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Summit **T**IMES



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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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CM ATTENDS PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF KEWZING SR SEC SCHOOL Statue of Gyalwa Ngadak Chenpo inaugurated

KEWZING, 26 DEC (IPR):

Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling attended the valedictory function of the Platinum Jubilee celebration at Government Senior Secondary School, (GSSS) Kewzing today. Also present were SLA Speaker, KN Rai, Minister Energy and Power Department cum Area MLA, DD Bhutia alongside Principal GSSS, ML Koirala, Adhakshyas, teachers, School Management Committee (SMC), Panchayats, students and public alike.

At the onset, the Chief Minister inaugurated the statue of Gyalwa Ngadak Sempa Chenpo Phuntshog Rinzing who is credited with creating the holy



spring water in Kewzing. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister extended his congratulations to the former and present students

and staff of Kewzing Senior Secondary School. He also highlighted the eventful journey of this school from its inception to the present status

and how this school has achieved holistic success which has not just been confined to bookish knowledge. The CM also applauded the various

initiative undertaken by the school such as effective waste management, ban on the use of plastic, engaging the students an

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DC West gets 'Champions of Change' award in New Delhi



GYALSHING, 26 DEC (IPR):

District Collector, West Sikkim, Dr. A. B. Karki was awarded with the 'Champions of Change' award instituted in memory of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Vice President of India, Venkaiah Naidu presented the award to Dr. A. B. Karki in a function held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

Dr Karki was awarded for his innovative practices and immense contribution in the District with programs like the 'District Administration at your Doorstep' and 'File to Field' aimed for the public convenience

living in the remote areas of West Sikkim, Chalk and Duster Free Classrooms and also the promotion of organic farming in rural areas which added up in bringing about significant changes in West Sikkim.

The 'Champions of Change' awardees are selected after thorough scrutiny by an esteemed jury, headed by K. G. Balakrishnan, Former CJI; Justice Gyan Sudha Misra, Former Justice (SC); S. Y. Quraishi, Former Election Commissioner; Sonal Man Singh, Padma Vibhushan and Raja

Sabha MP; Yaduendra Mathur, NITI AAYOG Addl. Secy; Anil Kumar Sinha, Former CBI Director and Subhash Ghai, Filmmaker.

The 'Champions of Change' awards are meant to felicitate people who have immensely contributed and brought about significant change in the Aspirational Districts.

The West District under the supervision of the District Collector was also recently nominated as the 2nd Best Performing District under the 'Aspirational District Program' by the NITI AAYOG.

SKM condemns Govt circular directing officials to attend SDF function

Circular is proof of dictatorship in Sikkim - Jacob Khaling

SAGAR CHETTRI GANGTOK, 26 DEC:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has strongly criticised and condemned a recent circular of the State Government with directives to government officials to attend the function celebrating 24 years of Sikkim Democratic Front government to be held on 28 Dec at Saramsa Garden. The party has stressed that this circular is a misuse of power and unfair to government employees.

Addressing a press conference here this afternoon, SKM spokesperson, Jacob Khaling said that the priority of the State Government should be the work of the people and not such celebrations at the expense of the public exchequer. He asserted that the State machinery should be used in the interest of Sikkim and its people.

Mr Khaling added that such a circular is

possible only under dictatorship and not a democracy.

However, striking a sarcastic tone he urged the government employees to attend the function to give a grand farewell to the Chief Minister.

SKM educated unemployed youth wing general secretary, Tshering W Lepcha stated that following the success of the SKM convention at Rolu the ruling government has immediately issued this circular directing government officials to attend the function compulsory. It should have at least been made voluntary and not mandatory, he added.

Mr Lepcha further said that organising such a meeting with elections nearing is misuse of power and amounts to threatening government employees. While criticising the circular, he stated that the circular was also a violation of rule 5 of the Central



Civil Service Rules, 1964.

Likewise, SKM student's wing general secretary, Chopel Sherpa alleged that the function was just to gain political mileage for the 2019 election.

On the recent speech of Daney Bhutia, a video clip of which went viral on social media, the SKM spokesperson stated that SDF has been making this

video viral on social media since they do not have anything else to offer to the Sikkimese public.

"SKM party and its leader have already condemned the speech given by Daney Bhutia and following the speech the party has not given him membership so far," he said.

He maintained that Mr Bhutia's speech does not in any way reflect

SKM's stand.

"SKM is very serious about politics and we are here to build Sikkim," he said.

SKM has also expressed gratitude to all those who participated and gave their contributions for the success of its youth and women convention at Rolu in South Sikkim.

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Gangtok power supply to be restored soon: MLA

REBYNA RANA GANGTOK, 26 DEC:

Gangtok has been facing frequent power cuts for the past few weeks. The most affected areas are Kazi Road, MG Marg, Nam Nang and Tibet road.

Gangtok MLA, Pintso Chopel Lepcha has agreed that there is a power supply problem regarding which he met the Power Secretary, KB Kunwar, today, to understand the reasons behind the frequent power cuts.

The issue has been resolved and power supply will be back to normal in a few days, he said.

The MLA further said increasing load on the power stations is a problem and a proposal for a separate power

sub-station for Gangtok is in the pipeline. We are hopeful that it will be approved shortly and this will boost the power supply in Gangtok, he added.

"There are technical problems from time to time and sometimes there are line faults and to correct these problems we need to stop power supply for some time. It is not due to shortage of power supply but the problem is due to technical faults; and during maintenance there can be some power outages. The Department is trying its very best to stop this kind of outages. In winters, power consumption is slightly higher than the summer season so there will be technical faults and to correct them we



have to cut the power supply for some time," said Power Secretary, Mr Kunwar.

The Secretary also informed that the 33/11 KV power substation shall be installed in the DPH power station and the proposal has already been made.

All Sikkim Women's Football tournament gets underway

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 26 DEC:

The first edition of the All Sikkim Women's Football Tournament kicked off here at Paljor Stadium today.

In the inaugural match, Dzongu Girls Football Club registered a convincing 4-1 victory over Women's Football Academy, Gyalshing.

In another match, Pragati Sangh, Soreng, downed Girls Football Club, South Sikkim, 2-1.

The inaugural match had international footballers Sanju Pradhan and Nirmal Chettri as the chief guests accompanied by SFA president

Menla Ethenpa and R Ongmu, the women's wing chairperson of the SFA, among others.

On Thursday, the first match will be played between Corinthian Girls FC, Pakyong, and Soreng Girls Academy, followed by Himalayan Girls Football Club, Gangtok, taking on Maneybong Dentam Girls Academy, West Sikkim.

The tournament is being organised by the women's wing of Sikkim Football Association and features eight teams from all four districts.

The SFA president informs that the associ-



ation is organising the tournament for the first time and that this will henceforth be an annual event on the SFA calendar.

He said that the main objective behind

the tournament was to support women's empowerment in Sikkim by providing them better exposure and regular platform to make a career in football.

NEW FRIENDS SNOOKER CLUB

5TH WINTER OPEN SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP 2019

Winner : 85,000/- + Trophy

Runners Up : 42,000/- + Trophy

High Break : 10,000/- + Trophy

Best Player : 8,000/- + Trophy

"This tournament is organised in order to enhance and experience the beauty of the game, and also inspire the younger generation to learn and excel."

Players from: Delhi, Nepal, Bhutan, West Bengal & Assam

Venue : New Friends Snooker Club, Bhutia Busty, Namchi
Date : 5th to 9th January 2019
*Lodging free for out station players

Media Partners: SummitTIMES

Gangtok on Thursday, 27 Dec

Temp: 10°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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Com

Swaminath Prasad elected SBJM president

REBYNA RANA GANGTOK, 26 DEC:

Swaminath Prasad has been elected president of the Sikkim Bihari Jagaran Manch (SBJM) Central Committee with Kameshwar Trivedi as vice president, Birendra Prasad as general secretary, Manoj Kumar Gupta as joint secretary and Parmeshor Prasad as treasurer.

The SBJM elections were held at Bihari Dharamsala, Singtam, on 20 Dec, under the guidance of patron, Ram Punjan Singh.

Addressing a press conference here today, the SBJM president informed that the election was held after a gap of four years and were carried out in a "very peaceful manner".

As for the main agen-

da for SBJM now, he said that the organization will be working unitedly to ensure wellness and upliftment of all members of the community and Sikkim.

SBJM was formed in 1994 and has 32 branches in Sikkim. The central committee now has 25 members and gives priority to education and health sectors.

SBJM also plans to hold a public meeting in Rangpo in the last week of February 2019.

This will be only the second jan sabha of the organisation, the first having been held 25 years ago in Rangpo.

The press meet was also attended by general secretary Birendra Prasad and Joint Secretary Manoj Kumar Gupta.

Jorethang Maghey Mela 2019 coordination meeting held

JORETHANG, 26 DEC (IPR):

The third preparatory meeting for the state-level Jorethang Maghey Mela 2019 was held at the conference hall of Green Park, Jorethang, under the chairmanship of Health & IPR Minister, area MLA AK Ghatani today.

The meeting was attended by DC (South), Prabhakar Verma, SDM Jorethang, Tshering Bhutia, HOD's of various government departments from South and West districts, Nodal Officers, NJMC members, stakeholders, panchayats, school heads, police and fire personnel alongside members of the Jorethang Maghey Mela celebrations committee 2019.

The Minister, who is also the Chief Patron of the organizing committee, addressed the meeting and updated the gathering about the state level meeting held in Gangtok with regard to Maghe Mela 2019.

He called for collective shared responsibility by the concerned officials as well as the public and spoke at length about how public and departmental participation with mutual assistance from each other would ensure regional as well as international success of Maghey Mela 2019.

He also called on the officials to identify and mobilise stakeholders from both South and West districts and to further enable them to actively and enthusiastically participate in planning the mela.

Allocating roles and responsibilities to respective individuals and line departments, he called for active participation and also issued clear directives regarding law & order, safety measures, water and uninterrupted electricity supply.

The Minister further highlighted the various aspects of the mela corresponding to cultural programs, traditional



folk cultural presentation, rural tourism, rural sports, Saras fair, Aarogya CATCH programme, job mela/career counselling, adventure sports, expo exhibition, art gallery, flower show, food court, painting competition, meena and mini fair, street magic show, impromptu events and so on.

SDM Jorethang and President Jorethang Maghey Mela, in his welcome address, briefed the gathering about the significance of observing the state-level program with its much needed

sheen and glory. A blueprint of land segregation for various components of Jorethang Maghey Mela 2019 was also presented during the course of the program.

General secretary of the Jorethang Maghey Mela committee 2019, Jigme Namgyal also addressed the meeting where he spoke about the theme of the mela "Relive old memories".

He also informed that this year will see a series of pre-mela activities such as Sikkim Run, Premier Badminton League tournament and a Yoga

demonstration.

The meeting also saw a comprehensive walk-through on new events that will emphasise the achievements of the government made in the last 24 years, a buyers-sellers meet, pension and cheque distribution to various beneficiaries, start-up scheme benefit distribution to beneficiaries from Zoom Salghari constituency etc.

Discussions on responsibilities allocated to each department and various administrative and management wings were also held.

Two-day mask dance at Lingthem



WANGCHUK BHUTIA DZONGU, 25 DEC:

Two-day mask dance was organised at Rikzing Chopel Targeling Monastery at Lingthem in Upper Dzongu, North Sikkim on 25 Dec. The first day of the event was witnessed by Deputy Speaker SLA cum Dz-

ongu MLA, Sonam Gyatso Lepcha who was accompanied by Chairperson, SNT, Pintsong Namgyal Lepcha; SDM, Dzongu, Tshering Dorjee Bhutia; Panchayat members and the general public.

The event was organised by Gumpa committee, Lingthem.

Organising committee member, Jay Jay Lepcha, extended gratitude on behalf of the committee to all the devotees and well wishers for supporting the event.

Special prayer was also held which was led by the head lama of the monastery.

Gor School hosts Lepcha traditional food competition

SUMMIT REPORT DZONGU, 26 DEC:

Lepcha traditional food competition was held at Gor Secondary School, Lower Dzongu, North Sikkim on the occasion of annual day celebration today. The competition was held among four houses of the school. Different kinds of delicious Lepcha dishes were prepared which were also tasted by chief guest, Deputy Speaker SLA cum area MLA, Sonam Gyatso Lepcha.

The judge of the competition, Naren Sharma [Nutrition Inspector] tasted the food and declared Pandim Chu house the winners followed by Siniolchu and Tendong Chu in second and third positions respectively.

Headmistress, Tseten Lhamu Lepcha, highlighted the annual activities of the school and also underlined the motive behind organising the food competition. Also in the function, the plant biodiversity bulletin for

Lum/Gor/Sangtok GPU compiled by the school was released by the chief guest.

Prizes were also distributed to meritorious students who have excelled in studies and for best class in waste collection, best class in bottle collection, best vegetable and flower garden, etc.

The function was also attended by ADC Development, KR Limboo; Range Officer, Fisheries, Sonam Lepcha; Assistant Director, HRDD, HL Giri; Zilla Panchayat, Tshering Gyatso Lepcha; Panchayat President, Phurmit Lepcha and the parents.

Gor Secondary School under the aegis of its headmistress has initiated the implementation of handmade products made by the teachers and the students as their extracurricular activities. Handmade greeting cards, souvenir, badges etc. were used in the function instead of store bought products.

Annual day function at Springdale School Dikchu



SUMMIT REPORT DIKCHU, 26 DEC:

The Springdale School Dikchu conducted its annual day function on 25 Dec with the participation of parents, teachers and students.

The celebration started with the brief introduction of the celebration and the school activities by a teacher of the school, Nima Choden Lepcha. While the Chairperson of the

School, Tseten Lhamu Lepcha spoke on the importance of education. She also urged the parents for their constant cooperation in moulding the children's better future.

The annual day celebration today witnessed a colourful array of activities performed by the students while the children from the kindergarten mesmerized the audience with their

welcome song.

The celebration concluded with the presentation of academic and endowment awards for the meritorious students. The Springdale family has extended gratitude to the parents and well-wishers to be a part of this celebration and making it a success. The function ended with the vote of thanks being delivered by Vice Principal, Marashi Tamang.

All Sikkim Women's Football..

He pointed out that Anju Tamang, Lako Phuti Bhutia and other women footballers from Sikkim have already proved that there were opportunities and potential in football for women.

"AIFF has also started a national women's league and five women footballers from Sikkim have been playing for different clubs. So, another objective of this tournament is to spot talented footballers and organise camps for them to put together an SFA Women's XI for the national league," Mr Ethenpa said.

SKM condemns Govt...

SKM youth wing chief convener, Janak Gurung, youth general secretary, Sahadev Sharma and Nari Morcha chief convener, Kala Rai stated that it was a historic event with participants from all corners of the State.

They also informed that around 6000 participants took part in the youth convention and around 2500 participants in the women convention.

"The main objective of the event was to empower youth and women to ensure their active participation in politics and the State building process for a better Sikkim," they said. They thanked all participants for their cooperation in making the event successful.

CM ATTENDS PLATINUM JUBILEE...

d teachers in Organic Farming, which in turn has transformed this school into an exemplary one which should be emulated by other schools present in the state.

The CM also announced that science and commerce streams in the Kewzing Senior Secondary School will commence from next year onwards. He also sanctioned additional 12 rooms for the smooth functioning of the school. Additionally, the Chief Minister also agreed to rename the school in memory of the various land donors after consultations.

Regarding the educational scenario of the State, the Chief Minister informed that the State Government is spending at least 20% of the budget on upgradation of education. He updated that on 15 Jan the foundation stone for the Medical College will be laid, where education will be free for students of Sikkim which will in turn bring Sikkim at the forefront with regards to medical education.

He also emphasized the rise of Artificial Intelligence and underlined how advanced technology will play a crucial function in directing the fate of the world. He encouraged students to pursue this field.

The CM also added that vacancies for nurses and police personnel will be announced soon.

Minister DD Bhutia touched upon the brief history of the school and spoke about the importance of education that this school has provided to students of the locality. He also urged the public of the locality to work in coordination in order to upgrade the school. Moreover, he emphasized that the school should consistently strive to lead in all the student centric competitive fields conducted at state and national level.

On the day, the CM felicitated ex-students and teachers of the school along with the meritorious students Sunil Chettri who achieved cent percent in class X CBSE and Karma Wangchuk Bhutia who got selected in under 16 BCCI team.

The school also felicitated the Chief Minister for bringing about great honour and prestige in terms of Organic Farming and education at domestic and global level.

During the course of the program Principal GSSS, ML Koirala also detailed the school report in which he informed about the establishment of the school and other features that the school has adopted till date.

Free eye camp held at Jorethang



JORETHANG, 26 DEC (IPR):

A daylong free Eye check-up camp organised by Drishyam Eye Care and Surgical Centre was held at Mahatma Gandhi lane in Jorethang today.

Patients from various places of South and West districts availed the fa-

cilities provided through the free camp.

Minister Health-cum-MLA of Zoom Salghari constituency, Arjun Kumar Ghatani along with councillors from Nayabazaar Jorethang Municipal Council welcomed and thanked the medical team led by Ophthalmol-

ogist, Dr. Arati Diyali, for successfully conducting the camp.

The camp was attended by 355 patients.

Patients detected with cataract problem will be operated at Drishyam Eye Care & Surgical Centre located in Gangtok.

All Sikkim Lharipa Association formed

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 26 DEC:

A meeting of traditional Buddhist artists (Lharipa) was held today here in the capital under the chairmanship of Norden Temba Sherpa. During the meeting, a new Association named All Sikkim Lharipa Association (ASLA) was formed.

Norden Temba Sherpa has been nominated as president of ASLA, general secretary, Tashi Norbu Ta-

mang, joint secretary, Tenzing Namgyal Peaching, treasurer, Tashi Dorjee Lepcha, assistant treasurer Paljor Bhutia, chief co-ordinator, Sangey Tamang and Karma Tenzing Bhutia as a publicity secretary.

Speaking to media persons, president Norden Temba Sherpa informed that the main objective of this association is to preserve their culture and tradition. According to Mr Sherpa, under

the direction of the State Government, the Ecclesiastical department had conducted seven years training and after completion of the training a certificate was given to the trainees but they are yet to get a job.

He claimed that the department has been providing jobs to non-locals and appealed to the government to give them opportunity because they are all trained.

SDM Dzongu felicitated



WANGCHUK BHUTIA DZONGU, 26 DEC:

Tshering Dorjee Bhutia from Dzongu was felicitated by Lingdong-Borfok Gram Panchayat unit of Dzongu in a function held at Government Primary School Borfok on 25 Dec.

The letter of felicitation was handed over by Deputy Speaker cum area MLA, Sonam Gyatso Lepcha who attended the function as chief guest. The Deputy Speaker also inaugurated the newly constructed mid-day meal shed. The function also saw the distribution of prizes to students who have been helping in collecting waste in large quantities. Lingdong School is on a mission to make the area plastic free where all sweet wrappers

have been used to make button flowers, etc.

He also stated that people of Dzongu should not forget the development initiated by the government under the leadership of Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling.

The chief guest urged all the people to keep their traditions alive. The Deputy Speaker also appreciated the efforts of SDM Dzongu in serving the people of the area and urged others to take inspiration from him.

The function also saw the finals of the football tournament. In women's football, Bringkatam defeated Upper Borfok. Likewise, in Lungzye Chu men's football, Upper Borfok defeated Punol Seven and lifted the trophy.

Entel presents TV set to customer as Christmas gift



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 26 DEC:**

Sikkim is celebrating Christmas with joy everywhere and Entel Motors hoped to spread some joy as well by handing over a 32 inch LED television set to a customer who bought a brand new Alto 800. Tika Maya Gurung of Rongli was chosen through a lucky draw to be presented with the celebration gift from Entel Motors. The gift was presented to Ms Gurung by Debasish Sarkar [Entel Motors Sales Head] and Richa P Sharma [Assistant Manager Entel Motors].

MLA hands over certs and trophy to national interschool band compt winners



JORETHANG, 26 DEC (IPR): Minister AK Ghataani, who also happens to be the concerned area MLA, presented certificates and trophy to band members of Jorethang Senior Secondary School who secured 1st position at the National Inter-School Band Competition held in New Delhi recently. Their felicitation was held at a meeting organised at

Jorethang SSS position at Green Park today. He congratulated and lauded the efforts of the band and the school. Principal, Jorethang Sr. Secondary School, Archana Gurung, also expressed gratitude on behalf of the school to the area MLA for his initiatives, guidance and support making the band display team of Jorethang SSS position

Minister hands financial assistance to two temples

JORETHANG, 26 DEC (IPR): Minister-cum Area MLA of Salghari Zoom constituency, Arjun Kumar Ghataani, handed over sanction order of financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh each to the Managing Committee of Singha Devi Mandir and Sun Temple, Upper Sisney, today.

At the outset, the Minister met the committee members of Singha Devi Mandir at Kamal Taar and

handed over the sanctioned order. The committee expressed their gratitude to the state government for fulfilling their long pending demand. Thereafter, he chaired a meeting with the business community and handed over sanction order of financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh to the Managing Committee of Sun Temple at Nayabazar.

During his interaction, the Minister talked about the importance and priority given to the business community along with other citizens in various aspects, under inclusive development of the Government led by the Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling. The Minister also advised to start construction of the Sun Temple at the earliest with the cooperation and contributions of all members of the community.

Wandering Souls of Sikkim have found their focus – the young

**NITESH R PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 26 DEC:**

Some ventures of like-minded individuals can create beautiful opportunities for the young and the talented.

A lecturer by profession, Pranay Khatiwara, founded Wandering Souls of Sikkim, a webzine and youth forum in 2012.

"I founded it with the objective to provide a platform for the young minds of Sikkim. We organised a college fest in February which around 15 colleges of Sikkim participated in," he says.

WSOS has also organised interschool scholastic competitions at various places.

Recently, on 03 Dec, they successfully organised "NEEV: A foundation for better future", an interschool festival at Pakyong in which around 300 students from 15-20 schools from around Pakyong participated.

They have begun setting up libraries and reading corners in various schools in the villages of Sikkim, the latest being one at Pacheykhani school, where, on 17 Dec, a reading corner stocked with 1,200 books, was inaugurated.

"We intend to set up similar reading corners at other places also and are in the process of collecting

contributions in the form of either books or cash," he shares.

He also informs that on the anvil are more interschool scholastic events with support from local organisations and agencies at the villages.

Around 30-35 college and university students and others are engaged as volunteers with WSOS currently.

WSOS can be contacted through their website www.wonderingsoulsosikkim.com.

They can also be reached through their Instagram and Facebook handles at Wandering Souls of Sikkim.

NATIONAL HYDROLOGY PROJECT INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB) E-Procurement Notice

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING
Bid No: NHP-01 Online Re-Tender-02 of 2018-19.

- The Government of India has received financing from the **World Bank** towards the cost of **National Hydrology Project** and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts' for construction of works as detailed below.
- Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding procedures agreed with the World Bank. Bidding is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers, January 2011.
- Bidders from India should, however, be registered with any State Governments/ Government of India, or State/Central Government Undertakings. The bidders/sub-contractors should also possess valid license to undertake specialised works as per Section III, (1.3). Bidders from India, who are not registered as above, on the date of bidding, can also participate provided they get themselves registered by the time of contract signing, if they become successful bidders. **Bidders are advised to note the clauses on eligibility (Section I Clause 4) and minimum qualification criteria (Section III – Evaluation and Qualification Criteria), to qualify for the award of the contract.** In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 of the World Bank's Guidelines setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.
- Bidding documents are available online on www.sikkimtender.gov.in (website) from 31/12/18 to 31/01/19. The bidders would be responsible for ensuring that any addenda available on the website is also downloaded and incorporated.
- Bids must be submitted online on www.sikkimtender.gov.in on or before 11:00 hours on 31/01/2019 and the 'Technical Part' of the bids will be opened online on 31/01/2019 at 11:30 hours.

Name of Work	Bid Security (Rs.)	Cost of Document (Rs.)	Period of Completion
Construction of State Water Resources Information Data Centre under National Hydrology Project at Sokeythang, Tadong.	880000.00	5,000.00	18 months

R.O. No. 556/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19
Date: 26.12.18

LAND FOR SALE
BL Plot, 60x60, both side road, Lower Syari, Near Ranipool, Land is almost flat. Contact 7384620040, 7477406169.

"Namchi Smart City Limited,
UD HD Building, kavi Agam singh Road,
Namchi- 737126 South Sikkim"

Corrigendum

This is to inform that an 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 & vol 3 no 316 dt. 11.12.2018 as below:

- Sl.NO. 4 Pedestrian Walkway from Namchi Bazar to Entry Gate (Job-A) the bid value should have been 138.84 instead of 13.86.
- Sl.NO.5 Pedestrian Walkway from Namchi Bazar to Entry Gate (Job-B) the bid value should have been 107.37 instead of 10.74.
- Sl.NO. 6 Pedestrian Walkway from Namchi Bazar to Entry Gate (Job-C) the bid value should have been 107.37 instead of 10.74.
- Sl.NO. 8 Pedestrian Walkway from Bhanjyang Raod near Jit Bahadur House, Upper boomtar to Tenzing Lama House (Job-A) the bid value should have been 25.25 instead of 9.83.
- Sl.NO. 8 Pedestrian Walkway from Tenzing Lama House to Housing colony (Job-B) the bid value should have been 9.83 instead of 25.25.

B. Likewise in the Last para caption : 04. INVITATION FOR BIDS" under the sl.no. 1. Under Name of Works. Affordable Housing at Gangap War, Dambudara Ward, Lower Ghurpisey Ward, Upper Ghurpisey Ward, Upper Singithang Ward, Purano Namchi Ward the beneficiaries should have read 85 nos instead of 84 nos and the bid value should have been 998.75 instead of 987.00.

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

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer,
Namchi Smart City Limited (NSCL)
Namchi, South Sikkim.
Dated: 24.12.2018

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BREEZA celebration Package
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STUDY ZONE
ADMISSION OPEN

STUDY ZONE
Mr. Dawchung Lepcha (Chairperson)

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

OUR COURSE OBJECTIVES:

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

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SummitTIMES

Real Women's Empowerment Still Awaited in Sikkim

Denials of Identity require consensus and wider public engagement

Sikkim Chronicle recently featured an interesting discussion between SDF and SKM representatives about women's empowerment in Sikkim. It would have been interesting to see how the two parties differ on interventions required to achieve true gender equality in Sikkim, but like with most political discussions, it too became a debate over claims and criticisms. Yes, the discussion was very civil but one did not get a sense of the ideological positions of the two parties and how they differ on what the core issues keeping equality at bay were. One hopes though that such political debates arrive more often in Sikkim and with that, the nature of discussions also matures.

That said, social indicators across the board suggest that Sikkimese women enjoy a better status than women in most other parts of the country. But that should hardly be a comparison to gloat over. While the shame of female foeticide remains unheard of, and dowry related harassments have not reached worrisome levels here, there still remain other issues which hamstringing equality for women in Sikkim. Given that Sikkim has had a largely peaceful and consistently stable past two decades, one would have expected it to have made stronger strides towards gender equality and empowerment. There will be those who will not agree, but let's face it, gender equality evades Sikkim. The State Government has initiated several policy decisions to bring women's issues to centre-stage and has even attempted some forward-thinking legislations within the space available to it, but the societal engagement required to see such plans through and institutionalise gender equality have unfortunately not come about yet.

Empowerments that governance can deliver on its own have made rapid strides in Sikkim. For instance, female literacy rate has nearly quadrupled in the past three decades from 22% in 1981 to 76% as of 2011, and now Sikkim is fully literate. This leap has been even more substantial in rural Sikkim where female literacy has gone up from 18% in 1981 to 73% in 2011! What also bodes well for the future is that literacy levels were handsomely higher among women aged between 15 to 24 years, around 95% of whom are literate (as per State Govt records as of 2007-08). Impressively for Sikkim, the gender parity index in enrolment for higher education and professional courses on government nomination has been tilting in favour of women of late. As per data released by the Human Resource Development Department of the Government of Sikkim, 54% of the students nominated for higher studies by the State Government were women in 2005. In 2010, this share had slipped but was still higher than males at 52%. It will be interesting to see what the latest stats on this reveal.

What this improvement could help achieve for Sikkim is a stronger representation of women in the organised workforce. As things stand though, even though there is 30% job reservation for women in State Government employment, women represent only 21% of the total officers in the Groups A and B category. Even here, they are seen more in the traditionally established vocations for women in the State Agricultural Engineering Service, Health Services and Education. In recent years though, women have managed to outgrow the quota by occupying 34% of the posts in the State Civil Services. It helps their ambition to know that the first Sikkimese to clear the UPSC exams to become an IAS officer was a woman – Rinchen Ongmu, IAS batch of 1979, who retired some years ago as the Chief Secretary to the Government of Sikkim and has since been appointed the Chief Administrator of the State. And yes, she was the first lady to become CS in Sikkim, and thus far, also the only one.

This is not a condescending paean to woman power in Sikkim, but an effort to highlight that the fact that they are reaching higher despite a societal indifference to their rights. They manage all this despite a legacy of rules, old laws and practices which are regressively sexist. The linking of a woman's status and identity as a Sikkimese to her father and husband, and refusing her the right to pass on her independent identity to her children is unfair and discriminatory. Similarly, women in Sikkim are particularly discriminated against in that they still do not enjoy any legal rights to family property, neither of their parents' nor of their husband's. They can acquire a share of family property only by way of a gift or through a will, but cannot otherwise make any claims to it as a matter of right under law. Yes, a small step towards ensuring some measure of equal property rights at least for unmarried daughters and surviving wives was attempted by the State Government in the year 2008 with the introduction of the Sikkim Succession Bill. Someone should ask what's happening with that and also read up on how offensive the Married Women's Property Regulation of 1962 is.

No one expects the past to be anything but regressive, but to perpetuate the same attitudes without concerted efforts to amend things, despite a governmental hint at more forward-thinking changes, is disheartening. These issues are still to receive any traction in the public domain. Perhaps the young will ask for better.

What's wrong with Huawei, and why are countries banning the Chinese telecommunications firm?

FRANK J. CILLUFFO & SHARON L. CARDASH
theconversation.com

The Chinese telecommunications company Huawei is under scrutiny around the globe over concerns that its close ties with the Chinese government present national security threats to the U.S., Europe and allied countries. Huawei, which denies all the allegations against it, is "the world's biggest supplier of telecoms gear" and has plans to "dominate the market" for the next generation of wireless communications, called 5G. But its hopes are threatened by governments around the world, which are restricting the company's prospects and even banning it from operating in some areas.

No Chinese company is fully independent of its government, which reserves the right to require companies to assist with intelligence gathering. Huawei is even more closely tied to the government than many Chinese firms: Its founder, Ren Zhengfei, is a former technologist in the People's Liberation Army. As his company grew, so did international concerns about whether Huawei equipment could be used to spy on companies and governments around the world.

As far back as 2003, the company was accused of stealing intellectual property, including from U.S.-based network hardware maker Cisco. The companies settled out of court, but Huawei has been accused of stealing other firms' intellectual property and violating international economic sanctions. Throughout 2018, a flurry of activity has signaled the level of concern in the international intelligence community, and pressure on the company – and other Chinese technology firms – has mounted.



MONTHS OF SETBACKS

In February, the heads of six U.S. intelligence agencies told a Senate committee they didn't trust Huawei or its rival ZTE, which is also based in China, and would recommend Americans not use the company's smartphones or other equipment.

On July 17, the intelligence chiefs of the U.S., Canada, the U.K., Australia and New Zealand reportedly met in person, in part to make plans to publicize their concerns about allowing Huawei equipment to operate in their countries and governments.

Two days later, the United Kingdom's government-run lab specifically set up to evaluate Huawei hardware and software reported finding "shortcomings" in Huawei's engineering processes that raised security risks. After a big push from the British government, Huawei agreed to spend US\$2 billion to address those problems.

In mid-August, the U.S. Congress passed, and President Donald Trump signed, a law specifically prohibiting U.S. government agencies from purchasing or using telecommunications and surveillance products from Chinese companies like ZTE and Huawei – both of which are named in the law.

What if consciousness is just a product of our non-conscious brain?

PETER HALLIGAN
theconversation.com

As the very word used to describe it has been "worn smooth by a million tongues", consciousness is a fertile topic for confusion. We all know what it is to be conscious. It is, basically, being aware of and responding to the world. Similarly, we all possess a common sense notion of how consciousness works. But common sense can be easily con-

sciousness processes are carried on beyond our awareness. For example, when picking up a pen we may know what we are going to write about but the selection and articulation of individual words are non-conscious processes.

The key driver behind this traditional distinction stems from our own powerful belief that causality links subjective awareness with the daily experience of appearing to have control over our thoughts, feelings and actions.

underpinning them.

This quote from George Miller – one of the founders of cognitive psychology – helps explain this idea. When one recalls something from memory, "consciousness gives no clue as to where the answer comes from; the processes that produce it are unconscious. It is the result of thinking, not the process of thinking, that appears spontaneously in consciousness".

Taking this further, we propose that subjective awareness – the inti-

ology. In this field conscious primacy is not nearly as prevalent as it is in psychology. Complex and intelligent design in living things are not assumed to be driven by conscious processes. Instead they are thought to come from adaptive processes which accrued through natural selection.

MOVING ON FROM THE DIVIDE

If we are indeed "subjects of unconscious authoring" then continuing to characterise psychological states in terms of being conscious and non-con-



fused. Consider these questions for example: if you felt pain in an amputated leg, where is the pain? If you say it is in your head, would it be in your head if your leg had not been amputated? If you say yes, then what reason have you for ever thinking you had a leg?

One source of confusion when explaining "consciousness" stems from common sense and formal accounts that frame the study of mental life. These are typically discussed in terms of a binary split between conscious intentional processes versus non-conscious involuntary processes – the latter of which are outside our awareness. When walking, for example, we have a conscious awareness of the intention to go somewhere. Yet putting one foot in front of the other is a non-conscious action.

Following this, most of us consider consciousness – our subjective awareness – to be responsible for creating and controlling our thoughts, memories and actions. At the same time, we recognise that some of these psy-

Over the past 100 years, however, a growing body of evidence has begun to question this binary distinction. There is now increasing agreement that most, if not all, of the contents of our psychological processes – our thoughts, beliefs, sensations, perceptions, emotions, intentions, actions and memories – are actually formed backstage by fast and efficient non-conscious brain systems.

THE NON-CONSCIOUS NATURE OF BEING

Previously, we argued that while undeniably real, the "experience of consciousness" or subjective awareness is precisely that – awareness. No more, no less. We proposed that while consciousness is created by brain systems, it has no causal relationship with or control over mental processes. The fact that personal awareness accompanies the contents of the personal narrative is causally compelling. But it is not necessarily relevant to understanding and explaining the psychological processes

mate signature experience of what it is like to be conscious – is itself a product of non-conscious processing. This observation, was well captured by pioneering social psychologist Daniel Wegner when he wrote that, "unconscious mechanisms create both conscious thought about action and the action, and also produce the sense of will we experience by perceiving the thought as the cause of the action".

Our proposition that both the subjective experience of consciousness (personal awareness) and associated psychological processes (thoughts, beliefs, ideas, intentions and more) are products of non-conscious processes is consistent with the fact that non-conscious automatic brain systems reliably carry out all of our core biological processes (such as respiration and digestion) efficiently, and often without our awareness.

It is also consistent with a wider prevailing observation found in the natural sciences – especially neurobi-

scious is unhelpful. It constrains the theoretical understanding of psychological processes. Furthermore, if all psychological processes and their products rely on non-conscious systems, then the idea that the brain has automatic and controlled processes needs a rethink too. It might be better to describe them as differences on a continuum of non-conscious processing, rather than alternative systems.

Such a proposal does not dispense with the common sense reality of one's personal qualitative experience, nor with the previous findings of cognitive neuroscience. However, it offers an opportunity to reduce some of the confusion that comes with use of the terms "consciousness" and "contents of consciousness". Both of which continue to imply that consciousness has a functional role in distinguishing psychological processes.

[the writer is Hon Professor of Neuropsychology, Cardiff University]

Assam court summons MoS Rajen Gohain in rape case

GUWAHATI, DEC 26 (PTI): The CJM court of Assam's Nagaon district has summoned Minister of State for Railways Rajen Gohain to appear before it on January 8, 2019 in connection with the alleged rape of a 24-year-old woman in that district.

In August this year, a case under Indian Penal Code sections 417 (punishment for cheating), 376 (rape) and 506 (criminal intimidation) was registered against Gohain for allegedly raping and threatening the married woman.

The summons, which became public Wednesday, was is-

sued on November 28. When contacted, Gohain told PTI, "I have heard that the court has issued a summons, but I have not received it yet. The case is totally false and I am a victim of political rivalry," he said.

The complaint alleged that the incident took place seven to eight months ago at the her home when her husband and other family members were not present.

Gohain, who has been representing the Nagaon Lok Sabha constituency since 1999, had claimed that the victim herself went to the court and wanted

to withdraw the case, which was not accepted.

Nagaon sadar police station officer-in-charge had said in August that the woman had pleaded at the court to withdraw the case, two days after the case was filed.

Both Gohain and the woman knew each other for a long time and the minister used to visit her home, a senior official of the Nagaon Police Station had said.

The minister's officer on special duty Sanjiv Goswami had then claimed that Gohain had filed some complaints of blackmailing against the woman and her family.

Govt making all efforts to rescue trapped miners: Meghalaya CM

SHILLONG, DEC 26 (PTI): The ruling NPP-BJP in Meghalaya on Wednesday contested Congress president Rahul Gandhi's jibe on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over 15 labourers trapped in a coal mine, saying the state government is making efforts to rescue them.

In a sharp attack against Modi, the Congress chief said 15 labourers trapped in the mine in Meghalaya since December 13 struggled for air while he strutted about on Assam's Bogibeel Bridge posing for cameras.

The prime minister inaugurated the bridge on Brahmaputra river Tuesday.

Gandhi also urged Modi to organise high pressure pumps for the rescue of the miners over media reports that the operation to rescue them is hampered by lack of equipment.

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, without mentioning Gandhi's comment, said there is no inaction and that the administration and the NDRF had really

worked hard to trace the miners, but unfortunately, the operation did not yield any result.

So far, 12 lakh litres of water has been pumped out of the mine, but it seems the whole river has gushed into the pit. Getting high-powered pumps and transporting them to the site of the mishap is not an easy task, he told a private news.

On if the rescue operation could be called off under such circumstances, Sangma said there is no question of aborting the rescue work.

The chief minister also hoped that the high-powered pumps would be available soon.

Sangma-led NPP's ally in the state, the BJP, also said the Meghalaya government is doing its best under the chief minister's leadership to bring the victims out of the rat-hole mine in East Jaintia Hills district.

"The government has done and is doing its best under Sangma. We have full faith in him. He has taken up the matter with the central government and to send bigger pumps,"



BJP Minister A L Hek told PTI.

The state government tried its best but water at the mine has not receded, he said.

The chief minister has written to Coal India requesting for the high-powered pumps, the BJP leader said.

East Jaintia Hills Deputy Commissioner F M Doph said district au-

thorities have taken up the matter with the state government and is awaiting a response.

The high-powered pumps, as advised by ace mining mishap expert Jaswant Singh Gill, are not available in the entire North East region, as far as we are aware, Doph told PTI.

Doph, who ordered temporary suspension of rescue operation last

Saturday, said until the bigger pumps are made available, the operations cannot resume.

Congress spokesperson H M Shangpliang told PTI that with Gandhi's intervention, "we hope the Centre will direct the state government to change its insensitive attitude and do what is necessary to help save lives".

IWAI team visits Tripura for Indo-Bangla waterway project

AGARTALA, DEC 26 (PTI): A four-member team of Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) Wednesday visited Srimantapur Land Customs Station (LCS) in Tripura to select the site for terminal building (jetty) for Indo-Bangla waterway project, official sources said.

The team led by IWAI Member Traffic, Sashi Bhusan Shukla called on Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb and held meeting on the ambitious Indo-Bangla waterway project - connecting Tripuras Gomati river with Bangladesh's Meghna (Dawodkandi).

Sukla informed the chief minister about the potential site for setting up terminal building at Srimantapur LCS in

Sepahijala district.

The IWAI team also met Tripura chief secretary L K Gupta and other senior state government officials.

"The IWAI wants 10 acres land for a big size terminal building at Srimantapur LCS but this much land is not available there. At best the government could offer 2 acres of land for setting up terminal building," said a senior official of the state Water Resource department said.

When contacted, principal secretary of Water Resource department, H Darlong confirmed the visit of IWAI team.

"We want a jetty to come up near Srimantapur LCS for hassle free transshipment of goods. According, I asked the

SDM to select a site near Srimantapur LCS," he said.

Darlong indicated IWAI would implement the ambitious project - connecting Gomati river with Meghna in Bangladesh through Dawodkandi area.

Presently ships and steamers are plying from Haldia (West Bengal) to Dawodkandi (Bangladesh), which is only 80 km from Tripuras Sonamura sub-division in Sepahijala district

Apart from building terminal building, dredging work would be done from Sonamura to Dawodkandi to access the existing waterway through Meghna, as per the waterway plan drawn by the IWAI, officials added.

Govt institutes annual awards to recognise excellent work in disaster management

NEW DELHI, DEC 26 (PTI): The Centre has instituted annual awards to recognise the excellent work done by individuals and institutions in the field of disaster management.

Three eligible institutions and individuals will be given the 'Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar' every year with cash rewards ranging from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 51 lakh, a statement issued by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said.

If the awardee is an institution, it will be given a certificate and a cash prize of Rs 51 lakh and the prize money will be utilised for disaster management-related activities only. If the awardee is an individual, the person shall receive a certificate and a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh, it said.

An application by an institution does not debar any individual from that institution to apply for the award in his individual capacity.

The statement said there is a need to recognise the efforts of individuals and organisations who have been working assiduously to alleviate the human suffering caused by disasters.

Only Indian nationals and Indian institutions can apply for the award.

For institutional awards, voluntary organisations, corporate entities, academic, research

institutions, response, uniformed forces or any other institution may apply for the award.

The applicant must have worked in the area of disaster management like prevention, mitigation, preparedness, rescue, response, relief, rehabilitation, research, innovation or early warning related work in India, the statement said.

The application must be accompanied by details of the work done in disaster management and must highlight achievements in any one or more of the areas like saving human lives, reduction in impact of disasters on lives, livestock, livelihoods, property, society, economy, or environment, it said.

Mobilisation and provision of resources for effective response during disasters, immediate relief work in disaster hit areas and communities, effective and innovative use of technology in any field of disaster management and disaster mitigation initiatives in hazard prone areas are some of the other criteria.

The applications has to be filed online on www.dmawards.ndma.gov.in

The last date for filing of application for the year 2018 shall be January 7, 2019, and the award will be announced on January 23, 2019, on the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

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The complaint alleged that the incident took place seven to eight months ago at the her home when her husband and other family members were not present.

Gohain, who has been representing the Nagaon

Lok Sabha constituency since 1999, had claimed that the victim herself went to the court and wanted to withdraw the case, which was not accepted.

Nagaon sadar police station officer-in-charge had said in August that the woman had pleaded at the court to withdraw the case, two days after the case was filed.

Both Gohain and the woman knew each other for a long time and the minister used to visit her home, a senior official of the Nagaon Police Station had said.

Tripura policeman arrested for involvement in drug smuggling

AGARTALA, DEC 26 (PTI): A police officer has been arrested in Tripura for his alleged involvement in drug smuggling, police said.

Cash amounting to Rs 10.01 lakh was recovered from the house of the Assistant Sub-Inspector (Special Branch) Sushil Debbarma during a police raid on Tuesday.

A suo-motu case had been registered at West Agartala police station here on June 27 as part of a drive against the menace of drug and ganja.

It came to light

during the probe that Madhvi Debbarma was one of the kingpins of heroin smuggling racket, operating in the city.

Based on the information, a team led by the officer-in-charge (OC) of the police station, Subrata Chakraborty, carried out a raid in the house of Madhvi Debbarma at Krishnanagar area on Tuesday night and took her to the police station for interrogation.

During interrogation, she admitted her involvement in the

smuggling of brown sugar and said that the money earned from the illegal trade had been kept at her brother-in-laws house, near Sanghati Club area here.

The police then conducted raids in the house of her relative, Sushil Debbarma and recovered Rs 10.01 lakh on Tuesday.

"Both Madhvi and Sushil have been booked under Narcotics, Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985 and will be forwarded to the court on Wednesday," the police said.

Remembering victims of 2004 Tsunami: Mamata



Kolkata, Dec 26 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Wednesday remembered the victims of the 2004 Tsunami, that had devastated coasts of several south and southeast Asian countries on this day.

Banerjee also had a word of praise for those who had shown courage in face of the disaster by

volunteering to help the affected. "On the 14th anniversary of the #Tsunami2004, my solemn tribute to those who lost their lives due to the disaster. Salute to those who volunteered to help the affected across the regions," Banerjee tweeted on Wednesday morning.

On December 26,

2004, an undersea earthquake with a magnitude of 9.1, had struck with an epicentre off the west coast of northern Sumatra. The tsunami had witnessed killing of over lakhs of people across Sri Lanka, India, Maldives and Thailand besides inflicting massive damage.

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Off target Indian archery finds new hope in administrative change of guard

TAPAN MOHANTA

KOLKATA, DEC 26 (PTI): An administrative overhaul after more than four decades held out hope for the future but Indian archery was largely in a downward spiral this year save for Deepika Kumari's comeback and some good performances in the compound category.

The highs were achieved in the compound section in which the women's team reached the pinnacle of world rankings for the first time in history with 22-year-old Jyothi Surekha Vennam leading the way.

The Archery Association of India, de-recognised by the Sports Ministry in 2012, finally held its elections and former IAS officer BVP Rao was elected president, ending Vijay Kumar Malhotra's reign which dated back to 1973.

Subject to ratification by the Supreme Court, the outcome of the elections was a harbinger of hope for the sport that was facing the threat of being banned from the international arena.

It remains to be seen if the new set-up heralds any concrete changes on the ground.

For the time being,

without a national coach and regular training facilities, the recurve archers were using the Army's facility in Pune under their respective personal trainers.

This reflected in their performances as well and they drew a blank at the Jakarta-Palembang Asian Games, in a repeat of the 2014 Incheon Asiad flopshow.

A quarterfinal exit by Olympian Atanu Das was the recurve archers' best in Jakarta, as four of them -- Jagdish Chaudhary, Sukhchain Singh, Ankita Bhagat and Laxmirani Majhi -- failed to qualify for the main round.

Team events were considered their forte once upon a time but the Indians mis-fired there too, finishing fifth, sixth and ninth in the women's, men's and mixed sections respectively.

There were four World Cups and a World Cup Final but Deepika Kumari was the lone bright spot for India in recurve archery. The performance doesn't inspire much confidence in their Olympic medal dreams.

Deepika, a four-time World Cup Final silver-medallist, clinched an individual World Cup gold for the first time since 2012 when she de-



feated Michelle Kroppen of Germany at the Salt Lake City stage.

With that, Deepika qualified for the World Cup Final for the seventh time and she ended the season with a silver at the event in Samsun.

The male archers, who were once world No.1, never managed to take off, while the women's team was no good either.

More than a dozen junior and senior archers were tried in the male team with Olympian Atanu Das being the only regular member. But none of them brought back the glory of the past.

That their last World Cup gold medal came in 2010 Shanghai World Cup summed up the crisis the male archers are

going through.

Thankfully it did not look that bad for the sport with the compound archers compensating for the pathetic recurve show.

Vijaywada archer Jyothi, who was a regular member of the Indian women's team, had the most memorable year.

Jyothi clinched three World Cup silver medals in the team events, including one at the Finals.

The women's compound team also bagged the Asian Games silver, upgrading their bronze medal finish in Incheon 2014.

Jyothi, along with male counterpart Abhishek Verma, made for a formidable pairing in the compound mixed pair event, clinching four

bronze medals from the four stages of the World Cup.

The duo ended the year on a high with a World Cup Final silver in Samsun in the exhibition compound mixed pair event.

The men's compound team, however, failed to defend their title at the Asian Games, returning with a silver, losing to South Korea in the shoot-off after the final scores were revised.

With no individual competition in the compound section and recurve archers drawing a blank, the Indians returned with two silver medals from the Asian Games -- a sharp decline from their one gold, one silver and two bronze count from 2014.

Warner encouraged me to tamper with ball: Bancroft

MELBOURNE, DEC 26 (PTI): Banned Australian cricketer Cameron Bancroft on Wednesday revealed that it was David Warner, who encouraged him to tamper with the ball in the ill-fated Cape Town Test, and he did it since he wanted to "fit in" and feel "valued" in the team.

Bancroft was handed a nine-month ban while Warner and then skipper Steve Smith were handed one-year bans by Cricket Australia in exemplary punishment for their role in ball-tampering scandal in March this year.

"Dave (Warner) suggested to me to carry the action out on the ball given the situation we were in the game and I didn't know any better," Bancroft said in an interview, conducted by former cricketer Adam Gilchrist for Fox Cricket.

"I didn't know any better because I just wanted to fit in and feel valued really. As simple as that," Bancroft who is days away from completing his ban, said.

However, he also admitted that he was guided by his own distorted values in making the horrendous decision.

"The decision was based around my values, what I valued at the time and I valued fitting in you hope that fitting in earns you respect and with that, I guess, there came a pretty big cost for the mistake."

Bancroft was candid enough to own up the mistake he made.

"I take no other responsibility but the responsibility I have on myself and my own actions because I am not a victim. I had a choice and I made a massive mistake and that is what is in my control."

However, while introspecting what would have happened if he had refused Warner's suggestion, the 26-year-old Bancroft said he may have buried himself under the doubt that probably he did not put team's interest before him.

"I would have gone to bed and I would have felt like I had let everybody down. I would have felt like I had let the team down. I would have left like I had hurt our chances to win the game of cricket."

It has been a tough road to redemption for Bancroft and he feels it's the best time for Cricket Australia bring in a change.

"The reason why it was painful is because the truth hurts. Maybe in that review there was some truths that were pretty hard to accept."

"What does that bring? It brings an amazing opportunity to do something about it. Only Cricket Australia will know if they are being true to themselves, to be able to own up to some of those recommendations."

It wasn't easy to check emotions and focus: Mayank

CHETAN NARULA

MELBOURNE, DEC 26 (PTI): Mayank Agarwal had been waiting for his India debut for the past one year but when dream turned into a reality, there was such a surge of emotions that the Karnataka batsman found it difficult to focus on the job at hand.

"It was a tremendous feeling to get the India Test cap. I had a lot of emotions (running through mind) when I got the cap. I will cherish it for the rest of my life. The first thought was 295 (his India cap number)," Agarwal said after his impressive 76 at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground.

But the occasion does get better at times, especially when someone scores mountain of runs and is kept waiting for that elusive India cap.

"It wasn't easy to get hold of those emotions and focus there, but it needed to be done. I just stuck to my plans and just kept telling myself, 'there is a plan that I have to go through and I am just going to stick to that'. Even though it was overwhelming, it was good and I am happy with the way I started," Agarwal added.

Agarwal felt good that the seniors came up and egged him to leave a mark on his debut.

"It's a big stage, and a big opportunity, and I had the seniors walk up to me, telling that bigger the day, bigger the opportunity to leave a mark," said Agarwal.

Agarwal became only the seventh Indian opener to score a half-century on Test debut and also

registered the highest score for a debutant Indian batsman on Australian soil.

"I am happy but obviously I would have liked more (runs). I would definitely take 76 rather than take something less than that. That said I would have liked to go on, and score more runs and stay not out at the end of the day," Agarwal seemed content.

For the past one year, it has been a case of living in hope for the 27-year-old but he never felt disheartened as he was constantly playing matches domestic and A tours, which kept him in good stead.

"Well, I was very happy when I got picked against West Indies. It was a big moment for me. From then on, it wasn't in my hands. Deciding whether I am going to play or not, or getting picked or not is not in my hands."

"But the good thing was that there was a lot of domestic cricket, and a lot of India A games. So, you make sure you go out there and give your best. Once you keep playing, you know those things don't keep coming to your mind because you are focusing on that game and trying to win that game for the side," Agarwal explained his mindset during the period.

"You do think about it (selection) but then you are professional and you tell yourself 'that's no something you can control'. So you move ahead, move on and see what's next for you, prepare for that and once you are in, give your best," he said.

Agarwal feels blessed that he made his debut at



the MCG and also crossed every step towards international cricket with flying colours.

"I just want to say that whatever happened and whatever kept happening, I feel very, very special. I am very lucky because I made my debut at MCG. Every player has to go through scoring runs in Ranji Trophy and doing what he has to do."

"I did that and I am very happy about that. And I learnt a lot as well. When you play Ranji Trophy for five years and play in all parts of India, you learn a lot from that. You face different situations, and it's always a great learning," he added.

When asked about a flat pitch at the MCG, which showed some variable bounce as the day progressed, Agarwal replied, "I won't complain about the pitch. I thought it was good to bat on. It did do a bit early on and it

was slow. And as the day progressed and when we batted after lunch, it got a little quicker."

"Obviously, I didn't think too much about the wicket. I just wanted to stay blank and take it as it comes. I thought while I am at the wicket, let me assess the wicket and see how to go about this."

India scored at a rate of 2.41 runs per over to reach 215 for 2 but Agarwal attributed it to the tight bowling from the home team bowlers.

"I thought they bowled extremely well. They didn't give us many loose balls, they kept it tight and they were attacking. So, with the way they played, I thought we played well."

He complimented his opening partner Hanuma Vihari, who despite not scoring heavily saw off the new ball, consuming 66 balls during the initial phase.

Steyn claims outright South Africa wicket-taking record



CENTURION, DEC 26 (AFP): Shaun Pollock on Wednesday described Dale Steyn as "the best fast bowler that South Africa has produced" after Steyn beat his record for the most Test wickets for the country.

Steyn broke the record he shared with Pollock when Pakistan's Fakhar Zaman became his 422nd victim on the first day of the first Test at SuperSport Park at Wednesday.

Zaman's dismissal brought to an end more than three years of frustration during which the fast bowler missed no fewer than 27 Test matches because of injury.

Steyn, 35, was mobbed by his teammates and hoisted on the shoulders of new-ball partner Kagiso Rabada after Zaman (12) edged the ball to Dean Elgar at third slip, reducing Pakistan

to 17 for two after winning the toss and batting first.

"His performances both home and away have been remarkable," said Pollock in a statement issued by Cricket South Africa.

"His injuries of late have been in stark contrast to how well he has managed his body and fitness throughout his career."

Pollock said Steyn's record stamped him as South Africa's all-time best fast bowler.

"I have enjoyed so many attributes of Dale's bowling, the ability to swing the ball at high speed upfront, reverse-swing the ball with devastating effect and bowl with great control, as well as being able to crank it up with high-speed, hostile bowling on very flat surfaces at times," said Pollock.

Ironically, before a groin strain ruled him

out of action midway through a Test in India, Steyn had been remarkably durable for a fast bowler, playing in 48 consecutive Tests from December 2009 to November 2015, during which he took 232 wickets at an average of 21.72 and dominated the International Cricket Council Test rankings for bowlers. He spent a record 263 weeks in the top spot.

Steyn took his 400th Test wicket in his 80th Test in July 2015 -- the second-fastest in the world to reach the milestone -- and it seemed Pollock's record was about to fall.

But four serious injuries delayed what had seemed inevitably inevitable.

The groin injury in India was followed by a shoulder injury during the first Test against England in December 2015 and, after a brief comeback, a more se-

rious shoulder injury against Australia in November 2016 which caused him to miss 15 Tests.

Just when it seemed he had made a full recovery, he suffered a freak heel injury in the first Test against India in January this year, which caused him to miss the remaining Tests against India and a series against Australia.

After a slow recovery, Steyn spent time with English county Hampshire and returned to Test cricket in an unproductive series in Sri Lanka during which he took only two wickets in two Tests to be stuck level with Pollock.

Steyn is now 11th on his own on the all-time world list, needing to match New Zealand's Richard Hadlee on 431 to claim a place in the top ten.

Koreas broke ground on railways but sanctions block project



SEOUL, DEC 26 (AP): North and South Korea broke ground Wednesday on an ambitious project to modernise North Korean railways and roads and connect them with the South, but without progress in nuclear negotiations, trains won't be crossing the border anytime soon.

The ceremony at the North Korean border town of Kaesong came weeks after the Koreans conducted a joint survey on the northern railway sections they hope to someday link with the South. It's one of several peace gestures agreed between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and liberal South Korean President Moon Jae-in as they push ahead with engagement amid a stalemate in larger nuclear negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang.

But beyond on-site reviews and ceremonies, the Koreans cannot move much further along without the removal of US-led sanctions against the North.

A South Korean train carrying about 100 people including government officials, lawmakers and aging relatives separated by the 1950-53 Korean War rolled into the North Korean border town of Kaesong, where they were greeted by North Koreans includ-

ing Ri Son Gwon, who heads an agency dealing with inter-Korean affairs.

North and South Korean officials signed a wooden railroad tie, unveiled a new signboard and observed a ceremonial connecting of northern and southern tracks at Kaesong's Panmun Station, according to South Korea's Unification Ministry.

Officials from China and Russia were also invited to witness the symbolic start of an ambitious project Seoul hopes will one day link South Korea with the Trans-China and Trans-Siberian railways. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, executive secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, also attended, according to the South Korean ministry.

The Seoul government plans to conduct further surveys on North Korean railways and roads before drawing up a detailed blueprint for the project. Actual construction will proceed depending on the progress in the North's denuclearisation and the state of sanctions against the country, the ministry said.

"We plan to hold detailed negotiations with the North to coordinate on the specific levels we want to achieve in the

modernisation of railways and roads and how to carry out the project," said Eugene Lee, the ministry's spokeswoman.

Even if the North takes concrete steps toward denuclearisation and gains sanctions relief, some experts say updating North Korean rail network could take decades and massive investment.

Seoul said it received an exemption to sanctions from the U.N. Security Council to proceed with Wednesday's ceremony as it involved South Korean transport vehicles and goods. The Koreans' joint survey of North Korean railways in November, which also required UN approval, marked the first time a South Korean train traveled on North Korean tracks.

The Koreans in December 2007 began freight services between South Korea's Munsan Station in Paju and the North's Panmun Station to support operations at a now-shuttered joint factory park in Kaesong.

The South used the trains to move construction materials north, while clothing and shoes made at the factory park were sent south. The line was cut in November 2008 due to tensions over North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

Indonesia tsunami survivors remain jittery as deaths hit 429

SUMUR (INDONESIA), DEC 25 (AP): Panicked residents, police and soldiers in this remote fishing village clobbered by a devastating weekend tsunami ran to higher ground Tuesday, shouting "Water is coming! Water is coming!" and reciting verses from the Quran as emergency messages were broadcast over mosque speakers. It proved to be a false alarm, but a similar frenzy broke out in Tanjung Lesung, another tsunami-stricken area located hours away, as unsettled survivors of the disaster remained traumatised by a tragedy that killed more than 420 people and left thousands homeless.

Meanwhile, Christmas celebrations were replaced by sombre prayers, as church leaders called on Christians across Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, to pray for tsunami victims.

Unlike other tsunamis that have hit disaster-prone Indonesia following large earthquakes, Saturday's big waves blasted ashore at night without warning.

The eruption of Anak Krakatau, or Child of Krakatau, a volcano in the Sunda Strait, is believed to have created a landslide on the volcano's slope, displacing a large volume of water that slammed into the islands of Java and Sumatra.

People in Sumur village, which has been slow to receive aid due to roads being cut off, remained stunned by how quickly the tsunami hit. The beach, located just a few kilometers from the tour-



ist island of Umang near Java's western tip, is popular for snorkeling and other water activities.

The tsunami decimated the area, ripping houses from their foundations and bulldozing concrete buildings. Scientists have said the tsunami's waves were recorded in several places at about 1 metre (3.3 feet) high, but residents of Sumur insisted they towered more than 3 metres (10 feet) there.

They said a soaring white wall of water roared toward them at high speeds, ripping trees out of the ground by their roots.

"There was no sign of a tsunami when we were at the beach. The sea didn't recede," said Tati Hayati, a housewife, who was enjoying a pleasant evening with 10 other people when the disaster hit. "It was calm and bright with the full moon."

When she spotted high, fast-moving waves launching toward the shore, she ran to her car and managed to get inside. But she couldn't outrun it. She said the car was struck by three waves, breaking out the back window and filling the vehicle with

gushing water.

"We were locked inside. The car was swaying in the waves and we thought we would all die," Hayati said.

"We almost could not breathe and I almost gave up when I groped the key in the water and managed to open the door; and the water began to recede. We got out of the car and ran to safety."

The disaster was compounded because it occurred over a busy holiday weekend before Christmas when many people had fled crowded cities such as Jakarta, Indonesia's capital, to relax at popular beach areas.

Pastor Markus Taekz said Tuesday that his Rahmat Pentecostal Church in the hard-hit area of Carita did not celebrate Christmas with joyous songs this year. Instead, only about 100 people showed up for the service, which usually brings in double that number.

Many congregation members had already left the area for locations away from the disaster zone.

"This is an unusual situation because we have a very bad disaster that killed hundreds of our sis-

ters and brothers in Banten," Taekz said, referring to the province on Java island. "So our celebration is full of grief." The death toll climbed to 429 on Tuesday, with more than 1,400 people injured and at least 128 missing, said Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, spokesman for Indonesia's Disaster Mitigation Agency.

He said more than 16,000 people were displaced and that there was an urgent need for heavy equipment in the Sumur subdistrict near Ujung Kulon National Park to help get aid flowing and reach people who may be injured or trapped.

Military troops, government personnel and volunteers continued searching along debris-strewn beaches. Yellow, orange and black body bags were laid out where victims were found, and weeping relatives identified the dead.

Many searched for missing loved ones at hospital morgues. The lead singer of the Indonesian pop band Seventeen located the body of his dead wife after posting emotional posts on social media, vowing that he would

not leave her. The group was performing at a beach hotel when the tsunami was captured on video smashing into their stage, killing several band members and crew.

Anak Krakatau is a volcanic island that formed in the early part of the 20th century near the site of the cataclysmic 1883 eruption of Krakatoa, which killed more than 30,000 people and hurled so much ash that it turned day to night in the area and reduced global temperatures.

The head of Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency, Dwikorita Karnawati, said Saturday's tsunami was likely caused by Anak Krakatau's volcanic activity and so could not have been picked up by sensors, which monitor conventional earthquakes responsible for more than 90 per cent of Indonesia's tsunamis.

She said the tsunami was probably caused by the collapse of a big section of the volcano's slope. Anak Krakatau has been erupting since June and did so again 24 minutes before the tsunami, according to the geophysics agency.

2018 will be remembered for worst political crisis in Lanka's history

COLOMBO, DEC 26 (PTI): The year 2018 would be etched in Sri Lanka's history as the most turbulent one politically as the cash-strapped country saw an unprecedented power struggle between the president and the prime minister, causing much concern in major world capitals, including in New Delhi.

President Maithripala Sirisena's dramatic move to sack Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and install former strongman Mahinda Rajapaksa in his place following differences over policy issues, left the country without a functioning government for nearly two months.

Rajapaksa's return to power drew concern in India that China would tighten its grip on the country. The veteran leader, who is credited for ending the brutal civil war with the LTTE in 2009, is under intense criticism for his decade-long authoritarian rule.

However, a Supreme court verdict forced President Sirisena to reinstate United National Party (UNP) leader Wickremesinghe on December 16, ending Rajapaksa brief regime.

During the political crisis, New Delhi sought to maintain a hands-off approach not wanting to be seen as taking sides. India chose to stay non-committal when Rajapaksa succeeded Wickremesinghe, who is seen as pro-India.

Following Wickremesinghe's re-appointment, India welcomed the resolution of the political crisis and exuded confidence that relations between the two countries will continue to move on in an upward trajectory.

The US, the European Union, Australia and Norway also welcomed the peaceful resolution of the political crisis in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka came closer to China under Rajapaksa's decade-long tenure as the president, with Beijing pumping millions of dollars in the country's infrastructure since the end of the civil war.

However, some of the projects had been reversed under the Sirisena-Wickremesinghe government as Chinese debt hit the country's economy.

China sees Lanka as crucial in its ambitious plan to expand trade routes, while India is concerned about grow-

ing Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean.

Despite India's concerns over China's forays in Sri Lanka, including its acquisition of the strategic port of Hambantota, New Delhi and Colombo kept their relationship warm in 2018 with high-level exchanges and signing of pacts.

Prime Minister Wickremesinghe visited India in October and held talks with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi on ways to deepen the bilateral ties. During the talks, Modi and Wickremesinghe reviewed the progress in implementation of various decisions taken during the high-level exchanges in the recent past, including Modi's visit to Sri Lanka in May 2017. They also discussed the progress of India-assisted development projects in the island nation.

The two countries signed an agreement for construction of 1,200 houses through 50 model villages, using Indian grant assistance of 60 crore Sri Lankan rupees.

The long-standing issue of fishermen, however, remained unresolved as India and Sri Lanka could not find a common ground.

Both sides have agreed to set up Standard

Operating Procedures (SOPs) to expedite the release and handing over of fishermen in each other's custody on completion of respective legal and procedural formalities.

During the year, the Lankan economy grew at a slower than expected. The economy suffered due to nearly two month political turmoil that led to government dysfunction.

Sri Lanka owes over USD 50 billion to foreign lenders, which is 77 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP). The country has to pay back more than USD 4 billion of its foreign loans, which just got harder as the political turmoil has sent the rupee to its lowest ever level against the US dollar. Sri Lanka rupee weakened nearly 17 per cent this year.

Though the reinstatement of Wickremesinghe has brought some hope in Sri Lanka, the political stability in the country in the coming months would be decided by how the prime minister and the president work together despite their differences over policy issues. This will also determine the path of India's ties with Sri Lanka.

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

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

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

EDITED BY TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

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Priyanka, Nick get their Simpsons caricatures

LOS ANGELES, DEC 26 (PTI): "The Simpsons" illustrators Stefano Monda and Rino Russo seemed to have given a gift to the newly-wedded couple Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas who now have their own caricatures from the world of the fictitious town of Springfield.

The "Quantico" star took to Instagram to share the two cartoons that were a play on their twin wedding in Indian city of Jodhpur where they were dressed in traditional white and red colours to honour the roots of the couple.

Priyanka and Nick exchanged wedding vows on December 1 at the majestic Umamid Bhawan Palace in a Catholic ceremony officiated by the groom's father Kevin Jonas Sr. It was followed by an equally grand wedding as per Hindu traditions on December 2.



In the first artwork, a scene from the Christian nuptials, here officiated by Homer Simpson, Priyanka and Nick can be seen standing in an embrace showing off their rings. A board titled, "First Church of Springfield - Wedding Day: Priyanka and Nick", is also visible in the cartoon.

The actor captioned the photo: "Love #simpsons."

In the cartoon from the

Hindu wedding, the couple can be seen holding hands, as the Simpsons family - Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa and Maggie - watches from the side. She captioned the picture: "#simpsons", with a heart emoji.

However, Priyanka's skin tone in the red wedding cartoon appears to have gone from yellow, as it was during the white ceremony, to a lighter brown.

2018: Hunt for newer markets saw interesting crossovers in Indian cinema

KOMAL PANCHAMATIA

MUMBAI, DEC 25 (PTI): With the pressure of three-day box office performance worrying even the biggest of the stars, the producers and actors are looking beyond their core audience.

2018 was a remarkable year in this regard as Akshay Kumar, the quintessential Bollywood hero, traded his charm to play a villain in a Rajinikanth film, which went beyond the southern audiences to woo the Hindi belt with its grand scale and visual effects.

It all started with the "Baahubali" franchise that reached its conclusion in 2017. SS Rajamouli's film had southern stars but such was its epic scale that it became a pan-Indian hit with its lead stars Prabhas, Anushka Shetty and Rana Daggubati becoming national stars.

When it comes to making larger-than-life films Bollywood seems to have ceded ground to its southern counterparts, but the producers in Hindi cinema are waking up to the pan-India appeal of these stories.

Karan Johar was one of the early names to realise this potential and presented both "Baahubali" and S Shankar-directed "2.0" in Hindi. "The makers look for a right reason to release the film in other markets, besides their own. Like, '2.0' had Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar and producer Karan Johar so it was released in the Hindi region.

"Even in the case of 'Baahubali', Karan was presenting it for the Hindi market, so it was released here. These films have done decent business in Hindi region," distributor Rajesh Thadani told PTI.

Noted writer KV Vijayendra Prasad, Rajamouli's and the man behind "Baahubali" and Salman Khan-starrer "Bajrangi Bhaijaan", has written Kangana Ranaut's upcoming period drama "Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi".

Prasad believes for a film to crossover, it needs to have the perfect balance of emotions and vision.

"People are ready to see a film irrespective of who has made it and who is in it. This kind of response only encourages creative people. The film has set the bar in every which way and I am happy about that," Prasad told PTI.

"A crossover film has to have the right content coupled with right emotions. It should be a big screen spectacle to draw audience from different parts of the country to theatres," he added.

This crossover is not just happening with southern films, Bollywood is also coming on board.

Sanjay Leela Bhansali, the director known for his grand vision, had subtitles added to "Padmaavat" for its release down south. The film did great business all over India despite or maybe because of the many controversies ahead of its release.

"Padmaavat" was a magnum opus. It had grandeur and a great story. It released in the southern markets, which is known for making visually appealing films. The film did decent business in south. Unfortunately, Aamir Khan-Amitabh Bachchan's "Thugs..." did not fair well," Thadani said.

Industry insiders believe this crossover trend of releasing films in different regions will only boost entertainment business and put Indian cinema on a global map.



"From business perspective, it is a win-win situation. The highest film in the Hindi belt is a Telugu movie 'Baahubali' that was dubbed in Hindi," film exhibitor Akshay Rathi said.

Having an actor from a respective region opens up new possibilities for a film and the producers are suddenly realising that diversity is good for business. Richa Chadha and Pankaj Tripathi, both actors of repute in Hindi cinema, are starring in the Shakeela biopic, which marks the directorial debut of Indrajit Lankesh in Hindi.

"We felt the story had to be told for a bigger audience from a greater stage. So we had to choose Hindi. We are bringing the audiences from the south and the north closer.

"With Richa and Pankaj, we are taking a pan-India approach. We also have Malayalam actor Rajeev Pillai and Esther who has acted in Konkani, Mangalorean and Kannada films. We hope to bring India together," Lankesh had told PTI.

Tripathi said, "Cinema is an art form that connects everyone. Emotions are same everywhere, we all want to be happy and enjoy and get lost in the world of films. Cinema knows no boundaries."

Kannada actor Yash, whose "KGF: Kolar Gold Fields" released last week, said there should be mutual respect for each other's work.

"We should learn from each other and make our Indian film industry better. Every industry has their own USP and this crossover culture is a nice learning experience for all," Yash told PTI.

His film has been presented by Farhan Akhtar in the Hindi market.

"I think barriers are coming down every single day and the world is becoming a smaller place. We are enjoying work from (different) cultures and languages which we weren't familiar with many years ago," Farhan said.

Similarly, "Karwaan" saw Malayalam cinema star Dulquer Salmaan making his Hindi cinema debut. "Happy Phirr Bhag Jayegi" featured Punjabi singer-actor Jassi Gill while "Helicopter Eela" had National Award-winning actor Riddhi Sen alongside Kajol. Tripathi and Huma Qureshi also featured in the Rajinikanth-starrer Tamil film "Kaala", which won critical acclaim for its director Pa Ranjith's astute analysis of caste politics.

The trend is only going to enjoy an upward swing in 2019 as Amitabh Bachchan will be making a guest appearance in Chiranjeevi's Telugu film "Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy", Vidya Balan is the leading lady in NTR biopic, Shradha Kapoor and Neil Nitin Mukesh will be seen in Telugu language film "Saaho".

Siddharth wants to remake 'Andhadhun', Ayushmann says 'go for it'

CHENNAI, DEC 26 (PTI): South actor Siddharth on Wednesday said he is keen for a remake of "Andhadhun", which has been dubbed as 2018's best Hindi film by critics, and the original film's star Ayushmann Khurrana is up for the idea.

The 39-year-old actor, best known in Bollywood for his stint in "Rang De Basanti" and "Chashme Baddoor", asked his fans if they would like a reimagining of the Sriram Raghavan-directed thriller.

"Quick vote - since it's on the table already, how many of you want to see me remake this lovely film? I'm very serious #Andhadhun @ayushmannk #sriramraghavan #Classic" Siddharth tweeted. To which Ayushmann gave a nod, replying, "Go for it machaan (friend)!" "Andhadhun", an edge-of-the-seat thriller about a blind pianist, has also topped IMDb charts as the best Indian movie of this year.

Also starring Tabu and Radhika Apte, the film released on October 5.



LOVE FOR DENIM! Actress Emma Roberts is seen strolling through the streets of Los Angeles.

ARIES: Could we get a shot of truth serum with that brandied eggnog? Today, as expressive Mercury butts up against nebulous Neptune, niceties and small talk won't be your thing. But don't hammer people with any harsh feedback, even if your fuse is short as you rush around to prepare for the celebrations. Compassion is what's called for! Tonight, cross-cultural connections could heat up.

TAURUS: Let Vixen and Cupid valet your sleigh this Christmas Eve. With Mercury blessing your sultry eighth house, celebrations could take a seductive turn. Position yourself under the mistletoe and just relax. And don't let anyone pressure you into playing elf! With foggy Neptune throwing Mercury shade, it's high time you passed the entertainment director's baton to someone else in your squad.

GEMINI: Dreaming of a glamorous Christmas? With your ruler, Mercury, holding court in your decadent and romantic seventh house, forget about putting around in your cozy yoga pants. Dress to the nines and hit the party

circuit—or host a spontaneous soiree 'round your tree. For coupled Gemini's, Santa's big day could end with a pledge of exclusivity or even a proposal! Have you always felt an attraction to a certain friend of yours?

CANCER: 'Tis the season for giving, Cancer, and with Mercury moving through your sixth house of service, your generous spirit is fully awakened. But today, a nudge from healing Neptune reminds you to add yourself to the list of people who deserve some generosity. While you want to make everyone's holiday merry and bright, that's just exhausting.

LEO: It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas—and those twinkly lights aren't fading anytime soon. With social Mercury buzzing through your fun-loving fifth house for the rest of the year, you're the star on top of everyone's tree. Feel free to assume the role of entertainment director and make Christmas Eve, and the days that follow, lively for yourself and all those around you.

Just make sure you do so inclusively! Someone else in your squad may want to play organizer as well. Be sensitive to that and plan together so this doesn't devolve into a draining rivalry.

VIRGO: Toss a Yule log on the fire and cozy up with your favorite plus-one(s). With your ruler, convivial Mercury, in your sentimental fourth house this Christmas Eve, you'll prefer the company of your innermost circle. Volunteer to make a special dinner tonight or just go around making sure everyone's cup is filled and that the playlist of carols doesn't repeat too many times. Thanks to soothsayer Neptune's influence, your Spidey senses will be strong.

LIBRA: Make people your priority this Christmas Eve, Libra. Who cares if you don't hand-wrap every gift or if you're wearing a dress you were already photographed in this season? If that opens up time for you to go mingle and share a cup of cheer, it's worth it, even if you have to set aside some of your trademark perfectionism. People prefer the pleasure

of your company!

SCORPIO: Valet that sleigh! A little holiday hedonism is sanctioned by the stars—as long as you don't start Prime'ing cases of Veuve after your second glass of bubbly! If you're doing a last-minute gift grab, carry cash instead of buying on credit. That way, you won't blow through your budget as you rush to stuff everyone's stocking. Treating yourself today?

SAGITTARIUS: You're the most famous reindeer of all this Christmas Day, Sagittarius, as buzzy Mercury zips through your sign! But with charitable Neptune ping the messenger planet from your heartfelt fourth house, use that influence for good. Pick a "cause celebre" and post about it on social media. Make a donation, perhaps in lieu of physical gifts for the minimalists in your life.

CAPRICORN: You're dreaming of a cozy Christmas! Huddling with your nearest and dearest will be especially heartwarming under today's nostalgic skies—as long as everyone has a clear understanding about evening plans. Du-

eling agendas (with a friend, sibling or someone else in your party) could create friction, especially if you get swept into a situation that involves making small talk with random people!

AQUARIUS: With buzzy Mercury in your ultra-social eleventh house this Christmas Eve, chilling at home could spark serious cabin fever. At the very least, get some group bonding in early today. If you're working, organize a holiday lunch or mid-afternoon cookie break. Or meet up with your squad for a champagne toast before everyone goes their separate ways.

PISCES: Tradition, tradition! Thanks to a spate of planets in your tenth house, you're up for a Christmas Eve with all the trimmings. As your co-ruler, compassionate and creative Neptune, chimes in, put a fresh spin on celebrations. How about hosting a spontaneous "Friendsmas" for your pals who have nowhere to go tonight, or an afternoon gift-wrapping party? Make it ugly-sweater themed and spike the eggnog with something top-shelf. Who knows?