 3517 3518 3520 3584 3624 3670 3712	
3529 3615 3624 3703 3726 3748 3811 3886 3955 3958 3958	
3961 3969 3983 3993 4014 4026 4142 4144 4145	
4187 4198 4232 4246 4270 4295 4316 4318 4325 4341	
4356 4365 4443 4478 4479 4511 4524 4543 4552 4600	
4617 4646 4861 4867 4869 4875 4878 4888 4924 4946	
4754 4840 4845 4889 4897 4898 4940 4950 5003 5033	
5052 5086 5124 5143 5183 5199 5219 5264 5315 5318	
5332 5390 5379 5394 5426 5537 5570 5598 5619	
5626 5657 5681 5675 5746 5786 5790 5801 5812 5830	
5900 5906 5909 6006 6049 6076 6095 6096 6105	
6140 6147 6157 6159 6167 6171 6275 6281 6284 6349	
6436 6464 6467 6497 6533 6553 6577 6578 6614 6664	
6691 6701 6708 6801 6803 6831 6832 6852 6866 6877	
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SIKKIM STATE LOTTERIES		MUMBAIXMI LAXMAN	
LAHBAIXMI TAURUS Draw No. 3 Drawdate on 19/12/17 1st Prize Rs.3000/- 6875 2nd Prize Rs.1500/- 3437 3rd Prize Rs.750/- 6875 4th Prize Rs.300/- 3437 5th Prize Rs.120/- 1218 6th Prize Rs.100/-		Draw No. 3 Drawdate on 19/12/17 1st Prize Rs.3000/- 3583 2nd Prize Rs.1500/- 4746 3rd Prize Rs.750/- 3583 4th Prize Rs.300/- 4746 5th Prize Rs.120/- 6th Prize Rs.100/-	
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KINDLY CHECK THE RESULT WITH THE OFFICIAL CASSETTE		Issued by: The Director, Sikkim State Lotteries, Lottery Office, DZ-771012, Shilong Phone No. 0361-2610101	

2017 saw UK-India ties grow but post-Brexit future concerns remain

ADITI KHANNA

LONDON, DEC 26 [PTI]: The UK-India ties grew steadily in 2017, with the British government laying the groundwork for a new post-Brexit economic partnership with New Delhi amid concerns over its tough stance on movement of professionals and students between the two nations.

The cultural strand of the bilateral relationship may have dominated the year, with grand celebrations at some of the UK's major institutions to also mark 70 years of India's independence, but the Foreign Office highlighted that other aspects of the ties remain equally at the forefront, especially within the context of Brexit.

"Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi described the connection between our people as a 'living bridge' and that link has been strengthened during the 2017 UK-India Year of Culture," said a UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) spokesperson.

"Our economic relationship is thriving and we want to expand our 16 billion pounds worth of bilateral trade, generating more jobs and building skills in the coming years, especially looking ahead to intensifying our trading relationship after Britain leaves the EU," the spokesperson said.

Describing the two countries as "modern, diverse and vibrant democracies", the UK government is keen to step into the New Year by building on the "shared connections and values" which make for a "natural partnership" as Britain prepares to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in April, 2018.

Prince Charles, who will be stepping in for the Queen as the head of the Commonwealth at this year's proceedings, had extended a formal invitation to Prime Minister Modi during a high-profile visit to India in November.

"Next year's Commonwealth Heads of



Government Meeting (CHOGM) will provide an opportunity for the UK, India and all Commonwealth members to build a reformed and revitalised Commonwealth that is more prosperous, secure, sustainable and fair for all our citizens," the FCO spokesperson noted.

As the UK prepares for a potential Modi visit for the summit next year, it will be keen to edge a little closer to the much-anticipated free trade agreement that both sides are expected to clinch once Britain has formally exited the EU by March 2019.

A Joint Working Group on Trade set up to lay the groundwork for a new post-Brexit economic partnership has held a few meetings this year but progress on that front is unlikely to be very significant until Britain is seen to soften its stance on the free movement of professionals and students.

Indian high commissioner to the UK, Y K Sinha, has been making that point at various platforms, most recently in November at the London launch of the Indian

Professionals Forum (IPF), a non-profit think-tank for Indian diaspora related policy advocacy set up to strengthen India-UK relations.

The envoy said that as Indian professionals will play an important role in defining the "contours of a winning partnership between India and the UK", freer movement of professionals between the two countries will be central to any "mutually beneficial agreement" in the future.

The latest UK Home Office statistics held up some promise as the declining trend among Indian students coming to study at UK institutions seems to have reversed somewhat, with 2,962 more students coming to study in the UK in 2017 to make up a total of 14,081, up 27 per cent from last year's 11,119.

Indian student numbers are now closer to the US (15,039) but still far behind the UK's largest overseas student category of China (88,258).

London Mayor Sadiq Khan during his

India visit had said he was "lobbying" with the British government to change its stringent visa norms, which he termed as a "big mistake".

Recently, the Theresa May government changed its visa policy for non-EU (European Union) nationals to curb its soaring immigration figures. The policy which came into effect in November will affect a large number of Indians, especially IT professionals.

One of the loudest voices claiming there is no bar on the number of Indian students who can come to the UK under the Theresa May-led Conservative party government was the senior-most Indian-origin minister in the UK Cabinet, Priti Patel.

However, she had an extremely turbulent year as she was forced to resign as Secretary of State for International Development after a series of damaging revelations around a dozen undisclosed meetings with Israeli political leaders during a "holiday" to the country.

The Gujarati-origin MP, who characterises Prime Minister Modi as a "great friend" of Britain, has since been shunted to the back-benches of the Tory party. However, her pro-Brexit views are expected to bring her back into the headlines soon as the UK continues to negotiate a tenuous agreement with the EU over its future trading relations with the 27-member economic bloc.

Security issues are expected to be central to the ongoing negotiations, especially against the backdrop of Britain being the target of major terrorist attacks throughout the year.

A car rampage into the side wall of the Palace of Westminster, which houses the Parliament complex, in central London in March was followed by a suicide bombing at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester in May and a knife attack on the streets

of London days later in early June.

A few days later a vehicle stormed towards a mosque in Finsbury Park area of London, adding to an already heightened sense of terror alert in the country.

The UK and India had been also locked in a stalemate over the election for the International Court of Justice. India's Dalveer Bhandari and Britain's Christopher Greenwood were both hoping to win re-election. Just before the 11th round of voting, Britain withdrew its candidate, paving the way for India's victory.

The UK media termed the defeat as a "humiliating blow" for the country even as India asserted that the hard-fought race will not impact the bilateral ties.

As the year comes to a close, it will be the extradition trial of liquor tycoon Vijay Malviya that will continue to be in the limelight.

The trial, to determine if the 61-year-old businessman can be forced to return to India to face charges of fraud and money laundering amounting to nearly Rs 9,000 crores, is set to conclude in December.

But with the verdict expected only in January 2018, this news is all set to spill over into the New Year and keep India-UK relations within the context of their extradition treaty in the news for some months to come.

The year 2017 had been ear-marked as the UK-India Year of Culture, which was inaugurated in style with a historic royal reception hosted by Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace in February.

The 91-year-old monarch had an impromptu lesson in some classical mudras with Indian dancer Arunima as she opened the doors of her London home to Indian music and dance.

The palace facade itself was lit up by a colourful projection of India's national bird, the peacock.

Egypt hangs 15 over attacks on security forces: officials

CAIRO, DEC 26 [AFP]:

Egyptian authorities today executed 15 prisoners convicted of attacks on security forces in the restive Sinai Peninsula, police officials said.

The men were hanged in two jails where they had been held since military courts sentenced them for the attacks in the Sinai, where jihadists are waging an insurgency, the officials said.

It was the largest mass execution carried out in the North African country since six convicted jihadists were hanged in 2015.

The hangings came a week after the Islamic State group attacked a helicopter with an anti-tank missile at a North Sinai airport as the country's defence and interior ministers were visiting.

The ministers were unhurt in the attack but an aide to the defence minister was killed along with a pilot.

IS's Egypt affiliate has killed hundreds of policemen and soldiers in attacks in the Sinai and also targeted civilians in the mainland.

Egyptian courts have sentenced hundreds to death over unrest since the military ousted divisive Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013. But most defendants have appealed and won retrials.

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China to maintain communication with India on artificial lakes

BEIJING, DEC 26 [PTI]:

China will maintain communication with India to deal with massive lakes formed by landslides on the Brahmaputra river in Tibet following an earthquake, which caused concerns of a sudden flooding on the Indian side, a Foreign Ministry official said today.

According to reports, three huge artificial lakes, whose size and volume of water in them are yet to be ascertained, were formed in the Brahmaputra river, locally known as the Yarlung Tsangpo, due to landslide after a 6.4-magnitude earthquake in Tibet last month.

The massive accumulation of water has caused concerns that if the lakes join or burst, millions of



people residing along the banks of both Siang (in Arunachal Pradesh) and Brahmaputra (in Assam) downstream could get affected.

"The Chinese side, through the existing channels, will maintain communication with the Indian side on the cross-border rivers," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told media persons here.

She said verification by the Chinese authorities has revealed that lakes are on the eastern

section of the India-China boundary.

"It is caused by natural factors. It is not a man-made accident. I noticed that authorised Indian professionals have made an analysis and clarified," she said, referring to reports of the lakes being detected by satellites.

"We hope the Indian media will not make a groundless speculation on this," she said.

She said the Chinese officials concerned will maintain communication

with the Indian side on the issue.

Earlier, China had refuted reports that the highly-polluted water in the Siang river was caused by attempts to build a massive tunnel to divert the water to neighbouring arid Xinjiang region.

The issue was reportedly discussed during the recent 20th border talks between NSA Ajit Doval and Chinese State Councillor, Yang Jiechi on December 22 in Delhi.

The India-China border dispute covers the 3,488 km long Line of Actual Control (LAC). While China claims Arunachal Pradesh as Southern Tibet, India asserts that the dispute covered Aksai Chin area which was occupied by China during the 1962 war.

China, Pakistan, Afghanistan resolve to fight terrorism

ISLAMABAD, DEC 26 [PTI]:

China, Pakistan and Afghanistan today agreed not to allow any country, group or individual to use their territories for terrorism as their foreign ministers discussed development, security and counter-terrorism during their first such trilateral dialogue in Beijing.

The three sides reiterated their firm resolve to fight the menace of terrorism, according to the joint statement shared by Pakistan's Foreign Office after the meeting.

It was the first meeting of its kind since the three countries agreed to establish a trilateral dialogue mechanism in June.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held the first China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue in Beijing with his Afghanistan and Pakistan counterparts -- Salahuddin Rabbani and Khawaja Muhammad Asif respectively.

"They expressed their strong determination not to allow any country, organisation or individual to use their respective territories for terrorist activities

against any other countries," it reads.

They agreed to strengthen counter-terrorism coordination and cooperation in an effort to combat all terrorist organisations and individuals without any discrimination.

They reaffirmed that a broad-based and inclusive peace and reconciliation process, which is "Afghan-led, Afghan-own", and fully supported regionally and internationally, is the most viable solution to end the violence in Afghanistan.

"In this regard, they call on the Afghan Taliban to join the peace process at an early date," the statement said.

The three countries agreed to conduct win-win trilateral economic cooperations, with an incremental approach, starting from the easier initiative to the more difficult ones.

They reaffirmed their commitment to improving their relations, deepening mutually beneficial cooperation, advancing connectivity under China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, and fighting terrorism in all its forms and manifestation without any distinction.

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Records created by Tiger Zinda Hai in just 04 days!



Tiger Zinda Hai is here and so are the many records. It's been a while since we listed down the amount of records a film has created. Last time we did, it was April when Baahubali 2 dawned on the box office and ransacked it. It's again that time of the year when we have sat to count Tiger Zinda Hai's many achievements.

Well, it's been only three days and the film has already made 09 records. That's so incredible! That's exactly what was expected of this film. Tiger Zinda Hai is a perfect treat to all Salman Khan fans who had

an issue with Tubelight later this year.

Today, we can safely say that it will erase all the memory of the film from people's mind. Now when it's Salman Khan, records are a given and for Tiger Zinda Hai, it's raining records already! But before we begin, we have to tell you that these records are based on the achievements of a Hindi film only. You all are aware that Baahubali 2 is at the top with all kinds of records fathomable. So we are concentrating on just Bollywood films alone.

#HIGHEST FIRST THREE DAY COLLECTION

TZH's opening weekend rests at Rs 114.93 crore

which is the highest any Hindi film has ever made in three days at the box office. Previously, the record was with Salman Khan's Sultan which had earned little over Rs 105 crore in 3 days!

#HIGHEST SINGLE DAY COLLECTION FOR A HINDI FILM

TZH earned Rs 45.53 crore on Sunday which is by far the highest any Hindi film has ever earned in a day! Interestingly, it is only a few crores behind Baahubali 2 which holds the all-time highest single day collection record in Indian Cinema [Rs 46+crore].

#THIRD HIGHEST DAY 2 COLLECTIONS

TZH however didn't only fall short of Baahubali 2 but Sultan as well. Its day 2 numbers of Rs 35.30 became the third highest day 2 total because of that.

#HIGHEST OPENER OF THE FRANCHISE

TZH beats its original film Ek Tha Tiger easily. The first film has earned Rs 32.93 crore while TZH made Rs 34.10 crore, thus making it the highest opener for the series.

#KATRINA'S HIGHEST BOX OFFICE OPENER

It beat Ek Tha Tiger and Dhoom 3 to become Katrina's biggest opener ever.

#HIGHEST OPENING DAY FOR HINDI FILM IN 2017

Again keeping Baahubali 2 aside, TZH is the highest opener for a Hindi film in 2017.



THIS DAY IN HISTORY

27TH DECEMBER WORLD HISTORY

1941: Japan bombs Manila even though it was declared an "open city".

1943: France transfers most of her powers in Lebanon to Lebanese government.

1949: United States of Indonesia gains independence from Netherlands.

1968: Apollo 8 returns to Earth.

1985: Terrorists kill 20 and wound 110 attacking El Al at Rome and Vienna airports, President Reagan blames Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

2007: Benazir Bhutto is assassinated by a bomb blast in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

2012: In his first political speech, marking the five-year anniversary of his mother's death, ex-Prime

Minister Benazir Bhutto's son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, vows to maintain democracy and fight militancy.

2013: An error on the Delta Air Lines website allows thousands of customers to buy tickets for super-low fares, some 90% below regular ticket prices; Delta takes responsibility for the error, and will honor ticket purchases as well as frequent flier miles earned on the reduced-fare flights.

2014: Sony Corporation's gaming service is back online after a hacking attack disrupted its PlayStation Network; the company is probing whether this incident is related to the attack on its Sony Pictures Division earlier this month.

INDIAN HISTORY

1797: One of India's greatest Urdu and Persian poets, Mirza Asadullah Baig Khan, better known as Mirza Ghalib, was born on December 27, 1797, in Agra.



A ROYAL AFFAIR! Soon-to-wed Meghan Markle and Prince Harry attend Christmas Day Church service at Church of St Mary Magdalene in King's Lynn, England.

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- HOEST & REINER



ARCTIC CIRCLE

- HALLATT



BABY BLUES

- KIRKMAN & SCOTT



THE DAY AHEAD

ARIES: The mood is oppressive and heavy today. Some disappointments will crop up here and there if you have to prove yourself in any way, either privately or professionally. There is some likelihood you'll feel angry with someone important to you. Don't yield to your negative feelings too quickly. It would be bad for your morale.

TAURUS: In the past few days, you've made a resolution to work steadily, seek stability, and follow your plans to the letter. So the day ahead will come as a rude surprise. You can expect to receive news that challenges the rigid program you've set for

yourself, or meet people who are determined to discourage you. Overcome these obstacles or they'll overcome you.

GEMINI: Today you may feel some anxiety about the future. You may feel your strength ebbing, especially if you have a deadline. You need challenges in order to assert yourself. Now is the time to begin getting in shape. Doubt is extremely counterproductive. You're completely equipped for success!

CANCER: The idea of expressing yourself will seem like a joke today. Have you ever stopped to question what expressing yourself really means? This is the ideal time

to think about it, especially if you have artistic objectives. Do only what you want to do. Don't force anything. In other words, express yourself for your own sake and not for the sake of others.

LEO: Once you stop dreaming about having superpowers, you'll feel a lot better. You're not a superhero and you never were. For that matter, no one is. On the other hand, you surely have capacities that you've exploited in the past but now you seem persuaded that they're of no interest. It's time to rethink this issue.

VIRGO: This isn't the moment to adhere to a particular philosophy, whatever it may be. You

may feel frustrated by your inability to figure out which path to take, but this is very good for you. Continue to search with your little flashlight, as weak as it may seem, because this is how you're going to get solid faith back again. Best of all, it will be a faith tailored for you.

LIBRA: You can't let everything fall apart now, not after you've come so far. This may be a difficult moment for you, as it seems the time has come to prove yourself once and for all. But this isn't a reason to give up. Sleep, play sports, and eat healthfully. You should be able to win this battle provided you give yourself

the opportunity to do so.

SCORPIO: Do you have the blues? It happens to everyone. Call a friend or go to a movie. Get out and do things that you know can help you overcome this funk. This isn't the moment to retreat. You have some inner work to do, even if it appears to lead nowhere. You may have the impression of being abandoned, but you know perfectly well that this isn't true.

SAGITTARIUS: You'll be in your element today. The stars challenge you to try something different. When you look at things relatively, rather than turn into a vague generalist, why not try coming up with a philosophy

that's more constructive? What good is the ability to see all sides of an issue if you can't channel your insight and observations into something specific?

CAPRICORN: It appears that today and for the past several days you've been building up internal tension without an outlet. As a result, your fuse is somewhat short. In fact, if anyone is unfortunate enough to provoke your anger by criticizing you or your work, you're liable to explode. There's a storm brewing! Try to weather it as best you can.

AQUARIUS: A certain decision means that you've reached a turning point. The hardest part about

making this decision is saying farewell to your old ways. The past can seem cozy and reassuring, especially when the unknown looms. It takes strength and determination to leave it behind. But whether it's your career or your love life, you have personal goals that can't be sacrificed or denied.

PISCES: The horizon is clouded with doubt. You're feeling the frustrations brought about by recent decisions about your love life. In other words, you're getting cold feet! Today you must draw on your willpower and self-control in order to face your problems realistically while vanquishing your anxieties.