

SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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WINTER HAS ARRIVED, SO HAVE THE ORANGES!

GANGTOK, 17 NOV: Today was Indra Maya Tamang's first day selling oranges this winter. The 55-year-old had set up a tiny stall inside Lal Bazaar to sell oranges from her own orchard located at 32 Mile. The oranges were priced at Rs 20 for three pieces. Winter here brings along with it the fresh aroma of oranges in the air. It is just the beginning of the suntala season and the Lal Bazaar stalls are already stocking them up. However, it is believed that the oranges at this point have a slightly sour taste so if you want your citrus sweet then wait a bit longer. [Rebyna Rana]

Mangan shuts down demanding “professionals” not local contractors build new hospital



**WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 17 NOV:**

Unhappy with sub standard work in the district for many years, the public of Mangan today took to the streets to protest against the engineering cell of Health Department for granting the Rs 14.09 crore contract of the upcoming district hospital to a local contractor.

The rally demanded that the department reissue the tender notice and invite 'qualified' and 'able' contractors for the contract. The entire town shut down for five hours with even local taxis staying put in support of the protest. After the protest rally a petition demanding the reissuing of tender notice was submitted at North District Administration Center.

Additional District Collector, TT Kaleon informed that the let-

ter will be sent to the office of the Chief Secretary for further action.

Many sloppy projects from local contractors in the district headquarter like Mangan Public Ground, which has been reconstructed four times now, and water supply projects prompted the public to take out the protest rally today.

They have been demanding that the construction of the hospital be undertaken by a technically competent professional company chosen on the basis of a turnkey tender.

Mangan Nagar Panchayat Building constructed by NBCC through pace infrastructure is a visible example of a well built structure constructed within time and cost targets.

"This is just the beginning. If the department still stays adamant we will stage a hunger

strike right in front of the hospital and if the peace and tranquility of North District headquarters is disturbed then the health department will solely be responsible," said local residents who were party of the rally today.

The residents of Mangan reportedly approached Chief Minister Pawan Chamling who directed the concerned department to award the project to a professional construction company on a turnkey basis.

In direct contravention of the Chief Minister's directives and the requests of the people of North Sikkim, the concerned department went ahead and invited tenders from local contractors in the beginning of this week.

It may be mentioned here that the first government hospital of Mangan was commissioned in 1958 and the heritage

building is still standing and is being used as the Block Administrative Centre.

Sometime in the 1990s, it was decided that a new building be constructed at a site in Pentok (near the District Secretariat) to house the new hospital. After much delay, the multi crore structure was completed by a local contractor and commissioned in 2007.

As soon as it was commissioned, the hospital staff started complaining about leaking roofs, spilling concrete, plumbing that didn't work and the poor lighting. The basic design of the structure also seemed to be faulty. Finally things came to a head and a technical inspection of the building was conducted. It was decided to abandon the structure and construct a new hospital building.

Cabinet sanctions

Following are some of the decisions passed by the Cabinet in the meeting held at Mintok-gang today:-
ROADS AND BRIDGES DEPARTMENT

1. Approval and sanction of Rs.102.04 lakh for payment of land compensation and other standing properties for construction of 18 meter span steel bridge over Tharey Khola, 12 meter span steel bridge over Salaley Khola and 20 meter span e steel bridge over Bala Khola along Assam Pakyong road in East Sikkim.

2. Approval and sanction of Rs.87.43 lakh for construction of approach road to Bethesda Church at Sang in East Sikkim.

3. The approval and sanction of Rs.44,74,69,808 with additional sanction of Rs.56,83,979 for upgradation, improvement and carpeting of Pakyong-Machong-Rolep Road km 1st to 35th.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

4. Approval and sanction of Rs.4,06,61,000

for construction of Food Court at Kamrang Government Degree College at Namchi.

5. Approval and sanction of Rs.4,09,50,000 for infrastructure development at Tharpu Senior Secondary School, West Sikkim.

6. Approval and sanction of Rs.35 lakh for construction of two roomed school building at Darap

Senior Secondary School in West Sikkim.

7. Approval and sanction of Rs.1.45 crore for construction of eight roomed school building at Mangshilla Senior Secondary School in North Sikkim.

BUILDINGS AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT

8. Approval and sanction to pg02

Plea on measures to tackle pollution; SC seeks Centre's reply

NEW DELHI, NOV 17 (PTI): The Supreme Court today asked the Centre to respond to a plea which has sought its direction on issues, including availability of sufficient gas supply in the NCR and review of status of existing coal-based power plants, aimed at tackling the problem of air pollution.

The application has also sought the top court's direction to implement the 2015 emission standards for power plants by December this year and also direct the Centre to strengthen the distribution of electricity in the National Capital Region (NCR).

A bench of justices Madan B Lokur and Deepak Gupta asked Additional Solicitor General A N S Nadkarni, representing the Centre, about it and he said that he would



take instructions and file a response, if necessary.

The application has been filed by an advocate, who has been appointed as an amicus curiae to assist the

court in the matter.

During the hearing, the court also observed that it would consider the issue of deadline for implementing BS-VI emission standards for

vehicles.

The plea has sought a direction that "sufficient gas supply be made available so that all power generation in the NCR is from power plants using gas as their principal fuel".

It has also sought ban on import of pet coke and furnace oil, review of status of existing coal-based power plants and a time-bound switch over to natural gas.

It has said the Centre should be directed to oversee measures to strengthen the distribution of electricity in NCR to ensure that there was no shortfall in availability of power on 24x7 basis.

Meanwhile, the bench asked the Centre, amicus and the counsel appearing for the Central Pollution Control Board to identify the money, which was collected under various

heads pursuant to orders passed by the court in pollution matter, so that it could be properly utilised.

The court, however, did not pass any order on a separate application filed by the amicus seeking a direction for collection of a compensatory sum on petrol and diesel in the NCR which would be used for measures to deal with pollution in the region.

The plea has also sought a direction to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to examine the feasibility of existing technologies and present a workable scheme on the use and disposal of crop stubble to the court.

The court was hearing a PIL filed in 1985 by environmentalist M C Mehta who had raised the issue of air pollution in the Delhi-NCR.

LG lifts emergency measures after air quality improves, ban on

NEW DELHI, Nov 17 (PTI): Ban on use of generator sets and prohibition on open burning of garbage will continue in Delhi, Lt Governor Anil Bajjal said today while lifting the emergency measures that were taken in view of the poor air quality here.

The LG said that other measures such as increased frequency of metro and mechanical sweeping of city's roads will be in place.

Bajjal today chaired a meeting to review the air pollution situation, which was attended by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, his deputy Manish Sisodia, Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot, Environment Minister Imraan Hussain, EPCA Chairman Bhure Lal and other senior officers. The emergency measures were lifted after the air quality in Delhi improved.

"Emergency measures lifted but measures like prohibition on open burning of garbage, mechanical sweeping of roads, increased frequency of metro & ban on use of generator sets to continue & to be strictly enforced by all agencies," the LG tweeted.

Yesterday, authorities in the city withdrew emergency measures such as the ban on entry of trucks and restore parking fee to usual rates.

Earlier in the day, the National Green Tribunal also lifted its ban on construction activities in the Delhi-NCR owing to improvement in air quality.

Two-day seminar on digitalisation of Cooperatives begins in Namchi

SUMMIT REPORT
NAMCHI, 17 Nov:

A two-day seminar as part of the 64th Cooperative Week with the theme 'Empowering people through digitalisation of Cooperatives' commenced today here at Officer's Club, Namchi, South Sikkim. The programme is organized by Cooperation Department, Namchi Sub-Division. The seminar was inaugurated by Joint Registrar, South, Matrika Khatiwara

The inaugural session of the celebration witnessed an Inter-School Quiz Competition and Open Essay Writing Competition.

Four schools around Namchi participated in the quiz competition in which Tendong Educational Institute, Namchi Govt Girls' Sr Sec School and Namchi New Sec School secured first, second and third positions respectively.

The winners were awarded



with cash prizes along with the certificates and souvenirs. The results of Open Essay writing competition will be declared on

Saturday.

The judges panel for the essay writing competition comprised of Yon Tsh Lepcha [Asst

Professor, English Dept] and Dr. Kamal Paudyal [Asst Professor cum HOD, Zoology Dept] from Namchi Govt College.

Dean of Diplomatic Corps takes up air pollution issue with MEA

NEW DELHI, Nov 17 (PTI): The Dean of Diplomatic Corps, who represents the voice of over 150 foreign missions in India, today conveyed concerns to the external affairs ministry over the city's air pollution and its adverse impact on health of the diplomats and their families.

Frank Hans Dannenberg Castellanos, the Dean, met senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), including Chief of Protocol Sanjay Verma, and told them that the air pollution is affecting daily operations at some of the missions.

"The diplomatic community had asked me to share some of our concerns with officials of the Ministry of External Affairs, about air pollution in New Delhi, and how (it) is affecting the inflow of tourism from some of our countries and the daily operations of some of the missions," he said in a media release.

At the same time, Castella-

nos said the diplomatic community completely understands that this is an issue that affects 22 million people living in Delhi. He said it needs to be addressed for the better future of all people and not only the diplomatic community.

"We all breathe the same air," he said.

On his meeting with Verma, Castellanos said the Chief of Protocol has taken note of the concerns of the diplomats and their families.

"He said that these concerns are understandable and a challenge to all," said Castellanos.

Castellanos said he and Verma hoped that the outcome of the efforts of both Central and local governments will bring "rapid and positive results", not only for the diplomats but also for every citizen living in Delhi.

The release said Verma assured the Dean of Diplomatic Corps that the government was

according the matter top priority, adding the conditions are historically not unique to India.

It said Verma conveyed the government's commitment to dealing with the issue, including learning from best practices from countries that have "traversed this experience".

The release quoted Verma as saying that the unusual deterioration in the quality of air is a product of multiple causes, most of which are indeed domestic, but have also been aggravated by a dust storm from a "distant geography".

He said the "simultaneous aggregation" of these cases has led to an environmental challenge, which the government is determined to "address and ameliorate".

Due to high pollution levels in the national capital, many diplomats have been forced to move out of Delhi. Some of the missions have taken a series

of steps to deal with the situation including installing air purifiers.

In a personal blog post, Ambassador of Costa Rica to India Mariela Cruz Alvarez said, "This past week the levels of pollution in Delhi reached impossible numbers. The consequences of breathing this air I had no idea--until I reached Bangalore and my system collapsed."



Allegations relating to Rafale deal shameful: Sitharaman

NEW DELHI, Nov 17 (PTI): Terming the Congress' allegations about Rafale fighter jet deal as "shameful", Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Friday these amounted to "disservice" to the armed forces, in first firm rebuttal of the charges levelled by the main opposition party.

Sitharaman said the cost of each aircraft along with weapon systems was much lower than what was negotiated by the UPA government. She alleged that the indecision of the previous UPA governments to procure the combat jets "potentially compromised" national security interests.

She said the inter-governmental agree-

ment with France for "emergency" procurement was struck duly following a transparent procedure and after clearance by the Cabinet Committee on Security.

"These allegations are shameful...The deal was finalised following a transparent procedure," Sitharaman told a press conference.

Questioning the previous UPA governments' "inability" to finalise the deal even after 10 years of negotiations between 2004 and 2014, the defence minister wondered whether the Congress does not owe an explanation to the country over the delay in taking a decision when IAF badly needed the jets.

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Cabinet sanctions...

contd from pg01

tion of Rs.179.50 lakh for construction of Annexe Building/Extension of the Phase-II Block at the High Court Premises, Gangtok.

9. Approval and sanction for an additional amount of Rs.1,58,39,017 for revised estimate for construction of the Community Centre at Jorethang, South Sikkim.

RURAL MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

10. Approval and sanction of Rs.2057.33 lakh as Grants-in-aid to Zilla Panchayats and Gram Panchayats for payment of salaries, administrative expenses, notified entitlements of Panchayats etc.

11. Approval and sanction of Rs.59.57 lakh as reimbursement of Environment Cess for the project - Pilgrimage cum Cultural Centre, at Solophok, Namchi.

12. Approval and sanction to (i) purchase and distribute GCI sheets for 1900 additional beneficiaries at a cost of Rs. 5,05,12,260 (ii) Distribution of house up-gradation grants to additional 1499 beneficiaries @ Rs 20,000- per beneficiary at a cost of Rs. 299.80 lakh.

TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT

13. Approval and sanction of Rs.2,44,83,098 for acquisition of land for tourism projects under Tumin-Lingee in South Sikkim.

14. Approval and sanction of 2.45 crore as Grants-in-aid to be released to i) Institute of Hotel Management, Sajong, Rumtek,

ii) Indian Himalayan Centre for Adventure & Eco-Tourism, Chemchey, iii) Tathagata Tsal, Rabongla, and iv) Siddheshwara Dhaam, Namchi.

15. Approval and sanction of Rs 22 lakhs for making of murals of Lord Shiva and Lord Buddha on the rock fascia at hill side of Mining Dara, Rangpo, East Sikkim.

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

16. Approval and en-bloc sanction of Rs.126.27 lakh for the implementation of project - Mass production and propaga-

tion of large cardamom for livelihood sustainability of rural people in Sikkim using Biotechnological interventions.

17. Approval and en-bloc sanction of Rs.35 lakh as Grant-in-aid to Sikkim State Council of Science and Technology for the financial year 2017-18.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY, LIVESTOCK, FISHERIES & VETERINARY SERVICES

18. Approval and sanction of Rs.32,32,027 as land compensation at Hatidunga, West Sikkim for construction of Veterinary Dispensary.

19. Approval and sanction of Rs.74.74 lakh only for implementation of Rural Backyard Poultry Scheme under National Livestock Mission.

20. Approval and sanction of Rs.150 lakh for construction of Rainbow Trout Mother Unit at Uttarey, West Sikkim.

FOREST ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

21. Approval and en-bloc sanction of Rs.224.618 lakh for implementation of Centrally Sponsored Scheme -Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat of Sikkim.

22. Approval and sanction of Rs.35 crore for implementation of works under Sikkim Ecology Fund and Environment Cess during the year 2017-18.

ENERGY AND POWER DEPARTMENT

23. Approval and en-bloc sanction of Rs.63.15 lakh for implementation of the project "Mountain Hiking Trail including resting sheds and camping area from Phoket Dara Chewabhanjyang to Uttarey under Maneybong-Dentam in West Sikkim.

24. Approval and sanction of Rs.24.15 lakh for acquiring 1600 square feet of land for the work -Drawing of 66 KV transmission line including construction of 2x7.5 MVA, 66/11 KV substation at Marchak in East Sikkim

25. Approval and sanction of Rs. 764.36 lakh for electrification of the Chenrezig Singkham Riwo Potala at Sanga Choeling, Pelling, West Sikkim.

26. Approval of the following for payment of compensation of land and damages in regard to Right of Way pertaining to construction of the Sub-Stations and Transmission lines under Comprehensive Scheme for Strengthening of Transmission and Dis-

tribution lines and Sub-Stations in Sikkim: i. Standard (Minimum) rate of land @ Rs.300/sqft for rural areas and Rs.500/sqft for Municipal Areas.

ii. The proposed rates shall be applicable to the Comprehensive Scheme for Strengthening of T&D lines and Sub-Stations in Sikkim and other allied centrally funded time bound ongoing projects of the department as one time relaxation.

iii. In case of any land price being above the standard rate (minimum rate), the same shall be taken up on case to case basis.

DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL, ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS, TRAINING AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES

27. Approval to change the nomenclature of Sikkim State Draughtsman, Planning Assistant and Planning Officer (Recruitment, Promotion and Seniority) Rules, 2013, as Sikkim State Draughtsman (Recruitment, Promotion and Seniority) Rules, 2017.

ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

28. Approval and sanction of Rs.97,59,528 for supply of uniforms and exercise copies to Monastic Schools, Sanskrit Pathshalas and Traditional Art School for the year 2016-17.

FOOD & CIVIL SUPPLIES & CONSUMER AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

29. Approval and sanction of Rs.2,08,36,140 as State share component under NFSA for transportation, handling, movement of food grains and fair price shops' margin for 2017-18.

SOCIAL JUSTICE EMPOWERMENT AND WELFARE DEPARTMENT

30. Approval for change of location of one Model ICDS Centre cum Public Service Facilitation Centre. The proposed AWC is New Market, AWC, Pakyong by renovating the existing defunct Rural Product Marketing Centre under SRDA, RMDD.

31. Approval and sanction of Rs.238.80 lakh as grant-in-aid to different Commissions and Boards under the administrative control of Social Justice, Empowerment and Welfare Department.

32. Approval and sanction of Rs.505.59 lakh for implementation of schemes / programmes under Special Central Assistance

to Tribal Sub-Scheme for the year 2017-18. (Post facto)

LAND REVENUE AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

33. Approval and sanction of Rs.76, 74,000 to be released to Sikkim Geo-tech Society for implementation of various components of Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme during the current financial year.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT

34. Approval and sanction of Rs.10 crore for implementation of a new credit linked promoter's contribution financial assistance scheme -Chief Minister's Start-up Scheme for development of new entrepreneurial ventures and self employment opportunities for unemployed Sikkimese youth and school drop outs.

ELECTION DEPARTMENT

35. Approval and sanction of Rs.10,48,63,754 for construction of Electronic Voting Machines and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails Warehouse in the four Districts of the State.

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

36. Approval and sanction of Rs.175.80 lakh and transfer it to Centre for Research and Training in Informatics account as 20 % State share of State Data Centre Scheme.

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

37. Approval and sanction of Rs.660.67 lakh for implementation of National Food Security Mission on rice, pulses and coarse cereals.

38. Approval of Annual Action Plan under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sichayee Yojana (PMKSY) amounting to Rs.746.62 lakh.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE, HUMAN SERVICES & FAMILY WELFARE

39. Approval and sanction of Rs.88,48,000 towards procurement of Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy machine of KARL STORZ for STNM Hospital, Gangtok.

40. Approval and sanction of Rs 1 crore for implementation of Chief Ministers' Comprehensive Annual and Total Check-up for Healthy Sikkim (CATCH) for the financial year 2017-18.

41. Approval and sanction of

Rs.10,02,36,378 towards purchase of medicine and consumables for the year 2017-18.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE REVENUE & EXPENDITURE

42. Approval and sanction of Rs 27.45 crore as enhancement of Dearness Allowance to the State Government employees and Dearness Relief to the Pensioners from the existing rate of 136% to 139% with effect from 01.07.2017 in accordance with the recommendations of the 4th State Pay Commission.

DEPARTMENT OF PRINTING & STATIONERY

43. Approval and sanction of Rs. 4,63,93,033 subject to adjustment of balance amount of Rs. 1,13,93,033 for procurement of New Komori Enthroned 429 Brand - 4 Colour Offset Printing Machine through STCS.

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS

44. Approval and sanction of Rs. 22,92,080 for publication of Coffee Table Book entitled "The Journey so far at Raj Bhawan".

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

45. Approval and sanction of Rs.29.54 lakh for conducting localised IT Domain specific training to the IT officials of State.

RURAL MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

46. Approval and sanction of Rs.5574.40 lakh for taking up 233 Water Supply Schemes and 57 Repairs / Renovation of existing Water Supply Schemes at a cost of Rs. 425.61 lakh.

FOOD, CIVIL SUPPLIES & CONSUMER AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

47. Approval for setting up of a Technical Engineering Cell in the Department .

URBAN DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING DEPARTMENT

48. Approval and sanction of Rs.280 lakh for construction of Parking-cum-Haart Complex at Uttarey, West Sikkim .

ENERGY & POWER DEPARTMENT

49. Approval of rates for land compensation in respect of comprehensive scheme for strengthening of transmission and distribution lines and sub stations in Sikkim .

Gangtok on Saturday, 18 Nov

Temp: 23°C / 10°C
Forecast: Beautiful with sunshine but not as warm.
Sunrise: 05:58 AM
Sunset: 4:43 PM

Sushil 'walks over' to a gold; Sakshi, Geeta excel at Natls

INDORE, Nov 17 (PTI): Back in action after three-long years, two-time Olympic-medallist Sushil Kumar took less than three minutes to bag a gold medal as three of his rivals gave him a walk over in men's 74kg free-style competition of the National Wrestling championship here today.

Sushil battled for just 2 minutes and 33 seconds in total on the mat as he fought only two of his initial round bouts before three of his opponents -- in the quarterfinal, semifinal and final -- gave him a walk over.

Meanwhile, India's lone woman Olympic medalist Sakshi Malik and popular 'Dangal girl' Geeta Phogat also bagged a gold medal each in their respective weight categories of women's wrestling on the second day of the marquee domestic event.

Sakshi finished on the top of the podium after posting a dominating 10-0 victory over Pooja Tomar of Haryana in the final of women's 62kg, while Geeta clinched the yellow metal with a win against Ravita in the final of 59kg category.

Even Geeta's husband Pawan Kumar managed to finish on top in 86kg.

All eyes were on Sushil today and India's greatest individual Olympian hardly had to break sweat as India international Parveen Rana decided to concede his bout against the 34-year-old in the gold-medal round, claiming injury.

Rana was carrying a niggle which could have been aggravated had he fought the bout.

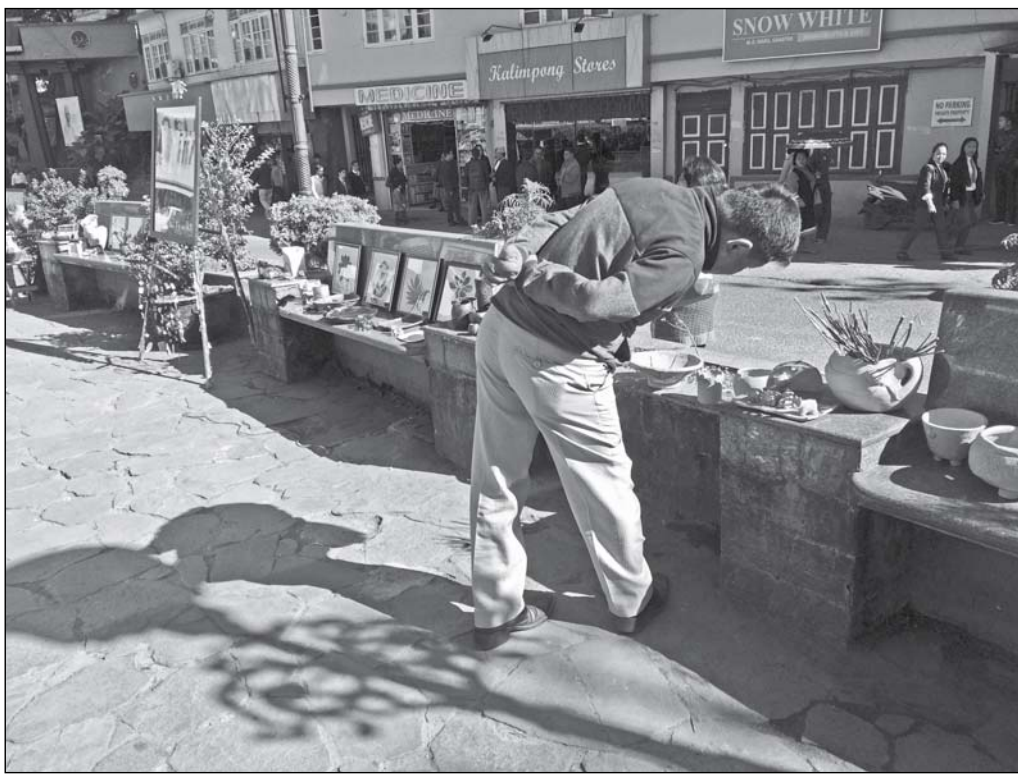
"I pulled up a muscle of my thigh before the Nationals and I wanted to give a medical. But Railways needed two wrestlers so I came. After the first bout, I got a problem and by final I could not wrestle," said Rana.

It was Sachin Dahiya who gave him a walk-over in the semifinals, enabling Sushil's smooth passage to the gold-medal round, while Praveen, too, handed his fancied opponent a walkover in the quarterfinals.

Both Dahiya and Praveen gave him a walk-over to "show respect", according to the coaches and the officials of Wrestling Federation of India.

Earlier, Sushil showed that class is permanent as he took less than two minutes to get past his opponents in the initial rounds.

Sushil overpowered Mizoram's Lalmaisawma by technical fall in 48 seconds in the first round and then pinned down Mukul Mishra in just a minute and 45 seconds in his next bout. Geeta had registered a come-from-behind win to make it to the finals with a 8-4 result over Sarita Mor 8-4 in her semifinal bout.



EXHIBITION-CUM-SALE BY LOCAL ARTISTS AT TITANIC PARK

GANGTOK, 17 Nov: Three days long exhibition-cum-sale of interior and life style products, Naturenomics, started on 16 Nov at Titanic Park here in the capital. The exhibition is being organised by local artists, Anupa Rai [clay works] and Chimib Ongmu Bhutia [frame works]. The duo expresses, "It is such a good feeling to explore our creativity in such a beautiful manner. We had been looking forward to getting positive responses through this exhibition and that is exactly what we have been receiving since we started the event." They have extended gratitude to the state government for providing the space for exhibiting their products and to Gangtok Municipal Corporation for understanding and supporting their venture.

Registration for third edition of Kanchenjunga Marathon kick starts today

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 Nov:

The organising committee of Kanchenjunga Marathon has announced that owing to the success of this year's marathon held on 06 Nov they have decided to open the registration process for the next edition of the marathon to be held on the same date next year. Registration will close one month prior to the marathon.

The organising committee chairperson, Sarala Rai [Secretary-Sikkim Housing & Development Board], stated that the committee has decided to organise the Kanchenjunga Marathon on a larger scale on the same date next year. She stated that due to increasing popularity of the marathon, queries have been pouring in from various places in and outside India.

"We have also decided to organise an event in February next year for local runners of Sikkim and we will select the best 20 runners from the event to train them further and will send them to national and international high altitude marathons," Ms Rai said.

The organising committee technical director, Everester Kunzang Gyatso, announced that another event 'Climb & Run the Kanchenjunga' will be



organized in November next year. He stated that the event will be a unique opportunity to experience trekking, climbing and running at high altitudes in Sikkim. The committee will continue with such activities to further promote Sikkim in adventure activities, he added.

"Inspired by Kanchenjunga Marathon, local children and youth of Yuksam have been running daily and practicing for the next edition of the event. The event has been successful in leading the youth

towards a productive and healthy path," he said.

It may be mentioned here that the committee organised the second edition of Kanchenjunga Marathon 2017 on 06 Nov from Goechala to Yuksam on the Dzongri trekking trail in West Sikkim. Fifty-six runners between the age group 18-64 years from Sikkim and from different parts of India and outside participated in the marathon. The event carried a total cash prize of Rs 4.96 lakh in different categories.

18-year-old Chandra

Kala hailing from Tumin Dhanbari in East Sikkim was adjudged as the winner in the women's category of 2nd Kanchenjunga Marathon who will be joining the popular Everest Marathon to be

held in May next year in Nepal. Chandra Kala has been running marathons since the past four years. She has already won medals in various marathons in and outside the State.

Hindi lit can reach global audience if translated into

DEHRADUN, Nov 17 (PTI): Uttarakhand Governor K K Paul today said that great works of Hindi literature can achieve a global identity only if it were translated into English.

Citing the example of Rabindranath Tagore's 'Geetanjali', which won him the Nobel prize for literature, Paul said if the great poet had not translated it into English the world outside this country would not have been able to relish his poetry.

"Hindi literature can achieve a global identity

only if our great literary works are translated into English to reach a larger audience," Paul said while addressing the inaugural session of an art and culture festival titled 'Valley of Words'.

He said the world would have been aware of the greatness of Hindi writer Premchand if his works were also translated into English.

Paul also called for lowering the prices of literature books and increasing their availability to inculcate the habit of reading among children.

National colloquium on future of Christian higher education

KOLKATA, Nov 17 (PTI): A national colloquium here on 'Future of Christian Higher Education and Contemporary Transitions in India' has expressed concern over alleged rise in "subtle attempts" to "saffronise" educational establishments in the country.

Speaking at the colloquium, the principal of Salesian College Dr George Thadathil said yesterday, "The topic is pertinent in the contemporary educational scenario in India and subtle attempts are being made to saffronise educational establishments of the country."

The colloquium was held to commemorate the 80th year of Salesian College, Sonada, Darjeeling.

Thadathil hoped, "the colloquium while exposing the alarming trends in higher education will also inspire a growing number of Christian institutions of educational

excellence to upgrade themselves to serve minorities and marginalised groups."

"For the first time, representatives of five Catholic universities of India participated in the colloquium," he said.

Loreto College, Kolkata Principal, Sister Christina Coutino said, "Christians are known for their social work in education, health, social service. We believe in changing lives of people towards betterment."

The Catholic Universities that participated in the colloquium included Christ University (Bengaluru) and St Joseph University Kohima.

Salesian College, started in Shillong in 1933. A fire gutted the wooden building in 1936. Since then the college was re-located at Gorabari village on Siliguri-Darjeeling Hill Cart Road (National Highway 55).

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Universal Children's Day

The minors have to be a collective responsibility

The new week begins with the Universal Children's Day. 20 November is observed as such a Day to mark the UN's adoption of the Declaration of Children's Rights in 1959. The Convention which followed is a legally binding treaty that obliges governments to "respect, protect and fulfil" children's rights through legislations, laws and policies.

Child Rights include the right to life, health, education, participation, and protection from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. All of these rights are underlined as being equally important and reinforce each other. Now, let's look at what India has achieved seven decades since it gained Independence and 58 years since the Declaration of Children's Rights was passed. Back in the year 2001, the Census of India suggested that 12.6 million of our minors were engaged in the work-force we know as child-labour. Even at that time, statistics for the informal labour force contended that the number of under-14 years olds – the "hidden workers" – made to work was as large as 60 million. Since then, the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act has been amended to ban the employment of children in all kinds of work. This, unfortunately, has had only limited impact and NGOs working on child labour issues believe that as many as 20 million continue to be employed in private homes. Raw data however shows a marked improvement with the 2011 Census of India revealing that the total number of child labourers, aged 5–14 stood at 4.35 million. Information given to Census enumerators, as we know, is voluntarily offered and is not cross-checked or verified. By the time 2011 came around, the ban on child labour had been written into the law and people became careful. Look around Sikkim, by how much do you think has the number of minors employed as domestic servants gone down since the Act was amended? Has no one noticed that the lost notices published in newspapers when one of these children run away, almost always claim the age to be 14 even though the photographs often appear to be of much younger children?

Meanwhile, in our country, a majority of the under-6 year olds live in families below the poverty line, although this figure could fluctuate with the ever-changing definition of BPL in our country. An astounding 43 per cent of Indian babies under the age of 3 years are underweight – a euphemism to soften the embarrassment of the fact that nearly half the babies born in India suffer from either short or long-term malnutrition. Given these statistics, it is easy to understand why one in every fifteen children born in India will not live past their first year.

Given this scenario, the observance of Children's Day becomes important to draw attention afresh to the problems. In India, we observe Children's Day on 14 November to mark Chacha Nehru's birth anniversary. The observance of Children's Day has been reduced to a celebration of Student's Day, and that makes 20 Nov an even more important date to mark. As the statistics quoted above suggest, the children who make it to school [no matter how deplorable the condition of the schools], are actually privileged. It is the army on the streets which rummages through trash to pick a livelihood, the domestic servants engaged in household chores when they should be playing with friends, who need to be reassured that they are still important and that their problems are being addressed, one tiny step after the other. Or forget it. That would be plain hypocrisy. No one is really concerned. What should be done instead is to pick these children up, put them up on a dais, or better still, march them through the streets recounting the lives they live. The mirror will be turned on the people and the reflection will hopefully rattle us into some real action. Another option would be to add more to the observance of Children's Day in schools. Instead of class picnics and partying, we should perhaps show them how the underprivileged in their age-group subsist. If they grow up with the knowledge, may be they will do something about Child Rights when they grow up and sit in positions of power. As for us, the present generation, we can continue paying lip-service to these issues till the next generation grows up and does our work for us.

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Wonder Woman and Aquaman are the only charismatic leads in Justice League

ARI MATTES
theconversation.com

Films based on DC comics have tended to be meaner, more violent, and more downbeat than their Marvel equivalents. This is, perhaps, because of the popularity of urban vigilante Batman, brought to the screen in Tim Burton's grotesque, nightmarish films, and then Christopher Nolan's brutal crime sagas.

Justice League, the new DC film directed by Zack Snyder, begins in this vein, opening with a wonderfully noirish sequence set in Gotham city's neon-lit, rain-soaked streets, in which Batman (Ben Affleck) fights a hellish demon. This opening recalls the kind of hyper-real, neon-noir aesthetic of Snyder's earlier *Watchmen* (2009) and *Sucker Punch* (2011).

Unfortunately, the tone of Justice League rapidly changes as it leaves Gotham after the first ten minutes or so. This represents perhaps the biggest problem with the film as a whole – it lacks coherency across several key levels, including narrative, performances, tone and style.

Fans of the recent *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2016) may disagree, but Justice League suffers, first and foremost, from the perennial problem of such "cinematic universe" fare: it relies too heavily on material from earlier films.

The story goes something like this. An apocalypse-loving villain, known as Steppenwolf (who in no way resembles Harry Haller) is resurrected and begins to wreak havoc on the world. Along with his legion of nightmare creatures – winged, demonic things that live off fear – he is looking to find and reunite three magical boxes, known, for some reason, as "mother boxes." When brought together, this will lead to an apocalyptic event known, for some reason, as the Unity. He will then take his place "among the new gods," as he informs the viewer on finding the second box.

Batman, meanwhile, believing



(arch-paranoiac he is) that "enemies are coming," assembles a team of superheroes to fight Steppenwolf. He summons Wonder Woman (Gal Godot), and together they convince Aquaman (Jason Momoa), The Flash (Ezra Miller) and Cyborg (Ray Fisher) to join them on their mission. When they discover that they are not strong enough to defeat Steppenwolf, they magically resurrect Superman (Henry Cavill), and the film ends with the six of them defeating Steppenwolf. (There's no spoiler here – it's a superhero film, what else could happen?)

Justice League is clearly set in a world reflecting current trends, and Snyder et al. consciously embed the film in this post-9/11, post-global warming, post-Brexit, and post-Trump context. The opening credit sequence – the best in the film – features Norwegian pop singer Sigrid's rendition of Leonard Cohen's *Everybody Knows* behind a slow motion montage of various contemporary atrocities: a white supremacist terrorises a Muslim grocer, a homeless man sits on a rain-soaked urban street with a sign reading "I tried."

Wonder Woman is then introduced taking down a group in London

who describe themselves as "a small group of reactionary terrorists" before trying to shoot a bunch of school girls. "This is man's only hope," their leader pontificates. "Down with the modern world! Back to the dark ages and the safety of holy fear!"

The narrative framework – the assembly of a team to take down a baddie, The Dirty Dozen superhero style – could have been the basis of a razor-sharp, effectively self-contained film.

As it is, Justice League is very uncomfortably paced; after a fine "recruitment" section, the film becomes lumped down in an uncomfortable blend of expository scenes, full of typical superhero-film speeches about responsibility, justice, etc. interspersed with some genuinely unimaginative action sequences, most of which rely far too heavily on CGI. For a director as visually inventive as Snyder, auteur of the post-MTV age, these sequences are remarkably tedious.

Affleck, reprising his role as the caped crusader from *Batman v Superman*, is uninspiring. Fine at playing dramatically realistic roles, his Bruce Wayne seems tired and wooden. Despite popular wisdom, it is much

more difficult to play a cartoonish character well than a realistic character, as the balance between caricature and emotional truth is very difficult to achieve, and few actors can pull it off – Ben Affleck is no Michael Keaton.

Ezra Miller, as The Flash, likewise seems out of his depth, and his performance seems silly and one-dimensional. Ray Fisher as Cyborg is forgettable. Really, only Gal Godot as Wonder Woman – and Justice League is clearly banking on the success of the much better film, *Wonder Woman* – and Jason Momoa as Aquaman are the only two lead actors with any charisma here.

The supporting cast, replete with excellent actors like David Thewlis, Jeremy Irons, Diane Lane, J. K. Simmons and Connie Nielsen, is wasted, given minimal screen time.

Snyder has made some good films in the past – his remake of *Dawn of the Dead* (2004) was the best of that bunch of horror remakes from the early 2000s – but Justice League is disappointing. It's loud and colourful, but that's about it.

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Somaliland's voting technology shows how Africa can lead the world

CALESTOUS JUMA
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Africa has become a testing ground for technological leapfrogging. This is a process that involves skipping stages and moving rapidly to the frontiers of innovation.

Technological leapfrogging in Africa has, so far, focused on economic transformation and the improvement of basic services. Drones are a good example: they're used in the continent's health services and in agriculture. In South Africa, robots play a crucial role in mining.

Now, in a remarkable extension of technological leapfrogging, Somaliland has become the first country in the world to use iris recognition in a presidential election. This means that a breakaway republic seeking international recognition will have the world's most sophisticated voting register.

DEMOCRACY AND TECH IN AFRICA
Somaliland's shift to such advanced voting technology emerged from a lack of trust because of problems with the 2008 elections. For instance, names were duplicated in the voter register because of pressure from local elders. These fraudulent activities and other logistical issues threatened to undermine Somaliland's good standing in the international community.

Of course, Somaliland is not the only country in Africa to experience problems with its election processes. Others, like Kenya, have also turned to technology to try and deal with their challenges. This is important. Being able to hold free, fair and credible elections is critical in democratic transitions. The lack of trust in the electoral process remains a key source of political tension and violence.

Technology can help – and Somaliland is set to become a regional powerhouse in the production and deployment of the technological know-how that underpins electronic voting.

So how did Somaliland reach this point? And what lessons do its experiences hold for other countries?

IMPORTANT LESSONS

The first lesson, then, relates to political will. Since 1991, Somaliland has operated as an autonomous state trying to build new institutions. One of its central goals is to gain international recognition as a sovereign state. Being able to conduct free, fair,

credible and just elections is central to this goal and its international image. Somaliland wants to rank highly in the indices of democratic performance – and that's a strong driver to develop and embrace electoral practices that are in line with international standards.

The second involves problem-solving and incremental technological learning. Somaliland wanted to reduce voter duplication. It compared the efficacy of different face, finger and iris recognition technologies, and this assessment showed that iris



recognition was superior.

Pilot efforts then allowed for lessons in the design of the system, which helped to reduce anxiety over the consequences of possible failure during elections. It also made the process transparent; interested users could access the available datasets. This enhanced public trust.

Somaliland has also wisely used international experts in biometrics. Much of the debate about the use of electronic voting systems centres on how the technology is procured. The country sought the support of Notre Dame University in the US in 2014. Their world class work on biometrics is led by Professor Kevin Bowyer. Such partnerships ensure technical expertise. This, in turn, helps boost ordinary people's trust in their country's electoral system.

The shift to electronic voting has also influenced the conduct of some observation missions. In Somaliland, electoral observation will in future include examinations of the iris recognition technology. This changes the expertise needed to observe elections.

This approach is in sharp contrast with the 2017

Kenya elections. There, international observers used traditional monitoring methods – and validated an election that was later annulled by the country's Supreme Court. It was a case where electoral institutions had not caught up with technology.

WIDER ISSUES

This raises some wider issues that need to be addressed so that they don't get in the way of this progression. The first is to emphasise that the technology, in most cases, will enhance and upgrade political infrastructure – even if they appear to bypass or replace it. For example, there are concerns that drones, used to transport medical supplies in places like Rwanda and Tanzania, divert financial resources from multi-purpose infrastructure like roads. In fact, the use of drones in medical supplies expands infrastructure options. They allow countries to align delivery means with specific needs, in a timely and efficient manner.

Secondly, technological and service leapfrogging usually go together. This has been demonstrated in Africa's mobile revolution. The widespread adoption of the Mpesa money transfer system best illustrates this point, as it is about changes in consumer behaviour and local manufacturing.

Finally, there are ample opportunities for international joint ventures in technological leapfrogging across Africa. Many of them however are being smothered by taxation and regulations. This is partly because of the pressure to generate state revenue and partially due to a lack of understanding.

With more products and processes to trade with, the world stands to benefit from Africa's increased participation in the global technology market. And it is encouraging to see that this is a movement which has the political support of African presidents; a support reflected in the adoption of the Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa Strategy (STISA-2024) by the African Union.

For now, Africa's technological futures are not only open but expanding in all directions. Somaliland's application in improving governance is the tip of the iceberg. It creates exciting possibilities for the continent to provide leadership in other areas of technological advancement.

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Season’s coldest night in Gulmarg, Kargil; Leh records minus6.5 deg C

SRINAGAR, Nov 17 (PTI): The famous ski-resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir along with Leh and Kargil towns in Ladakh region recorded the season’s coldest night owing to snowfall in several areas in the upper reaches of Jammu and Kashmir earlier this week.

Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 5.6 degrees Celsius, a Meteorological Department official said here.

The area experienced a drop of over five degrees in night temperature from the previous night’s zero degree Celsius, he said.

Gulmarg was the coldest place in the Valley and the second coldest in Jammu and Kashmir along with Kargil, the official said.

Kargil town in Ladakh region also registered minimum temperature of minus 5.6 degrees Celsius, the official said.



According to him, Leh town was the coldest in the state with the mercury there settling at minus 6.9 degrees Celsius. Night temperatures at all other places in Kashmir division stayed above the freezing point last night.

low of 2.9 degrees Celsius, Qazigund and Kokernag towns in south Kashmir registered minimum temperatures of 4.4 degrees Celsius and 2.6 degrees Celsius respectively, the official said.

He said the mercury at the famous Pahalgam resort, which serves as one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra, settled at a low of 1.4 degrees Celsius.

The north Kashmir town of Kupwara recorded a low of 1.7 degrees Celsius, the official said.

Several areas in the higher reaches of the state received snowfall on 15 November, while the plains recorded light rainfall which ended the dry spell in the Valley.

The Met Department has forecast light rainfall or snow at isolated places in the state till tomorrow, following which the weather is likely to remain largely dry for a few days.

Girl gang raped for 3 months in Bhopal

BHOPAL, Nov 17 (PTI): A 10-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a 65-year-old watchman and two others several times in the last three months here, following which the accused were arrested, police said today.

According to primary investigations, the victim, a class 5 student, was gangraped twice or thrice in the last three months. She was last raped on November 12, Jehangirabad police station's Inspector Preetam Singh Thakur told PTI.

The watchman, Nanhulal, Gokul Panwala (45) and Gyanendra Pandit (36) allegedly raped the girl in the house of one Suman Pandey (50), who has also been apprehended, he said.

The girl's mother had registered a complaint with the police yesterday, the officer said.

The victim's mother noticed that her daughter was depressed and quiet since the last few days. When asked, the girl initially did not speak but later narrated her ordeal to her mother, he said.

Thakur said the accused, who lived in the same locality of the girl, had threatened the victim of dire consequences if she revealed the incident to anyone.

According to police, Pandey used to lure the girl with sweets.

On the basis of the complaint, a case was registered under relevant sections of the IPC, including 376D (gangrape), and provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), he said.

All the three accused were arrested last evening, the inspector said.

While Panwala runs a betel (pan) shop, Pandit is a driver, Thakur said, adding Pandey works as a domestic help.

The incident comes days after a woman was allegedly raped by four men for nearly three hours near the railway tracks in Bhopal when she was returning home after attending a coaching class on October 31.

SC allows WB govt’s plea to amend petition on Aadhaar

NEW DELHI, Nov 17 (PTI): The Supreme Court today allowed a plea by the West Bengal government which had sought to amend its petition challenging the Centre's move to make Aadhaar mandatory for receiving benefits of various social welfare schemes.

A bench comprising justices A K Sikri and Ashok Bhushan asked the state to file its amended petition and said that the matter would come up for hearing after two weeks.

The apex court had on October 30 pulled up the West Bengal government while asking it as to how a state could challenge Parliament's mandate and question the move to make the Aadhaar mandatory for receiving benefits of social welfare schemes.

Under the federal structure, an individual can file such a plea but not a state government, it had observed.

The state had told the court that the plea was filed by its labour department as subsidies under the welfare schemes concerned have to be given by it.

However, the state government later told the court that it would amend the plea.

Record production of foodgrains in Bihar: state agri deptt

PATNA, Nov 17 (PTI): Foodgrains production in Bihar reached a record high, both in terms of total produce and per hectare yield, in last financial year, the state agriculture department said today.

"The total production of foodgrains in the state was 185.61 lakh tonnes in 2016-17, which is a record. The previous record was 178.29 lakh tonnes, achieved in the year 2012-13", Principal Secretary, Agriculture, Sudhir Kumar said.

"The per hectare yield for foodgrains was 27.77



last year which, too, is a record", Kumar added. The Principal Secretary, who was quoted in a release issued by the state agriculture department, also said "record production was also achieved in maize, which stood at 38.46 lakh tonnes with the per hectare yield being 53.35 quintals".

duction was achieved in 2012-13 at 27.56 lakh tonnes. The per hectare yield then had stood at 39.75 quintals", Kumar said.

"We are hopeful of attaining the objectives laid down in the Agriculture Road Map for 2017-22, wherein Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has hoped to have at least one dish from Bihar on every Indian's plate", he added.

The ambitious road map, with schemes worth Rs 1.54 lakh crore, was launched last week by President Ram Nath Kovind.

Naga MLAs for early settlement of Naga political issue

KOHIMA, Nov 17 (PTI): A legislators forum in Nagaland today resolved to send a delegation to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and central leaders and submit a memorandum to settle the Naga political issue at the earliest.

A copy of the resolution signed by Speaker and Convener of Nagaland Legislators Forum on Naga Political Issue, Imtiwaphang Aier and Chief Minister T R Zeliang was issued by the Assembly Secretariat.

It said the forum, which met in the assembly premises under the chairmanship of Aier, appreciated the leadership and vision of the prime minister for the significant progress made in the negotiations for the final settlement of the Naga issue.

It felt that it was important to settle the issue before the state assembly election scheduled early next year to prevent any shift of focus and therefore an all party meeting should be

convened by the chief minister at the earliest.

For the purpose a delegation of legislators should go to Delhi to meet the prime minister and other central leaders to submit the memorandum on the Naga political issue, the resolution said.

"The involvement of the six Naga political groups along with NSCN(IM) in the ongoing peace talks is the right time to finalise an inclusive solution," it said.

The Framework Agreement for Naga Peace had been signed in the presence of the prime minister, Home Minister Rajnath Singh and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval by top NSCN(IM) leader Thuingaleng Muivah and government's interlocutor R N Ravi at the PM's residence in New Delhi on August 3, 2015.

The Agreement had been described as a 'historic' step to usher in peace in the north eastern state.

Schools along LoC closed due to Pak shelling in J-K

JAMMU, Nov 17 (PTI): Schools along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district were today shut down due to shelling from the Pakistani side, a senior district official said.

Both government and private institutions along the LoC in Shahpur, Kandi and other areas of Poonch have been closed, the official said.

Pakistan has resorted to cross-border firing and shelling targeting posts and villages along the LoC in Poonch sector for the third consecutive day today, he said.

Inter-state ATM fraud gang busted, 3 held

JAIPUR, Nov 16 (PTI): Three persons have been arrested in connection with running an inter-state gang involved in ATM frauds in Pali district here, police said today.

Ajay Rathore (22), his brother Sachin Rathore (24) and their friend Vijendra Chouhan (42), all residents of Haridwar, robbed people by tampering with ATM machines and withdrew money from their accounts, SP Pali, Deepak Bhargava said.

They have duped people of over Rs 2 crore in the last two years in over 250 incidents, he said.

The officer said the accused used to restrict ATM machines from dispensing cash and later withdrew money from them.

They have confessed to committing the crime in various districts of Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh, he said.

All three were produced before the court from where they were sent to 10-day police remand, SHO Rajpur police station, Rajendra Singh Charan said.

President Kovind on four-day NE visit since Nov 19

ITANAGAR, Nov 17 (PTI): President Ram Nath Kovind will arrive here on Sunday in the first leg of his four-day maiden tour to the North East after assuming office.

The President, who will also visit Assam and Manipur besides Arunachal Pradesh and attend several programmes and meetings, official sources said today.

On Sunday he will attend a function at Indira Gandhi Park here to mark 40 years of Vivekananda Kendra here, the sources said.

Later in the day, he



will also dedicate the new assembly building of Arunachal Pradesh to the people and address the legislators at a special assembly session in the afternoon.

On November 20, Kovind will attend the closing ceremony of

Namami Barak festival at Silchar in Assam, the sources said.

The President will also attend a civic reception organised by Gauhati University.

He will visit Manipur on November 21 where he will inaugurate the North East Development Summit and the annual 10-day Sangai Festival in Imphal.

Before leaving for Delhi, the President will visit the INA war memorial at Moirang on November 22, the sources added.



Market for cinema in Nepal expanding, says filmmaker

KOLKATA, Nov 17 (PTI): Nepalese filmmaker Nabin Subba, whose 'Goodbye Kathmandu' has made it to the 23rd Kolkata International Film Festival, says the market for cinema in the Himalayan Kingdom is steadily expanding.

Subba's film, the first Nepalese movie to be screened at the festival, was chosen for the Asian Select competition section.

"Now, it (films) is a Rs 1,500 crore industry (in Nepal)," he said, adding that apart from 40-50 single screens, there are multiplexes in the main city of Kathmandu.

"While single screens do mostly exist in small towns, they are on the decline. Unlike independent filmmakers, here it is more difficult for us," he said before the screening of his film yesterday.

Elaborating on 'Goodbye Kathmandu', Subba said the film talks about relations between Nepal and India, and "subtly" traces the political situation post the year 2000.

"It is a multi-layered film having three protagonists, each telling different stories. And three characters belonging to different age groups, who don't meet each other.

It took me years to wrap up the project for certain reasons," he said.

The film, which was also screened at the Busan Film Festival this year, makes mention of the insurgency issue in Nepal.

"It is about three young men living in Kathmandu, who are caught in the civil war of 2004... All these three persons are united in a way," Subba said and added he would love to call it an independent genre film.

To a question, the former journalist said there are around 125 ethnic groups in Nepal, and the country has many similarities with India.

Serenity Cup Football Tournament '17 kicks off on 23 Nov at Paljor Stadium

SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 17 Nov:

The 3rd edition of the Serenity Cup Football Tournament 2017 will kick off on 23 Nov here at Paljor Stadium. The fortnight-long tournament is being organised by Gangtok-based rehab centre, Serenity Home, with the support of other rehab centres of Gangtok.

Seven teams from Gangtok, Darjeeling and Siliguri will be participating in the tournament. The participating teams are the defending champion, Goodwill from Siliguri, UDAS Siliguri, Darjeeling Fellowship and Freedom Facility, United Brothers, Recovering Fellows and Serenity Homes from Gangtok.

Addressing a press conference here at Paljor Stadium conference hall today, Serenity Home founder, Udai Rai, stated that Serenity Cup football tournament is one of its kind as it not only provides



a platform for healthy activities but also helps recovering individuals to come into the mainstream.

"The main objective of the tournament is to celebrate the individual recovering and at the same time to send the right message to the society that addiction is just a disease and can be treated," he said.

Mr Rai stated that

every rehab centre has been facing the big challenge of follow-up programmes to involve recovering members in productive ways.

"So we have decided to try sports to involve them in sporting and healthy activities. Now, with the success of the tournament, recovering members have been practicing throughout

the year for this tournament and staying in a team," he said.

The organising committee advisor, Thupten Rapgyal, mentioned that the tournament will be played in league-cum-knock out format with 35 minutes in each half. The teams have been divided into two groups for league stage. The organisers have also been

working on providing cash prizes to winning and runner-up teams.

Freedom Facility founder, KC Nima, stated that the tournament has played a huge role in keeping recovering members engaged in productive activities. He also appreciated the efforts of Serenity Home for providing such a big platform to them.



EPCS Sang enters semi finals of Sikkim Inter Church Football Tourney

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 17 Nov:

EPCS Sang has also entered the semi-final round of the ongoing 6th Sikkim Inter-Church Football Tournament 2017 here at Paljor Stadium.

In the last quarter-final match played today,

EPCS Sang edged past the defending champion, Regu Horeb IEC 2-1. Ashir Subba of Regu Horeb was adjudged Man of the Match.

The first semi-final match will be played between Wok XI and ICYM Gangtok at 1 p.m. on 18 Nov.

Our pacers will relish bowling here, says Sridhar

KOLKATA, Nov 17 (PTI): India fielding coach R Sridhar feels Mohammed Shami and Bhuvneshwar Kumar will relish the challenge of bowling on the green top here as much as the Sri Lankan pacers have in the rain-hit opening Test where the home team is currently in a spot of bother.

After Suranga Lakmal's (3/5) exploits on the first day of the rain-affected series opener, it was Dasun Shanaka's (2/23) turn to steal the limelight on Friday as he struck twice to leave India reeling at 74/5 in 32.5 overs.

"It was fabulous to see so much of lateral movement and swing Lakmal and his fellow bowlers were purchasing from this wicket. Hopefully Shami and 'Sultan of swing' Bhuvneshwar Kumar would relish the challenge," Sridhar told reporters here.

With rain playing spoilsport again, only 21 overs of play was possible on the second day. On day one, only 11.5 overs were bowled before umpires decided to call off the day's play.

The rain is caused by a depression that is likely to clear out on Saturday and Sridhar said a result was very much on the cards if they have three full days.

"This Test can definitely get a result in 270 overs, should we get that. If the weather clears out, it would be really interesting going by the conditions of this Test," he said.



"Days like these really bring the team together where you spend a lot of time in the dressing room with each other with team in a bit of an adverse position. I always feel these kind of days are wonderful for the team."

Cheteshwar Pujara stood tall amid the ruins with an unbeaten 47 from 102 balls and Sridhar said the mantra for the India batsman was to narrow down the 'V' region to minimise the chance of being caught.

"The thing that really stood out was most of his drives were

to the right of midoff. He had a very narrow V. It was a simple mantra and he was successful. It's one of the best 47 runs from Pujara in last two-three years," he said.

"He is a batsman who has a grip of every condition when he goes to bat. With moving ball the gameplan was pretty simple -- play as close to your body, play straight."

Stressing on the importance of slip catching, Sridhar said it would play a crucial role as they have a packed overseas calendar next year.

"As a team looking ahead to 15-20 months we are playing more away matches, our slip catching is going to be one of the areas that can contribute to the results which we want to achieve in our away Tests," he said.

Sridhar said slip catching is more difficult in sub-continent than abroad.

"It's always a challenge in the subcontinent because of the two-paced nature of the wickets. In England the ball wobbles. We have certain practice methods. We have prepared our best."

US Congress passes USD 700 billion defence bill

WASHINGTON, Nov 17 (PTI): The United States Congress today passed a nearly USD 700 billion American defence budget for 2018, which, among other things, seeks advancement in defence co-operation with India.

The 2018 National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA) sailed through both the chambers of the Congress House of Representatives and the Senate by a voice vote.

It now heads to the White House for President Donald Trump to sign it into law, which he is expected to do before the Thanksgiving holidays.

The budget also imposes tougher conditions on Pakistan for military and security assistance and accommodates last minute additional White House's financial request implementing its new South Asia strategy.

The NDAA-2018 asks the Secretary of State and the Defence Secretary to come out with a common definition that recognises India's status as a "Major Defence Partner".

Welcoming the move, top Republican Senator Ted Cruz said few partnerships in the 21st cen-

tury carried more strategic significance than the US-India partnership.

During the legislative process, Cruz secured an amendment that calls on the Department of Defence to reassess its approach to partnering with India and to appoint an individual to oversee this process.

Additionally, Cruz co-sponsored Senator Mark Warner's amendment, which was adopted, to develop a strategy of defence cooperation between the US and India.

The NDAA-2018 also asks the Pentagon to develop a "forward-looking" strategy for defence ties with India "that would build upon current objectives and goals, underlining a mutual desire to develop an enduring defence relationship with India".

According to it, the two countries "should work closely with Afghanistan" to promote stability in the region to include targeted infrastructure development and economic investment, means to address capability gaps in country, and improved humanitarian and disaster relief assistance.



SRK to inaugurate IFFI; Katrina, Shahid to be present

PANAJI, Nov 17 (PTI): Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan will inaugurate the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) here on November 20.

Over 200 films would be screened during the festival which would be held till November 28.

"Shah Rukh Khan will declare the festival open," Entertainment Society of Goa's Vice

Chairman Rajendra Talak said on Friday.

However, even before its inauguration, the festival has been embroiled in a controversy over the information and broadcasting ministry's move to drop the films "S Durga" and "Nude" from IFFI's Indian Panorama section, leading to jury chairman and two other members resigning in protest.

Actors Katrina Kaif, Shahid Kapoor and Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Smriti Irani will be present for the inaugural function to be held at Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Stadium.

Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi's movie "Beyond The Clouds" will be the opening film of the fest, added Talak.

The film stars Ishaan Khattar along with Malayalam actor Malavika Mohanan.

A R Rahman has composed the music for the movie which revolves around the adoration of love, life and human relationships between a brother and sister in Mumbai.

Indo-Argentine film "Thinking of Him" by filmmaker Pablo Cesar will be the closing film of the festival. The film revolves around the friendship between legendary poet and intellectual Rabindranath Tagore and Argentinian writer Victoria Ocampo.

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Summit TIMES

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Lanka
Army chief
summoned
by court over
disappearance
of 24 Tamils

COLOMBO, Nov 17 (PTI): A Sri Lankan court has summoned the commander of the country's Army tomorrow over the disappearance of 24 Tamils since their arrest in 1996 by security forces during the internal conflict with the LTTE.

The Jaffna High Court has asked Army chief Lieutenant General Mahesh Senanayake along with two other state officials to appear in court tomorrow.

Judge Ilanchelilyan ordered them to appear in court when a case filed by parents and relatives of the 24 missing persons was taken up on November 15.

The relatives have claimed that the 24 had gone missing since July 1996 when the security forces had arrested them in Navatkuly, Jaffna.

Sri Lankan troops and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have faced international condemnation for alleged human rights violations during the long-drawn conflict.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in three successive resolutions has urged for independent international investigation into alleged abuses blamed on both sides.

Judge Ilanchelilyan also urged the Jaffna security officials to crack down on the gangs who wield swords and intimidate the locals in the wake of the reported rise in such attacks recently.

The police said they have arrested six people.

Zimbabwe's Mugabe makes first public appearance

HARARE, Nov 17 (AP): Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's first public appearance since a military takeover is at a university graduation ceremony on the outskirts of Harare.

Clad in academic gown and hat, Mugabe walked slowly in a procession on a red carpet to a podium as a marching band played.

Several thousand graduates of the Zimbabwe Open University and guests stood as Mugabe and other dignitaries entered a tent set up for the event.

Once on the podium, Mugabe joined the crowd in singing Zimbabwe's national anthem. He announced the opening of the graduation ceremony, and the crowd applauded.

Mugabe's presidential security detail was present.

Mugabe is making his first public appearance since the military put him under house arrest earlier this week, attending a graduation ceremony in the capital, Harare.



mony in the capital, Harare.

The appearance comes during an extraordinary series of negotiations with regional leaders over Mugabe's

departure after 37 years in power.

The military is taking pains to show respect for the 93-year-old leader, the world's oldest head of

state, by referring to him as the president and the commander-in-chief.

Today's event appears to allow Mugabe to project the image of leader-

ership, even as calls for his departure grow stronger.

Zimbabwe's military says it is continuing talks with President Robert Mugabe for his departure while it pursues those who were close to the leader and his wife.

Zimbabwe state media reported this morning a military statement saying talks with Mugabe "on the way forward" are ongoing.

The Zimbabwe Defence Forces said "significant progress has been made in their operation to weed out criminals around President Mugabe," adding that they had arrested some although others were still at large.

The statement said Zimbabwe's military is "currently engaging with the Commander-in-Chief President Robert Mugabe on the way forward and will advise the nation of the outcome as soon as possible." The state Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation television aired a similar report in its early morning bulletin.

Japan's Abe vows to
bolster defense amid
N Korea threat



TOKYO, Nov 17 (AP): Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe says the threat from North Korea is the most serious security concern his country has faced since World War II and has pledged to bolster defense measures.

Outlining priorities in his policy speech in parliament today, Abe called North Korea's sixth nuclear test and missiles that flew over Japan earlier this year "a national

crisis."

Abe says Japan will take "concrete actions" under the Japan-US alliance in order to respond to any emergency amid Pyongyang's "escalating provocation." He says Japan will further strengthen its missile defense capability.

Japan's defense spending has steadily increased since Abe took office in 2012. Tokyo has said it plans to buy more American missile defense systems.

Pak must prevent militants from operating from its soil: US Gen

ISLAMABAD, Nov 17 (PTI): In a blunt message to Pakistan, a top US general has told the country's military leadership that Islamabad must prevent militants from operating within its soil and across its borders to bring in security and stability in the region.

US Central Command (Centcom) Commander General Joseph Votel, who was here on a two-day visit, also emphasised the importance of improved Pak-Afghan relations, and the need for strengthened border security, including measures to coordinate military operations along both sides of the border, according to a statement from the US Embassy.

During his visit, Votel met senior Pakistani military commanders including Army Chief General Qamar Bajwa, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Gen Zubair Hayat and Director General of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Lt Gen Naveed Mukhtar.

The US Centcom Commander's visit, his fourth to Islamabad, is believed to be a preparatory visit for the upcoming trip of US Defence Secretary James Mattis, who is likely to visit to Pakistan next month.

Pakistan and the US have had a series of meetings to bridge their differences since President Donald Trump's



Fort Myer speech on the new US policy for South Asia and Afghanistan in which he criticised Pakistan for showing insincerity in the fight against terrorism despite getting

billions of dollars in assistance from America.

Trump's harsh language had aggravated the already strained bilateral relations.

Votel stressed the

Donald Trump Administration's message that Pakistan must prevent all militants from operating within and across its borders, the Embassy statement said here.

"Votel underscored the vital role Pakistan can play in facilitating a peace process in Afghanistan and in bringing stability and security to the region," it said.

It was essentially the reiteration of the demand for action against the alleged "safe havens", Dawn reported today.

During his meeting, Gen Bajwa told Gen Votel that Pakistan's commit-

ted efforts for peace in Afghanistan were not being reciprocated. He pointed towards the latest cross-border attack on a Pakistani post in Bajaur in which two soldiers were killed.

Following the attack, the military had called for "more efforts" by all stakeholders in Afghanistan, both the NATO's Resolute Support Mission and the Afghan security forces, for elimination of terrorist sanctuaries in Afghanistan and effective border security.

Foreign Office spokesman Mohammad Faisal,

speaking at the weekly media briefing, said yesterday that efforts were continuing "to bridge the gap between the perceptions of the two countries in the wake of President Trump's South Asia and Afghanistan policy, and to arrive at a consensus on moving forward and exploring avenues of co-operation between both sides".

Noting that Pakistan was "actively engaged" in dialogue with the US at all levels, he said, "he believes that dialogue is the best way forward to enhance cooperation between the two sides."

NAGALAND STATE LOTTERIES

DEAR VULTURE EVENING

Draw Time : 8:00 pm onward

Draw No:16 DrawDate on:17/11/17

1st Prize Rs.26 Lakhs/- 871 60200

(Including Super Prize Amt)

Cons. Prize Rs.9498/- 60200 (REMAINING ALL SERIALS)

2nd Prize Rs.9000/-

13477 28399 36762 50570 51837

73519 74857 77352 78220 81158

3rd Prize Rs.500/- 1010 1218 2797 4172 4923 5297 5628 9410 9769 9773

4th Prize Rs.250/- 1301 1373 1954 3309 5363 6851 7435 8388 8434 9958

5th Prize Rs.120/-

0102 0157 0503 0569 0644 0650 0678 0825 0890 0994

1130 1155 1344 1349 1532 1548 1892 2064 2142 2190

2269 2387 2464 2622 2851 2870 2876 2921 3116 3354

3384 3413 3559 3636 3690 3823 3911 3943 4222 4270

4372 4577 4624 4711 4778 4841 4866 5022 5025 5234

5344 5404 5405 5565 5816 5962 6540 6573 6612 6640

6706 6909 6937 6972 7051 7315 7434 7504 7511 7515

7538 7610 7650 7711 7803 7859 7925 8043 8045 8064

8139 8172 8249 8328 8343 8368 8369 8491 8757 8847

8946 9085 9103 9167 9467 9506 9589 9626 9782 9985

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SIKKIM STATE LOTTERIES

DEAR ADMIRE MORNING

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

1st Prize Rs.26 Lakhs/- 81G 97410

(Including Super Prize Amt)

Cons. Prize Rs.9498/- 97410 (REMAINING ALL SERIALS)

2nd Prize Rs.9000/-

03540 04308 04881 11818 41942

60185 65254 68238 86576 95810

3rd Prize Rs.500/- 1573 4204 4876 5065 5089 5415 5428 6939 7471 7545

4th Prize Rs.250/- 0006 1338 3560 5234 6292 6446 6559 8234 8717 9670

5th Prize Rs.120/-

0031 0055 0504 0557 0667 0923 0924 1169 1272 1319

1351 1396 1477 1513 1542 1610 1791 1819 1846 1938

2087 2110 2201 2282 2530 2561 2751 2918 3615 3749

3858 3970 4076 4110 4326 4381 4401 4577 4679 4716

4810 4926 5195 5275 5291 5361 5450 5467 5570 5596

5667 5830 5837 5887 5890 5979 5986 6123 6233 6433

6470 6493 6518 6648 6768 6803 7014 7043 7234 7270

7280 7292 7312 7388 7396 7603 7784 7887 7993 8015

8122 8157 8163 8470 8524 8576 8703 8796 8882 8909

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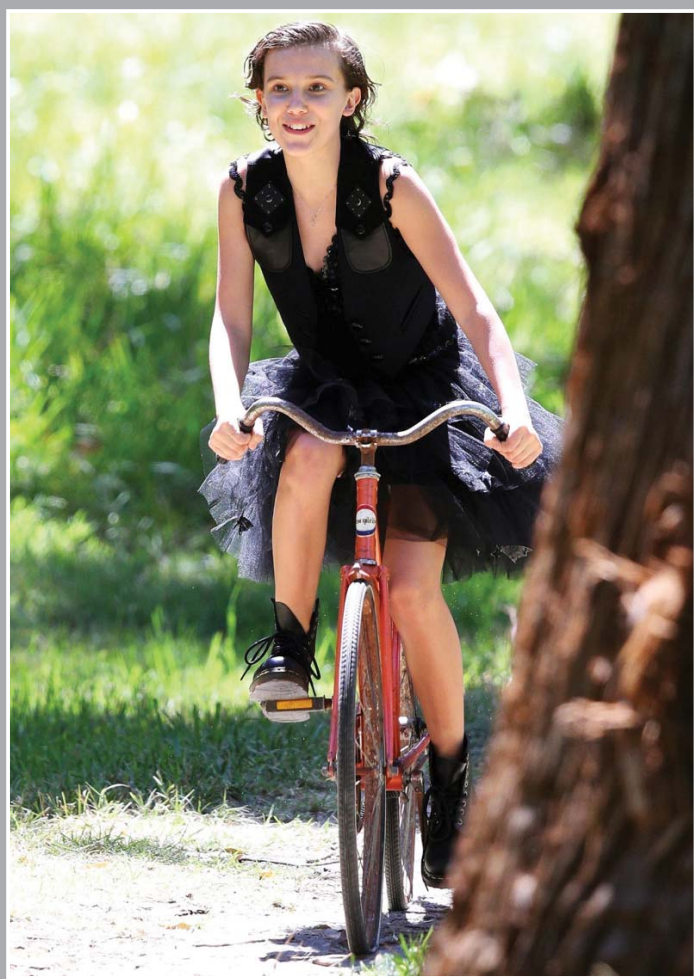
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WHAT A RIDE: Stranger Things actress Millie Bobby Brown posed on a bike during a fashion photo shoot in Sydney, Australia.

KATY PERRY, GIGI HADID AND OTHER MODELS DENIED VISAS AHEAD OF VS FASHION SHOW IN CHINA



Katy Perry has reportedly been 'banned indefinitely' from China ahead of her rumored performance at the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show taking place next Monday in Shanghai.

Several news sources have said that Chinese authorities denied the 33-year-old pop diva's visa after outrage over her wearing the Taiwanese flag during a 2015 concert at Taipei Arena.

The communist country was further angered over her wearing a sunflower gown - symbolic of the Sunflower Student Movement, which protested a Chinese trade agreement in 2014.

"For every artist who wants to perform in China, officials comb through their social media and press reports to see if they have done anything

deemed to be offensive to the country. Maroon 5 was banned a few years ago because one band member wished the Dalai Lama happy birthday on Twitter."

Back in 2010, the 13-time Grammy nominee performed four songs on the runway during the lingerie extravaganza, which took place at Manhattan's Lexington Avenue Armory.

Former 1D boybander Harry Styles is now rumored to replace Perry due to an official-looking flier leaked online, which reveals he'll sing his single Kiwi. Grammy-winning singer Miguel is also rumored to be a musical guest at the San Francisco bra brand's bash, which airs November 28.

Katy's banned news came hours af-

ter model-of-the-moment Gigi Hadid announced she was 'bummed not to be able to make it to China this year' over Twitter.

The real reason was reportedly due to an Instagram video of the 22-year-old IMG Model squinting her eyes to resemble a Buddha cookie that her sister Bella uploaded in February.

As for Gigi's sibling, the 21-year-old sneaker head shared a lingerie-clad snap Wednesday gushing: "5.DAYS. @victoriasecret I am so excited! Can't wait to see you Shanghai!"

Other cancellations this year include Brazilian bombshell Adriana Lima due to a 'diplomatic problem' as well as Julia Belyakova, Kate Grigorieva, Irina Shari-pova, and Dasha Khlystun.

ANIL KAPOOR AND MADHURI DIXIT NENE MAY ROMANCE EACH OTHER IN TOTAL DHAMAAL

After the news of Sanjay Dutt being replaced by Ajay Devgn broke out a few months back, Indra Kumar's Total Dhamaal has garnered attention yet again. It has been rumored that Anil Kapoor and Madhuri Dixit Nene have been cast opposite each other in the movie that is slated to go on floors this December. The pair was last seen in the movie Pukar 17 years back.

Ajay Devgn will be seen portraying a character similar to what Sanjay Dutt had played in Dhamaal and Double Dhamaal

won't be having a love interest.

A source was quoted by a leading tabloid, "There was no truth to the rumors about Ajay recommending Ileana for Total Dhamaal. It is true that the original script had scope for another actress besides Madhuri. But on second thoughts, the makers felt that it would be interesting to see Ajay without a love interest. If you see Dhamaal and Double Dhamaal, Sanjay Dutt's character too didn't have a leading lady opposite him. They will start shooting in Lucknow tentatively on December 15."



DRAKE STOPS MID-SONG DURING CONCERT TO CALL OUT MAN ALLEGEDLY GROPPING WOMAN IN THE AUDIENCE

Drake is taking a firm stance on sexual harassment. The "One Dance" rapper, 31, stopped mid-song during a concert in Sydney, Australia to address a man in the audience who was allegedly groping a woman next to him.

"Yo, stop that s—t," the Grammy winner told the man in a clip captured by a fan in the crowd at Marquee. "If you don't stop touching girls, I'm gonna come out there and f—k you up."

The audience burst out into applause and cheered in support of the "Passionfruit" crooner. Fans also took to Twitter to express their approval of Drake's remarks.

The "Fake Love" singer's comments come in the midst



of a tumultuous time in Hollywood. Over the past month, numerous actors and actresses, actresses and others have come forward with sexual misconduct allegations against Harvey Weinstein, Louis C.K., Kevin Spacey, Steven Seagal, James Toback, Mark Schwahn, Ed Westwick and more.

Although the majority of those accused have denied the claims made against them, C.K., 50, admitted that the "stories are true" in a statement.

"I have been remorseful of my actions. And I've tried to learn from them. And run from them," the comedian said. "Now I'm aware of the extent of the impact of my actions."

Drake is not the first prominent male to speak out against sexual harassment. Channing Tatum, J.J. Abrams, Colin Firth and more notable A-listers have publicly addressed the allegations and condemned the men accused.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

18TH NOVEMBER

1978: The Cult leader Jim Jones instructed over 900 members of his church, "People's Temple", to drink a soft drink brewed in a tub with cyanide and sedatives at a mass meeting at the Jonestown camp, the bodies were later discovered at a camp in the Jungle. The cult leader was being investigated by American Authorities for conditions at the camp and Jones was also being investigated for tax fraud. Prior to the mass suicide Jones had a number of his followers shoot reporters and the head of the investigation team Congressman Ryan.

1928: Mickey Mouse appears for the first time in Steamboat Willie, It was the first successful sound-synchronized animated cartoon film produced by Walt Disney and premiered at the Colony Theater in NYC.

1940: George P. Metesky (New York Mad Bomber) leaves his first bomb on a Consolidated Edison power



plant window sill which failed to go off. Between 1940 and 1956, he planted at least 33 bombs, of which 22 exploded, injuring 15 people before he was caught.

1953: An effort was made to learn what part will be assigned to neutral representatives during the Korean peace conference. One person active in learning more what the communists want is U.S. Envoy Arthur H. Dean. Envoy Dean has learned that communists intended on having countries such as India, Russia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Burma involved. They were to be neutral representatives during the peace talks.

2005: A series of suicide bombings in Iraq have killed at least 60 people and injured 60 more as insurgents attacked a prominent Baghdad hotel, an apartment block in Baghdad and two mosques 90 miles north-east of the capital.

LOCKHORNS

- HOEST & REINER



ARCTIC CIRCLE

- HALLATT



BABY BLUES

- KIRKMAN & SCOTT



SCORPIO: If you aren't romantically involved, expect that status to change today. You could meet more than one attractive person! A new person could come into your life or an old friend could suddenly seem more appealing than you thought. If you're involved, expect the energy around your partner to change. He or she could seem happier, funnier, stronger, so much so that you fall in love all over again.

SAGITTARIUS: Idealism and some intriguing mystical revelations could make you want to spread your ideas. You may want to invite some friends over to talk. For the most part, people will be interested in anything you say. Don't force the

issue on those with doubts. They'll have to make up their own minds and will do it in their own time.

CAPRICORN: The hopes and goals of a group with which you're associated inspire you. You might make personal sacrifices in order to assure their success. These sacrifices are temporary, for you'll share in the group's good fortune. Personal success is also in the stars, but it may require disruptive change. Go with the flow and don't let self-doubt hold you back.

AQUARIUS: Sudden, unexpected success could result in an equally unexpected raise. Friends may have pointed you in the direction that put

you in the right place at the right time. Don't be surprised if this catapults you into entirely different life circumstances. Make the most of this break. Don't rest on your laurels or your success could disappear as fast as it came.

PISCES: A rush of optimism and enthusiasm could propel you into a more positive frame of mind, and you could accomplish wonders. Your circumstances may be turned upside down. A move is possible, as is a change in your work. Don't cling to the shore - flow with the current. Success and good fortune are on the way as long as you let them happen!

ARIES: Sudden insights and revelations could enable you to make some long-desired changes. A lucky break might bring an unexpected sum of money your way. Unusual dreams could amuse you during the night. Keep track of them as they might contain messages that can help you accomplish whatever you want to do. This is a day of fortunate developments and pleasant surprises.

TAURUS: An old friend you haven't seen in a long time could suddenly reappear. You'll be surprised by this person's achievements. This meeting or the circumstances surrounding it could mark a turning point for you. Perhaps this person

inspires you, or people you meet through him or her make a difference to you. This is going to be a strange, significant day. Make the most of it!

GEMINI: A sudden but fortunate change of job circumstances could take place today. Perhaps you suddenly get promoted or transferred. Perhaps an important piece of information comes your way that leads to advancement. Technology and data exchange could also play a role in events. Friends or colleagues may be involved. Whichever way you look at it, this could be an auspicious day.

CANCER: A close friend or your

partner could propose an impromptu trip and you might decide to go. You're restless for adventure. You may have been considering several options, but your friend's idea seems the most appealing. If this is a trip to a foreign country, you might want to study the language. You'll be surprised at how quickly you learn it!

LEO: An unexpected sum of money could cause chaos in your home, but it's an exciting, pleasant sort of pandemonium! Perhaps this makes it possible for you to make some necessary changes or buy some new equipment, furniture, or appliances. Phone some friends and give them the good news. You might want to host a celebration!

VIRGO: Information received today might make it possible for you to change your job, residence, or at least the way you think or operate. You might feel nervous at the prospect, but you'll pull it off all right. Don't be afraid to go with the flow and make changes. This is only one hurdle in the course of your personal development.

LIBRA: An increase in your technical skills could bring you a new job or an increase in income. You may have felt a bit nervous and stressed lately, but this should balance out now. You feel focused and you're aiming carefully toward your goals. You'll succeed if you keep going as you are.