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SummitTIMES

Vol 04 | Issue 05 | Gangtok | Sunday | 06 January 2019

O N T O P O F T H E N E W S

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

All colleges and institutions to switch affiliation to SSU

NITESH R PRADHAN
Gangtok, 05 Jan:

Sikkim State University (SSU), which has now been granted UGC recognition, will soon have all state government colleges re-affiliate to the state university. Principal Secretary, GP Upadhyaya has informed the media that all colleges and institutions under the state government which is now affiliated to the Centre's Sikkim University shall switch affiliation to Sikkim State University.

Sikkim State University was formed by the state government last year with the passing of an Act by the State Assembly.

Principal Secretary, HRDD has stated that this was necessary in order to have control over the syllabus, examination schedule and other aspects of a proper functioning university of the state. Further he added that this has paved a way forward for the State's university to get direct funding from

UGC in future.

Twelve colleges, one engineering college and one B. Ed College were under Centre's Sikkim University. Mr Upadhyaya informed that Centre's Sikkim University had also in the past requested that under graduate courses should be looked after by the state as the university was more research oriented with a focus on post graduation courses.

Adding further, he stated that the new state university will also delve

into research very seriously with state specific requirements like organic farming and eco friendly environment. Organic agriculture, Himalayan ecosystem of Sikkim and its varied flora and fauna will also be taken up for future research.

"We can produce human resource relevant to our needs," he said. He also stated that 50 to 60 acres of land is required for the new university for which a request has been made to the government.

As of now the state

university is running from Nar Bahadur Bhandari Degree College, Tadong. Regarding courses in the new university, Mr Upadhyaya stated that "8 to 9" Master's degree courses have been planned in the initial phase in Humanities and Science streams. As soon as the state university started last year, Master's in Sanskrit and Nepali languages were started. Gopal Kumar Niraula has already been appointed as the Vice Chancellor of SSU.

Health Minister visits Sichey Hospital



GANGTOK, 05 JAN (IPR): Minister for Health, AK Ghatani today inspected the newly constructed 1000 Bedded Multi Speciality Hospital at Sichey and took stock of the final preparations before the inauguration scheduled on 15 Jan.

Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling would be inaugurating the new hospital.

The Minister was accompanied by Commissioner cum Secretary, Health Department, Vishal Chauhan, Principal Directors, STNM hospital Medical Superintendent, Dr KB Gurung, concerned heads of various depart-

ments under health department, officials and engineers from Buildings and Housing department and other officials.

The inspection began from the trauma unit on the second floor which was followed by department of medicine, ENT, nephrology, chest and respiratory, dermatology, gastroenterology, dental, cardiology, pathology, microbiology, bio-chemistry, histopathology, blood bank, ophthalmology wards, central sterile services department, deluxe cabin, special cabin, oxygen supply centre where required work

and update on present scenario was noted.

The Minister instructed the concerned heads and engineers to expedite the on-going work before the inauguration.

He also visited the construction sites of Cancer and TB treatment buildings, AYUSH building and link road of outer gate of the hospital. The Minister discussed with the Secretary, concerned HoDs, project director of the multi-speciality hospital, S Bhattacharya on technical aspects and further instructed the complete finishing part of requirements at the earliest.

Sikkim to host North-East Youth Festival this month

SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 05 JAN:

Sikkim Government is organising the first North-East Youth Festival in the State from 21 to 23 January at Dantam in West Sikkim. State Youth Development Board, Sikkim is organising the Festival.

It may be mentioned here that all North East Youth Festivals held so far in the region were organised by the Central government and this is the first time that a State government is organising the event.

Maneybong-Dentam MLA and Minister, NK Subba informed that the festival will be inaugu-

rated by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling on 21 Jan. He mentioned that the festival will have the participation of youth from all eight north-eastern states.

The festival will showcase cultural and traditional artefacts, cuisines and attires of all north eastern states. The festival will also have North-East level competitions in Muay Thai, Kickboxing, Taekwondo, Karate and half marathon.

The Minister informed that during the inauguration the CM will address around 15,000 youths at Dantam Stadium.

Bhaichung to lead HSP youth wing's dharna at Jantar Mantar



REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 05 JAN:

Youth wing of Hamro Sikkim Party [HSP] will be leaving for New Delhi on Sunday to conduct a dharna at Jantar Mantar on 07 Jan. In this regard, a function was held at the party office at Deorali today which was chaired by senior vice president, RB Subba along with senior functionaries of HSP.

The dharna is being held to raise the issue of corruption in the state along with placing demands for Limboo Tamang Assembly seat reservation, restoration of lost Nepali seats, tribal status for 11 left-out communities, etc, before the Centre. The team is being led by vice presi-

dent, Bhaichung Bhutia.

In days to come we also plan to stage hunger strike if the demands are not met, said Mr Bhutia. The team also plans to visit the Prime Minister and Home Minister and submit a written memorandum on all the issues pertaining to Sikkim, he added.

A team of 15-20 youths from across the State will participate in the dharna.

Mr Subba said that prior to scheduling of the dharna in Delhi, the party had met the Governor of the State and submitted memorandum on behalf of the party.

"In the memorandum submitted we had highlighted the corrupt practices prevailing in the state

informing the Governor on the issues related to political and social rights of the Sikkimese, wherein no solution so far has been met," he said.

Even after 25 years of SDF rule in the state, long pending issues like political rights and other social issues pertaining to the state have not been solved, he added.

He also said that HSP has been talking about these issues since the inception of the party but now the party also plans to attract the attention of the central government.

Vice president HSP, Tara Shrestha mentioned that the dharna has been timed according to the Parliament Session which is being held till 09 Jan.

Banking services may be hit as bank unions call for strike on Jan 8-9

NEW DELHI, JAN 5 (PTI): Banking services are likely to be affected on January 8-9 as a section of PSU bank employees would go on a two-day strike in support of the nation-wide strike call given by 10 central trade unions against the government's alleged anti-worker policy.

The All India Bank Employees Association (AIBEA) and Bank Employees Federation of India has informed the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) of the two-day nationwide strike on January 8-9, 2019, IDBI Bank said in a filing to the BSE.

In a stock exchange filing, Allahabad Bank said the issues and demands are of industry level and strike call is also given at industry level.

"Therefore, if the strike takes place, the functioning of branches of the bank may be affected. The bank is taking all the necessary steps in terms of the existing guidelines for smooth functioning of bank's branches/offices on the day of strike(s), in the event the strike materialises," it said.

Public-sector Bank of

Baroda said "in the event of AIBEA and BEFI proceeding on strike on January 8-9, 2019, the functioning of bank's branches/offices in some of the zones may be affected".

Private sector Karur Vysya Bank said if the strike call materialises, "the workmen of our bank may take part in the proposed strike on the said date, in which occasion the normal working of the branches/offices of the Bank may get affected during the day".

Ten central trade unions -- INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC, AICTUC, UTUC, TUCC, LPF and SEWA -- have also called for a nationwide general strike on January 8-9 against what they call "anti-people" policies of the Centre and have placed a charter of 12 demands before the central government.

Earlier on December 26, 2018, nine bank unions or close to 1 million employees of various banks, including private lenders, had observed a one-day strike to protest against the proposed amalgamation of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with Bank of Baroda.

Mallya becomes first tycoon to be declared Fugitive Economic Offender

MUMBAI, JAN 5 (PTI): Weeks after a UK court ordered his extradition, former liquor baron Vijay Mallya, accused of defaulting on loans of over Rs 9,000 crore, received another blow as a Mumbai court declared him a "Fugitive Economic Offender" (FEO).

Mallya on Saturday became the first businessman to be declared an FEO under the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act which came into existence in August 2018. The Enforcement Directorate had moved the special court for FEOA for this purpose. The agency had requested the court that Mallya, currently in the United Kingdom, be declared a fugitive and his properties be confiscated and brought under the control of the Union government as provided under the act.

"The application of the ED is partly allowed. Vijay Mallya is declared as Fugitive Eco-



nomic Offender under section 12 (i) of the FEO Act," said judge M S Azmi in the order.

Hearing on the second part of ED's plea confiscation of properties will start from February 5. Incidentally, the same court is also hearing ED's plea to declare diamond merchants Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi FEOs in the Punjab National Bank fraud case. Mallya's law-

yers requested the court to stay the order for four weeks so that they could obtain its full copy and move the high court. The judge declined, saying a court under the FEO Act can not stay its own order.

The ED had argued that it made all possible efforts to bring Mallya back to India, but failed. The extradition process in the UK court was a proof enough that

he was not willing to return, ED counsel D N Singh had contended.

Even after the London court upheld Indian authorities' plea for his extradition, Mallya decided to appeal against the order before the higher court there and refused to return, so he should be declared an FEO, Singh had argued. Mallya's lawyers contended that as he had surrendered before a magis-

trate's court in London (during the hearing on his extradition case) and obtained bail, he could not be called a fugitive. They had also questioned ED's claim that he left India under suspicious circumstances, arguing that he had left to attend a meeting of World Motor Sports as the director of an F1 team (Force India).

Mallya left India on March 2, 2016. A court in London on December 10, 2018 ordered his extradition.

Facing cases registered by the ED as well as the Central Bureau of Investigation, he is wanted for alleged fraud and money laundering amounting to an estimated Rs 9,000 crore.

Under the FEO Act, a person can be declared a Fugitive Economic Offender if a warrant has been issued against him for an offence involving an amount of Rs 100 crore or more and he has left the country and refuses to return.

Gangtok on Sunday, 06 Jan

Temp: 14°C/06°C
Forecast: Sunny to partly cloudy with a little rain in the evening, then a shower in spots

Sunrise: 07:01 AM
Sunset: 03:49 PM

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BJP accuses CM of having failed in duties of alliance partner

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 05 JAN:

Bharatiya Janata Party's Sikkim unit has accused Chief Minister Pawan Chamling of being an opportunist and of having failed to deliver on the duties of an alliance partner. This was in regard to recent comments ascribed to the Chief Minister in which he is alleged to have stated that the NDA Government has remained unmoved to Sikkim's pressing concerns and issues. Sikkim BJP has countered that it was condemnable that after having himself failed to

take any of the State's issues to their logical end the CM was now making baseless allegations against the Prime Minister.

A BJP press release mentions that Limboo and Tamang of Sikkim got tribal status during the tenure of Atal Behari Vajpayee as Prime in 2003 and that a UPA government came to office almost immediately.

The release adds that SDF government remained in alliance with UPA from 2004 to 2014 and in these 10 years, the SDF government failed to work in the interest of Sikkim.

IndiGo plane returns after mid-air engine failure, govt to review incident

MUMBAI, JAN 5 (PTI): An IndiGo Airbus A320neo plane flying to Kolkata from Chennai suffered a mid-air engine failure with a "loud bang" and was forced to return mid-way Thursday, prompting the civil aviation ministry to order a review.

The January 3 incident, which came to light on Saturday, is the latest in a series of cases involving a Pratt & Whitney engine. The plane returned mid-way to Chennai and has been grounded there since then due to damaged engine blades, sources said. An IndiGo spokesperson said in a statement that its crew took note of a "technical caution" and decided to return the flight to Chennai, even as sources said the engine of the aircraft stalled mid-air with a "loud bang".

When contacted, Civil Aviation Secretary R N Choubey told PTI, "Ministry has taken serious note (of the incident) and we will review it on Tuesday."

He was asked whether the ministry will direct the aircraft maker Airbus and US-based engine manufacturer Pratt & Whitney to stop deliveries unless all issues are fixed.

"One of the P&W engines of IndiGo neo aircraft operating on Chennai-Kolkata route on January 3 stalled mid-air followed by a loud bang and sparks from it and smoke, leading to heavy vibration," a source said.

The incident forced the A320neo aircraft to return

to Chennai under emergency conditions, he added. The number of people on board the flight could not be ascertained.

"This was for the first time that an A320neo faced multiple problems -- smoke, heavy vibration, loud bang and engine stalled -- in one single flight," the source added.

IndiGo, which is facing such issues in the A320neo planes powered by P&W engines since their induction in the fleet in 2016 and has received compensation from both Airbus and the engine maker for each grounding, said the aircraft returned to Chennai due to "technical caution" noted by the crew.

"An IndiGo flight 6E 923 (Neo) operating Chennai-Kolkata route on January 3 returned to Chennai after take-off due to a technical caution noted by the crew."

"The crew followed the normal operating procedures and asked for a priority landing. There was no engine shutdown and no emergency landing was declared as per the report," IndiGo said in the statement.

Meanwhile, the government's apex aircraft investigation body AAIB has rushed a team to Chennai to assess the incident and take a call on the probe.

"As per settled practice, we have sent a team. We are awaiting details," a senior official of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) told PTI.

KIIT - An Emerging Hub for Research & Innovation



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 JAN:

Started in 1992 by eminent educational entrepreneur and social activist, Dr Achyuta Samanta as a modest Industrial Training Institute with only 12 students, KIIT has now emerged as one of the most preferred destinations of professional education in the country. Today KIIT Deemed to be Uni-

versity's cosmopolitan campus is proud to have more than 27,000 students from all corners of India and around 50 countries, a press release informs.

KIIT is a multi-disciplinary university with 19 constituent Schools offering more than 100 academic programmes. Recognising the University's high standards, the Govt. of India in the

Ministry of Human Resource Development has conferred 'A' Category status to it. It has been reaccredited by NAAC with grade 'A', placing it among the top ranking universities of the country. High national standing of the University is bolstered by the NBA accreditation under Washington Accord to its five B.Tech programmes.

Apart from these so-

phisticated central research facilities, specialized laboratories have been established – some in collaboration with the industry and corporate bodies – in various schools. School-level research laboratories such as NI Innovation Centre, SKF-KIIT Advanced Reliability Centre, Green Engine Technology Centre, Thin Film Photovoltaic Lab, High Frequency

Simulation & Fabrication lab, etc., greatly augment research activity at KIIT.

They provide ideal platforms for conducting collaborative research and development work with several partnering agencies and institutions around the world.

KIIT has established 18 Centers of Excellence with industry to promote collaborative research, the release adds

Mohun Bagan faces spirited Real Kashmir in I-League

KOLKATA, JAN 5 (PTI):

Former champions Mohun Bagan will be bolstered by the return of a fit-again Sony Norde when they face a spirited Real Kashmir FC in their I-League fixture here Sunday.

Having missed a fourth consecutive match for his muscle injury, the I-League winning star Haitian forward was seen training in full flow and was named in the 18-member squad.

Overcoming their derby loss, Mohun Bagan won back-to-back matches against Minerva and Shillong Lajong FC

but only to falter against Neroca FC in their previous encounter to slip to sixth position on the table.

"Sony is fit now and will be in the 18-man squad. Our target is to get three points at any cost," coach Shankarlal Chakraborty told reporters on the eve of the match.

With the team having a long injury list that has the likes of Pintu Mahata, Sukhdev Singh and the latest being Sourav Das, the return of Norde will be a big relief for the team who have won only one from six matches at home.

With Norde back, the

Mohun Bagan coach may look to bench last season's leading scorer Aser Dipanda, while giving a central role to Henry Kisseka.

In the first leg, Real Kashmir lost to Mohun Bagan by a solitary goal and since then the debutants are on an unbeaten run from six matches.

"The first leg match was different. It was a different ground, different conditions. Currently they are ahead of us so we have to focus on the game," the Mohun Bagan coach said.

"I have told everyone to forget about what we did in the first phase. We

have to focus on the second leg. Currently we are concentrating on Real Kashmir game.

"Real Kashmir are a good side, they are in good form at the moment and are very consistent. They have very good foreign players. The Indian players are also supporting them. We have to be very cautious against them. They did well against EB too."

Away from home for three matches, Real Kashmir have scored five points which include a win over leaders Chennai City to remain in title contention.

Water pumping starts in main shaft of Meghalaya's coal mine

SHILLONG, JAN 5 (PTI):

The operations to rescue 15 miners trapped in a flooded coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district for the past 24 days got a shot in the arm Saturday when two high powered pumps started dewatering the main shaft.

The pumps were operational 10 days after the Kirloskar Brothers Ltd offered to help and assist the state government in the rescue operations, officials said.

But, since the pumps functioned only for one hour, the Navy divers did not go down to gauge the water level inside the shaft so that they could resume the search for the diggers.

At about 3:30 pm today, a team from Kirloskar Brothers Ltd was able to start their pumps in the main shaft (where the miners are trapped)," operation spokesperson R Susngi said.

He, however, said that since the pumps were operational for only one hour, the Navy divers did not go down to deter-

mine the water level inside the main shaft.

The rescuers stop work at 5 pm daily with descend of the night darkness.

The pump has to run at least 10 to 12 hours of continuous pumping before the water level will be determined, Susngi said.

He said that on Sunday, the unmanned remotely operated vehicle will be sent down to check at the bottom of the shaft again.

Meanwhile, a high power submersible pump from Coal India and two other pumps from Odisha are engaged in dewatering the nearby abandoned mines, which might be interlinked and as much help in lowering of water in the main shaft, he said.

Rescue divers from the Indian Navy and the NDRF are yet to be able to make any significant impact in their search and rescue operations as the water level is still beyond 100 feet, the safe diving capacity for the divers, the official said.

AFFIDAVIT

I, Sumita Pradhan aged about 36 years daughter of Shri Dirgha Raj Pradhan, resident of Namchi Bazar, P.O. & P.S Namchi, South Sikkim do hereby solemnly affirm on Oath and declare as under :-

1. That I had lost my original Pass Certificate of Class - X bearing index no. T/263/024of India School Certificate Examination (ICSE).
2. That I had lodged FIR before the Station House Officer, Namchi Police Station on 4.01.2019 bearing GD No. 50 and also published in the local Newspaper "SummitTimes" date 5th January 2019 for the said lost.
3. That I have sworn this affidavit to declare that I had lost my Original Pass Certificate of Class X bearing Index No. T/263/024 of Indian School Certificate Examination. (ICSE).
4. Sworn and signed this affidavit on this the 5th Day of January 2019 at Namchi, South Sikkim at 12.10 pm

VOYAGE IS HIRING

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2. Where can we find custom design printed cloth bag?

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RECRUITMENT OF PART TIME SWEEPERS
Punjab National Bank has invited applications for recruitment of Part Time Sweepers in one office (for Scheduled Caste) in **Purba Bardhaman District** of West Bengal and one office (for Other Back Ward classes) in **East Sikkim District of Sikkim**. Applicants must be domicile of the said Districts. Last Date of receipt of applications is **31.01.2019**. For details, please refer to our Recruitment Notice published in Bank's website: www.pnbindia.in or contact nearest Branch of PNB in Purba Bardhaman District of West Bengal/ East Sikkim District of Sikkim.
Date : 01.01.2019 Circle Head

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

Require: Urgently require sales boy & girl computer hardware and software knowledge person for Ramola Cellular Lall Market Road, Gangtok. Contact: 9832062684.

FLAT AVAILABLE FOR RENT

Fully furnished, 3 Bedroom flat available for rent at Church Road, Near Diesel Power House. Conveniently located by the roadside and a 5-minute walk from M.G. Marg. Suitable for Corporate Office and Guest House.

For further details please
Contact: 943417687 / 9083826462



Namchi Smart City Limited

UD HD Building, Kavi Agam Singh Road
Namchi-737126, South Sikkim"

Corrigendum

This is to inform that the advertisement under project "Namchi Smart City Limited, UD HD Building, Kavi Agam Singh Road, Namchi-737126, South Sikkim" under the caption '01. INVITATION FOR BIDS' published in SummitTIMES Vol. 03 no. 315 dt. 10.12.2018 no 361 dt. 11. 12. 2018 has been changed as below:

1. SL.NO. 4 Pedestrian Walkway from Namchi Bazar to entry Gate (Job A) with bid value of 138.84 has been divided into two parts.
 - a. Pedestrian Walkway from Namchi Bazar Entry Gat (from near Mt. Carmel school) to starting point of Rock Garden road with bid value of 65.52 (lakhs) (Job A).
 - b. Pedestrian Walkway from Ghurpisey (from Kinzong Bhutia House) to Entry Gate (Job B) with bid value of 73.58 (Lakhs).
2. Likewise, Construction of new link road from Durga Mandir to Kamrang College is also been divided into two parts.
 - a. Construction of new link road from Durga Mandir to Kamrang college JOB A' with bid value of 105.28 (lakhs)
 - b. Construction of link road from Durga Mandir (from near Lt. Dhan Bahadur Chettri house) 'JOB B' with bid value of 128.00 (lakhs).

Rest everything remains same as published. The department regrets for above errors and above stand as rectified and correct.

Chief Executive officer,
Namchi Smart City Limited (NSCL)
Namchi, South Sikkim
Dated: 5. 01.2019

Watchdog group urges probe of Ivanka Trump tax break role

WASHINGTON, JAN 5 (AP): An ethics watchdog group asked the Justice Department on Friday to investigate whether President Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka violated federal conflict-of-interest law by promoting an Opportunity Zone tax break program from which she could potentially benefit.

The complaint from the Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington follows an Associated Press investigation last month.

The AP found that Trump and her husband Jared Kushner, both White House advisers, could benefit from the Opportunity Zones program they pushed that offers tax breaks to developers who invest in downtrodden communities.

AP reported Kushner owns a USD 25 million to USD 50 million non-management stake in Cadre, a real estate investment firm which has announced plans to invest in several cities under the Opportunity Zones program. Separately, the couple has interests in at least 13 properties held by Kushner's family firm that may qualify for the tax breaks because they are in Opportunity Zones in New Jersey, New York and Maryland.

The CREW complaint says that, under federal law, Kushner's financial interests are considered of value to Ivanka Trump as well. In a 12-page letter sent to Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, CREW Executive Director Noah Bookbinder said that as a result of the 2017 decision by Ivanka Trump and Kushner to "retain a sprawling portfolio of investments after entering government," the couple "assumed responsibility for exercising due diligence to avoid participating in any particular matter that directly and predictably affects the interests of the companies they retained."

Ivanka Trump, Bookbinder wrote, "may have failed to live up to this responsibility."

Bookbinder told the AP that CREW's complaint focused on Ivanka Trump because "there is so much public information about her role in the Opportunity Zones program."

The AP report noted that Ivanka Trump publicly promoted the program and coordinated with its main congressional sponsor, Republican Sen Tim Scott of South Carolina.

President Trump lauded his daughter last February for "pushing this very hard."

Hours after the AP story ran last month, Ivanka Trump tweeted her public support for Opportunity Zones and appeared at a White House event promoting the program.

AP reported that Kushner also backed the program, but had more limited involvement behind the scenes.

A spokesman for Abbe Lowell, the couple's ethics lawyer, dismissed the CREW complaint as "meritless."

SDF driver's front convenes meeting for Khamdong-Singtam



NITESH R PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 05 JAN:

The All Sikkim Democratic Driver/ Transport Front conveyed a co-ordination meeting with drivers, transporters and association heads of the Khamdong-Singtam constituency of East Sikkim at the Community Hall here today.

State In-charge of the ASDTF, GM Gurung of Rangpo was present as chief guest accompanied by ASDTF general secretary, Karma Tashi Bhutia of Bhusuk, SDF general secretary, Tenzing Sherpa, SDF CLC vice president, Krishna Chettri, president Singtam Motor Transport Service Co-operative Society, Tinku

Adhikari, and president of Singtam New Generation Cooperative Society, Tatshering Lepcha among others.

Senior drivers from Singtam, Bindeswari Prasad and Laxuman Darji were felicitated by the chief guest at the beginning of the meeting.

Drivers from different stands of the constituency and parking contractors placed their grievances with the executive committee members of the All Sikkim Democratic Transport/Driver Front.

Tinku Adhikari and Tatshrering Lepcha extended the heartfelt thanks to the ASDTF, Chief Minister and the

SDF government for opening an RTO office at Singtam and Chief Minister Startup Scheme which had benefitted the drivers of many constituencies.

The ASDTF general secretary highlighted the works of the front and in conclusion, State Incharge of ASDTF, Mr Gurung reviewed the grievances raised by the drivers. He also informed about sanctions and implementation of many demands till date by the government.

The daylong coordination meeting was attended by around 200 drivers of the region.

Further, Mr Gurung highlighted that before

the SDF government took office, there were only 9,000 vehicles in Sikkim and that the state now has more than 90,000 vehicles and 1 lakh drivers. The State road network has increased from 1,800 KMs to 6,200 KMs, new tourist destinations have been introduced, permits extended, and government is continuously working towards improving facilities for the general public and drivers of state as a whole.

Earlier, the welcome speech was delivered by SDF general secretary, Tenzing Sherpa and vote of thanks proposed by ASDTF executive member, Kishor Pradhan.

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
TOURISM & CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT
PARYATAN BHAWAN
NEAR METRO POINT, TADONG, EAST SIKKIM

EOI No: 347/TD

DATED: 05/01/2019

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST NO. 347/TD

On behalf of Governor of Sikkim, the Tourism & Civil Aviation Department, Government of Sikkim invites the Expression of Interest (EOI) for "Construction of statues of four patron saints of Sikkim at Yuksom in West Sikkim" on a Design, Built at Transfer (DBT) basis from the Class-I AA registered Contractors enlisted with Sikkim Public Works Department (SPWD) and having experience and expertise in construction of Temples, Statues and religious complexes. The interested contractors shall submit their Expression of Interest to the Chief Engineer, Tourism & Civil Aviation Department, Metro Point, Lower Tadong, East Sikkim on or before 9th February, 2019 along with the requisite documents to fulfill the pre-qualification as per the Eligibility Criteria given below.

The details of the other mandatory requirements, general conditions, tender guidelines, bid system, selection process, project overview, project completion schedule, tender schedule etc will be uploaded in the departmental website www.sikkimtourism.gov.in on 8th January, 2019.

Eligibility Criteria:

The Eligibility Criteria to be fulfilled by the intending bidders for pre-qualification are as under:

- The intending bidder shall be the holder of Class-AA enlistment certificate registered with the Sikkim Public Works Department (SPWD), Government of Sikkim. The attested copy of the intending bidder shall be attached with Expression of Interest.
- The intending bidder or his/her associate partner/consortium shall have adequate experience in construction of Temple, Statues or Religious complexes with a proven track record of having successfully executed and completed at least one similar nature of project of net worth not less than Rs. 10.00 crore in a single work order/job order or at least Rs. 15.00 crore in two work orders/job orders in the last 10 years within the State or any regions in India. The completion certificate of the client/client department issued in the name of the bidder or his/her associate partner/consortium for having successfully completed the similar work indication project cost, location, name or type of the project or any other relevant information about the project shall be attached with the Expression of Interest. In case the experience and expertise so desired is in the entity of associate partner/consortium of the intending bidder, the attested copy of the registration of such partnership/consortium legally authenticated and certified by the District Magistrate within State of Sikkim shall be attached with the Expression of Interest.
- The Annual Turnover of the intending bidder shall not be less than Rs. 4.00 crore per annum in the three years or less than Rs. 8.00 crore cumulative in the past two years. The certified copy of the balance sheet of the last three years duly vetted by the registered Chartered Accountant shall be attached with the Expression of Interest.
- The intending bidder or his/her associate partner/consortium shall have adequate tools, plants, equipments and skilled artisans, craftsman for such work to explicitly display the bidder's capacity to execute the project. List of the same shall be submitted in self sheets for manpower and equipments separately.
- The intending bidder shall submit a latest Solvency Certificate from the State Bank of Sikkim or any Nationalized Banks operating in Sikkim issued not earlier than 8th January, 2019 for a minimum amount of Rs. 2.00 crore with the Expression on Interest.

Sd/-

Chief Engineer,
Tourism & Civil Aviation Department
Paryatan Bhawan, Tadong

R.O. No.: 575/IPR/PUB/Classi/2018-19
Date: 05/01/2019



STUDY ZONE
Mr. Dawchung Lepcha (Chairperson)

OUR COURSE OUTLINES:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Winter Crash Courses running successfully for classes X, XII (CBSE, ICSE, ISC) | 4. Revision notes for the students to make them much more effective |
| 2. Study Materials provided according to the standards of the board. | 5. Doubt clearing Sessions held by respective teachers |
| 3. Mock Test and Pre Board examinations | 6. Separate hostel facilities for boys and girls. |

OUR COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. To give clear concept of the chapters | 4. Greater emphasis would be to excel. |
| 2. To give the students proper guidance to excel in their examinations | 5. Last minute suggestion tips as per board requirements |
| 3. To Prepare and deliver answers effectively and efficiently | |

For further details please contact: 9002163719, 7319565616, 7432036651
Address: P.N.G Road, Opp. City press, Gangtok



Human Resource Development Department
Government of Sikkim
Tashiling Secretariat
Gangtok

Ref. No. GoS/HRDD/Adm/2018/678/02

Date: 03/01/19

NOTICE INVITING RE-TENDER

For & on behalf of Governor of Sikkim, Deputy Director/IT, Human Resource Development Department, Government of Sikkim, seeks proposals from reputed and experienced registered Company /Proprietorship firm in India to participate in competitive bidding for implementation of "Smart Classrooms (including Supply and Installation of software solution, IT and non-IT equipment (Site preparation, electrical / UPS with required wiring etc), commissioning, integration and maintenance" for a period of 03 (three) years in the border areas of Sikkim.

The RFP document is available on the website www.sikkimtender.gov.in. Interested Bidders, who qualify as per the criteria mentioned in the RFP document, may submit their bids online as per calendar of events. Bidders are required to submit tender document fee of Rs. 30,000.00 in form of Demand draft from a Nationalized/ Scheduled bank/ State Bank of Sikkim in favour of Additional Chief Secretary/HRDD, payable at Gangtok.

Sd/-

Dy. Director/IT
Human Resource

R.O. No. 572/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19
Date: 04.01.19

Development Department
Government of Sikkim.



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
BALUAKHANI, GANGTOK-SIKKIM

PUBLIC NOTICE

(Change in Date of Final Publication of ELECTORAL ROLL)

This is for information of general public that final Publication of Electoral Roll in respect of Special Summary Revision of Photo Electoral Roll in respect of Special summary Revision of Photo Electoral Rolls of intensive nature with reference to 01.01.2019 as qualifying date in all Assembly Constituencies of Sikkim will be on 18.01.2019 (Friday) instead of 04.01.2019.

No Voter to be left Behind

Mere possession of EPIC card without name in electoral roll does not provide Right to vote. Please check your name in voter list online www.ceosikkim.nic.in or www.nvsp.in
If your name is missing from electoral roll, please apply immediately. Process for additional of addition of names and correction of existing entries will continue even after final publication of electoral roll.

Helpline No.
1950

website
www.ceosikkim.nic.in

SummitTIMES

The Mountains Are Sweating

And more Sikkimese need to take a keener interest in issues like climate change

The current spate of biting cold might not lend itself too well to talk of global warming, but that is also the kind of only-on-occasion nature of interest that we need to get over when it comes to addressing issues of climate change and the health of Sikkim's ice-caps. It is bad enough that very few Sikkimese actually get to visit the glacial areas of the State, and to make awareness about warming limited to visuals of shrinking arctic ice creates a distancing which make genuine interest difficult to establish.

Not just experts, even lay people and mass media are now noticing the change in weather patterns all over the world. The mountains are getting warmer, the plains colder and weather hitting extremes at other times, think the inundation of Kerala recently which Met scientists have ascribed to climate change. All these are symptomatic of global warming, a fact that cannot be denied anymore. Even as the debate continues over the developed world's attempts at browbeating the third world nations to sacrifice more to manage the planet's environment, regions close to ice need to get more concerned and start undertaking studies and working solutions on their own. Ice caps – the polar regions and the glacier fields – feel the impact of global warming first. North and west Sikkim are crisscrossed by many glaciers which are the frozen fountains of life for the State. The cultivation, the rivers and their hydel potential are all sourced from these glaciers, and now that hydro-power is still being pursued as the economic deliverer for the State, it becomes imperative that the source of this potential is better studied and understood. Himalayan glaciers are reported to be receding at the rate of 10 to 15 metres on an average every year. The largest glacier in the Eastern Himalaya – the 10 mile long Zemu Glacier in north Sikkim is believed by many to be receding the fastest. It also sits in the vicinity of many minor glaciers, several of which have visibly retreated from the valleys and now hang higher on the mountains, leaving behind a litter of dangerous moraines. Zemu also feeds the Teesta on which many hydel projects have been planned. When glaciers recede, and some in Sikkim are also reportedly expanding, there is more water in the rivers, that is simple enough to understand, but someone has to study the glaciers better to be able to calculate how long the source will keep feeding the rivers. Some recent studies have been undertaken, and a closer watch is now being kept on some glacial lakes, but very little of these findings have made way into the public domain with any coherent analysis.

Given the fact that 70 per cent of the world's fresh water is frozen in glaciers, it is surprising that not more is being done to save them and contain their recession. This is probably because the scientists and decision makers prefer the plains and share their data only among their clique and have seldom made their findings simple enough for the stakeholders to understand. But the problem is already too clear and present to waste time pointing fingers. Sikkim might be too small to make a difference to the handling of Himalayan glaciers, but it can at least take care of its own "water towers." Maybe with its initiative, it could also trigger a more genuine concern elsewhere.

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: news@summittimes.com

India: Government continues to suppress citizens' right to information ahead of election

VIDYA VENKAT
theconversation.com

Back in 2014, when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ascended to power in India, it did so on the promise of running an open government accountable to its citizens that would eliminate corruption. But nearly five years later, and with an election due between March and May, the track record of Narendra Modi's government on upholding citizens' right to information has raised doubts about its commitment to accountability.

The BJP's predecessors, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, led by the Indian National Congress party, were instrumental in passing the Right to Information (RTI) law in 2005. Its aim was to undo the culture of bureaucratic secrecy encouraged by the colonial Official Secrets Act of 1923.

For the first time, the law compelled government departments to provide official information in the form of records or documents to citizens when specific requests were made. This helped to expose corruption in government as state authorities could no longer hide information on the way they made decisions, or spent taxpayer's money. The exposés contributed to the UPA government's political downfall at the 2014 elections.

Yet, ever since the RTI law was passed, successive governments have sought to suppress it one way or another. In recent years, public authorities affiliated to the central government have denied information to citizens under the law on matters of vital public interest.

REQUESTS BLOCKED

Take, for instance, the case of demonetisation, in which the government pulled high-value currency notes out of circulation in 2016. It said the move was aimed at eradicating fake currency notes circulating in the economy, but demonetisation led to a severe cash crunch that had spiralling effects on jobs and economic growth.

When citizens filed RTI appeals with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) about demonetisation, they were refused information on a range of queries from who had been consulted, to the reasons behind the move and the cost incurred by scrapping the banned notes. The central bank took refuge under the law's exemption clause, which states that exemptions can be sought for information if disclosure would: "prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the state, relation with foreign state or lead to incitement of an offence". While it's up to the public information of-

ficer of each institution to decide on exemptions, these decisions can be appealed to the Central Information Commission (CIC), which settles information disputes.

But such denial of information amounts to a failure to come clean on a controversial decision that affected the lives of ordinary citizens in a big way. It's not even clear whether demonetisation's stated motive of removing fake notes was actually achieved.

Another important ongoing case of denial of information regards a list of wilful loan defaulters held by the RBI. This came at a time when the Indian government has been struggling to extradite businessmen who fled the country after defaulting

tails accessible under the RTI. The legal case drags on, with the next hearing due in early 2019. Requests for the release of details of the prime minister's MA degree from Gujarat University were also denied under the RTI law.

In November 2016, the Supreme Court upheld citizens' right to know about the educational background of people contesting polls and held that the election of those lying in their affidavits could be set aside.

DILUTING THE LAW

Besides denying information, the BJP government has also proposed amendments to the RTI law, in which the central government seeks to control the salaries and tenures of the information commissioners. The effect would be to erode the independence of the information commissions – which are vested with court-like powers to adjudicate information appeals denied by government departments – that actually give the law its teeth.

Since coming to office in 2014, the BJP government has delayed making crucial appointments to the CIC as vacancies have arisen and, as the end of 2018 approached, eight of the 11 posts for information commissioner were vacant. After activists went to the Supreme Court to demand speedy appointments to the commission, in late December the government announced the appointment of a new chief information commissioner and four new information commissioners. While RTI activists hailed this as a small victory following months of protests, the government has refused to divulge information on the process adopted for vetting applicants for the job.

At present more than 26,000 information appeals lie pending before the commission, delaying availability of information to thousands of citizens using the RTI. The government has also dragged information commissioners to court. This is a clear case of intimidation of commissioners aimed at discouraging them from ordering disclosures of information that the government finds inconvenient.

Back in 2005, when India passed the RTI law, it was heralded as a revolutionary move to empower the people to hold those in power to account. But that task has been easier said than done. As India awaits yet another electoral battle later in 2019, the incumbent government has clearly failed to deliver on its promise of accountability.

[the writer is PhD scholar in Social Anthropology, SOAS, University of London]



on billions of dollars of bank loans. After the CIC ordered the RBI to release information on the loan defaulters, the central bank went to court in mid-December to get a stay order, denying the release.

India's Supreme Court had already pulled up the RBI back in 2015 over its in-house "disclosure policy", which violated provisions under the RTI law. The court ruled in favour of making disclosures, but the central bank has continued to deny information requests on matters of vital public interest.

In 2017, the Indian Air Force also denied an RTI request and refused to release crucial information related to the pricing of a deal for 36 Rafale aircrafts finalised between India and France, that has currently snowballed into a major corruption scandal.

Another controversy pertains to the prime minister's educational qualifications. In 2015, when Neeraj Sharma, an IT professional from Delhi, sought to verify Modi's 1968 BA degree results from Delhi University – mentioned in his election affidavit – the information was expressly denied. When the CIC directed the university to disclose the information, the university went to the high court demanding a stay on the disclosure order.

The university publicly confirmed Modi's degree was authentic, but still refuses to make the de-

Will China's moon landing launch a new space race?

WENDY WHITMAN COBB
theconversation.com

China became the third country to land a probe on the Moon on Jan. 2. But, more importantly, it became the first to do so on the far side of the moon, often called the dark side. The ability to land on the far side of the moon is a technical achievement in its own right, one that neither Russia nor the United States has pursued.

The probe, Chang'e 4, is symbolic of the growth of the Chinese space program and the capabilities it has amassed, significant for China and for relations among the great power across the world. The consequences extend to the United States as the Trump administration considers global competition in space as well as the future of space exploration.

One of the major drivers of U.S. space policy historically has been competition with Russia particularly in the context of the Cold War. If China's successes continue to accumulate, could the United States find itself engaged in a new space race?

CHINA'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN SPACE

Like the U.S. and Russia, the People's Republic of China first engaged in space activities during the development of ballistic missiles in the 1950s. While they did benefit from some assistance from the Soviet Union, China developed its space program largely on its own. Far from smooth sailing, Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution disrupted this early programs.

The Chinese launched their first satellite in 1970. Following this, an early human spaceflight program was put on hold to focus on commercial satellite applications. In 1978, Deng Xiaoping articulated China's space pol-

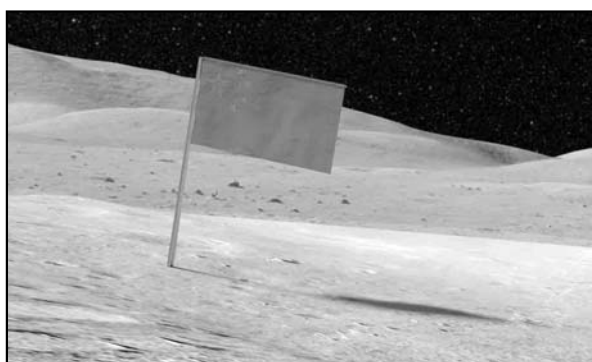
icy noting that, as a developing country, China would not take part in a space race. Instead, China's space efforts have focused on both launch vehicles and satellites – including communications, remote sensing and meteorology.

This does not mean the Chinese were not concerned about the glob-

station, a lunar base and possible sample return missions from Mars.

A NEW SPACE RACE?

The most notable feature of the Chinese space program, especially compared to the early American and Russian programs, is its slow and steady pace. Because of the secrecy that sur-



al power space efforts can generate. In 1992, they concluded that having a space station would be a major sign and source of prestige in the 21st century. As such, a human spaceflight program was re-established leading to the development of the Shenzhou spacecraft. The first Chinese astronaut, or taikonaut, Yang Liwei, was launched in 2003. In total, six Shenzhou missions have carried 12 taikonauts into low earth orbit, including two to China's first space station, Tiangong-1.

In addition to human spaceflight, the Chinese have also undertaken scientific missions like Chang'e 4. Its first lunar mission, Chang'e 1, orbited the moon in October 2007 and a rover landed on the moon in 2013. China's future plans include a new space

rounds many aspects of the Chinese space program, its exact capabilities are unknown. However, the program is likely on par with its counterparts.

In terms of military applications, China has also demonstrated significant skills. In 2007, it undertook an anti-satellite test, launching a ground-based missile to destroy a failed weather satellite. While successful, the test created a cloud of orbital debris that continues to threaten other satellites. The movie "Gravity" illustrated the dangers space debris poses to both satellites and humans. In its 2018 report on the Chinese military, the Department of Defense reported that China's military space program "continues to mature rapidly."

Despite its capabilities, the U.S.,

unlike other countries, has not engaged in any substantial cooperation with China because of national security concerns. In fact, a 2011 law bans official contact with Chinese space officials. Does this signal a new space race between the U.S. and China?

As a space policy researcher, I can say the answer is yes and no. Some U.S. officials, including Scott Pace, the executive secretary for the National Space Council, are cautiously optimistic about the potential for cooperation and do not see the beginning of a new space race. NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine recently met with the head of the Chinese space program at the International Astronautical Conference in Germany and discussed areas where China and the U.S. can work together. However, increased military presence in space might spark increased competition. The Trump administration has used the threat posed by China and Russia to support its argument for a new independent military branch, a Space Force.

Regardless, China's abilities in space are growing to the extent that is reflected in popular culture. In Andy Weir's 2011 novel "The Martian" and its later film version, NASA turns to China to help rescue its stranded astronaut. While competition can lead to advances in technology, as the first space race demonstrated, a greater global capacity for space exploration can also be beneficial not only for saving stranded astronauts but increasing knowledge about the universe where we all live. Even if China's rise heralds a new space race, not all consequences will be negative.

[the writer is Associate Professor of Political Science, Cameron University]



GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT
SORENG, WEST SIKKIM

MEMO NO.:136/GOS/SD/R&B/305/Soreng

Dated:04.01.2019

For and on behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, Assistant Engineer (Soreng), Roads & Bridges Department Government of Sikkim, invites sealed tenders under single bid system from the eligible contractors of class IV Grade enlisted with Sikkim Public Works Department vide Notification No.515/R&B/PWD/Secy. Dated 12.06.2018, 556/ R&B/PWD/Secy. Dated 26/08/18, and 584/R&B/PWD/Secy. Date:08/10/2018 for the construction of fair weather roads ,through competitive bidding within the territorial jurisdiction of concerned ward of the Gram Panchayat / Urban Local Bodies where the work is to be executed.

Sl. No	Name of Work	Cost put to Tender (Rs)	Earnest Money @ 2.5%(Rs)	Cost of tender Form (Rs)	Completion Time
1	Construction of road from Anku PWD road to lower sengeng PHSC (KM 0.00-1.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
2	Construction of road from Anku PWD road to lower sengeng PHSC (KM 1.00-2.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
3	Construction of road from Anku PWD road to lower sengeng PHSC (KM 2.00-3.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
4	Construction of road from Anku PWD road to lower sengeng PHSC (KM 3.00-4.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
5	Construction of road from Jamuney to Lekdam via upper Namrick ward no.1 (KM 0.00 -1.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
6	Construction of road from Jamuney to Lekdam via upper Namrick ward no.1 (KM 1.00-2.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
7	Construction of road from Jamuney to Lekdam via upper Namrick ward no.1 (KM 2.00-3.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
8	Construction of road from Dhargaon to rockgarden (KM0.00- 1.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
9	Construction of road from Baidang golai to khimmat golai (KM 0.00-1.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
10	Construction of road from Bori golai along Soreng Malbasey road to santhang ward (KM0.00- 1.50)	6357744.00	158944.00	5000.00	12 Months
11	Construction of road from pakkigaon dispensary towards malidang Malbasey west sikkim (KM0.00-1.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
12	Construction of road from pakkigaon dispensary towards malidang Malbasey west sikkim (KM1.00-2.50)	6357744.00	158944.00	5000.00	12 Months
13	Construction of road from Deythang near PHC to lower Dhankutey ward (km 0.00-1.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
14	Construction of road from Deythang near PHC to lower Dhankutey ward (km 1.00-2.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
15	Construction of road from Lower Deythang to U/Gairi gaon (KM 0.00-1.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
16	Construction of road from Lower Deythang to U/Gairi gaon (KM 1.00-2.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
17	Construction of road from PMGSY road Jushingthang Dhurpeney mandir via Deorali Dara (KM 0.00-1.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
18	Construction of road from PMGSY road Jushingthang Dhurpeney mandir via Deorali Dara (KM 1.00-2.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
19	Construction of road from PMGSY road Jushingthang Dhurpeney mandir via Deorali Dara (KM 2.00-3.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
20	Construction of road from Nakang Dara upper kamling to maneydara (km0.00-1.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
21	Construction of road from Nakang Dara upper kamling to maneydara (km 1.00-2.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
22	Construction of road from suldung PMGSY road to upper suldung (km0.00-1.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
23	Construction of road from suldung PMGSY road to upper suldung (km1.00-2.00)	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months
24	Construction of road from upper sribadam Daragaon and Ramitaydara and church (salom Pentecostal church) (km 0.00-1.50)	6357744.00	158944.00	5000.00	12 Months
25	Construction of road from upper sribadam Daragaon and Ramitaydara and church (salom Pentecostal church) (km 1.50-3.00)	6357744.00	158944.00	5000.00	12 Months
26	Construction of road from Bara samsing school to Rock garden via rungdung khola km 1.00-2.30	5458327.24	138011.00	5000.00	12 months
27	Construction of road from upper Gelling Dham area to Bhimsing gaon km 2.00-3.00	4238496.00	105962.00	1500.00	09 Months

Details for Date and time of Tender and venue are as follows:-

Sl. No	Name of Con-stituency	Date of Sub-mission of Application with Bank receipt for is-sue of Tender Document (Excluding ten-der form)	. Date of issue of Tender form on Submission of TDR (as Earnest money	Last Date of Submission of Tender form	Date & Time of opening of Tender	Tender venue
1	Zoom Salgari ConstituencySl. no- 1-4 & Sl. No. 26 – 27)	14/01/2019 (10:00 am to 4:00 Pm)	16/01/2019 (10:00 am to 4:00 Pm)	17/01/2019 (10:00 am to 12.00 noon)	17/01/2019 Sl.no.1-4 (12.30 pm) Si.no 26-27 (1.30pm-2.30pm)	1.Mabong G.P.K (sl. no 1-4) 2.Gelling G.P.K (Sl no.26-27)

2	Soreng Chakung Constituency (Sl. no- 10-12) Zoom Salgari constitu-encySl.no- 5-9	16/01/2019 (10:00 am to 4:00 Pm)	17/01/2019 (10:00 am to 4:00 Pm)	18/01/2019 (10:00 am to 12.00 noon)	18/01/2019 Sl.no 11-12 (3.00-4.00pm) Sl.no 10 (1.30-2.30pm) Sl.no.5-9 (12.30pm)	1.Budang G.P.K (sl. no 11-12) 2.Malbasey G.P.K (si.no 10) 3.Zoom G.P.K, (sl. no.5-9)
3	Rinchenpong Constituency(Sl. no-13-25)	17/01/2019 (10:00 am to 4:00 Pm)	18/01/2019 (10:00 am to 4:00 Pm)	19/01/2019 (10:00 am to 12.00noon)	19/01/2019 Sl.no 13-16 (2.30-3.30pm) Sl.no 17-19 (1.30-2.30 pm) Sl.no 20-23 (12.30 noon) Sl. No. 24-25 (3.30-4.00pm)	1.Deythang G.P.K sl.no.13-16 2.Parengga-on G.P.K (Sl. no. 17-19) 3.Suldung Kamling (Sl. no. 20-23) 4.Sreebad-am G.P.K Sl.no. 24-25

CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT:-

1. Tender is open only to the eligible Contractors/Firms of appropriate Class /concerned ward of the Gram Panchayat unit and Urban Local bodies Area.
2. The intending tenders/contractors should apply in writing for issue of tender documents. The applica-tion would be invariably be signed by the contractor himself/herself. The tender document will not be issued to any person other than the INTENDING TENDER. The application shall be submitted initially for each work listed above with all required documents.
3. The applicants should enclosed attested copies of the a) Goods & Services Tax Clearance Certificate (b) Validated/Updated Contractor Enlistment Certificate along with the application along with attested copy of COI, Adhar card, Voter card. It is mandatory to produce the Original validated/Updated Enlist-ment Certificate during sale/issue of the Tender Document for verification.
4. The prescribed Non-Transferable Tender Documents (excluding the Tender Form) can be obtained during the period specified in (from the Assistant Engineer, Roads and Bridges Department, Soreng Sub-Division, on production of requisite Bank deposit slip in favour of the concerned GPU .
5. Earnest money deposit @ 2.5% in State Bank of Sikkim shall be in the form of Deposit Receipt of Sched-ule Bank which includes deposits in the form of temporary deposit receipts (TDR) in favor of the Sr. Ac-counts Officer, Roads & Bridges, Gyalshing, West Sikkim. Tender form shall be issued only on production of toward deposit receipts of 2.5% earnest money.
6. The Tender Documents, including the Tender Form with quoted offer should be placed in a sealed cover with the name of the tenderers and the name of the work superscripted on it, supporting documents listed at Sl.No 3(a &b) along with other relevant documents be enclosed with the offer.
7. Sealed tenders may be deposited in the Tender box in the office Concerned GPU where the work is to be executed, on the date and within the time indicated above.
8. Tenders shall be opened by a Tender Opening Committee as prescribed by the Government in the pres-ence of the tenderers on the date and time indicated above.
9. The Tenderer should sign on every page of the tender documents as Acceptance of the general Direction and Conditions of the Contract and other laid down norms. The rate quoted should be both in figures and words and should be inclusive of GST all other applicable Taxes and Levies. Over writing and cor-rection should be avoided and if made should be authenticated. Incomplete/Conditional tenders shall be rejected forthwith.
10. In case of any discrepancy in rate(s) printed in the Schedule of Rates and Quantities issued with the ten-der documents, rates as per approved Schedule of Rates will be taken as correct. For items outside the SOR, the rates shall be as per the technically checked estimate/analysis. Decision of the Principal Chief Engineer cum Secretary/ Head of the Department will be final in this regard.
11. The work value, scope and quantum of work are subject to change, the contractor shall execute the work as per the directives of the Department. No claim on this account is entertained whatsoever. If any claim is made, it shall be as per the agreement rates.
12. The Department reserves the rights to hold payments to the contractor unless test certificates are not produced by the contractor when called upon to do so.
13. Avoidable damages due to negligence of the contractor shall be at his own risk and cost. The Depart-ment shall not be liable for payment of such damages (if any), including accidents to labours at site.
14. The offer shall remain valid for a period of 90 days. The work should commence within 15 days from the issue of the work order.
15. All the conditions as mentioned in the NIT shall be deemed to a part of the agreement to be entered with the contractor. Security deposit shall be collected by deductions from the running bills of the contractor @ 5% of the value of work done.
16. The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
17. The recoveries of Royalties on Forest Produce shall be as per rates notified by the Government from time to time and applicable on the date of payment. In no case, clam of any contractor for deduction as per rates incorporated in the analysis of rates or Schedule of Rates on the date of tender shall be acceptable.
18. Subletting of contract work is against the norms and if it comes to notice, the original contract shall be cancelled and appropriate action shall be initiated as per the rules.
19. The Department also reserves the right to increase, decrease, alter or modify the item of works as indi-cated in the NIT without assigning any reason thereof.
20. In case the man powers employed by the contractors are from outside the State or neighboring coun-tries, it shall be the responsibility of the contractors to get them registered with the labour department, Government of Sikkim as per the relevant Labour Laws.
21. Use of explosives shall be regulated as under:-

a) Transportation, Handling, storage and use of Explosives (if necessary) shall be in accordance with the provisions of the India Explosive Act and General Guidelines, Circulars issued by the depart-ment and other competent authorities on the subject from time to time.

b) The rules and regulations issued by the Sikkim Public Works department or any other competent authority shall strictly be adhered to with regard to transportation, storage; handling and use of explosives shall be maintained by the contractor.
22. The contractor shall also make arrangements to have photographs of the works taken at least at three stages of the construction period. i.e. beginning, middle and completion stage.
23. Damage to properties in and around the work site must be avoided at all cost. The contractor shall be held responsible for any acts of negligence and shall be made to make good the damages.
24. It is accepted to the tenderer to have inspected the site before submitting his/her bid. There may be possible site difficulties for which the tenderer should have their own correct assessment before sub-mitting the bid.
25. The cost of stock materials supplied from the Department store will be deducted from the contractors’ bills as per rules.
26. The bidders shall produce a Certificate of Residence from the concerned Gram Panchayat Unit where the work is to be executed.

Sd/-

R.O. No. 574/IPR/Pub/classi./18-19
Date:05.01.2019

Assistant Engineer,
Roads & Bridges Department,
Soreng Division, West Sikkim

With help from diaspora, Palestinians hope for Asian Cup surprise

RAMALLAH, JAN 5 (AFP): The Palestinian football team are taking part in their second-ever Asian Cup in the coming days, and team members born in various parts of the world are hoping to spring a few surprises. The team qualified four years ago for the first time but crashed out in ignominious fashion, losing all three games to an aggregate score of 11-1.

This year, with the help of several players from the Palestinian diaspora, they hope to do better.

Around five million Palestinians live in the blockaded Gaza Strip and occupied West Bank, but around another six million are estimated to live elsewhere.

Chilean defender Alexis Norambuena said the players speak in a mix of languages to understand each other.

"Football is a way to give some joy to the people and for us to represent them in this cup that is quite important for the country," he said.

"We aim to represent them and give them enough joy so the people can be entertained a bit." The tournament begins in the United Arab Emirates on Saturday. Back home in the West Bank, football lovers are also willing their players on to new heights.

At a recent second division league game, player Sameh Sheikha told AFP that the team's participation "rep-



resents a country at a time when we are still living under occupation." "We hope the team achieves good results this time, because the team has become stronger than before," he said.

There are perhaps cautious reasons for optimism.

Despite being made up of mostly amateurs, the team beat Bhutan 10-0 on aggregate to qualify for the tournament.

This and other good results saw them rise to a record high 75th in the FIFA world rankings, though they have since slipped back to 99th.

Palestinians say that Israeli restrictions on players' movements limit potential, whether that means checkpoints in the

West Bank or the blockade on Gaza, where Israel and Hamas have fought three wars since 2008. Sport is also an area where Palestinians seek to advance their cause.

Their football federation has been a member of FIFA since 1998 and plays in the Asian Football Confederation.

The Palestinians were also granted the status of UN non-member observer state in 2012. This year's Asian Cup side has a little more of an international feel.

They are led by an Algerian coach and among those donning the red jersey in the Emirates is Yashir Pinto, a Chilean who qualifies for the team due

to his Palestinian ancestors.

Another Chilean with Palestinian roots on the team, Jonathan Zorrilla Cantillana, said "I think we are preparing in a very good way and we will try to create a surprise, to surprise them with the training we got here, and I think we will arrive well prepared at the cup."

The bookkeepers still see Palestine as very much outside shots. While regional giants Japan, South Korea and Iran are again among the favourites, Palestine have odds as high as 2,000 to one.

Their group is also a little daunting, with a game against Jordan followed by matches

against group favourites Australia and Syria.

Yet while few expect them to have any chance of coming home with the cup, in the Palestinian territories there is optimism. "The national team is a source of pride, and it is competing at the Asian level. This confirms the progress of the level of our sport," said Mohamed Sulaiman, a football coach in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

"Our team is strong and we hope we can achieve something." In Qatar, Norambuena said "it's very nice to have these days to get to know each other more and we hope this will help us do good in this cup.

India inch closer to maiden series win before bad weather stops play

CHETAN NARULA

SYDNEY, JAN 5 (PTI): India closed in on their maiden Test series triumph in Australia before bad light and rain combined to delay the inevitable, adding more hours to a wait of 71 years.

Bad light stopped play in the final session of day three of the fourth Test as the hosts, responding to India's mammoth first-innings total of 622 for seven declared, were reduced to 236 for six in 83.3 overs on Saturday.

With two full days play left in the game and Australia still 386 runs adrift of India's score, the visitors will fancy their chances of winning the four-match rubber 3-1.

India first went Down Under back in 1947-48 under Lala Amarnath's captaincy, and are yet to achieve series triumph there despite eleven attempts. At the Sydney Cricket Ground, the players went off with an hour's play pending in the day as bad light hampered proceedings, before rain intervened and brought out an early stumps.

This was after Kuldeep Yadav (3-71) and Ravindra Jadeja (2-62) shared five wickets to put India in a commanding position. At

stumps then, Australia were trailing by 386 runs, with Peter Handscomb (28 not out) and Pat Cummins (25 not out) at the crease.

Post tea, Yadav struck on the sixth ball as Tim Paine (5) was completely foxed by the turn he was getting. The spinner pitched the ball up and the batsman, going for a drive, failed to counter it and was bowled.

Cummins and Handscomb then put on 38 runs for the seventh wicket. India requested for the second new ball after 81 overs but were denied owing to bad light.

They kept the batsmen in the middle for only a couple more overs before the umpires stopped play altogether owing to a thunderstorm in the vicinity.

Earlier, India struck four times in the middle session as Australia were reduced to 198 for five at tea. Post lunch, Australia made the worst start possible with Marcus Harris (79) getting out before he could settle in again. In the third over after the restart, he played on off Jadeja.

In the 49th over, the left-arm spinner made it a double blow six overs later as Shaun Marsh (8) was caught at slip.

Djokovic crashes out of Qatar Open



DOHA, JAN 5 (AFP): Novak Djokovic lost surprisingly in Doha on Friday, beaten in the Qatar Open semi-final by world number 24, Roberto Bautista Agut, 6-3, 6-7 (8/6), 6-4.

The Serb fell to his first defeat of the season in a high-quality contest lasting more than two-and-a-half hours, which saw the Spaniard lose his first set of the week but come back to beat the world number one.

"What happened? I lost the match. That's it," a clearly frustrated Djokovic said in his post-match press conference.

Agut took Djokovic's serve in the second game of the final set for the decisive break and secured victory on his first match point. "I will remember this match for [the rest] of my life," said the 30-year-old Spaniard.

He will play the Czech Republic's Tomas Berdych in Saturday's final. "I can't be more happy than I am now."

It is the second time he has beaten Djokovic in his career and both victories occurred in a semi-final.

The first came in October 2016 in Shanghai. Djokovic was also world number one at that stage.

Bautista Agut said Friday's victory was the better of the two.

"I think today the match was better, the level of the tennis today was very high," he said. "We

both played very good tennis and it was also more tight on the score and more emotions and today was a really good match."

A fired-up Djokovic smashed his racquet after dropping his serve in the eighth game of the second set.

"I thought I was pretty much in control of the match, set and a break, serving 4-3," Djokovic said. "He played a good game. I missed some easy balls and that's what you get as a result of losing the focus in the most important moments and it happens, it happens."

Questions may be asked about how tired the Serb was, as he played two matches each day for three days in singles and doubles, prior to Friday's defeat.

Including the meeting with Bautista Agut, Djokovic spent almost 10 hours on court in three days and played 11 sets in singles' matches.

Asked if he had done too much through the week, he replied: "I wasn't the freshest, you know. "This is what I was looking forward to, to get from this tournament, as many matches as possible, to get ready for the Australian Open, so I'm very pleased."

"Obviously, I'm not pleased that I lost the match today, but I lost to a better player in the end." The second semi-final proved a much tamer affair.

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India face Thailand in AFC Asian Cup campaign opener

ABU DHABI, JAN 5 (PTI): Underdogs India will look at their impressive results in recent months for inspiration when they open their AFC Asian Cup football campaign against Thailand here Sunday.

With the continental showpiece event being expanded to 24 teams for the first time from the earlier 16, the Indian side have a real chance to make it to the knock-out rounds, which will be a first after their runners-up finish in 1964.

Both in 1984 and 2011, India were knocked out of the tournament at the group stage.

The two top sides from each of the six groups made up of four countries as well as four third-place teams will advance to the Round of 16.

India, playing in their fourth Asian Cup, are entering the tournament on the back of a goalless stalemates against World Cup-winning Italian coach Marcello Lippi's China and Oman in



the lead-up to the tournament. They lost narrowly (1-2) to Jordan in their third big match ahead of the Asian Cup.

These results were preceded by a 13-match unbeaten run in international friendly matches and the Intercontinental Cup at home last summer.

Constantine's players will

also be keen to improve upon the disastrous performance of the country in 2011 edition, when it badly lost all its group matches.

Sunday's Group A match against Thailand at the Al Nahyan Stadium will be crucial for India as a positive result will boost the Stephen Constan-

tine-coached team's chances of making it to the Round of 16.

If India beat Thailand on Sunday, then a draw in the remaining two matches -- against hosts UAE (January 10) and Bahrain (January 14) -- could be enough for them to qualify for the knock-out round.

Defensive discipline will be one of the key factors for India against a Thailand team that scored a lot of goals at the ASEAN Football Federation Championship.

India are placed 97th in the FIFA charts compared to Thailand's 118, but rankings will hardly matter in the continental showpiece. In fact, India are the second highest-ranked team in the group after the UAE.

Historically, India and Thailand have played against each other 24 times with the South East Asian nation winning on 12 occasions. India have won five times while the remaining seven were drawn.

India needs more women in science to improve research quality: Narayana Murthy

SHAKOOR RATHER

BANGALURU, JAN 5 (PTI): India needs to create an environment conducive for qualified, bright women researchers to continue their pursuit in the field of science to improve the quality of research in the country, Infosys co-founder N R Narayana Murthy said here.

A recent report released by the firm Clarivate Analytics shows that only 10 Indians figure among the world's top 4,000 highly-cited researchers (HCR), with only one woman from India featuring in the list topped by the US.

Asked if more women researchers can help improve the quality of research in India, the renowned IT industrialist said, "absolutely, no doubt about it..."

"Whenever I have gone for a convocation address in any university or IITs or lots of institutions in the country, I find the percentage of gold medals that are won by women is generally much higher than by men," Murthy told PTI.

"Therefore, we have to create an environment where it is easy for our women research-



ers to continue their pursuit even after they get married, even after they have children..." he said.

However, Murthy noted that it was a social issue and not so much the problem of the research institutes.

"In our society, we have to create mechanisms whereby qualified, bright women researchers have no hindrance at all to continue their research focus," Murthy said.

"And it does help (in improving the quality of research) as 50 per cent population (in the country) is women

and their performance is no less than men at the undergraduate and perhaps at the Masters level," he said ahead of the Infosys Prize ceremony here on Saturday.

The Infosys Prize is an annual award given to scientists, researchers, engineers and social scientists by the Infosys Science Foundation (ISF) and ranks among the highest monetary awards in India to recognise research.

This year, six eminent professors have been awarded the prize across different categories of science and research.

The annual award includes a pure gold medal, a citation, and a prize purse worth USD 100,000 (or its equivalent in Indian rupees).

Murthy believes that India has realised the importance of creating an environment where the researchers can indeed contribute to the global betterment and produce world-class work.

"We are still obviously in the early stages, and I'm positive that as we move forward the number of Indians in the top 4000 scientists will indeed increase rapidly. And I have no doubt that Infosys Science Prize will provide an impetus to this effort," he said.

He said many Infosys Prize winners had gone on to win international awards in research considered at par with the Nobel Prize.

Asked about the challenges faced by Research and Science in the country, he noted that the research institutes should adopt a more multidisciplinary approach and provide for more interactions of researchers with those outside the country.

He noted that funding may not really be the hurdle in im-

proving the quality of research and that he was very hopeful and excited about the things to come in the field of research and science in the near future.

This point in time, the UPA government and the current NDA govt, both have taken a lot of interest in improving the quality of higher education. UPA tripled the allocation of funds for higher education, the current government has continued it, so I don't know if funding is the issue, Murthy said.

He said youngsters needed to spend more time with international researchers and they should participate in conferences outside India.

I think our aim for world-class work, aim for the best research work has to be improved first by being more open-minded to compare our work to what is happening outside India, second by providing greater chances for our youngsters to interact with world-class researchers and third by adopting a multidisciplinary research approach, he said.

If we do some of these things I am sure we can improve the quality of research, Murthy added.

UNHCR seeks clarification from India over repatriation of Rohingya to Myanmar

YOSHITA SINGH

UNITED NATIONS, JAN 5 (PTI): The UN refugee agency has expressed regret over India's decision to repatriate a group of Rohingya to Myanmar, saying it has sought clarification from India on the circumstances under which the asylum seekers were sent back, voicing concern over the un-conducive conditions for such returns.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said Friday that it "regrets India's decision to repatriate a family of Rohingya asylum seekers to Myanmar, the second such return in three months," Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General, Farhan Haq told reporters at the daily press briefing.

The UN refugee agency said a family of Rohingya asylum-seekers from Rakhine State, registered with UNHCR in India, was sent back to Myanmar on Thursday after being detained in Assam, where they had been serving a prison term since 2013 for ille-



gal entry into India.

The agency said despite repeated requests, it did not receive a response from the authorities in India regarding requests for access to individuals in detention to ascertain their circumstances and to assess the voluntariness of their decision to return.

Noting that this was

the second such incident since October 2018, when India returned seven Rohingya men to Rakhine State in Myanmar, the agency said conditions are not conducive for return of Rohingya to Myanmar.

UNHCR continues to request access and seek clarification on the circumstances under which

the return has taken place, the agency added.

There are an estimated 18,000 Rohingya refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR in India, living across different locations.

Responding to a question on the Rohingya being returned to Myanmar, Haq said the UN wants to ensure that whenever

any family is returned, the nature of the return was voluntary. "And UNHCR was not able to assess the voluntary nature of that return, and so they are very concerned about this," he said.

When asked if the Secretary-General intends to talk directly to India over the issue since the UN refugee agency has "failed", Haq replied "I wouldn't say that UNHCR has failed. What I would say is that there's movements on the ground about which they are concerned, but they are in charge of this particular file, and we'll see how it goes with their efforts."

Assam Additional Director General of Police (Border) Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta has said in Guwahati that the five members of the Rohingya family were handed over to the Myanmar authorities along the International Border in Manipur.

They were apprehended about five years ago without any travel document and were booked for violating the Foreigners Act, Mahanta has said.

Floods, blackouts after Thai storm, but tourist islands spared



NAKHON SI THAMMARAT (THAILAND), JAN 5 (AFP): Floods and blackouts caused by Tropical Storm Pabuk left nearly 30,000 people in evacuation shelters across southern Thailand Saturday, as relieved tourists stranded on islands further north were spared the worst and began to plot routes home.

Pabuk, a once in three-decades weather system, packed winds of up to 75 kilometres (45 miles) an hour and brought heavy rains and storm surges as it lashed the entire south of the kingdom on Friday, downing power cables and causing widespread flooding.

A fisherman died in southern Pattani province early Friday as high waves smashed into his boat and another crew member was reported missing.

But the storm tacked away from the key tourist islands of Koh Samui, Koh Phangan and Koh Tao where large numbers of tourists hunkered down for 24 hours in heavy rains, unable to leave as

airports closed and ferry services were cancelled.

"There were no casualties, there is some sunshine today and I'm confident some tourists will be able to leave today as ferries and flights resume," Kittipol Roddon, Koh Samui district chief said.

But "red flag" warnings banning swimming off what are normally sun-baked paradise beaches at this time of year were still in place. "It's all over. All 10,000 tourists are safe... I am relieved," Krikkrai Songthane, district chief of neighbouring Koh Phangan, an island famed for its full-moon parties, told AFP, adding only minor damage had been caused by high winds.

But holidaymakers keen to leave the islands face long delays as transport links are slowly reopened on Saturday.

The storm was downgraded early Saturday to a depression with wind speeds slackening as it moved into the Andaman Sea, the Meteorological Department said.

Pabuk made landfall on Friday afternoon in Nakhon Si Thammarat province, south of the tourist hubs on the Gulf of Thailand, hammering the coastal province with rain.

Authorities warned of flash floods as some parts remained inundated by a combination of rainfall and storm surges.

Around 200,000 people were left without power as dozens of electricity poles were toppled by high winds or falling trees.

Some 30,000 customers remained without power early Saturday, according to an update by the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department.

A similar number of people remained in evacuation shelters, waiting for floods to recede and power to be restored, it added.

Pabuk struck in peak tourist season, a blow to the cash-cow sector that is integral to Thailand's economy. The kingdom is expected to welcome a record 40 million visitors this year.

about its work," he explained. That work includes electoral support and other functions.

Somalia's UN mission didn't immediately respond to an inquiry about the developments.

The UN Security Council discussed them in a closed-door session Friday but didn't make any public statement. The Horn of Africa nation announced Tuesday it was ordering Haysom to leave, saying he overreached and meddled in the country's internal matters. In

a letter to Somali officials, Haysom had raised concerns about the legal basis for the arrest of Mukhtar Robow, a former deputy leader of the deadly al-Shabab Islamic extremist group who defected and then ran for a regional presidency. Robow was a leading candidate, and the election was days away, when he was arrested last month.

Somali officials said he hadn't completed a defection process and had failed to renounce extremist ideology, among other allegations against him.

Trump threatens to declare national emergency to get fund for border wall

WASHINGTON, JAN 5 (PTI): President Donald Trump warned on Friday that he could keep the US government partly closed for "months or even years" and declare a national emergency if the Congress refused to provide USD 5.6 billion funding for a wall along the Mexico border.

After his meeting with top Democrats failed to end the two-week impasse, Trump said that he may call a national emergency to build the wall without congressional approval.

I did say that. Absolutely, I said that, Trump told reporters in the Rose Garden of the White House after Democratic leaders told media about the president's "threat", during their meeting with him, to continue with the partial government shutdown for years.

The Republican president initially gave a positive account of the 90-minute meeting with Democrats at the White House, describing it as "very productive".

But when asked whether he had considered using emergency presidential powers to bypass congressional approval of funding, Trump said he had.

"I may do it. We can call a national emergency and build it very quickly. That's another way of doing it," he said.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, after his meeting with Trump on ending the partial government shutdown said, We told the president we need the government open. He resisted. In fact, he said he'd keep the government closed for a very long period, months or even years."

The discussion then - we discussed a bunch of issues - that were somewhat contentious, and we'll continue discussing, of course, but it's very hard to see how progress will be made unless they open up the government, Schumer said.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who attended the meeting along with other Congressional leaders

stressed on the need to open the government.

We recognise on the Democratic side that we really cannot resolve this until we open up the government and we made that very clear to the president. Services are being withheld from the American people.

"Paychecks are being held -- withheld from people who serve the needs of the American people and our border security will suffer if we do not resolve this issue, Pelosi said.

Responding to reporters' questions thereafter, Trump said he could continue with the government shutdown but it is unlikely to happen. I don't think it will, but I am prepared and I think I could speak for Republicans in the House and Republicans in the Senate. They feel very strongly about having a safe country, having a border that makes sense. Without borders, I've said it many times, we don't have a country. I hope it doesn't go on even beyond a few more days. It really could open very quickly, he said.

Trump said he has the option of building the border wall with his constitutional provisions under national emergency.

We could call a national emergency because of the security of our country. Absolutely. No, we could do it. I haven't done it. I may do it. I may do it. But we could call a national emergency and build it very quickly and it's another way of doing it. But if we can do it through a negotiated process, we're giving that a shot, Trump told reporters in response to a question.

The president, however, denied he threatened the Democrats.

I'd never threatened anybody, but I am allowed to do that, yes, he said. Trump during the meeting with the Congressional leaders, made another strong case for a border wall.

I explained to them the problem though as

we could have a wonderful port of entry but you have 2000 miles of border between the United States and Mexico and if you take a look and you see like we do through certain technology including cameras in airplanes, not just drones, you will see vast numbers of vehicles driving through the desert and entering where you don't have a very powerful fence or a wall, he said.

Trump said he only wants to stop the flow of illegal immigrants, human trafficking and smuggling of drugs, by having a solid steel structure or concrete structure. Now the steel is actually more expensive than the concrete but I think we are probably talking about steel because I really feel the other side feels better about it and I can understand what they are saying. It is more expensive, he said.

We mentioned the price that we want USD 5.6 billion This is national security we're talking about. We're not talking about games. We're talking about national security. This should have been done by all of the presidents who preceded me and they all know it. Some of them have told me that we should have done it, Trump said.

We're not playing games. We have to do it. And just remember human traffickers, remember drugs, the drugs are pouring into this country. They don't go through the ports of entry. When they do, they sometimes get caught," said Trump.

He said even Democrats want to check the inflow of drugs and illegal immigrants in the country.

"When we finish, and the Democrats do want this, they want ports of entry strengthened and I want to do that too. In fact, we have it done. It's about USD 400 million and we can have the best equipment in the world, he said. Vice President Mike Pence said the nation is in the midst of a crisis on the southern border.



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Xi orders Chinese military to be combat-ready; says risks and challenges on rise

KJM VARMA

BEIJING, JAN 5 (PTI): Chinese President Xi Jinping ordered the army to enhance its combat readiness to make sure it is always ready for a battle, saying risks and challenges are on the rise as the world is facing a period of major changes never seen in a century, state media reported Saturday.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA), the world's largest with two million troops, last year doubled the training period for new recruits from three to six months in a bid to improve their combat capabilities.

President Xi, who also heads the PLA besides the ruling Communist Party, told a meeting of the Central Military Commission (CMC), the overall high command of the Chinese military, that "the world is facing a period of major changes never seen in a century, and China is still in an important period of strategic opportunity for development". Xi is the Chairman of the CMC. He is the only civilian in the high-power military body comprising top defence officials.

Preparedness is vital in the era of drastic changes, unpredictable risks, Xi said Friday, official media reported.

He ordered the armed forces to continue strengthening their combat preparedness and to make sure they are always ready for battle, state-run China Daily reported.

The entire armed forces should have a correct understanding of China's security and development trends, enhance their awareness of danger, crisis and war, and make solid efforts on combat preparations in order to accomplish the tasks assigned by the CPC and the people, Xi said.

UN to send new envoy to Somalia after flap led to expulsion

UNITED NATIONS, JAN 5 (AP): The United Nations plans to replace an envoy who was expelled from Somalia after questioning the arrest of a political candidate with an extremist history, the world body said Friday.

The announcement came after three days of diplomatic back-and-forth over Somalia's expulsion of Nicholas Haysom, a longtime UN official who has also served as envoy to Afghanistan, Sudan and South Sudan. UN spokesman Farhan Haq said Sec-

retary-General Antonio Guterres has full confidence in Haysom, deeply regrets Somalia's decision and spoke twice about it with Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed.

The world body also argues that its personnel can't be kicked out under the diplomatic doctrine that Somalia invoked.

Nevertheless, the secretary-general plans to appoint a new representative for Somalia, Haq said. "It's crucial that the UN mission on the ground is able to go

about its work," he explained. That work includes electoral support and other functions.

Somalia's UN mission didn't immediately respond to an inquiry about the developments.

The UN Security Council discussed them in a closed-door session Friday but didn't make any public statement. The Horn of Africa nation announced Tuesday it was ordering Haysom to leave, saying he overreached and meddled in the country's internal matters. In



CLASSY IN RED: Mary Poppins Returns star, Emily Blunt, looks stunning in a bright red off-the-shoulder dress at the 30th Annual Palm Springs International Film Festival Film Awards Gala.

Danny DeVito joins 'Jumanji' sequel

LOS ANGELES, JAN 5 (PTI): Actor Danny DeVito has joined the cast of Dwayne Johnson's "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" sequel.

Kevin Hart, Jack Black and Karen Gillan are also returning for the sequel, reported Variety. Jake Kasdan is coming back as the director.

"The magic of Jumanji" is who becomes who. And the idea of Danny DeVito joining our cast was too irresistible and something we knew we wanted to deliver to our audience this upcoming Christmas. Dwayne Claus loves everyone," Johnson said.

"Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" followed a group of four teens transported into the world of Jumanji, where they turn into their adult avatars. The setting

is now a video game instead of a board game, on which the book and original 1995 film, featuring Robin Williams, were based. Scott



Rosenberg, Kasdan and Jeff Pinkner have penned the script of the sequel.

Natalie Portman says being sexualised as child star was not her doing

Natalie Portman has said she knows what it feels like for a person to be sexualised, something that she has tried to show in her film "Vox Lux".

The actor says her performance in the new film, where she plays a troubled pop star who survived a terrible event during her childhood, comes from the same personal experiences.

"You see in this film how a young girl is packaged into this brand, and it's kind of separate from her. I experienced a different degree of it, in a different way, and obviously I have very different support system than the character in the movie, but you see what the culture wants from you, or demands from you and wants to put out there," Portman told People magazine.

The actor was just 13 when she made her feature film debut opposite Jean Reno in Luc Besson's "Leon: The Professional".

Portman, however, said she has come to terms with the issue after all these years.

"I know I was sexualised in the ways that I was photographed or portrayed, and that was not my doing. That becomes a part of your public identity," she added.



Last year, the actor had opened up about receiving a particularly inappropriate piece of fan mail as a young teenager during the Women's March. "I understood very quickly, even

as a 13-year-old, that if I were to express myself sexually I would feel unsafe and that men would feel entitled to discuss and objectify my body to my great discomfort," Portman had said.

"I felt the need to cover my body and to inhibit my expression and my work in order to send my own message to the world that I'm someone worth of safety and respect," she added.

'Destroyer' director Karyn Kusama praises Nicole Kidman for honesty

LOS ANGELES, JAN 5 (PTI):

Nicole Kidman's honesty towards her craft made things easy for Karyn Kusama while directing "Destroyer", says the filmmaker.

The crime drama features the 51-year-old actor as an undercover LAPD officer who must take out members of a gang, years after her case was blown.

In an interview with IndieWire Filmmaker Toolkit, Kusama said her collaboration with the Oscar winner was the "most intense", an experience that she last witnessed while working with Michelle Rodriguez on sports

drama "Girlfight".

"I think the irony of comparing those two things is that part of Nicole's gift is she never shows up like, 'Oh I've got my bag of tricks, I'm just going to go into my bag of tricks, I've got this all figured out.' She's very open about not always finding her way through," she said.

"She's very open (and would) say, 'I think we need to explore here,' or, 'I'm not quite sure what to do.' That honesty actually makes my job so much easier because we can stop and say 'Let's talk, let's figure out what are we saying about this char-

acter, who is she in this moment' and we can have much more open-ended conversations... about what are we doing here," she added.

Kusama said the actor has always been clear as to what she can do and what she cannot. "That's how she framed it to me initially, that's why in many respects she convinced me of how right she was, she was searching," the director said.

"Destroyer" also features Toby Kebbell, Tatiana Maslany, Scoot McNairy, Bradley Whitford, and Sebastian Stan. The film had its world premiere at the Telluride Film Festival in August last year.

Vikings' to end after season 6



LOS ANGELES, JAN 5 (PTI): History's scripted series "Vikings" will be ending after the upcoming 20-episode sixth season.

The last season will air in two parts, with the first half slated to premiere later this year and the final ten episodes to air sometime in 2020, reported Deadline.

The Emmy nominated historical drama, which debuted in 2013, features Gustaf Skarsgard, Travis Fimmel, Alexander Ludwig and Kathryn Winnick.

Set in medieval Scandinavia, the series follows the story of the legendary Viking Ragnar Lothbrok, who is portrayed in the show as a farmer who rises to power after successfully raiding England. It's not long before Lothbrok becomes intent on exploring distant lands across the ocean.

According to the publication, "Vikings" creator Michael Hirst and studio MGM Television, are planning to extend the "Vikings" franchise with a new series.

Justin Timberlake returns to tour after vocal cord injury



LOS ANGELES, JAN 5 (PTI): Pop star Justin Timberlake is ready to restart his 'Man Of The Woods' tour two months after postponing numerous dates due to bruised vocal cords.

The singer shared the news on Instagram on Thursday night, one day before the tour resumed in Washington D.C. at the Capital One Arena.

"First of all, Happy New Year. Hope everybody had a good holiday. Second of all, D C we here. We're back. Can't wait. Excited, ya'll ready?" Timberlake said in a new clip he posted to Instagram.

He captioned the video, "And... we're back. See you tomorrow DC!"

Timberlake, 37, has been facing vocal

issues throughout the global tour, which is slated to run through April. In October, he announced on Instagram just hours before a show in New York City at Madison Square Garden that his doctors had ordered him to rest. He then postponed planned shows in Buffalo, New York, and Tacoma, Washington. His November Los Angeles concert was to be his first since the injury, but that too was ultimately postponed.

And in early December, Timberlake was forced to postpone another month due to a slower recovery time than initially expected.

The singer previously had an operation to remove his throat nodules benign growths on the vocal cords in 2005.

ARIES: Your rise to the top can wait no longer! On Saturday, the solar (new moon) eclipse in Capricorn powers up your tenth house of career ambition and success, dangling an irresistible carrot in front of you. Talk about a power surge! But before you go charging into action Aries-style—i.e., spontaneously and without a solid game plan—spend some time thinking about your goals and visualizing yourself exactly where you want to be!

TAURUS: You're in your social element today, as messenger Mercury teams up with your co-ruler innovative Uranus in your friendship houses. Even if you're up to your eyebrows in back-to-the-grind undertakings, there's no reason you can't connect with people while you're hustling and bustling. Catch up with a friend during your commute; listen to an inspiring podcast while paying bills. Or cut your task time in half by asking a colleague to help you with a project!

GEMINI: Thinking of a mellow NYE, Gemini? Think again! Before the stroke of midnight, firebrand Mars rushes

into Aries and your eleventh house of groups, which means more will definitely be merrier. Early in the day, set some lofty intentions, perhaps writing them down in a dedicated journal or making a vision board that will inspire you on a daily basis.

CANCER: Upgrade to the VIP tickets, Cancer. Shortly before the ball drops on 2019, uncompromising Mars rushes into Aries and your prestigious tenth house until February 14. You've got grand plans for the year ahead, and it all starts NOW. Tonight, you practically owe yourself an upscale celebration.

LEO: You may still be digesting Christmas cookies, but you can start burning off those holiday indulgences now. Today, as the life-giving Sun links up with disciplined Saturn in your sixth house of wellbeing, you may find sticking to an exercise routine or a healthy-eating plan easier than ever. Exploit this planetary lift by diving in headfirst. Join a gym—or become a regular at yours—and find a class that will keep you pumped up. In

the food department, experiment with cutting back on just one "evil," like sugar or processed food.

VIRGO: Simmer down! You want to tune out the outer world and listen for messages from your muse today, as the creative Sun winks at structured Saturn in Capricorn and your fifth house of self-expression. If you've been taking your talents for granted, it's time to get a little more about serious about them. Withhold judgment for now and just start devoting a few hours a week (and more on weekends) to pursuing your craft—whatever it may be. Romance could reach a passionate peak, but you need to know if the object of your affections is playing for keeps. Ask!

LIBRA: You'll be in your gracious, glamorous element this NYE as passionate Mars launches a six-week tour through Aries and your seventh house of relationships (aka "the Libra house").

SCORPIO: This might not be the NYE that sees you dancing on the bar till dawn, but considering the year of wild growth that's behind you, a gentler pace is fine

by you—isn't it, Scorpio? Thanks to your co-ruler Mars settling into Aries and your sixth house of self-care this evening, 2018 sinks out more like a kitten than a lion. You'll be just as happy (happier, probably) bidding adieu to the year in a meditation circle, candlelight yoga class or perhaps on some sandy beach

SAGITTARIUS: Party costume: Check. Crazy shoes and accessories: Check! Wild hair and makeup: Up to you, Archer, but why not? This NYE gets a turbo-charge from passionate Mars. Just before midnight, the red planet bursts into Aries and your festive, flamboyant fifth house until February 14. Since the fifth house also rules fame, this NYE (and the first six weeks of 2019) could turn into one giant photo op for you and your crew.

CAPRICORN: How's this for a perfect NYE gameplan: Get yourself suitably dressed up; have everyone stop by just as the bubbly reaches the perfect temperature; cue up your killer playlist; and let the rest unfold spontaneously. With passionate Mars nestling into your domestic quarters

shortly before the ball drops, you may relish the thought of staying home and turning your living room into "the club."

AQUARIUS: Wait a second there, Water Bearer. If you're about to hit Go on a team project without running your decisions up the flagpole, you need to do a rethink on that. Last we checked, democracy still rules. And with savvy Mercury in your collaborative zone connected with healer-feeler Chiron in Pisces, you have no business trying to be the whole voting committee!

PISCES: How happy are you with your so-called soul squad? Saturday's solar (new moon) eclipse in Capricorn activates your eleventh house of friendship and community. Even if you fancy yourself a "gregarious introvert," there's no denying that the people you surround yourself with have a strong influence on your life—and your day-to-day moods. But if any of those so-called friends don't have your back, it's time to thin the herd. You don't have to have a dramatic confrontation; just begin searching for a more high-vibe tribe, and in places you may not have frequented before.