



DSA WANTS SHERPA LAND SOLD TO OTHER COMMUNITIES RETURNED pg02

HMs MEET TO DISCUSS COMMON ISSUES AND GRIEVANCES pg03



Gold for Bajrang Punia pg03

Summit **T**IMES

Vol 03 | Issue 219 | Gangtok | Monday | 20 August 2018

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

A Sikkim Tourism Policy, finally

POLICY DOCUMENT SPELLS OUT KEY GOALS, MODALITIES AND HOW TO GET THERE

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 19 AUG:

Among the books and reports released by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling on Independence Day was the long-awaited Sikkim Tourism Policy 2018.

The Sikkim Tourism Policy, a press communiqué informs, is grounded on the guiding principles of environmental sustainability, cultural integrity, equity inclusiveness and social justice, and athithi devo bhava with a vision to make Sikkim "a highly valued responsible tourism destination with tourism contributing significantly to the state economy while conserving its natural and cultural heritage."

Drafted by WWF-India and Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS), the policy document commissioned by the Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, is an outcome of a long participatory process comprising of a series of brainstorming and successive meetings with the tourism stakeholders, scholars, experts and officers from various line departments, it is explained.

A draft of the Tourism Policy was also put up for comments on the Tourism Department's website to seek inputs from the public at large, and the suggestions were reviewed and incorporated into the final draft. The National Tourism Policy 2002 and the tourism policies of other states were also consulted while preparing the draft.

Tourism in Sikkim has seen tremendous growth in the past few decades with total tourist arrivals reaching 14.25 lakhs in 2017.

The policy was felt necessary because having come this far, an urgent need was felt to look into future growth and the direction of tourism in the state for the next few decades.



Sikkim's need for a sustainable tourism policy had been expressed by Tourism Minister Ugen T Gyatso and Lok Sabha MP PD Rai at a stakeholders' workshop on sustainable tourism held way back in 2014 by WWF and ECOSS.

Work on the policy commenced in 2015 when a steering committee was formed by the Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation comprising of representatives of the tourism industry and the Department and was spearheaded by WWF and ECOSS.

The key goals of the policy are: Developing tourism as a key sector in Sikkim's economy; Promoting low impact sustainable tourism; Making Sikkim a prime round the year destination for nature, adventure and culture based tourism within India and globally; Ensuring tourism benefits are

broad based to support local, social and economic development and also ensure social justice; ensuring all tourism infrastructure and services shall be of the best standards and quality delivering a consistent high level of satisfaction and hospitality to tourists.

In terms of tourism products, the policy has recommended focus on the following sectors:

- a) Conventional leisure based tourism,
- b) Nature based tourism or Ecotourism
- c) Adventure based tourism
- d) Culture based tourism & village homestays
- e) Religion based tourism f) MICE tourism (Meetings Incentives, Events, Conferences and Exhibitions) and g) Health and Wellness Tourism

In order to achieve the vision and goals of the policy a set of objectives and strategies

turn to pg02

SKM OPENS ZONAL OFFICE AT LALL BAZAAR

Golay lashes out, alleges undue political pressure on govt employees

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 19 AUG:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party president, PS Tamang [Golay], today alleged political pressure and interference in the State administration. He further contended that government officials and employees have been working in an environment of fear and suppression and were not being able to work freely as per their capacities.

Mr Tamang was speaking at the inauguration of SKM zonal party office here at Lall Bazaar under Arithang constituency today.

Also on the occasion, 123 families from different constituencies joined the SKM. SKM also raised a sum of Rs 23,240 from party workers and supporters during the programme as relief support for flood victims in Kerala.

In his address, Mr Tamang thanked the party workers and supporters for strengthening SKM during his absence when he was in prison for the past year serving time for a corruption conviction.

He urged party workers to continue with their task to "liberate" the people from all bondages at the grassroots level.

"I was conspired against and put into jail to kill our movement,



but I am really happy and satisfied that our movement grew even stronger in my absence. Now, immense love and support of the people has filled me with new energy to work more for the people," he shared.

Mr Tamang stated that SKM does not depend on a single person and this was proven over the past year and stressed that the party believes in teamwork which is why "all conspiracies of the ruling party failed".

"I am happy to see the lakhs of PS Golays have been born in the State to take our Kranti forward," he said.

While congratulating the party workers and supporters for strengthening the party in his absence, he expressed that no power will now stop SKM from forming the government in 2019.

Mr Tamang went on to accuse the SDF of resorting to manipulative

gimmicks instead of politics of ideology. He lashed out saying that the ruling party has been indulging in politics of statues just to play with the emotions of the people for its own political benefits. "If SDF party is really concerned and wants to give respect to these people then it should take care of their family members," he said.

While accusing the Chief Minister of making false announcements in his speeches, the SKM president asserted that the CM should not only limit his announcements to speeches but also follow up with work on ground.

Referring to the CM's statement on Nepali seats, he asserted that if the CM was really concerned about the Sikkimese Nepali then SDF should pass a resolution for Nepali seats in the State Assembly and send it to the Centre.

Mr Tamang accused

turn to pg02

Thousands still waiting to be rescued in rain-battered Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG 19 (PTI): Thousands of people in flood-hit areas in Kerala are battling all odds to survive as the death toll has touched 197 in the past 10 days in the second spell of monsoon fury since August 8.

Many are still stranded in their homes with no food and sheaths of water around them at various places in Alapuzha, Thrissur and Ernakulam districts.

The maximum death toll has been reported from Idukki district, where 43 people have lost their lives so far, as per official estimates.

Twenty eight deaths were reported in Malappuram and 27 in Thrissur.

At Chengannur in Alapuzha district, at least 5,000 are stranded, according to revenue officials.

Over six lakh people are in relief camps across the state.

"This is a second birth for us. We did not have any food for the last four days and there was neck deep water all around," said a woman survivor in a relief camp at Ranni in Pathanamthitta district.

A woman at Aranmula near Alapuzha said they had not had any food or water for two days.

Many people are still stranded as they prefer to be in their homes.

At Paravur in Ernakulam district, six persons are said to have been killed as a portion of a church collapsed on Wednesday night.



At least 600 are stranded in the church and no help has come from any quarter so far, an angry survivor in chest deep water told a television channel.

"There is no food or drinking water... no one has so far come to help us."

However, there is no official confirmation about the deaths of the six persons in the church so far.

Agriculture minister V S Sunil Kumar said at least 42 villages in Kole wetlands in Thrissur were inundated after the Karivannur river changed its course following breach of a bund road.

Over 2 lakh people in Thrissur district are in relief camps, he said.

In some relief, Kochi Naval airport will start operating com-

mercial flights from tomorrow. This was due to closure of the Kochi International airport till August 26 following flooding of the runway and airport areas in the heavy rains.

The railways have cancelled at least 18 trains, partially cancelled nine and diverted today's Kanyakumari-Mumbai CST express train via Nagercoil, Tirunelveli, Madurai, Dindigul and Erode.

With several stretches across the state being destroyed, the services of the Kerala State Transport Corporation and private buses has also been affected.

Along with personnel of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and the NDRF, hundreds of fishermen and local people are engaged in relief operations. A young officer safely winched

to safety a baby from a building marooned by flood waters yesterday, while at another place girl students from a hostel were rescued in a similar manner.

A 24-year-old man, who rescued his mother and siblings after their home was fully flooded, lost his life as he tripped and fell into the fast flowing waters while helping his aged father.

His body was recovered yesterday. His father, who held on to a fallen tree branch, was saved from the flood water.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had undertaken an aerial survey of some of the flood affected regions yesterday and reviewed the situation.

The Centre had sanctioned Rs 500 crore as immediate assistance to the state.

GBT Entertainment presents

MR. SIKKIM 2018 MANHUNT

DO YOU HAVE IT IN YOU?

ONLINE REGISTRATION OPEN
LAST DATE 23rd AUGUST, 2018

Mr Sikkim Manhunt | mrsikkimmanhunt

www.mrsikkimmanhunt.com
email id: mrsikkimmanhunt@gmail.com

Powered by:

ACCELERATOR | **SC**

Eligibility criteria: Age: 16-27 years, Height: 5' 4inches and above, Unmarried, Single

For Enquiries | Registration | Contact +91 8250520467 / 7584977223 / 8016458624

EIECOS reviews Sikkim Summit, confident it will help attain tribal status for left-out communities

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 19 AUG:

A review meeting of Sikkim Summit 2018 and thanksgiving programme was organized by EIECOS here yesterday, a press release informs.

The meeting was chaired by Lok Sabha MP, PD Rai, in the presence of chairperson SCBC

TN Sharma, Legal Advisor to the CM KT Galytshen, and chairperson EIECOS Dr SK Rai.

In his welcome address, Dr Rai shared that the Sikkim Summit was successful and would go a long way towards the attainment of tribal status for the eleven left-out indigenous communities.

He thanked all the EIECOS members and also thanked the MP for the conceptualization of the entire Summit and also thanked the SCBC chairperson for the enormous help along with all the officials of SJWE Department.

Addressing the gathering, the Lok Sabha MP said that

the idea behind Sikkim Summit had occurred during a visit of the delegation in the month of December 2017 and with EIECOS coordination, the Summit was initiated.

Although earlier there were lots of apprehensions regarding several aspects of the event, these were eventu-

ally sorted out, he shared.

The MP thanked the Chief Minister who was generous enough to attend the opening session of the summit and also thanked all Ministers and HODs. Lastly, he thanked all the EIECOS members for the great work.

Mr Sharma added that the Summit would definitely help

attain tribal status for the left out communities of Sikkim and thanked all the members of EIECOS and officials of different department.

Addressing the gathering, Mr Gyaltsen remarked that during the Summit was a very satisfying experience. He was also one of the speak-

ers at the Summit.

The programme also included the handing over of tokens of appreciation to all the contributors of Sikkim Summit 2018.

The programme was attended by all the EIECOS members and officials of Social Justice Department.

Golay lashes out...

contd from pg01

The ruling party of nepotism and favouritism in appointment in government jobs. He also mocked the SDF government as a "withdrawal government" for repeatedly withdrawing its own notifications.

The SKM president also alleged political pressure and interference in the State administration. He added that the State Vigilance has been used as a weapon just to instill fear in government employees.

He added that despite many vigilance raids in the recent past, no charge sheets have been filed against anyone proving thereby that these were just weapons to scare government employees.

He stated that the only chargesheet filed was against his wife and that too just for political revenge. Mr Tamang alleged injustice and pressure on the government employees and contended that the State government has not been working in the interest of government employees.

"Due to political pressure, victimization and political transfer, government employees have been coming to SKM party," he said.

"I am not a businessman politician who builds hotels in each new term. I have sacrificed everything for the people of the State. So vigilance and such action will not frighten or discourage us," he expressed.

He further accused the SDF party of politicizing sportspersons to meet their own political ends.

He lashed out at the State government for poor services and facilities in the health sector.

He went on to state that the Health Department is being run on the backs of doctors appointed on adhoc basis under the NHM scheme. On the same, he demanded that the government immediately regularise all adhoc doctors.

He alleged that due to bad politics of the State government, all specialist doctors of Sikkim have been working in Siliguri. He announced that on the day of the forming the government, SKM would convert the CM's official residence, Mintokgang, as into a Cancer Hospital and provide free treatment to patients there.

Mr Tamang also clarified that the SKM was not against the organic mission but was opposed to corruption in the name of organic farming. He added that everyone has been suffering due to this mission and only SIMFED and a handful of people have benefitted.

He demanded the government to immediately provide salaries of at least Rs 20,000 to local youths working under this mission who have been paid poorly.

Earlier, the SKM acting president, KN Lepcha, stated that SKM enjoys large support among the youth and women of Sikkim. He encouraged the party workers to work continuously to bring Parivartan and good governance in the State.

SKM chief coordinator, Sonam Lama also encouraged the party workers to continue with the movement which had resumed on 10 August to give justice to the people. The programme was also addressed by other leaders and workers of the party.

A Sikkim Tourism Policy...

contd from pg01

have been laid out that emphasise on establishing and strengthening institutional structures to promote, manage and implement responsible tourism in Sikkim.

The policy also talks about enhancing the skills and capacity for quality service delivery in tourism sector and seeks to bring synergy between the various training and capacity building efforts that are underway in the state through different agencies, and to provide uniform training modules through concerted efforts of all stakeholders. Promoting standards and certification for the tourism industry is another important objective that the policy includes, looking at all sectors of the industry from hotels to homestays, travel operators, guides, drivers, etc.

The policy also spells out modalities for managing tourism destinations, infrastructure and amenities created by the department, and strongly recommends carrying capacity exercises for

certain ecologically sensitive areas that are fast developing as mass touring destinations. The policy further recommends that the state should look at high value and high quality tourism products to have lower impact on these areas, which has also been recommended in the Sikkim EcoTourism Policy earlier.

Ensuring strategic and sustained marketing and publicity for the state is also a strong focus of the policy as well as promoting enabling environment for local tourism stakeholders.

Overall the policy also seeks to facilitate inter-sectoral coordination and convergence with all other relevant departments, and to that end the establishment of the Inter-Departmental Co-ordination Committee as mandated by the National Tourism Policy shall be the first step towards policy implementation.

The policy document can be accessed at the Departments' website at <http://www.sikkimtourism.gov.in/Webforms/General/Default.aspx>.

DSA wants Sherpa land sold to other communities returned

DENZONG SHERPA ASSOC REITERATES LAND PROTECTION BILL REJECTION, WANTS INCLUSION UNDER REVENUE ORDER NO. 1

BIKASH CHETTRI RABONG, 19 AUG:

Denzong Sherpa Association (DSA) convened a coordination meeting at Kewzing, South Sikkim, under Rabong constituency today.

"The Sherpa community of the state rejects the Land Protection Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly and demands that our lands be brought under the protection of Revenue Order No. 1. We also demand that 5,000 acres of Sherpa land sold to other communities be returned to the Sherpas," said Pasang Sherpa, the spokesperson of Denzong Sherpa Association.

He stressed that DSA reiterates its single-point demand of inclusion of Sherpa lands under Revenue Order No. 1 like the Bhutia-Lepcha lands.

He termed that Land Pro-



tection Bill, Sikkim Regulation of Transfer of Land Amendment Bill, Bill No. 18 of 2018 passed by the Assembly on 12 July as a "forceful implementation of an unwelcome Bill" and rejected it as being against the interests of the Sherpa community of the State.

He further stressed that as per historical facts and evidence, the term 'Bhutia' was not a single caste or community, but a group of communities which includes Sherpas, hence the Sherpas are also part of the Bhutia community and enti-

tyled to Constitutional right being enjoyed by the Bhutias.

He also alleged that Sherpa party representative had failed to speak up for the community in their time of need and warned that if the state government tries to alienate the Sherpa community, a greater movement would be launched.

Mr. Sherpa also added, "In a move to bring friction, hostility and animosity among Sherpas in Sikkim, the ruling SDF has planted one or two docile and submissive Sherpas to speak

against the inclusion of Sherpas under Revenue Order No. 1 at the Centre. Such nefarious activities of SDF seem to have the hidden agenda of wiping out the existence of Sherpa community in Sikkim. Therefore, SDF government and party will be held responsible if any animosity or violence erupted out of their sinister design."

Sonam Gyatsho Sherpa, chief convener of Sherpa Protection Forum (SPF), in his address, claimed that conspiracies to exclude the Sherpa community

from the definition of BL was being hatched and a demand to alienate the Sherpa community from BL has been placed with the central government.

He added that the organization will approach the Central government very soon with a demand seeking quashing of the Bill.

Lha Tshering Sherpa, the DSA president, in turn said that their movement is for protection of Sherpa lands and that DSA was an apolitical organisation and if some forces tries to give their movement a political colour, then DSA would field its own candidates in the upcoming election.

He contended that the Sherpa community has been denied their rights for the past 100 years in Sikkim and it was time for the Sherpa community to unite in their fight for their rights in a democratic way.

The DSA will approach different Central government agencies regarding the issue, he added and that no one can stop the community from getting their constitutional rights.

Also today, advocate Yanji Phinasa was officially appointed the legal advisor of Denzong Sherpa Association.

Since 2014 ministers of environment have become ministers of 'approval': Jairam Ramesh

NEW DELHI, AUG 19 (PTI): The ministers of environment since 2014 have been "ministers of approval", said senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, who held the portfolio during the UPA rule, and argued that the job of the minister was to protect the environment and "not necessarily clear proposals".

Speaking at the launch of book "On Jim Corbett's Trial: And Other tales from the Jungle", written by country's foremost conservationist AJT Johnsingh, Ramesh added that if the present minister of environment's "metric of success is based on the number of approvals he gave, then he is not doing his job".

"Is there an environment minister? I mean, from 2014, the ministers of environment have been ministers of approval. And if the minister of environment is going to give a press conference saying that I have cleared thousands and thousands of proposals... then he is not doing his job," the former Union minister said.

Talking about the time when he was the minister of environment, he said that he always judged himself by the "number of questions asked, number of rejections, the number of impediments he put", and not by the approvals he gave.

Ramesh was the minister of environment and forests from May 2009 to July 2011 in the Congress-led government.

"It is a tough call and I think it is important to pick your battles if you want to win the larger war. I was minister of environment for 26 months, if I had not taken the decisions that I took I would have



lasted 60 months," said Ramesh, adding that during his tenure more often than not his choice was in favour of conservation and protection only.

Underlining the battles, those he picked during his stint as the minister, he said one of the most celebrated one that he can remember was the protection of "Tadoba Andhari-Tiger Reserve (TATR) which was threatened by the proposal of huge coal mine".

The Tadoba national park is Maharashtra's oldest and biggest national park.

"The coal mine was proposed for good whole decade, but then I went there and saw for myself the devastation that it will cause and put a stop to it... well, now it is back on the agenda.

"Then there were instances in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. Numerous examples like this across the country. There were very few instance when I actually took a decision in favour of the project proponents," he said.

Further, he claimed that very frequently the proponents for projects were governments them-

selves, centre or state, and not the private sector.

"They (governments) were the worst culprits in this regard," he said.

He, however, did admit that there were instances when he had to make different choices.

"The fact is that you have to navigate both sides. There is a very large community of people who think that conservation is good in theory but when it comes to practice well we can postpone it for a while if it means more investment, more jobs, more industry.

"It is a tough call and you have to see for yourself what the issues are, what are the short term implication, and also what are the long term implications whether it is national highways, railways," he said.

The 246-page book, published by Natraj publishers, is the author's narration of his journey retracing Jim Corbett's tracks, which other than providing conversationist's experiences and observations, also gives the readers a sense of the ecological change that is occurring in Indian forests and waterways.



Bhagwad Katha at Central Pendam

SUMMIT REPORT

CENTRAL PENDAM, 19 AUG: A two-week long "Shreemada Bitak Charcha evam Bhagwad Katha" is currently underway at Shri Krishna Pranami Prarthana Bhawan at Central Pendam to mark the fourth centenary celebration of Mahamati Prannath ji. The congregation had commenced on 11 Aug is scheduled to conclude on 25 August 2018. Hundreds of devotees are attending the programme everyday in rapt to the erudition of religious scholar Gopika Ghimirey.

SIKKIM STATE LOTTERIES

DEAR ZEAL EVENING

Draw No:1 DrawDate on:19/08/18

1st Prize Rs.26.06 Lakhs/- 82G 11617
Cons. Prize Rs.9500/- 11617 (REMAINING ALL SERIALS)
2nd Prize Rs.9000/-
37244 51339 75159 80231 94752
10927 18674 25846 33510 34121
3rd Prize Rs.500/- 0375 1956 3760 6479 6510 7528 7860 7875 8250 9806
4th Prize Rs.250/- 0222 0287 0550 1215 5812 6300 6934 7688 9633 9913
5th Prize Rs.120/-
0019 0112 0259 0386 0440 0622 0660 0720 0779 0973
1092 1309 1319 1385 1714 1718 1723 1725 1868 1968
1990 2301 2338 2354 2356 2375 2552 2565 2608 2613
2826 3172 3198 3313 3332 3349 3560 3583 3617 3730
3789 3981 3990 3995 4013 4078 4152 4250 4468 4683
4789 4869 4878 4958 5165 5210 5290 5341 5423 5553
5648 5705 5738 5795 5839 6263 6375 6631 6746 6748
6822 6846 7016 7082 7107 7303 7310 7539 8136 8247
8258 8682 8803 8943 8948 9039 9194 9195 9283 9459
9479 9495 9575 9614 9705 9746 9790 9823 9946 9963

Issued by:

The Director, Sikkim State Lotteries,
Government Of Sikkim, Deorali - 737102, Sikkim
Please Visit : www.sikkimlotteries.com

KINDLY CHECK THE RESULT WITH THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE

visit us at: www.summittimes.com

Gangtok on Monday, 20 Aug

Temp: 30°C/17°C
Forecast: Sunny and hot day, a thundershower in the evening.
Sunrise: 05:08 AM
Sunset: 6:10 PM



Gold for Bajrang

JAKARTA, AUG 19 (PTI): A dominating Bajrang Punia opened India's gold medal account at the Asian Games, bringing smiles and relief to the Indian camp which was jolted by the early exit of star wrestler Sushil Kumar here today.

Bajrang came into the Games after winning three tournaments -- Commonwealth Games, Tbilisi Grand Prix and Yasar Dogu International -- and carried on with his superlative show here.

Such was his domination that the 24-year-old from Haryana won all his bouts, till the final, by technical superiority.

He outclassed Uzbekistan's Sirojiddin Khasanov (13-3), Tajikistan's Fayziev Abdulqosim (12-2) and Mongolia's N Batmagnai Batchuluu (10-0) to storm into the gold medal bout.

In the final, he was tested by Japan's Takatani Daichi but Bajrang held his nerves to prevail 11-8 in an exciting battle. He raced to a 6-0 lead but the Japanese kept at it and put Bajrang under immense pressure.

Bajrang emulated his mentor Yogeshwar Dutt, who won gold in the last edition, and is now one of the few Asiad gold medal winners in wrestling.

Kartar Singh (1978, 1986), Satpal Singh (1982), Rajinder Singh (1978), Changdi Ram (1970) and Maruti Mane (1962) are among Asiad gold winners from India.

to book advertisements in SummitTimes call 03592-208698 9734152541 9647102692 advertise@summittimes.com

HMs meet to discuss common issues and grievances

SUMMIT REPORT SINGTAM, 19 AUG:

A meeting of Headmasters of Primary Schools from all four districts was convened here at the Marwari Dharmasala today to discuss common issues, grievances and aspirations. The meeting discussed issues ranging from the cadre system of Primary School Headmasters and the Primary school teachers and promotion on seniority basis which remain awaited till date.

Around 40 Headmasters attended the meeting, it is informed.

The meeting also discussed grade pay, promotion and other facilities for Headmasters and Primary teachers.

A working committee, president and executive members of the association was also con-



stituted today.

"The demands, grievances and agendas laid down by the headmasters and the Primary

teachers will be submitted to the Chief Minister in the coming week," informed president of the group, Phu Tshering Lep-

cha, at the meeting.

The meeting was organised by Arjun Chettri (HM Rekep PS), Gopal Sharma (HM Karek PS),

Tashering Tamang (HM Amaley PS), all from South Sikkim and was conducted by Mahesh Sharma Dahal (HM Tanak PS).

Acumen interaction seeks Fellows to fight poverty

NITESH R PRADHAN GANGTOK, 19 AUG:

Acumen, an international non-governmental organization, held an interactive session of the India Fellows Program here today in association with digital media house, Sikkim Chronicle.

While explaining the initiative, the program manager of the organisation, Krishna Dahya, informed that the organisation has worked on poverty alleviation efforts across the world particularly focusing on having diverse people from various backgrounds work towards this common goal.

The organisation has 93 fellows in India but none here in Sikkim and that they were looking forward to members



from Sikkim, because, she added, the story of Sikkim also needs to be heard.

Emarine Kharbhih, fellow of the organization, shared her experience and held that she has grown and become enriched after having

associated with such an organisation.

The organisation is headquartered in New York, USA.

The organisers inform that anyone with a passion to work for the society can apply for the

organisation's fellowship which can provide like minded people a good opportunity for service.

The interactive session was attended by DSP [West], Tenzing Loden Lepcha, social activist KC Nima, entre-

preneurs Devika Gurung, Kushan Zulca, Rewaj Chettri, Sonam Choden Katsopa and Smita Rai, Rjs Priyanka Tamang and Prabal Rai among an eclectic mix of impactful individuals from across various fields.



At Singtam, an I-Day to remember!

YOGEN THATAL SINGTAM, 19 AUG: Singtam celebrated the 72nd Independence Day in grand manner at Golitar ground on 15 Aug.

In a well-received initiative, the organisers put up a special flex carries photographs of freedom fighters whose blood, sweat and tears made 15 August 1947 possible and made us free people.

This was welcome departure from people getting to see only pictures of politicians and some famous freedom fighters.

The gesture was also noticed by the chief guest of the day, Uttam Pradhan, chairperson, Culture Board, Government of Sikkim, and a product of Singtam bazaar.

"This is the very first time that people attending I-Day celebrations will see the faces of patriots and brave heroes of the Freedom Struggle," he remarked in his I-Day address.

While Mr Uttam Pradhan and his family contributed trophies and cash prize for the Interschool dance competition in the memory of their father, the late Durga Pradhan, Ranju Lamichaney dedicated the prize for Interschool March Past competition in the memory of her father, Gopal Lamichaney; Gupta Subba and family mem-

bers sponsored prizes for sports events in the name of their belated father DB Subba; and Pradeep Sharma contributed the prizes for girls open football tournament in the memory of his belated father as well.

In the inter-school football tournament, Ralap Secondary School outplayed Sang Senior Secondary School 3-0 to lift the trophy. The winning team was awarded with cash prize of Rs 1,00,000 while the runner up was presented with Rs 50,000 cash prize.

The Open Late Laxman Pradhan Memorial Football Tournament had Sikkim Himalyan FC, Gangtok emerge victorious against Hawlers FC, Singtam with score line of 3-0.

Sikkim Bihari Jagran Manch, Singtam branch, headed by its president, Dilip Prasad, felicitated 30 senior citizens of Singtam for their contributions to the society during the celebration.

Later, a grand musical night and raffle draw event was organised by JVC FC.

"The money collected from this event will be utilised for buying football kits and accessories for JVC Academy since our academy also coaches students from underprivileged families," said JVC Academy founder, Sangey Bhutia.

AFFIDAVIT

I, **PRAJITA SUBBA** wife of Samuel Subba, Resident of Liza Hill Tea Estate, P.O. Marybong, P.S. Pulbazar, Dist. Darjeeling, West Bengal, have changed my name from **PRAJITA SUBBA** to **PRAJITA THAPA SUBBA** vide affidavit dated 16/08/2018 before the notary public at Darjeeling.



LIONS ORGANIZE BLOOD DONATION CAMP IN RORATHANG

RANGPO, 19 AUG: Lions Club of Rangpo Gateway of Sikkim, in association with Scorpion Containers Pvt Ltd, organised a daylong Blood Donation Camp at the Scorpion complex in Rorathang, East Sikkim, today helped by a team from STNM Hospital Blood Bank. 42 units of blood were collected and deposited to the STNM Blood Bank.



**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT ENGINEER (NORTH – II)
WATER RESOURCES & RIVER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
NORTH SUB DIVISION (II), EAST SIKKIM**

Memo No:- 238/A.E(II)/N/WR&RDD Date:-16/08/18

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

On behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, Assistant Engineer (North – II), Water Resources & River Development Department, Government of Sikkim invites sealed tender from **Class IV grade contractor within the territorial jurisdiction of Gram Panchayat Unit** of the State for the work(s) listed below:

Sl.No.	Name of works	Work Value put to Tender	Earnest Money @2.5% for issue of Tender form	Bank receipt for the Cost of tender document	Completion Period.
1	Restoration of JTW at Gangyap Jhora at Namphong, under Lingdok Namphong G.P.U. Kabi Lungchuk Constituency, East Sikkim.	Rs.929966/-	Rs.23249/-	Rs.500/-	Six Months.

The data and time for submission of completed tender/bid document is as under:

i)	Date of Submission of application with bank receipt for issue of Tender Document (excluding Tender Form)	20th September 2018 (10.00 am to 4.00 pm) Office of the Assistant Engineer, WR&RDD, North Sub-Division II, Nirman Bhavan.
ii)	Date of issue of Tender Form on submission of Earnest Money (TDR)	24th September 2018 (10.00 am to 4.00 pm) Office of the Assistant Engineer, WR&RDD, North Sub-Division II, Nirman Bhavan.
iii)	Date and Time for submission of Tender	26th September 2018 (10.00 am to 1.00 pm) at Office of the Assistant Engineer, WR&RDD, North Sub-Division II, Nirman Bhavan.
iv)	Date and Time for opening of Tender	26th September 2018 (2.30 pm) at Office of the Assistant Engineer, WR&RDD, North Sub-Division II, Nirman Bhavan.

For any further queried i/c condition of contract, office of the undersigned may be contacted during office hours.

Sd/-
Assistant Engineer – II (North)

R.O. No. 288/1pr/pub/classi./18-19
dt. 16.8.18

Water Resources & River Development Department
Govt of Sikkim

SummitTIMES

Language Barrier

Language needs contemporary and relevant literature to flourish

Speaking to a young Nepali-speaker a few days before Bhasa Manyata Diwas was eye-opening. The youngster could rattle off a Nepali proverb to suit just about any situation or irony that abounds around us nowadays. When asked what she would recommend to someone beginning an exploration into Nepali literature, and she listed out only what would qualify to be classics. When it comes to the region, she says that while there are some interesting contemporary works in Nepali, there were not enough invested with the endurance or even lasting relevance that the past greats have nuanced their works with. Make no mistake, she was not being dismissive about the language itself, in fact, she, like perhaps her entire generation, is rather passionate about language and what it means for a people. Their conviction on the importance of language is encouraging even as it is uncomfortable to stare into the mirror they hold up to reflect the legacy that the present generation passes down to them by way of language.

Speak to students of Nepali language at the school level and they will complain that the Nepali taught in schools is too outdated and out of step with their realities. The stories in the textbooks speak of issues which none of the students can identify with and in a language that is almost alien to them. Of course there are still gems hidden in the syllabus, but the overall content is less than inspiring, they insist. They have a point there. Nepali writing is moving in two extremes at present. They are either too archaic, or too esoteric. There is not much that is contemporary and this is also reflected in the less than handsome circulation figures of Nepali publications which have not even touched a small fraction of what is possible. Nepali writers, the young speakers contend, are not only out of sync with the times, but also distant from their readers. As a result, few students end up developing any serious interest in the language which is already compromised by the fact that it is of little use beyond the region. Take vibrant literature out of the mix, and the language stares at a very real danger of becoming a dialect.

Not everything the young say can be dismissed as an emotional outburst of rebellious and easily bored minds. They will after all be carrying the language further and going by what they have to say, they are not confident about delivering on this responsibility.

Why?

Because the present generation has not equipped them well enough. Students who speak Nepali at home have to take tuitions to pass in the subject. They could not possibly be weak in the language, it is obviously because the material does not excite enough interest in most of them; an interest which those responsible for developing and promoting the language have failed to kindle in them. The students want a more contemporary syllabus which they can identify with; they want greater respect shown to the language by their elders; and they want a genuine interest in the promotion of Nepali as a language to be learnt by those who control the language cartels. Tokenism will just not do, they stress. Justified points, but are we equipped to deliver on them? And this is not just about Nepali or even language for that matter.

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

Nanomedicine could revolutionise the way we treat TB. Here's how

SARAH D'SOUZA & ADMIRE DUBE
theconversation.com

Tuberculosis is one of the world's deadliest infectious disease. Worldwide, there are still about 10.4 million cases of TB and 1.7 million deaths every year.

One of the reasons it's been hard to bring the disease under control is that the drugs used to treat it require a gruelling regimen and can be toxic. This means people very often don't finish the course.

TB treatment lasts for six months and uses a combination of four antimicrobial drugs taken in large, daily amounts. The reason for the large daily dose is that these drugs are poorly absorbed; even when a drug gets to the infected site, only a portion of it will enter the affected tissue and fight the bacteria. They are also quickly eliminated from sites of infection by metabolic body functions.

These medicines also exhibit considerable toxicity such as liver damage, painful tingling in the hands and feet as well as joint pain. That's because they don't just target the infected areas of the body.

In some instances, the medicines are only available as injectables into the muscle, which is a painful procedure – and require daily clinic or prolonged hospital stays.

All of this leads to poor adherence to treatment among TB patients – and, ultimately, contributes to the generation and transmission of drug resistant TB strains. These are even harder to treat, with treatment lasting up to two years.

But there may be hope for TB treatment, in the form of nanomedicine. Tests are already being done on animals. And we are just two of many researchers from around the globe doing research at the nexus of nanomedicine and TB at the University of the Western Cape.

HOW NANOMEDICINE WORKS

Nanomedicine is the use of nanotechnology to either diagnose or treat a disease. Nanotechnology, simply put, is the creation of structures which are in the nanometer size range. One nanometer is equivalent to the diameter of a strand of human hair that has been divided ten thousand times. Hu-



man DNA is about 2.5 nanometers in diameter. Advances in science now enable scientists to engineer these tiny structures and load them with TB drugs to deliver them to infected sites in the human body.

Nanoparticles can be loaded with a variety of types of drugs such as proteins, DNA or even extracts from plants. Multiple drugs can be loaded in a single nanoparticle or a mixture of nanoparticles, each containing a single type of drug, can be administered. Nanomedicines can be administered into the human body through swallowing, inhaling, injections or via the skin.

Nanomedicines are already being used by patients for the treatment of cancer; examples include Doxil® and Abraxane®. Another nanomedicine, Diprivan®, is used as an anaesthetic.

Researchers believe that nanomedicine could help TB patients enormously. They would need to take less medication for a shorter duration, with fewer side effects. And, hopefully, the drugs will be cheaper. There are already animal trials underway to test these hypotheses.

Our ongoing research focuses on the application of nanoparticles to target cells of the immune system known as macrophages. These are a major harbour for the bacteria that causes TB; *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

Mycobacterium tuberculosis is able to multiply within the macrophages and escape elimination by the body's immune system. Nanoparticles can be used to deliver immune-modulating signals to

macrophages to turn these harbour sites into hostile environments for *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

This form of immunotherapy holds great promise: it could prevent the generation of drug resistant TB strains, since the body's own immune system is used to kill the bacteria.

TARGETING TB

The reason that nanoparticles hold such hope for TB treatment is that they can be carefully targeted. That's because nanoparticles are able to make the drugs more available at the sites of infection by protecting them from breakdown prior to reaching the site. And there's a greater uptake of the nanoparticles into infected sites.

Nanoparticles can also be localised to only the sites of infection. This can be achieved in two ways. First, scientists can attach chemicals to the nanoparticles' surfaces which serve as "homing devices" and target them to desired sites. Second, nanomedicines can be inhaled so they're localised in the lungs – the centre of TB infection.

The TB drugs, then, would only act at the necessary sites. Less medicine would be needed and toxic side effects would be reduced.

In addition, nanoparticles can control the rate at which the drug is released, extending the duration of the drug within the sites of infection. This would have significant implications for TB patients who have to take numerous drugs daily for long periods of time. Under these circumstances, more patients are likely to complete their courses, reducing the occurrence of drug resistance.

It's hoped that these TB-specific nanomedicines will make it to human trials over the next few years, prove to be safe and effective – and start doing the important work of tackling this debilitating disease.

[Sarah D'Souza is Postdoctoral Fellow in the Tuberculosis Nanomedicine Research Group, University of the Western Cape; Admire Dube is Associate Professor, Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of the Western Cape]

Genoa bridge collapse: maintaining these structures is a constant battle against traffic and decay

MARIOS CHRYSSANTHOPOULOS
theconversation.com

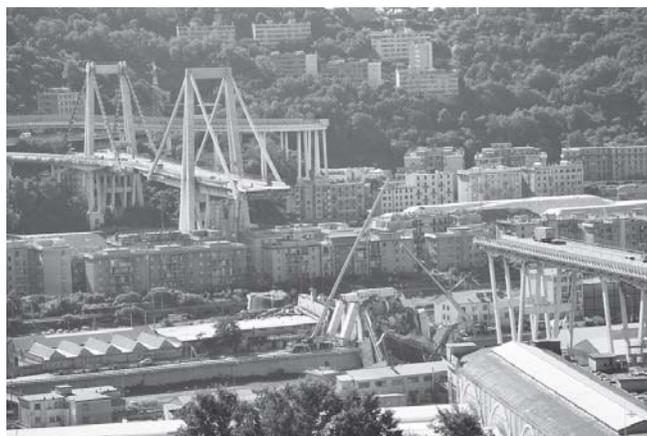
As rescue workers look for survivors in the concrete rubble that used to be part of the Morandi bridge in Genoa, Italian authorities are starting their investigation into the possible causes behind this terrible tragedy.

It is too early to determine what may have caused the catastrophic collapse of more than 100 metres of the multi-span, cable-stayed suspension bridge, completed just over 50 years ago. But it's important to understand that bridge engineering does not end when construction finishes and traffic starts to flow. In fact, properly looking after a bridge during its long life is as crucial as having a good design, using high-quality materials, and ensuring sound workmanship during construction.

Modern bridges are designed for a life of 100 years, though many centenarian bridges – such as the Forth Bridge in Scotland, which opened in 1890 – still provide sterling service, and of course there are smaller bridges built of stone to more ancient designs that have stood for many hundreds of years. Considering the number of bridges built in Europe during the expansion of the motorway networks from the late-1950s onwards, we should expect, and be prepared for, many to exceed their planned lifespan in coming decades. Facilitating this is ambitious but necessary, and made possible thanks only to regular inspection and maintenance that ensures that building materials have not degraded, and that structural elements are fit to bear the traffic and environmental loads they face.

So what are the factors that affect the strength of a bridge and may compromise public safety?

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE



The climate in a bridge's location, taken alongside atmospheric pollution common in cities, can have an adverse influence on the material of the bridge – for example, the corrosion of steel reinforcement or pre-stressed steel tendons embedded in concrete. Regular inspections are typically scheduled every six years for large bridges to identify any degradation, and to take appropriate measures to replace cracking concrete and corroded steel, or to introduce protective coatings.

In England, the Midlands Link motorway viaducts, comprising 13 miles of elevated motorway carrying the M5 and M6 motorways around Birmingham, suffered from chloride-induced steel corrosion early on in their life from exposure to salt used to de-ice the roads. This required an extensive application of corrosion protection measures in the early 1990s. More than 700 structures have benefited from this action, demonstrating the cost savings that can be made if appropriate action is taken at the right time.

STRESS AND FATIGUE

Fatigue caused by use is another factor, and inspectors will look out for tell-tale signs of failure often associated with the cyclical stress produced by passing vehicles, particularly heavy trucks. This type of failure is especially relevant for metal bridge decks and the cables of suspension and cable-stayed bridges. Traffic has increased ever since these bridges were built, which inevitably leads to the need for more maintenance and strengthening work, such as additional steel, glass or carbon fibre-reinforced plates on critical parts in order to restore or enhance their strength compared to what was deemed necessary during their design. For example, Network Rail in the UK used fibre-reinforced polymers to strengthen more than 20 bridges carrying highway or railway traffic between 2001 and 2010.

Consider how we all tend to react to a road sign bearing the words: "Essential Bridge Works – Expect Long Delays". One such situation prompted this comment from a member of the public: "We are doomed. I am going to buy a tent and pitch it outside work

for the three months while the misery goes on." Perhaps knowing why this is necessary – and the consequences of not doing so – might persuade people to reconsider such views.

MONEY AND WILLINGNESS TO SPEND IT

Equally, we must understand that maintenance budgets need to be set at levels that far exceed those that would allow engineers only to "firefight" the most severe problems, as is becoming worryingly commonplace. Instead, budgets need to allow for planned interventions and necessary upgrades over many decades. That requires public and government support, as well as skilled engineers committed to ensuring the safety of an ageing structure.

There are challenges in devising improved methods to assess bridge strength, developing new repair techniques, and new ways of collecting and using inspection and monitoring data to provide advance warning of problems. These constantly push technological boundaries, making it possible to operate existing bridges safely during their long service lives. And the experience gained feeds into new designs that will become reality in years to come.

Those investigating the collapse of the Morandi bridge will look at inspection and maintenance matters. Other lines of enquiry will no doubt include the unusual design of the multi-span bridge, with only a few cable stays to transfer deck loads to the towers, the ongoing work to shore up the foundations, and the heavy rainfall at the time of the collapse. In the shadow of this terrible loss of life, it is worth remembering that bridge inspection and maintenance may be annoying for commuters – but it is crucial.

[The writer is Professor of Structural Systems, University of Surrey]



Manipur ministers campaign for Conrad Sangma in Meghalaya

SHILLONG, AUG 19 (PTI): Manipur ministers are campaigning in Meghalaya to drum up support for NPP candidate and Meghalaya chief minister Conrad K Sangma for the upcoming August 23 Assembly bye-election.

Besides South Tura seat, senior BJP leaders of Manipur are also camping in areas under Ranikor constituency, which will also witness a bypoll on August 23.

Speaking at an election meeting in Tura yesterday, Manipur Health minister Jayantakumar Singh said, Conrad Sangma has followers across Northeast region as he is interested in voicing the concern of the people and he is also the voice of the people of the region at the Centre.

Seeking mandate of the people, Singh urged the voters of South Tura not to get carried away by any false propaganda of the opposition parties or get lured by their promises.

"We look up to the people of Tura to come and vote in favour of Conrad. North East and India is keeping a watch on the prestigious constituency. We are sure that people will come out and repose their faith in Conrad Sangmaji," Manipur Sports Minister Letpao Haokip told PTI.

Both the Manipur ministers will be in South Tura till tomorrow. National People's Party (NPP) president Conrad K Sangma is pitted against Independent candidate and former South Tura MLA John Leslee Sangma in South Tura constituency.

The bypoll has been declared to fill up a vacancy caused by the resignation of former Union minister Agatha K. Sangma.

Agatha Sangma, who is also Conrad Sangma's sister, had resigned from the seat on July 2. Conrad Sangma was sworn in as chief minister on March 6.

Tribal students urge govt to give them better facilities for quality education

New Delhi, Aug 19 (PTI): Tribal students have appealed to the Centre to ensure "quality education" and proper facilities, including schools and hostels, for those belonging to scheduled tribes and said that reservation in government institutions and jobs alone is not the solution to their problems.

They also urged the central government to formulate policies on the "basis of ground realities" for the welfare of tribal children. Tribal students from across the country participated in a convention organised by the Adivasi Adhikar Manch and the Centre for Adivasi Research and Development here on Saturday to highlight their issues.

"Please tell the government that we are not getting a quality education. There are no schools in some tribal areas. Even if there are, there are no teachers. At some places, tribal students have to travel miles to reach school. "We need more hostels and good facilities. The government talks about reservation (in jobs), but what will we do if we do not get a proper education?" asked Sunil Tirki from Jharkhand.

Tribal students, who had come from faraway villages of Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Tripura, and other states, also complained about poor hostel facilities at residential government schools.

They said that hostels do not have proper drinking water and toilet facilities. At some places, there are no ceiling fans. So, the students sleep in the open during summers. "Sometimes, we have to

fetch water from nearby wells. Very often students fall sick and return home, as there are no proper medical facilities available for us," Lata Soren, a tribal student from Chhattisgarh, said.

The organisers claimed that because of the "flawed" policy framework of the government which is detached from the ground reality, "Adivasi children cannot sustain their education".

"The Centre is cutting down on the number of schools based on the number of students attending the classes. Now, in tribal areas, this is proving to be disastrous. Because of the geographical locations of these areas, one cannot hope that Adivasi children will sustain their education without a decentralized approach.

"That's why compared to

other children, the dropout rate among tribal students is higher. If the government wants to bridge this gap, then it needs a different policy framework," Brinda Karat, CPI(M) leader and member of the Adivasi Adhikar Rashtriya Manch, says.

The students' parents, who also attended the convention, said that there are many villages which do not have schools.

"I want my two children to study, but there are no schools. If they want to go to school, they need to travel miles through forests. It is unsafe. Why cannot schools be built near our villages?" asks 25-year-old Phula Bai, who belongs to the Bhil tribe of Rajasthan.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Adivasi Adhikar Manch and the Centre for Adivasi Research and De-

velopment, some tribal areas have recorded an increase in the dropout rate among girl students, as not many parents feel safe to send their daughters to the schools far-off.

"My school is very far from my village. It takes more than two hours to reach there. I am able to continue with my studies because my brother accompanies me. But there are many in my class who have stopped coming to school as they are scared to travel alone and they do not have money to pay for the transport. There is no hostel for girls," said Varsha Sihem, a class 8 tribal student from Madhya Pradesh.

The tribal students also demanded that the government "stop its policy of shutting down and merging schools based on the number of students attending them".

School book depicts Farhan as Milkha Singh, actor requests WB govt to correct 'glaring error'

MUMBAI, AUG 19 (PTI): A photograph of a school textbook in West Bengal depicting Farhan Akhtar as veteran athlete Milkha Singh has gone viral on the social media and the actor has urged the state government to rectify the "glaring error".

The 44-year-old actor, who essayed the role of Singh in 2013's biopic in "Bhaag Milkha Bhaag", took to Twitter to point out that a still from the film

had been incorrectly used in the book instead of the real athlete's photo.

"To the Minister of School Education, West Bengal. There is a glaring error with the image used in one of the school text books to depict Milkha Singh-ji.

"Could you please request the publisher to recall and replace this book? Sincerely," Akhtar wrote while retweeting the image shared by a Twitter user.

The actor-director also tagged Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien to draw his attention to the post.

Singh, known as The Flying Sikh, became the first Indian to win an individual athletics gold medal at a Commonwealth Games (1958).

Akhtar received critical acclaim and accolades for his performance and "Bhaag Milkha Bhaag" bagged two National Awards in Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment and Best Choreography categories.

My heart goes out to those excluded from draft NRC in Assam: Mamata

Kolkata, Aug 19 (PTI): On

World Humanitarian Day today, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said her heart goes out to those left out of the draft National Register of Citizens in Assam, which has excluded nearly 40 lakh people.

Describing human rights as one of the basic tenets of the Constitution, Banerjee said those excluded from the NRC have become refugees in their own country.

"Today is World Humanitarian Day. Respecting human rights is one of the basic tenets of our Constitution. On this day, my heart goes out to the 40 lakh people who have become refugees in their own country because of #NRCassam," she wrote on Twitter.

She has been raising her voice against the draft NRC since the



complete draft was published on July 30, and claimed that those who did not make it to the list of the citizens' register "were being sent to detention camps".

More than 2.89 crore people were found to be eligible for inclusion in the draft NRC, out of the total 3.29 crore applicants.

The Trinamool Congress supremo had also said those who have been staying in the country for years were "branded as infiltrators". She has accused the ruling BJP of carrying out the exercise with an eye on the Lok Sabha election.



Unsung heroes bring smiles to stranded in rain ravaged Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG 19 (PTI): Braving inclement weather and risky conditions, a young Air Force officer dramatically winched up a toddler to safety from the roof-top of a marooned house in rain-battered Kerala where thousands of people are battling all odds to survive as the death toll has touched 197 in the past 10 days in the second spell of monsoon fury since August 8.

Wing Commander Prashanth slid down a rope to the terrace of the two-storey house which seemed from above like a toy floating on the yellowish murky waters. TV visuals showed the officer airlifting the two-year-old boy with care, pressed him to his body and winched him to safety.

The proud officer later handed over the baby to his anxious mother waiting inside the chopper.

The woman, who was almost in tears, was all gratitude and smiles as she received her bundle of joy in her hands.

Prashanth is one among many unsung heroes who have brought smiles to the faces of anxious and panic-stricken people of Kerala, reeling under the worst floods of a century.

Another TV grab showed some

girls trapped in their hostel room for days without food and water making a lucky escape after an IAF helicopter came to their rescue.

They cried and hugged each other after all the stranded were safely pulled up into the copter yesterday.

Commander Vijay Varma, who saved a pregnant woman in labour by winching her up in a helicopter from a stranded building, was later happy to hear that she had successfully delivered a baby boy.

"This was a very challenging task. We got an SOS and we traced them out...There is tremendous satisfaction, both professionally and personally," the officer said later.

The social media was all praise for the exceptional courage shown by the Indian Navy's Captain P Rajkumar who airlifted over 25 persons battling challenging conditions.

The visual of a man kneeling down in muddy waters to help women step on to him to get into rescue boats went viral today.

The man in a blue shirt was seen kneeling with his face hardly a few inches above the flood waters and women stepping onto his back to climb up to a rescue boat.

The act of IAS officers M G Rajamanikyam and N S Umesh who unloaded rice sacks at the Wayanad Collectorate for distribution at relief camps was also celebrated by netizens.

As soon as news of the devastating floods and the plight of the stranded came out, 600 odd fishermen immediately turned up with their country and mechanised boats to help rescue those marooned in various parts of the state.

Thousands of people, including women, children and college students are tediously working at various centres across the state free of cost to gather essential materials, including food, medicines, cloths to send to relief camps.

Union Tourism minister K J Alphons, who visited some relief camps here, today said they are the 'unsung heroes'.

Many are still stranded in their homes with no food and sheaths of water around them at various places in Alapuzha, Thrissur and Ernakulam districts.

The maximum death toll has been reported from Idukki district, where 43 people have lost their lives so far, as per official estimates.

SummitTIMES
ON TOP OF THE NEWS

informed, inquisitive, relevant

India opens medal count at Asiad with bronze in rifle mixed team

PALEMBANG, AUG 19 (PTI): India opened its account in the 18th Asian Games with a bronze medal after Apurvi Chandela and Ravi Kumar cracked under pressure to finish third in the rifle mixed team shooting event here today.

The Indians aggregated 429.9 after 42 shots in the 48-shot final and were in second spot for major part of the 48-shot finals before China overtook them to take the silver.

The strong Chinese pairing of Ruozhu Zhao and Haoran Yang ended with a score of 492.5. Chinese Taipei's Yingshin Lin and Shaochuan Lu claimed the gold, scoring 494.1.

Korea and Mongolia finished fourth and fifth respectively in the event held for the first time at the Games.

It was a maiden Asian Games medal for Chandela, who will be aiming for a better colour medal in the 10m air rifle. Chandela is also a multiple time World Cup winner and had bagged gold at 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.



World Cup bronze medallist Kumar, who is mentored by the great Abhinav Bindra, had won a men's 10m rifle team bronze at

last the edition at Incheon.

Chandela, having won the first Games medal for the country, was satisfied with her performance.

"Our best finish together was fourth at the World Cup and we have improved on that. My first Asian Games medal and my first

medal for India here. I am really happy about that but my focus is on main event (10m rifle) tomorrow," Chandela told PTI.

Asked about slipping to third from second in the elimination stage, Chandela added: "This happens in shooting. I think we shot alright."

Kumar said, "This bronze has come only because of apurvi. The final was a disappointment after a decent qualification. We didn't get enough time to train together."

After the first series, India were second with 102.9 while Korea led with 103.4. Indian remained in that position even after the third series but the Chinese improved drastically to steal the second spot.

Mongolia were the first to be eliminated, followed by Korea.

Earlier, Kumar and Chandela had finished second in the qualification with a total score of 835.3. Both shooters fired 40 shots each in the 50-minute session.

South Korean pair of Hyeonjun Kim and Eunha Jund had topped the session with 836.7.

Mongolia were third with 832.1, China fourth with 831.1 and Taipei sealed the fifth and final qualification spot with 829.8.

There was disappointment in store for pistol mixed team of teen sensation Manu Bhaker and Abhishek Verma, who failed to qualify for the finals after being tied with Kazakhstan.

Both teams were tied at 759 points after 80 shots but the Kazakh sealed the fifth and final qualifying spot with more inners 10s than India (25 to India's 14).

"Manu did not shoot to her potential. She was angry and agitated towards the end. She needs to work on controlling her anger. Abhishek needs to learn how to cope up with pressure in big events. It is new for him. They both will learn," said pistol coach Jaspal Rana.

Bhaker had raised expectations after becoming the youngest Indian woman to win a gold at the Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast. The 16-year-old had also won two gold medals at the Guadalajara World Cup earlier this year.

Centre orders withdrawal of 7,000 CRPF troops from four states, to be re-deployed in south Bastar

NEW DELHI, AUG 19 (PTI): The central government has directed the withdrawal of over 7,000 CRPF personnel from their long drawn deployment in four states, the maximum being from West Bengal.

These armed troops, part of seven battalions, will subsequently be re-deployed for conducting operations in Naxal-hit regions of south Bastar in Chhattisgarh, a recent government order has said.

The force was deployed to carry out anti-Naxal operations in West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand whereas for internal security-related duty in Uttar Pradesh.

As per the directive issued accessed by PTI, the Union Home Ministry early this week informed the respective states enumerating that the maximum of three battalions are to be withdrawn from West Bengal, two from Bihar and one each from Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand.



Official sources said the move to take out the Central Reserve Police Force battalions from these states has come after a long time and the Home Ministry ordered for their marching after the paramilitary made a demand to it that it requires more battalions in Chhattisgarh in order to open more bases in the Maoist hotbed in Chhattisgarh.

As the biggest Left Wing Extremism (LWE) combat challenge is now in south Bastar, that borders Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, it is required to enhance the number of CRPF boots in these areas, they said.

The districts of Sukma, Dantewada, Bijapur, Kanker and Kondagaon witness the maximum

movement and activity of the armed Maoist cadres and since the last year, the CRPF has begun opening camps in the interior areas to penetrate into the core Naxal areas, they said.

The LWE theatre in all the states from where the battalions have been ordered to be taken out, except Uttar Pradesh, have seen a marginal dip in the strength and control of Naxals and the forces are now in the dominating position, a senior official supervising anti-Naxal operations for the CRPF explained.

Uttar Pradesh has one LWE affected district - Sonbhadra - and the lone CRPF battalion proposed to be taken out from this central Indian state would come from a

group centre of the force under which eight-nine battalions operate, he said.

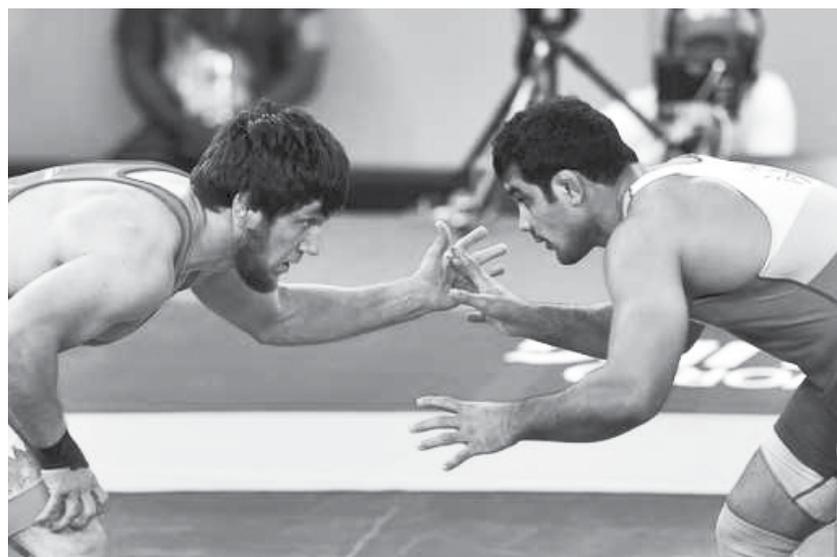
These states are the only places from where the CRPF could take out few battalions as there is not much scope to withdraw units from either Jammu and Kashmir or the north east, the two other internal security theatres where the paramilitary is deployed thickly.

We expect the withdrawal to begin by this month end and their re-deployment in Chhattisgarh to be completed by the year end, he said.

The Home Ministry, under the same order, has asked the Chhattisgarh government to provide "adequate logistics and accommodation" for these new incoming units.

The CRPF, country's largest Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) with over three lakh personnel in its ranks, has about 30 battalions deployed in Chhattisgarh at present.

A CRPF battalion has over 1,000 troops.



Sushil bows out of Asian Games after just one bout

JAKARTA, AUG 19 (PTI): Two-time Olympic medallist wrestler Sushil Kumar's Asian Games campaign ended in disappointment as he suffered a stunning loss in the first qualification round bout against Bahrain's Adam Batirov in the men's 74 kg category here today.

The 35-year-old celebrated Indian wrestler, who won a bronze and a silver respectively in the

2008 and 2012 Olympics, lost 3-5 to Batirov in the qualification round.

Sushil's chance of playing in the repechage round went up in smoke after Batirov lost his quarterfinals bout. If Batirov had made the final, the Indian would have had a chance to win bronze through repechage.

Against Batirov, Sushil led 2-1

after the first period with a take down but the Bahraini made a strong comeback to silence the Indian fans.

The Indian stalwart created two opportunities to score in the second period but could not convert while Batirov did not miss his chances. The Bahrain wrestler led 3-2 with a take down and then pushed the Indian out for a win.

Coast Guard undertakes 'Operation Water Baby' in Kerala

MUMBAI, AUG 19 (PTI): From flood-ravaged Kerala comes a story of grit of the Coast Guard and armed forces personnel who saved a newly-born baby in a night-long rescue operation near the Idukki dam two days ago.

The rescue operation began after a call from the Mumbai Coast Guard about rising water level in the Idukki dam area, the Army officer, who led the team, said.

"We were in the weekly commanders' conference at Kochi when a call came from the Coast Guard office in Mumbai to send the best team near the dam where water was flowing above the danger level," Lt Col Shashikant Waghmode said.

Lt Col Waghmode, an assault engineer officer, currently on deputation to the Coast Guard, volunteered to lead the team and within 30 minutes, the team members were selected.

Many Coast Guard personnel were called from various ships, he told PTI when asked about the operation.

They were equipped with boats, outboard motor, ropes, digging tools, survival ration and medical kits, he said.

"After the briefing by District



Commander DHQ-4 DIG Sanathan Jena, the team, comprising 16 Coast Guard divers, started the journey at night," he said.

The terrain was a challenge as Idukki is located in a hilly area, which had a number of landslides. There were waterfalls and poor visibility due to fog. The 'nullahs'

(drains) and rivers were overflowing, he said.

The team had to cross the Chapat bridge as the dam gates were going to be opened at 4.30 am.

"I had taken along drivers experienced in the hilly terrain and after nine hours we managed to cross the bridge at 4 am, half-

an-hour before the dam gates opened," said Lt Col Waghmode, an alumnus of the Sainik School at Satara in Maharashtra.

In Idukki, they found that all the villages were evacuated and hotels, shops, ATMs and petrol pumps were shut.

There was no place to take

shelter, he said.

For the next four days, the Coast Guard team rescued many people in Manjumala and nearby villages and cleared debris and boulders.

"I was leading a peculiar team comprising personnel from the Coast Guard, the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. I was given the best sea divers of the Coast Guard, Navy nursing assistants, vehicle drivers of the Army and the Air Force," he said.

"On August 16 night, just as we reached an abandoned government hospital for rest after four days of non-stop work, the local police officer, villagers and NDRF officials came to us, asking to save the life of a woman who had just given birth," he said.

The locals told the rescue team that the woman and her five family members were stuck in a flooded house without food and water for four days, he said.

The team then launched a night-long rescue mission, calling it "Operation Water Baby", Lt Col Waghmode said.

The woman's house was two km from the point where the rescue boat was unloaded, he said.

"The best six members of the

team were selected and the operation began at 10.30 pm in pitch dark and against the water current," the officer said.

The outboard motor was not effective as there were lot of stones, debris and mud mounds below but the team pushed the boat for about 2 km against the water current, which was around 15 knots, he said.

The team reached the house, guided by local policemen who accompanied them in the boat, at 1.30 am.

"The family was in a bad state. They were not aware that someone was coming to their rescue. Due to medical issues of the newborn baby and the mother, we decided to wait till sunrise and continued the operation early morning with the help of a local doctor," he said.

"On our way back, wherever there was less water, we lifted the boat with family members inside it. After we reached a safe spot, the woman told us that she will make her baby boy join the armed forces," the officer said.

After this rescue operation, the team was given a choice to return and rest, but the personnel chose to proceed to Chengannur and join another rescue operation, he said.

Australia ramps up aid to farmers as drought bites

SYDNEY, AUG 19 (AFP): Financial aid for drought-stricken Australian farmers will be increased to Aus 1.8 billion (US 1.3 billion) as they endure the driest conditions in half a century, the prime minister said today.

Farmers in eastern states are struggling with extreme aridity that has turned green pastures into dust, with the economies of local towns also suffering.

"I want to say to our farmers, we have your back. There is no set-and-forget," Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull



told reporters in the New South Wales town of Forbes.

Graziers in Forbes,

some 390 kilometres (240 miles) west of Sydney, are among those battling the lack of rain.

"We are constantly working to ensure that you get every support you can, and of course let's all pray for rain," Turnbull added.

While droughts are not uncommon in Australia, the length and severity of the dry conditions have depleted farmers' food stocks.

With grass unable to grow, some graziers have had to hand-feed their cattle and sheep, sell off stock to keep going, or even shoot their animals

as they do not want them to suffer or cannot afford to feed them.

Canberra has already offered Aus 576 million in assistance in recent weeks, with Sunday's announcement taking the total to Aus 1.8 billion.

The extra funds will include doubling the number of low-interest concessional loans for farmers, who will not have to make any principal repayments for the first five years.

Councils in the drought-affected states of NSW, Queensland and parts of Victoria will be given money to boost lo-

cal facilities, with further funding set aside for water infrastructure.

Recently retired senior military officer Major General Stephen Day was appointed national drought coordinator to help farmers and other organisations determine where support is most needed.

There has been an outpouring of support from other parts of the vast continent.

On Friday, a convoy of 23 trucks carrying 2,300 bales of hay for over 200 farmers arrived in NSW from Western Australia state more than 3,500 kilometres away.

Imran Khan announces 21-member Cabinet

ISLAMABAD, AUG 19 (PTI): Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has unveiled his 21-member Cabinet, most of whom previously held key posts in the regime of former dictator General (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf.

Out of the 21 names announced, 16 will be ministers while five others will be advisers to Khan, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) spokesman Fawad Chaudhry said yesterday, hours after the cricketer-turned-politician was sworn-in as the country's 22nd Prime Minister.

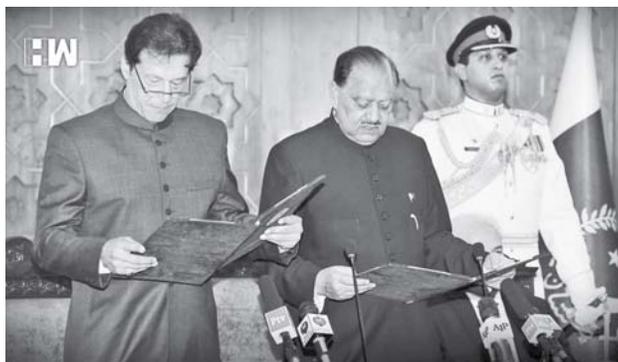
According to the list shared by Chaudhry on his Twitter account, veteran politician Shah Mahmood Qureshi will be the foreign minister.

Qureshi, the vice president of the party, was the foreign minister from 2008 to 2011 under the Pakistan Peoples Party government when the 2008 Mumbai terror attack took place.

He was in New Delhi when 10 Pakistan-based LeT terrorists attacked India's financial capital.

Pervaiz Khattak has been appointed the defence minister while Asad Umer will be the finance minister. Khattak served as the chief minister of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province from 2013-18.

Asad Umer is the son of former Lt



Gen Mohammad Umer who was part of the Pakistan Army during 1971 war with India.

The newly-announced Cabinet is expected to take oath tomorrow at the President's House.

At least 12 members of Khan's Cabinet served under General (ret'd) Musharraf, The News reported.

The new Cabinet includes a former spokesperson of Musharraf, his attorney and several members of his cabinet and core team, the paper said.

The Cabinet members who served under Musharraf in various capacities include Farogh Naseem, Tariq Bashir

Cheema, Ghulam Sarwar Khan, Zubaida Jalal, Fawad Chaudhry, Sheikh Rashid Ahmad, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Shafiqat Mehmood, Makhdoom Khuro Bakhtiar, Abdul Razak Dawood, Dr Ishrat Hussain and Amin Aslam, the paper said.

Five of the new Cabinet members, including Khattak and Qureshi, had served as ministers in past Pakistan Peoples Party governments, it added.

Sheikh Rashid from Rawalpindi has been appointed as the railway minister. He previously held the same portfolio under the Musharraf regime.

Three women including Shireen

Mazari, Zubaida Jalal and Fehmida Mri-za are also part of Khan's Cabinet.

The five advisors who have status of ministers include known faces like former banker Ishrat Hussain, businessman Abdul Razzak Dawood and Babar Awan.

According to the Pakistan's Constitution, the size of the federal cabinet should be not more than 11 per cent of the total strength of the National Assembly and Senate.

Khan, the chairman of PTI, was administered the oath of office by President Mamnoon Hussain at a simple ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr (the President House) in Islamabad yesterday.

His government is the third consecutive democratic government in Pakistan since 2008 when Gen Musharraf announced elections after serving as president from 2001 to 2008 following a bloodless coup in 1999.

The PPP formed the government in 2008, followed by the PML-N led by jailed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in 2013.

Pakistan's powerful military has ruled the country through various coups for nearly half of the country's history since independence in 1947.



Strong 6.3 earthquake rocks Indonesia's Lombok island

LOMBOK, AUG 19 (AFP): A strong 6.3-magnitude earthquake rocked the Indonesian island of Lombok today, sending people fleeing into the streets just two weeks after a quake which killed more than 460 people.

The quake was centred west-southwest of Belanting town in East Lombok, the US Geological Survey said, at a relatively shallow depth of seven kilometres.

There were no immediate reports of deaths or injuries from the latest tremor.

"The earthquake caused people to panic and flee their houses," national disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho told Metro TV. "We are still checking."

He added that landslides were reported in a national park where hundreds of hikers had been trapped on a volcano after a quake in late July.

Residents said the earthquake was felt strongly in East Lombok.

"I was driving to deliver aid to evacuees when suddenly the electricity pole was swaying. I realised it was an earthquake."

"People started to scream and cry. They all ran to the street," East Lombok resident Agus Salim told AFP.

The tremor was also felt in the island's capital Mataram and on the neighbouring resort island of Bali.

It comes two weeks after a shallow 6.9-magnitude quake on August

5 levelled tens of thousands of homes, mosques and businesses across Lombok.

More than 460 people died and tens of thousands were injured.

The hardest hit region was in the north of the island.

A week before that quake another tremor surged through the island and killed 17.

The August 5 quake left more than 350,000 displaced with many sleeping under tents or tarpaulins near their ruined homes or in evacuation shelters, while makeshift medical facilities were set up to treat the injured.

Badly damaged roads, particularly in the mountainous north of the island, have created a headache for relief agencies trying to distribute aid.

The economic toll of the quake -- including its impact to buildings, infrastructure and productivity -- has been estimated to be at least 5 trillion rupiah (348 million).

Indonesia, an archipelago of thousands of islands, sits on the so-called Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide and many of the world's volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur.

In 2004, a tsunami triggered by a magnitude 9.3 undersea earthquake off the coast of Sumatra, in western Indonesia, killed 220,000 people in countries around the Indian Ocean, including 168,000 in Indonesia.



Iran announces new fighter jet

TEHRAN, AUG 19 (AFP): Iran will unveil this week a new jet fighter and upgrade its missile defences to meet threats from Israel and the US, Tasnim news agency said today quoting the defence minister.

"Our first priority is our missile capability and we must enhance it... given the enemy's efforts in missile defence," said Amir Hatami in an interview on television yesterday, according to Tasnim.

He added that a new fighter jet "will fly on National Defence Industry Day", which falls on Wednesday.

Hatami said the defence programme was motivated by memories of the missile attacks Iran suffered during its eight-year war with Iraq in the 1980s, and by repeated threats from Israel and the United States that "all options are on the table" in dealing with the Islamic republic.

"We have learned in the (Iran-Iraq) war that we cannot rely on anyone but ourselves. We saw that wherever we are not capable, no one will have mercy on us," he said.

"Our resources are limited and we are com-

mitted to establishing security at a minimum cost.

"We upgrade our missiles according to our enemies' threats and actions, as a deterrent and to give a crushing response to the enemy," he added.

Hatami added that regional rival Saudi Arabia "has the largest military budget in the world after America and China... while our defence budget is limited".

"What would any nation with such a situation and past do in our place?" he said.

The defence minister dismissed the idea of an "Arab NATO" -- an old concept that has recently resurfaced as Washington tries to push regional countries to accept a greater share of their defence.

"Arab NATO is part of the game of creating discord by the enemy and it's not worth paying attention to," said Hatami.

"It is unlikely that America and the Zionist regime (Israel) allow Muslim countries to come together. They know well that the aim of Muslim nations is to destroy the Zionist regime and defend Palestine," he added.

Eight essays put the spotlight on the journey coursed by hydel projects in Sikkim and the region, the cost exacted by this "development" and some of the stories it birthed, not all of which have been shared before.

Also finding place in this collection is the arrival of Climate Change and its impact on Sikkim and how the State could negotiate with this new disruption.

THE BIRDS HAVE LOST THEIR WAY

EDITED BY
TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

LOKTA BOOKS
Lombok - Sikkim
loktabooks@gmail.com
+91 981 080 0200; +91 980 200 0763

ARIANA GRANDE PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE 22 VICTIMS OF THE MANCHESTER BOMBINGS!

Her fourth studio album - Sweetener - was released on 17 Aug and is already receiving stellar reviews. And, between the 15-song catalog, Ariana Grande made sure to include a touching tribute to the victims who were killed during a terrorist attack after her concert in Manchester, England in 2017.

Grande titled the final track of the new collection Get Well Soon, a five-minute, 22-second song focused on healing and dedicated to the 22 victims of the bombings at Manchester Arena following her May 22 show.

"This is for everybody," she sang on the track. "Babe, you gotta take care of you body, yuh yuh. Ain't no time to deny it, that is why we talking about it. So deal with it, don't try to get by it."

While the music stops long before the song is over, Grande included 40 seconds of silence at the end of the track to further honor her fans.

The No Tears Left to Cry powerhouse told Vogue UK in July that she suffered from anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder following the tragic event which also in-



Photo: Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

jured nearly 500 people. "But, yeah, it's a real thing. It's hard to talk about because so many people have suffered such severe, tremendous loss," she said.

the biggest thing. I feel like I shouldn't even be talking about my own experience — like I shouldn't even say anything."

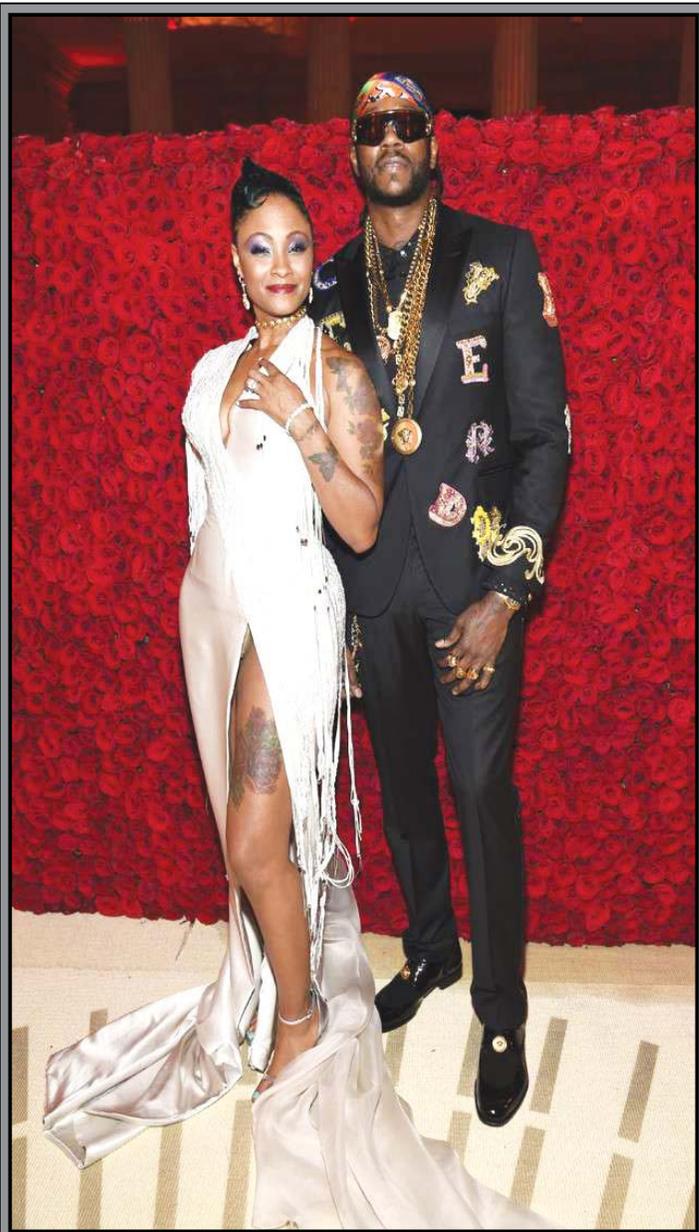
Ariana later returned to the UK to raise funds for the victims during the One Love Manchester benefit concert.

"Thinking of you all today and every day," she wrote in May on the anniversary of the attack.

In addition to her success on the charts, Ariana is certainly feeling the love at home after boyfriend Pete Davidson proposed with a \$93,000 pear-shaped diamond in June, just weeks after the couple went public with their relationship.

And while fans were shocked by the union and even more surprised at the speedy trajectory of their commitment, Pete admitted he knew years ago that Ariana was the one for him after the couple met while she hosted an episode of Saturday Night Live in 2016.

The power couple are also setting up house after recently purchasing a \$16-million apartment in New York's Chelsea neighborhood.



2 CHAINZ MARRIES KESHA WARD: 2 Chainz is finally a married man! The rapper, whose real name is Tauheed Epps, and his longtime girlfriend, Kesha Ward, said "I do" in front of family and friends on Saturday, his rep confirmed. The two tied the knot at the Villa Casa Casuarina in Miami, which was once the home to the late designer Gianni Versace.

Bachchan starts shooting for 'KBC' 10th season, remembers game show's early days

MUMBAI, AUG 19 (PTI): Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has started shooting for the 10th season of his hit game show "Kaun Banega Crorepati".

In a new blog post, the 75-year-old actor reminisced about the early days of his hit show that started its journey back in 2000.

"The first day of shoot for KBC... and the apprehensions and nervous energy eating up the intestines... It's been 18 years of KBC in India and the 10th season... A majority of which have been associated with me... Seems strange but there it is..." Bachchan wrote.

"The location the crew the stage the meetings the



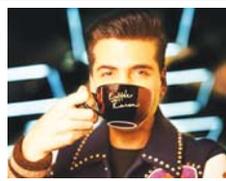
references and the briefings .. all form such a vast variety of creative input that it is difficult to ignore even the smallest of suggestions..." he added.

The veteran actor said that though shooting for the show has been a "daunting" and "most arduous" task, he still believes that the continued support from the audiences "is enough reason to be there even after 18 years of its existence".

"To know and meet the

people of my land, from distant destinations... To hear their stories of struggle and condition is heart breaking at times... Yet when you witness their achievements and the liberation of all their woes, it is the most satisfying moment... A life changes and in some small way when KBC is able to achieve that then the association with the game show is all the more worthy," Bachchan said.

"There is a sense of pride in what we conduct for the benefit of others but there is the greatest pride in the achieving of the contestant... And the happiness that the few hours at the hot seat brings for them," he added.



New season of 'Koffee With Karan' to premiere on Oct 21

MUMBAI, AUG 19 (PTI): Karan Johar will be back with the sixth season of his celebrity chat show, "Koffee With Karan" from October 21.

The 46-year-old filmmaker, who hosts the Star World show, took to Twitter to make the announcement.

"And here it is! #Koffee-WithKaran, premieres 21 Oct, Sundays 9 PM. @Star-WorldIndia," Johar wrote.

The "Ae Dil Hai Mushkil" director also revealed on social media that the shoot of the show is underway.

Johar had earlier teased that the show will return with a bang.

"Time to wake up and smell the... COMING SOON," he tweeted, along with his photograph from the sets of the show.

The last installment of the show, which premiered on November 6, 2016, was in news after Kangana Ranaut called Johar the "flag-bearer of nepotism" in one of the episodes, kick-starting the debate about Bollywood's favouritism towards industry kids.

Nobody is irreplaceable in Bollywood: Rajkummar Rao

MUMBAI, AUG 19 (PTI): Every time Rajkummar Rao decides he will do only two films a year, but the "greedy" actor says he cannot let go of a good script as everyone is replaceable in the industry.

Last year, Rajkummar had as many as six releases with films such as "Trapped", "Bareilly Ki Barfi" and "Newton".

The actor began 2018 with "Omerta", followed by "Fanny Khan" and is geared up for his third release, "Stree", a horror comedy directed by Amar Kaushik.

Rajkummar says he finds it impossible to refuse a good film and hence ends up doing it.

"Whenever I think I'm going to do two films a year, I get another wonderful story, like 'Stree', and I'm like wow! Everybody is replaceable, nobody is irreplaceable here. If I'm going to say no to it because I want to do two films a year and sit at home, someone else will," he says.

"I am a greedy actor, I want all the scripts to come to me. So I do all the good films which come my way, even if it means I'll rest a little less. Every time I think I'm going to take it slow, a good script comes along," he adds.

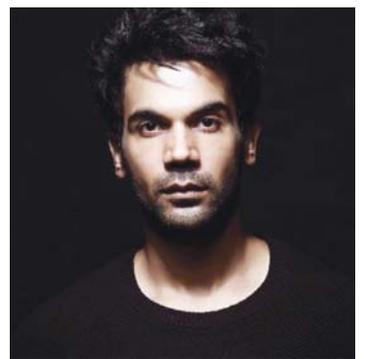
It is not that the 33-year-old actor has not turned down a project, but whenever he has been honest about it.

"I've said no to some important people and they were kind and sweet to understand where I was coming from. Somehow I couldn't see myself in those scripts. It's important to say 'no' and say it rightly. My mantra is to be honest about it. They've been here for so long, you can't try to be smart with them," he says.

For the actor, who made his debut in 2010 with Dibakar Banerjee's "Love Sex Aur Dhokha", almost everything fell into place last year where he got a chance to perform in films of genres ranging from comedy, romance, drama to thriller.

Rajkummar says, over the years, he has learnt that he cannot land films by "networking" or attending parties.

"There's no formula to success. No for-



mula that you go to filmy parties and you might get work, or do some networking. All that doesn't matter anymore, it's your work which speaks. I still believe that. My work has to speak.

"I can't do networking, I can't go to parties, I can't just be in touch with someone because I might get work. I can't be sending good morning messages to people. I'd rather work on my craft because I'm still not sure of my craft. I still get nervous before I start a new film. It happens every time."

Working on the craft, Rajkummar explains, involves him completely nose-diving into the character, which includes creating back stories and learning a new language.

For "Stree", also featuring Shraddha Kapoor, the actor learnt stitching and using manual sewing machines.

"I picked up an accent (from Madhya Pradesh) and tried to keep it authentic, which is tough. It's easy to make it into a caricature. So, if possible I visit the place and spend some time with the locals to get it right. It's exciting to explore new characters every time," he adds.

Produced by Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK and Dinesh Vijan, "Stree" releases on August 31.

ARIES: You're feeling altruistic today, Aries. You're eager to do what you can for others. You can now put into action all those lofty visions of volunteering for a worthy cause. It's time to do some real work. You'll be astonished at how great it feels to make a direct contribution. Spending time chopping vegetables in a soup kitchen is much more satisfying than mailing a check.

TAURUS: Children are highlighted today, Taurus, either yours or someone else's. You could be in one of the healing professions. If you're a nurse or doctor, you may have the opportunity to make a big difference in the life of one of your patients. If you're a parent, see if you can spend extra time with your children. You will all benefit from some quality time together.

GEMINI: You have a generous spirit, Gemini. And today you're feeling particularly altruistic. Finally, you have a chance to help your fellow man in a very real, direct way. Forget about big goals and lofty visions. Don't try to set out to eradicate world hunger. You can go down to a local shelter and help cook a meal for a few dozen people. The personal contact will do you good.

CANCER: This may be an intense day, Cancer, especially if you follow your instincts and say what needs to be said to loved ones. There may be some unresolved issues at home. Do you and your siblings need to address them? If so, today is the day. You can expect some emotional reactions. This will be draining at first but ultimately therapeutic.

LEO: This is just the kind of day you

like, Leo - intense and supercharged, just like you! It seems there's a deadline coming up, or a time-sensitive project. You'll have a lot to do and not a lot of time in which to do it. This is when you're at your most productive. Just remember to drink plenty of water and eat. Even superheroes need fuel in order to accomplish their heroics.

VIRGO: You're an organized, disciplined person, Virgo. No one who knows you would disagree. But there are times when you need to loosen up a bit, and this is just such a time. Forget about work, chores, and all your daily obligations. You've been working too hard lately. Live a little. Take a holiday. Don't think of this as being irresponsible. Think of it as being human!

LIBRA: Libra, today you may have

to make some important decisions. You're demanding of your friends and loved ones. Have you ever thought about why? It's possible that you demand more of them than you do of yourself, and that doesn't seem fair, does it? Today insight and inspiration will show you how you can rectify this. Lower your standards for others or raise your standards for yourself. Level the playing field.

SCORPIO: You may be thinking about everything you need to do to improve your work situation. You've made your demands clear, but no one seems to be paying attention. Maybe you've approached the wrong people. This could be just the excuse you've always needed to become your own boss. You have creativity and sound business ideas, Scorpio.

SAGITTARIUS: You're sensitive, Sagittarius, and impressionable. You may not appreciate the intense atmosphere building, but it may be just what you need to get motivated. Yes, you're about to face a lot of pressure, but you can handle it. No more planning, no more delays, no more staring off into space. Buckle down and get your work done. You can fantasize during your free time.

CAPRICORN: It's one thing to stick to your guns, another altogether to do so without considering the views of others. People may resent this stubbornness, Capricorn. Today you're encouraged to take a good look at yourself. Practice listening rather than speaking and you may be amazed at what you learn. Other people have opinions, too. Some of them are valid. Imagine that!

AQUARIUS: Today you may be confronted with one of the harsher aspects of your personality, Aquarius. It can be a bit of a shock when such a thing happens. It may be that your temper flares or you wrestle with feelings of jealousy. You're normally on top of your emotions, and losing control in any way is upsetting. Don't fret. You're human like everyone else. Learn what you can from the experience and move on.

PISCES: Today you won't feel quite like your usual upbeat self, Pisces. There's nothing to be concerned about. It's just that you have a lot to do and can't help but be focused on it. You certainly are conscientious! See if you can't get out for some fun after you've finished your tasks. You've earned a break.