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SummitTIMES

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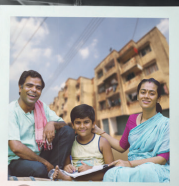
ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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A HOME FOR EVERY POOR FAMILY

- 1.5 crore poor families get their own home
- Housing for every poor family by 2022



NAMUMKIN AB MUMKIN HAI



DAVP 22201130047/1819

SLTTJAC rallies for LT seats and CM's resignation

**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 24 FEB:**

The youth wing of the Sikkim Limboo Tamang Tribal Joint Action Committee (SLTTJAC) took out a rally from the District Administrative Centre [East] here at Sichey to Paljor Stadium pressing their demand for reserved seats for the Limboos and Tamangs in the State Legislative Assembly and reminding Chief Minister Pawan Chamling of his announcement that if the LT seats did not arrive before the 2019 elections, he would resign and quit politics.

Although organized by the youth wing of the organisation, the rally was also joined by older members of the SLTTJAC.

Speaking to media persons, the SLTTJAC treasurer, Adeep Tamang, who is also the spokesperson, con-



demned the CM's allegation that the organisation had obstructed the process of seat reservation by filing a case in the Supreme Court.

He asserted that the CM should first see the content of the petition and study the reasons

behind filing of this case.

"We are not saying not to give the seats but we have been demanding the reservation of seats at the earliest and even the Court has already sent notices to the State Government and if the

government responds to the Court's satisfaction, the case will be complete immediately," he said.

He added that now the simplest solution to the seat reservation issue was a Presidential Ordinance.

On the same, he re-

quested the State government and Ministry of Home Affairs to have such an Ordinance issued at the earliest and ensure that the Limboos and Tamangs received their political rights before the 2019 elections.



A MASTER AT WORK: Master Calligrapher Jamyang Dorjee Chakrishar treated Gangtokians with a peek into the art that flows from his hands after years of practice. A renowned Tibetan Calligrapher, watching Mr Chakrishar paint magic with his brush is a special treat. At "Mantra in Motion," his art exhibition hosted at Café Royale here at the Tsuklhakhang complex, visitors can not only get to marvel at some of his grander calligraphic creations, but also, time permitting, have him write their names or words of their choice in his signature Tibetan calligraphic style. A nominal fee will be charged which will go towards charitable causes. The exhibition is on at Café Royal on 24 and 25 February. Also on the inaugural day, Mr Chakrishar's "Workbook of Tibetan Calligraphy" was released by former Chief Secretary, Karma Gyatso, in the presence of Tenzing Wangyal Rinpoche, PT Gyamtso and a select gathering of friends and visitors. [from KARCHOONG DIYALI]

GST on under-construction flats slashed to 5%; affordable housing to attract 1%

NEW DELHI, FEB 24 (PTI): In a big relief to home buyers, the GST Council Sunday slashed tax rates on under-construction housing properties to 5 per cent without input tax credit, from the existing 12 per cent, Finance Minister

Arun Jaitley said.

The Council also cut GST rates on affordable housing to 1 per cent from the current 8 per cent and expanded the scope of affordable housing to those costing up to Rs 45 lakh and measuring 60 sq metre in metros and

90 sq metre in non-metro cities. The new tax rates will come into effect from April 1, 2019.

Currently, the GST is levied at 12 per cent on payments made for under-construction properties or ready-to-move-in flats

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**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 24 FEB:**

Muk Zek Ding Rum Faat, the Lepcha worship to Mother Nature, was performed at Pangthang here in East Sikkim on Saturday.

A press communiqué received from the Sikkim Lepcha Youth As-

sociation informs that Bongthings from North and East Sikkim were invited to perform this special ritual.

During the ritual the Bongthings invoked and offered prayers to Mother Nature seeking a conducive environment and

climate conditions in which life could prosper and natural disasters and diseases forestalled.

With a view to send a strong message to society about the ecology and environment and also to revive this special part of Lepcha culture

which attests a close relationship with nature, the organisation has conducted this special ritual of the Lepchas in a grand manner this year and shall be conducting this ritual in the same venue in the coming years as well, the release adds.



VP arrives on Monday

GANGTOK, 24 FEB [IPR]: M. Venkaiah Naidu, the 13th Vice President of India, is visiting Sikkim on 25 and 26 February, 2019. This is his maiden to the State.

Born on 01 July, 1949 at Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, Mr Naidu took oath as the 13th Vice President and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha on 11 August, 2017. He has served as Minister for Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Urban Development and Information and Broadcasting.

He is an alumni of Andhra University College of Law, Vishakhapatnam, and was an active member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the ABVP during his college days.

Mr Naidu is a prominent leader of the Bhartiya Janta Party and has served as its National President from 2002 to 2004.

A Guard of Honour will be welcoming the Vice President to Sikkim at Pakyong Airport. Governor Ganga Prasad and Chief Minister Pawan Chamling will be hosting the Vice President during his visit. The Vice President will be visiting many places of interest in Sikkim during his visit.

Norbugang coronation throne makes a philatelic debut

**SHITAL PRADHAN
SINGTAM, 24 FEB:**

A two-day SIKKIM-APEX 2019 (Feb 21-22) was held at Modern Senior Secondary School with two Special Covers released on during the event organised by the Sikkim Postal Department.

A Special Cover on Pakyong Airport, the 100th operational airport of India, was released on the inaugural day by Ramtanu Shah, Airport Director, Pakyong.

A stamp featuring the coronation throne at

Norbugang, Yuksom, was featured on a special cover and released the next day by Dr Anira Phipon Lepcha, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Sikkim University.

Both the covers were designed by Singtam-based philatelist, Roshan Prasad.

This philatelic exhibition was held in Sikkim after ten years. 21 philatelists from different parts of Sikkim, Darjeeling and Siliguri participated in the exhibition. Souvik Roy and Eeshita Basu Roy from

Kolkata were among the invited philatelist.

86 frames of philatelic materials were displayed, including rare postage stamps and other postal stationery items. Also displayed on the philatelic frames was international award winning exhibits on Cricket, National award winning exhibits on Music, a rare 14-frame exhibit on Buddhism by Souvik Roy and other popular exhibits.

The list of participants included Ganesh Pradhan, CP Raya, Shital

Pradhan, Deepen Pradhan, Vivek Yonzon, Padam Parajuli, Sushil Karthak, Sunita Gurung, Sishir Pradhan, Sheila Rai, Sanskriti Sharma, Tejeswani Neopane and others.

The other major highlight of the two-day event was a book released on dictionary of stamps. 'The Stamp Collectors' Dictionary,' written by Roshan Prasad and published by Sikkim Postal Department, was released on the first day.

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CM’s hit-list allegation to trigger fear psychosis: SKM

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 24 FEB:

Sikkim Kranti Morcha General secretary, Bikash Basnet, while condemning allegations leveled by the CM that SKM has prepared a hit-list of 79 people, including the CM, has countered that this was a ploy of the Chief Minister to create fear psychosis among the people and defame the SKM.

Speaking with SummitTimes, Mr Basnet further pointed out that

since the CM also hold the Home portfolio and has the police directly under him, he should produce proper evidence to back his allegations and disclose other names in the purported hit-list.

Mr Basnet stated that SKM was convinced that SDF plans to target its own party workers and supporters and then pin the blame on SKM to undermine SKM’s growing popularity in the State.

Gujjar leader bats for Article 370 and Article 35A

JAMMU, FEB 24 (PTI): A prominent Gujjar leader in Jammu and Kashmir said Sunday his community and the Bakerwal tribe favours continuation of Article 370 and Article 35A that provides special status to the state. “The Gujjars and Bakarwals are in favour of continuation of Article 35A and Article 370 of the Constitution. We will strongly protest if these articles are removed,” Shamsher Hakla Poonchi said in a statement.

The Gujjar leader appealed to the Supreme Court and the Centre to not take any step in order to abolish these articles as the state “was brought under the territory of India only because of this Article 370.”

“If these articles are abolished, the relation between Jammu and Kashmir and India will weaken besides worsening the situation in Kashmir,” he said.

The comments come ahead of a hearing in the Supreme Court on Article 35A of the Constitution. Poonchi claimed that

34-lakh Gujjars and Bakarwals of the state were strongly in favour of the continuation of the constitutional provisions.

Meanwhile, Tribal Research and Cultural Foundation founder and noted Gujjar researcher Javaid Rahi demanded that grazing lands must not be converted for any purposes in the state. He said such changes could badly affect centuries-old migratory traditions of Gujjars, Bakarwals, Gadhis, Sippis and Chanpas of Ladakh.

“Such conversions are adversely affecting tribal migratory culture and nomadic way of life of Scheduled Tribes, who are already passing through tough times in Jammu and Kashmir,” Rahi said.

Rahi asked for a law immediately and restrict conversion of grazing land, including its change of title or ownership of the land in the state. “The grazing land must be used for animal rearing only and should strictly kept for the tribal community’s use.”

Bangladesh foils plane hijack attempt, passengers safe

ANISUR RAHMAN

DHAKA, FEB 24 (PTI): A Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight, en route Dubai from Dhaka, made an emergency landing at an airport in a coastal city in the country after a man allegedly attempted to hijack the plane, officials said. The lone suspect has been detained and is being interrogated, Bangladesh’s Air Vice Marshal Abdul Matin said.

Army, Navy and elite police cordoned off the plane soon after it landed at the Chattogram airport in southeastern Bangladesh. All the passengers were evacuated safely. “No one was hurt during the rescue opera-

tion,” Matin said.

According to eyewitnesses, minutes after the Flight BG-147, which was on its way to Dubai from Dhaka via Chattogram, flew from the Chattogram Shah Amanat International Airport, it returned and made an emergency landing.

The emergency exit was opened through which the passengers disembarked immediately. The captain and the first officer of the flight also came out later, they said. Though the identity of the hijacker is yet to be known, according to unconfirmed reports the hijacker was a foreign national and was equipped with a handgun.

GST on under..

where completion certificate has not been issued at the time of sale.

However, builders will not be able to claim input tax credit (ITC) under the new GST rates.

“This (GST reduction) decision will certainly give boost to construction sector,” Jaitley told reporters.

However, Goods and Services Tax (GST) is not levied on real estate properties for which completion certificate has been issued at the time of sale.

With regard to lotteries, the GST Council, however, deferred its decision with Jaitley saying that the Group of Ministers (GoM) will meet again to discuss the proposal.

Currently, state run lotteries attract 12 per cent GST, while state-authorised ones attract 28 per cent.

Norbugang coronation..

Vivek Yonzone from Darjeeling conducted a philatelic workshop. There were Quiz competitions, Letter writing competitions and drawing competitions organised for school students.

The list of participating schools included Holy Cross School, St. Xavier’s School, Deorali Girls Senior Secondary School, Tashi Namgyal Senior Secondary School, West Point Sr. Secondary School, Tathangchen School, Modern Senior Secondary School, Rongneyk Jr. High School, Enchey Senior Secondary School and Manjushree School.

ICAR-NOFRI organizes capacity building programme for women on Vanaraja chicken farming

GANGTOK, 24 FEB [PIB]:

ICAR–National Organic Farming Research Institute (NOFRI), the erstwhile ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Sikkim Centre, Tadong, organized a three-day capacity building programme for tribal women on “Backyard Poultry Farming with Vanaraja Chicken for Livelihood and Nutritional Security in Rural Sikkim” under the Tribal Sub Plan Project from 20 to 22 February under the leadership of Dr Ravikant Avasthe, Joint Director, ICAR-NOFRI.

22 participants from different villages of Sikkim, comprising six participants each from North, South and West districts and four participants from East district, attended the training program.

In his welcome address, Dr Rafiqul Islam, Principal Scientist, ICAR-NOFRI, and coor-



dinator of the training program explained that the training was organized to train trainers to educate and train other farmers, particularly women farmers, in their respective areas.

All the participants were very interactive

during all the theory and practical sessions held on various aspects of Vanaraja poultry farming. The training programme included nine lectures and two hands-on sessions on housing, feeding, lighting, preventive and therapeutic management

of Vanaraja birds both at intensive and backyard rearing systems including soil health management, organic vegetable and crop production in integration with poultry farming.

Dr Ravikant Avasthe, Joint Director, ICAR- NOF-

RI, addressed the participants and urged them to undertake Vanaraja chicken farming as an enterprise for self employment as well as enriching the nutrition of their families by providing good quality eggs and meat.

He highlighted the

Tumin-Lingee preps for SDF Foundation Day; SDF supporters to thwart SKM bandh

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 24 FEB:

A constituency-level meeting of the Sikkim Democratic Front for Tumin-Lingee constituency was held at the Makha party office on Saturday. The meeting, which was chaired by the area MLA,

Minister Ugen T Gyatso Bhutia, resolved to host the constituency-level 27th foundation day of the SDF at Makha playground.

Addressing the meeting, the area MLA shared that the party was expecting a grand celebration with around 6,000 in attendance.

He also alleged that SKM has been trying to create unrest in the State in the name of a bandh called by it for 28 February and stressed that SDF would protest this bandh and not allow SKM to disturb the peace established in the State by the

SDF government.

He informed that SDF was taking out peace car rallies at the state-level from 27 February to 01 March and that around 2,000 vehicles from Tumin-Lingee constituency will participate in the rally.

CIC rules EVMs are ‘information’ under RTI Act

NEW DELHI, FEB 24 (PTI):

An Electronic Voting Machine is “information” under the Right to Information Act and can be demanded by an applicant from the Election Commission of India on a payment of Rs 10, the Central Information Commission has ruled.

This implies the Election Commission has to respond to an RTI application seeking the EVM either by providing it or refusing it under exemption clauses in the Act. But that also can be contested before the CIC, the highest adjudicating authority in RTI matters.

Deciding a unique RTI application, through which the applicant had sought an EVM from the Election Commission, Chief Information Commissioner Sudhir Bhargava recently said the machine was covered under the definition of “information” and can be demanded from the ECI.

The Election Commission had rejected the application saying the EVMs held by it do not come under the definition of “information”.

The applicant, Rajaak Khan Haider, approached the CIC with a strong argument that as per Section 2(f) and 2(i) of the RTI Act, the definition of ‘information’ and ‘record’ also includes ‘any model or any sample’ held by a public authority, calling the rejection as wrong.

Section 2(f) of the RTI Act defines ‘Information’ as any material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, log-books, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models, data material held in any



electronic form and information relating to any private body which can be accessed by a public authority under any other law for the time being in force.

The Election Commission representative admitted that model and samples of the machines are available with it but the same are only kept for training purpose, and not saleable to the general public.

Tendering unconditional apology for rejection, the Election Commission representative agreed that it was wrong on its part but reiterated that EVMs did not come under the definition of information, an argument rejected by Bhargava.

“The EVM which is available with the Election Commission in a material form and also as samples, as admitted by the respondent (ECI) during the hearing, is an information under the RTI Act,” the CIC ruled.

In the next sentence, however, the Commission tried to nip in the bud any aspiration of accessing the machine underlining the second contention of the EC that the software installed on these machines is an intellectu-

al property of a third party, the disclosure of which would harm its competitive position.

The CIC, however, did not give any view whether it was upholding or rejecting the EC’s position on commercial confidence leaving a grey area which can be pursued further by any applicant.

An information can be denied by a public authority if it attracts any exemption clauses listed in the RTI Act which also exempts information pertaining to commercial confidence or intellectual property from disclosure.

One of the clauses Section 8(1)(d) exempts information including commercial confidence, trade secrets or intellectual property, the disclosure of which would harm the competitive position of a third party, unless the competent authority is satisfied that larger public interest warrants the disclosure of such information.

The issue of larger public interest in the wake of allegations of EVM tampering was not mentioned in the order.

The ECI argument calling machine having propriety software was noted by the CIC but he limited his order,

saying the rejection of application was “erroneous” by the ECI and a fresh reply should be sent to the applicant as per the RTI provisions.

“The commission also notes that as per the respondent (ECI), the software installed in the EVM is an intellectual property of a third party, the disclosure of which would harm the competitive position of the third party concerned,” he said but did not uphold or reject the argument.

Several opposition leaders have raised “doubts” over EVMs and their functioning before the Election Commission.

The opposition parties had sought moving back to the ballot paper, but after the EC made it clear there was no going back.

In a meeting with the ECI recently, Opposition leaders demanded the poll panel ensure that 50 per cent of EVM results are crosschecked with voter-verifiable paper audit trails (VVPAT) before declaration of results in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

The leaders had told the Election Commission the people of the country doubted the efficacy of EVMs and this issue needs to be redressed.

National programme for elimination viral hepatitis launched

NEW DELHI, FEB 24 (PTI):

Union minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey launched a national programme aimed at eliminating viral hepatitis, recognized as an important public health problem across the world, on Sunday in Mumbai.

The minister of state for health launched the National Action Plan - Viral Hepatitis in presence of Amitabh Bachchan, the goodwill ambassador for hepatitis, WHO South-East Asia Region.

Bachchan described how he contracted the disease, an inflammatory condition of the liver, when blood was transfused into him after he was injured during the shooting of “Coolie” in 1982.

One of the blood donors had Hepatitis B, the actor said, ruing that the detection process for the virus was not available then. He came to know about the condition in 2005.

According to WHO estimates, viral hepatitis caused 1.34 million deaths globally in 2015, a number comparable to deaths due to tuberculosis, worldwide.

In India, it is estimated that there are 4 crore people suffering from Hepatitis B and 0.6-1.2 crore people suffering from Hepatitis C, a ministry statement said.

The action plan was developed by experts from across the country. It provides a strategic framework, based on which the National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme was framed and launched in July 2018 under National Health Mission by the Health Ministry.

“This programme is also in line with our global commitment towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.3. India has affirmed this commitment at the 69th World Health Assembly,” Choubey said.

India is one of the few countries to roll out management of Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C in a public health approach and offer free diagnostics and drugs lifelong to its beneficiaries. The aim of the

higher production potential of Vanaraja compared to the native chicken in terms of eggs and meat production. He invited the participants to utilize the know-how gained during the three-day training to increase production through Vanaraja poultry farming in their respective areas.

He highlighted the role of poultry manure in enriching the soil with more micronutrients and other essential organic matter for increased production of crops and vegetables.

Dr Avasthe further reiterated that backyard poultry farming is very close to organic farming where most of the guidelines are followed.

Later, 35 Vanaraja dayold chicks and essential vitamin supplements along with handouts about the rearing practices were distributed to each participant.

programme is to combat hepatitis and achieve countrywide elimination of Hepatitis C by 2030, he said.

The minister also released the Technical Guidelines for Diagnosis and Management of Hepatitis B.

In India, Hepatitis B vaccine was introduced in the Universal Immunization Programme almost a decade ago. Since healthcare workers and high-risk groups by virtue of their occupation and behaviour are more vulnerable to acquiring infection, it is envisaged to extend the beneficiaries for this vaccine to healthcare workers and high-risk groups under the National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme (NVHCP).

Focus under the programme is also on screening of pregnant women for hepatitis B, in places where institutional delivery is less than 80 pc, to ensure provision of birth dose Hepatitis B vaccination and Hepatitis B immunoglobulin, if required, the statement said.

Another important strategy adopted by the programme is propagating the use of Re-use Prevention (RUP) syringes in the country. The NVHCP website was also launched on the occasion.

Today, we have taken a pledge to fight hepatitis; while we have done this in the presence of hundreds of people, the message should go to crores of people,” Choubey said.

Bachchan said, “I am here today because I am a Hepatitis B victim. While shooting for the film Coolie, I got injured and required a lot of blood; the blood given by 200 donors saved my life, but one of the donors was carrying the Hepatitis B virus.

“The detection process for that virus was not in order at that time, and that went into my system. This was discovered only in 2005, when I came to know that 75 per cent of my liver had been destroyed. I am a living example of a Hepatitis B victim.”

Yeshel and Neha to represent Sikkim at National Youth Parliament

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 24 FEB:

Two NSS volunteers, the state-level Youth Parliament winners - Yeshel Dorjee Tamang from Nar Bahadur Bhandari Degree College, and Neha Gupta from Sikkim Law College - will be representing the state at the National Youth Parliament scheduled to be held in New Delhi on 26 and 27 Feb. They will be going up against the best-two speakers of other states of the country.

The Prime Minister is expected to attend and address the programme on 27 Feb, an official press release informs.

Along with the two speakers, the next four best speakers from the



districts will represent Sikkim as delegates at the Delhi event. They are: Ayesha Limboo, Nima

Lepcha, Suvecha Pradhan and Sanjeev Adhikari.

The programme was organised under the banner

of NSS and the participants were NSS volunteers.

The team will be leaving for Delhi on 25 Feb

accompanied by Joint Director Doma Tshering Dhutia and Asst. Director P Bhutia.

Sikkim loses to Assam at Dr T Ao Cup

Team needs at least a draw against Bangladesh to reach semis

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 24 FEB:

Sikkim went down to Assam in its third qualifying match of the ongoing 2nd Dr T Ao Centenary North East International NEC Gold Cup Football Championship [U-21 years] at SAI Stadium, Guwahati, today.

In a well-contested match, Sikkim lost 02-01. Sangay Chopel Bhutia scored a goal for Sikkim in the 89th minute.

Sikkim will now take



on Bangladesh in its final qualifying match at LNIPE Stadium at Guwahati on Monday.

Sikkim team manager, Arjun Rai, informs that Sikkim maintained constant pressure right since the start with an attacking game but missed many golden opportuni-

ties to score.

He mentioned that the last qualifying match against Bangladesh was very vital for Sikkim to secure a berth in the semi-final round. He said that even a draw match will take Sikkim to the next round of the tournament.

Piaggio aims to scale up two-wheeler biz in India

NEW DELHI, FEB 24 (PTI): Italian two-wheeler maker Piaggio is looking to expand its sales network in India to over 350 dealerships by the end of this year as part of scaling up its business in the country, a top company official said.

The company, which currently has around 250 sales outlets, will however stick to its premium lineage even as it seeks to grow its volume in the world's largest two-wheeler market as it does not want to be perceived as mass segment player. "We plan to expand our volumes in both domestic and export markets. Currently, our sales network is very limited (in India) as we are one of the last players to come on board here," Piaggio Vehicles India Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer Diego Graffi said here during an interaction.

There is huge area in India where the company is not present in terms of sales network, he said adding that it has only been 6 years since the company re-entered the country.

"Through this expansion of sales network, we plan to expand our presence...we are planning to have 350 active dealerships by the end of this year," Graffi said.

When asked if the company would like to compete with mass market players in the country, Graffi said: "Wherever we are present all across the world in the two-wheeler space, we do not want to be perceived as a mass segment player." He further said: "We are not interested in that (mass segment). We are not interested in market share...we are among the top when it comes to brand recall...that is what we are looking at."

The company, which sells Vespa and Aprilia brands in the country, sold 74,704 units in India in 2017-18. Piaggio has a manufacturing plant in Baramati in Maharashtra, where it manufactures the iconic Vespa alongside the Aprilia SR 150.

Graffi also supported the call for reduction in GST on two wheelers.

"In two-wheelers, we have seen a lot of challenges starting from mandatory third-party insurance which came into force from September 2018...then we have new legislations like mandatory usage of ABS from April 2019," Graffi said.

Then there is BS-VI challenge as well, so due to all these factors, the industry is going to provide better service, content, safety to consumer, he added.

"So, my idea is that reduction of GST rates on two-wheelers from 28 per cent to 18 per cent is quite recommendable from even our point of view," Graffi noted.

The company sees two-wheelers as a normal medium of mass transportation and "we don't see having such high GST applied (on the segment), he added.

Earlier, Bajaj Auto, Hero MotoCorp and TVS Motor Company had asked the government to slash GST on two-wheelers from the current 28 per cent slab to 18 per cent to give relief to the customers.



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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER BALUAKHANI

No: Elec/299/2014/(W-4)/229 Dated: 22nd February, 2019

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

With reference to the Notice Inviting Tender vide R.O.No. 677/IPR/PUB/CLAS-SI/18-19 (II) dated 8/2/2019 published in Summit Times Vol.04 issue 38 dated 09th February 2019 and Samay Dainik Vol 16 issue 38 dated 09th February 2019, the last date of issue of tender form is hereby extended form 21.02.2019 to 28.02.2019.

Sd/-

Chief Electoral Officer, Sikkim.

R.O.No. 727/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19

Date: 23.2.2019

Sebi orders impounding of Rs 1 cr from ADF Foods' promoters, 4 others in insider trading case

NEW DELHI, FEB 24 (PTI):

Markets regulator Sebi has ordered impounding of alleged illegal gains worth over Rs 1.02 crore from ADF Foods' promoters Bhavesh Thakkar and Priyanka Thakkar and four others in an insider trading case. The other four are Pallavi N Mehta, Shefali B Mehta, Navin M Mehta and Abhishek Mehta.

As per Sebi's order, on July 27, 2016, ADF Foods informed the BSE and NSE that the board of directors in its meeting on the same date had approved a buyback of equity shares for an aggregate amount not exceeding Rs 18 crore.

On May 21, 2016, the discussion of idea to under take buy back or payment of dividend was first tabled at a meeting, Sebi said. Therefore, Sebi considered the time period from May 21-27

July 2016 as unpublished price sensitive information (UPSI) period when the price sensitive information of buyback remain undisclosed.

Sebi conducted a probe and found that entities had access to UPSI and traded in the scrips of the firm during the May 21-July 27, 2016 (UPSI period).

The regulator further said that it prima facie found that 'insider' Bhavesh Thakkar being promoter and executive director of the firm communicated UPSI to other entities whom Sebi classified the m as insiders as they were related to Bhavesh and his promoter wife Priyanka.

Priyanka, being a promoter, was involved in the fund transfer from her husband (Bhavesh Thakkar) to the other four entities and vice-versa

for their trades in scrips of the firm during the UPSI period and thus prima facie violated insider trading norms, the regulator said. Regarding the other four, Sebi noted that Navin Mehta and Abhishek Mehta, being insiders, traded in the shares of ADF Foods through the trading accounts of Pallavi Mehta and Shefali Mehta when the price sensitive information remained undisclosed in violation of insider trading regulations.

Accordingly, Sebi ordered to impound the alleged unlawful gains of Rs 1,02 crore (alleged gains of 77 lakhs with interest of Rs 25 lakh) to be paid jointly and severally.

The regulator further added that entities may file their replies to Sebi within 21 days from the date of receipt of this order, if they so desire.

Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche arrives in Sikkim



GANGTOK, 24 FEB [IPR]:

Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche arrived in Sikkim today and was given a warm traditional welcome at Rangpo by devotees and monks from different parts of the state.

Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche is a teacher and master of the Kagyu and Nyingmapa lineages of Vajrayana Buddhism and has authored two best-selling books and oversees the Tergar Meditation Community, a global network of Buddhist meditation centers.

Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche possesses the rare ability to present the an-

cient wisdom of Vajrayana Buddhism in a fresh and engaging manner. His profound yet accessible teachings and playful sense of humor have endeared him to students around the world.

Most uniquely, the Rinpoche's teachings weave together his own personal experiences with modern scientific research, relating both to the practice of meditation.

The Rinpoche will be visiting Martam, Gangtok and Phodong among other places and will also be bestowing empowerments and teachings on dharma.

He will also be giving a talk in English on 'Meditation in daily life' at Manan Kendra at 5 pm on 26 February. The talk will also be translated in Nepali.

On the same day, he will be bestowing Chenrezig Khorwa Dhungrug kawang (Empowerment for liberation from samsaric miseries) at 11 AM at Mani Lhakhang, Rongyek.

The Rinpoche will begin his engagements in Sikkim with a long life empowerment (Tsewang) at Martam Tsongkhari Tashi Choling Monastery at 10 AM on 25 February.



STATE BANK OF SIKKIM

(A Government of Sikkim Undertaking)

LATERAL RECRUITMENT OF GENERAL MANAGER IN STATE BANK OF SIKKIM

ADVERTISEMENT NO. SBS/GM/2019/01

DATES FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION: 01.03.2019 TO 20.03.2019

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Special pilgrimage train sets off for Kolkata, Kamakhya



BHUBANESWAR, FEB 24 (PTI): A special pilgrimage train, as part of the 11th edition of Baristha Nagarika Tirtha Yatra Yojana (BNTYY), was flagged off Sunday at Bhubaneswar railway station with 1,000 senior citizens.

The train was flagged off by Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

The train, with Senior citizens from Cuttack, Puri, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur and Khurda districts, set off its journey for Kolkata in West Bengal and Kamakhya in Assam.

Patnaik congratulated the senior citizens and wished them a happy journey. The elderly passengers also thanked the

chief minister for fulfilling their long-pending wish of going on a pilgrimage, said an official from the chief minister's office.

The Odisha government had started the pilgrimage trip in 2016. As many as 11,000 senior citizens have visited various religious and pilgrimage centres so far, official sources said.

Evaluate Results to Empower People

Change evaluation from input-driven to result-oriented

It is not rare in the cramped huddles of share-cabs or service jeeps to overhear complaints of days and hours lost to making the rounds of government offices trying to get even routine works done. Lethargy and impromptu truancy remain ingrained habits in departments across the board. Of course, there is an impressive club of diligent officers as well, but accept it, their numbers pale in comparison to those who have too many other more important chores and distractions vying for their time. This situation as entrenched in head offices as in the branch offices and the inconvenience suffered by the people is also evenly spread out among the urban and rural aam janta.

Given the sheer number of government offices now opened across the State and the scale of personnel deployment this entails, it would be almost unfair to expect all these offices to be staffed by able and diligent officials. It will not be surprising to learn that there are more offices which are under-performing, but that really should not be the case since even if there are a more offices now, Sikkim is still a very small state and fixing accountability should not be too difficult.

Admittedly, that is easier said than done. It is not impossible though if the right administrative corrections are allowed through. In fact, the Administrative Reforms Commission [ARC] of the Government of India had made some interesting recommendations on how the country should be administered. And no, compulsory military training for all joining even the civil services was not one of the recommendations. It would be wonderful if the army itself was allowed more funds to improve training and arsenal, but that clearly is not how chest-thumping nationalists and their need to over-express their machismo thinks. But we are talking of the civil services here and the ARC, the draft report of which had suggested that bureaucrats be held responsible for service delivery. That was a decade ago in 2008! And service delivery remains unaddressed. No surprises there since the Centre believes announcements are enough to claim delivery. Hence, performance continues to be gauged on input-centric indices in our country and also the State. Bureaucrats, as also the schemes they oversee, are rated on the basis of money spent, man-hours supposedly devoted and manpower deployed. The ARC had noticed this fault a decade ago and recommended that assessment be based on quantifiable output targets. This was a good idea, even if an obvious one, and a welcome relief from attitudes which focus only on “effort” [which are all about claims] and ignore the all important aspect of “impact” [as in results]. Schemes are evaluated and sustained [with release of subsequent funds] based on Utilization Certificates. Although Sikkim’s bureaucracy fares poorly even on this formality, as the Chief Minister and recently even the Chief Secretary admonished them for; should the ARC’s recommendation be adopted [along with its penal clauses on failure], development could attain an even steeper trajectory here upwards.

More importantly, it would also fix accountability and embarrassments like complaints of delays even in routine official processes would not occur too frequently, and if they did, there would be a prescribed process to readdress them. After all, officials who do not report to even push files will not fare too well in service delivery either. Basically, the problem with the present model of evaluation [and thus also work culture] is that because it is “input centric” it makes no demands on the bureaucracy to remain true to its public service epithet.

One of the biggest hurdles holding up effective decentralization of power; despite devolution of substantial responsibilities to the panchayat level, is that lay people still do not have an important enough say. While they can vote for change every five years, that is about the only control they have on delivery of development. They cannot touch the bureaucrats. And the babus can continue to talk down to them because when it comes evaluating their performance, it is based on data of inputs which they control along with the elected representatives [who become a part of the System the moment they get elected].

Should performances instead be evaluated on returns accrued on the inputs made, the end-recipients, that is the people, will have at least a deciding say because it will be their assessment of the effectiveness of administration’s ability to deliver that will decide which officers stay and who is shown the door. Yes, the ARC draft had also recommended that civil servants who continually fail to “perform” are compulsorily retired. The Departments will automatically become populated by “public servants” in the real sense of the term. Devolution of power would have been attained and job-satisfaction ensured for public servants who make the grade and every penny of the pay commission rewards would have been well earned. That said, 10 years since the idea was mooted, it has still not happened....

Why Paris is the perfect city to introduce break dancing to the Olympics

JONATHAN ERVINE
theconversation.com

Along with surfing, climbing and skateboarding, break dancing has been proposed for inclusion at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. While fans of the sports have been delighted by the news, it has provoked some criticism too, not least from followers of sports such as squash and karate which will not be considered for the 2024 games.

But the inclusion of break dancing in Paris 2024 would not be a complete surprise. Indeed, there are several reasons why it would actually make sense. Firstly, break dancing proved itself as a popular event when it was included in the Youth Olympics for the first time at Buenos Aires in 2018. Secondly, the launch of break dancing as an Olympic sport in 2024 would fit with the very ethos of the Paris games.

The Paris 2024 organising committee plan to locate Olympic events in two key areas – a Central Paris zone and a Greater Paris zone. The Olympic Marathon will pass many central Parisian landmarks, archery will take place near the Eiffel Tower, at Esplanade des Invalides, and the road cycling will travel along the Champs-Élysées. Meanwhile, athletics events as well as the opening and closing ceremonies will take place outside central Paris, in the Stade de France.

So why does this mean that break dancing should have a place in the 2024 games? The Stade de France – like much of the Greater Paris zone – is located in Seine-Saint-Denis, a part of Paris’s suburban fringe that is said to be the birthplace of hip hop in France. Including an event like break dancing would not just be a big moment for urban culture worldwide, but important for French culture in the capital too.

Hip hop culture is big in France overall. Indeed, the hip hop market in France is now the second largest in the world, after the USA. And since the 1980s, break dancing, rap music, and graffiti have been particularly popular in the often-impooverished “banlieues” outside many major French cities.

However, French politicians have often been suspicious of break dancing. Within French rap music, there is an at times aggressive critique of French politicians and the police. Leading rap groups such as NTM, Sniper and La Rumeur have used their music to blame both groups for injustices and inequalities experienced by young people in the banlieues.

In an attempt to change negative perceptions, several films, including Jean-Pierre Thorn’s *Génération hip hop* ou *le mou’v’ des ZUP* (1996),

Faire kiffer les anges (1997) and *On n’est pas des marques de vélo* (2003), have shown how important hip hop culture has been in giving young people from such areas a powerful means of expression. Thorn’s 2010 film *93, La Belle Rebelle* sought to reinforce the idea that areas such as Seine-Saint-Denis are characterised by cultural diversity and dynamism. The film showed how many varied performers have come from the often stigmatised area, including well-known figures such as Serge Teys-

become more inclusive. Crucially, Perryman argued that the Olympics would be more successful if more events were free for spectators to attend. He cited the Tour de France as an example of a highly profitable major sporting event that is free for spectators. Perryman also argued that the Olympics should favour sports which are accessible to participants because they do not require expensive equipment. This last point provides a good argument for the inclusion of break dancing. No specialist equipment



sot-Gay from the rock group *Noir Désir*, slam artist Grand Corps Malade and members of the iconic French rap group NTM.

Professor Dayna Oscherwitz has argued too that hip hop culture has become the dominant vehicle for urban youth from the banlieues to articulate their vision of the world. She says that it allows them to describe the reality of life in the banlieues, and to highlight the problems they face.

Including break dancing at Paris 2024 would connect the games with the urban culture of the area surrounding the Stade de France. It would see the French capital embracing a discipline often associated with its outer suburbs rather than the city centre, and provide a means to engage with young people too. It may even go some way to dispelling the negative reports more often coming out of these areas.

Prior to London 2012, sports activist Mark Perryman argued that the Olympics can, and should,

or professional training is necessarily needed to begin break dancing.

However, it is important to add a note of caution. If Olympic break dancing is to successfully engage young people from Paris’s banlieues, this will partially depend on them being able to buy tickets. The distribution and pricing of tickets for some Olympic events attracted criticism at Rio 2016 and London 2012. Empty seats were visible at several venues, notably due to tickets remaining unsold or being given to sponsors who did not use them.

On one hand, the symbolic importance of including break dancing in the Paris 2024 games should perhaps not be overstated. However, this one event could help anchor the games within the areas in which many venues will be located, as well as re-energise the Olympic movement for a young, urban audience both in France and worldwide.

[the writer is Senior Lecturer in French and Francophone Studies, Bangor University]

Language has become a tool for social exclusion

LOREDANA POLEZZI, JO ANGOURI & RITA WILSON
theconversation.com

Within a week of the Salzburg Global Seminar’s Statement for a Multilingual World launching in February 2018, the document – which calls for policies and practices that support multilingualism – had received 1.5m social media impressions.

The statement opens with some striking facts, including that “all 193 UN member states and most people are multilingual”. It also points out that 7,097 languages are currently spoken across the world but 2,464 of these are endangered. Just 23 languages dominate among these 7,097, and are spoken by over half of the world’s population.

As these statistics show, the soundtrack of our lives and the visual landscapes of our cities are multilingual. Languages, in their plurality, enrich our experience of the world and our creative potential. Multilingualism opens up new ways of being and of doing, it connects us with others and provides a window into the diversity of our societies. And yet, despite the more positive statistics above, we are currently witnessing a deep divide.

On the one hand, multilingualism is associated with mobility, productivity and knowledge creation (see, for instance, the EU’s objective for all citizens to speak two languages in addition to their first one). On the other, monolingualism (speaking only one language) is still perceived as both the norm and the ideal for an allegedly well-functioning society. Linguistic diversity is seen as both suspicious and costly.

LINGUISTIC PENALTIES

This is particularly visible in relation to the most vulnerable groups seeking a new home: refugees and asylum seekers. Newcomers are often required to prove they can read, write and speak the national language/s to be given the right to remain. Fluency, however, goes beyond technical ability in the majority languages. In



the 1980s, researchers showed that language is more than just a code by which we communicate, it is related to social and political knowledge, and access to power structures.

Language skills are critically important for engagement with a host society and lacking those skills can be an insurmountable barrier for accessing opportunities in education, work, and other areas of social life. Success in finding one’s place in a new social context, however, requires more than instrumental use of language.

Research has shown that refugees pay a “linguistic penalty” when transitioning to a new socioeconomic environment. That penalty refers to the consequences of being categorised as “different” or not “one of us” on the basis of language performance that does not follow established societal norms.

Speakers who inadvertently break societal rules of expected behaviour are assessed as “not having enough language”, which becomes a proxy for an inability to “fit in”. That inability, in turn, is interpreted as a moral deficiency: lack of fluency becomes a sign of insufficient desire to become “one of us” and marks the migrant as both a “failed” and a “bad” citizen.

Language, held up as a sign of belonging, becomes a gatekeeper for inclusion/exclusion, regulating access to citizenship and education, health and legal protection. The responsibility for success or failure falls firmly on the shoulders of the “other” – the migrant, the minority member, the one who “does not fit in”. This process is clearly visible in citizenship and language tests. The tests blur language assessment with reproducing and assessing abstract values about the home society. They take a narrow approach to cultural diversity and represent one hegemonic set of “ways of doing things around here”.

DEFICIT APPROACH

The myth of one nation, one (national) language, one (national) culture – which was at the heart of the ideal of the nation state in the 19th and 20th centuries – perpetuates the master narrative of national homogeneity. The consistent and robust evidence that “native speakers” (a political term in its own right) fail citizenship tests and that the evaluation process is deeply political has not yet produced an alternative narrative.

By projecting a deficit approach onto refugees and asylum seekers, their contribution to society is dis-

missed and both their presence and the linguistic diversity attached to it are perceived as problems or costs. This mechanism of exclusion relies on a hierarchy in which not all languages are equal or desirable.

“Their” language(s) are low on the pecking order that the majority perceive as needed or wanted. Monolingual models insist on a “subtractive” principle in which one dominant language replaces another less “desirable” one, rather than recognising and valuing how multilingualism, by adding the ability to communicate in more than one language, can benefit everyone in our increasingly connected world.

These attitudes silence the contributions that new multilingual citizens make to economic growth, social cohesion or artistic production. A different approach is urgently needed, one that moves away from multilingualism as deficit and towards a recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity as a creative engine of civic participation and social well-being.

[Loredana Polezzi is Professor in Translation Studies, Cardiff University; Jo Angouri is Professor of Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick; Rita Wilson is Professor in Translation Studies, Monash University]

Apathy and incompetence of Assam government has resulted in tragic deaths: Rahul

NEW DELHI, FEB 24 (PTI): Congress President Rahul Gandhi said on Sunday that the “apathy and incompetence” of the BJP government in Assam has resulted in “tragic” deaths of over 100 people due to intake of toxic alcohol.

The death toll in Assam’s hooch tragedy has shot up to 124, while 331 people are undergoing treatment in hospitals, officials said on Sunday.

“The apathy and incompetence of the Assam Government has resulted in the tragic deaths of over 140 people with scores of victims in hospital, poisoned by toxic alcohol,” Gandhi tweeted on Sunday afternoon.

He added, “My condolences to the families of those who have died. I also pray that those in hospital make a speedy recovery.”

A large number of labourers of two tea estates of Golaghat and Jorhat districts had fallen ill after drinking spurious liquor on Thursday night and many of them died in the past few days.

Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal met the affected people at Jorhat Medical College Hospital (JMCH) on Saturday and announced an ex-gratia payment of Rs two lakh



to the next of kin of each of the deceased and Rs 50,000 to those who fell ill.

Sonowal said Saturday the guilty would not be spared, even as the opposition Congress accused the BJP government in Assam of not taking adequate steps to stop the sale of illicit liquor and demanded the resignation of the state excise minister. New Delhi, Feb 24 (PTI): The Congress Sunday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “silence” on the hooch tragedy in Assam with its president Rahul Gandhi blaming the “apathy and incompetence” of the state’s BJP government for it.

“The apathy and incompetence of the Assam

Government has resulted in the tragic deaths of over 140 people with scores of victims in hospital, poisoned by toxic alcohol,” Gandhi tweeted on Sunday afternoon.

State government officials put the death toll at 124, with 331 persons undergoing treatment in hospitals.

Later at a press conference, Congress spokesperson Pawan Khara took aims at Modi saying he is busy giving speeches all the time for “politics” but has not spoken even a few words on the deaths of so many people after consuming spurious liquor.

“Politics can be done with speeches but government cannot be run by it,” he said.

He also targeted Modi over the violence in the BJP-ruled Arunachal Pradesh amid protests against the state government’s decision to give permanent resident certificates to six communities.

In a broad swipe at Modi, Khara said, “He keeps travelling from morning to evening, changing clothes three-four times. But the work for which he was elected he does not do, nor does (BJP) chief ministers do. Why are you silent on such tragedies?”

“This government is missing in action...We condemn his silence and incompetence,” he added.

Winning elections have become his only goal but there is no

governance, he said and sought to know what action has been taken against the liquor mafia behind the tragedy in Assam.

In Arunachal Pradesh, the house of the deputy chief minister has been attacked and Modi should answer as to what has been done to restore peace there, Khara said.

In this context, the Congress spokesperson also referred to the Pulwama attack and said incidents happen but a government is known by its action following a crisis.

“People have become bored of his speeches and want to know what his government did after a crisis,” he said.

A large number of labourers of two tea estates of Golaghat and Jorhat districts had fallen ill after drinking spurious liquor on Thursday night and many of them died later.

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal met the affected people at Jorhat Medical College Hospital (JMCH) on Saturday and announced an ex-gratia payment of Rs two lakh to the next of kin of each of the deceased and Rs 50,000 to those who fell ill.

Sonowal said the guilty would not be spared.

Arunachal govt to not accept recommendations to grant PRC to 6 communities: Rijiju

New Delhi, Feb 24 (PTI): Amidst violent protests in Arunachal Pradesh, Union minister Kiren Rijiju said Sunday the state government has decided to not accept the recommendations of a high-level committee to grant permanent resident certificates to six communities, and blamed the Congress for “instigating” a section of people.

In separate tweets, Rijiju said the Arunachal Pradesh government has passed an order to not accept the recommendations of the Joint High-Powered Committee to grant PRC to six communities living in Namsai and Changlang districts.

Widespread violence has been reported in the state capital Itanagar and other places, leading to the death of at least two persons, injury to several and destruction of properties and vehicles.

The central government has dispatched 1,000 paramilitary personnel to the state to help the administration in maintaining law and order.

“Everyone must come together without blaming each other for the sake of peace. It’s very unfortunate that innocent lives were lost in the violence,” Rijiju, who hails from Arunachal Pradesh, said.

The Union minister of



state for home accused the Congress of “instigating” people of the state to protest against the move to grant permanent resident certificates to six communities.

Rijiju said Chief Minister Pema Khandu has clarified that the state government was not bringing the bill on PRC but only tabling the report of the Nabam Rebia-led committee consisting of members and student organisations.

“It means the state government has not accepted it. In fact, Congress Party is fighting for PRC but instigating people wrongly,” he said.

Rebia is a cabinet minister in the state government.

Rijiju alleged that the Congress has supported and “instigat-

ed” non-Arunachal Pradesh STs in Lekang area to fight for PRC but “misguided” innocent people in Itanagar.

“From the beginning I have strongly urged the state government not to grant PRC unless people are convinced of full protection of indigenous rights. We must stand united,” he said.

People in some parts of Arunachal Pradesh have been protesting after the state government announced that it was considering issuing permanent resident certificates (PRC) to six non-Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe (APSTs) communities living in the Namsai and Changlang districts and to the Gorkhas living in Vijaynagar.

FIELDWORK REFLECTIONS

The Vanishing Knowledge

Human health is a complex phenomenon which is often defined as a state of physiological and psychological wellbeing. Numerous factors like the socioeconomic, environmental, biological and cultural factors affect human health at different levels i.e. both in physiological as well as psychological levels.

In other words, health can be defined as the absence of diseases/illness.

When we talk about health and illness, it is very important to understand how different communities perceive health and illness based on their cultural beliefs and practices. Before the introduction of modern medicine and healthcare practices, almost every community relied exclusively on traditional healing practices which are basically nature and ritual-based. Now, looking at the present scenario modern healthcare practices have taken over the traditional systems and along with it the knowledge about those traditional healthcare practices is slowly fading away.

This article is an attempt to showcase the factors leading towards the decline of traditional healthcare knowledge and practices.

I was always fascinated by traditional healers and often wondered how they healed simply by beating the patient with a clutch of grass and the smell of herbs which was in fact my first experience of encountering a traditional healer. It was measles for which I had already visited the doctor and was taking medication but the fever got worse and the next thing I remember was a healer performing rituals and beating me with grass and later giving me something to eat. I had little idea of what was going on but was doing everything as directed perhaps because all I wanted was to get better and after an hour or two I started feeling better as well. I do not know whether it was the medicine from the doctor that worked or the herbs I was made to eat and smell or both but the situation I want to focus on to is the first step taken to cure my illness.

Nowadays, everyone prefers modern medicine over traditional healing yet one will always opt for an alternate solution if the former

doesn’t work. In my case, it was modern medicine that was preferred first despite the availability of a traditional healer, but during my fieldwork I came across many cases where traditional healers were preferred over modern healing methods which again had many reasons. Firstly, socioeconomic conditions play a vital role in determining preference for a healing method. When asked, patients simply said that the convenient fee made local traditional healers the preferred choice. Another reason is the obligatory reason which is the lack of modern medical facilities or difficulty to avail the same. One of the main reasons is however the belief system of the people towards traditional healing. As mentioned earlier that influence of modern medicine is a recent case, many people have not deviated from their faith in traditional healing which have been in practice since ages.

The things mentioned above are from the patient’s perspective.

Now, when traditional healers are asked about challenges they are facing despite acquiring such vast knowledge about healing, they came up with some valid points, one of the important factors being the lack of recognition from the concerned authorities because of that the validation of their knowledge is always in question. Since the knowledge they acquire is totally based on oral traditions and experiences, it is obvious for some to have doubts. The decline of traditional healing and healers is also because the younger generation is not sensitised about it and as a result they are not interested in learning. Another reason is that traditional healing does not earn enough for the practitioners and as such they want their children to opt for something better. One of the healers who is an expert in healing fractures said that it takes a lifetime for a healer to learn about the medicines and experiment those on themselves before recommending it to patients hence they want that knowledge to be kept within a few people mostly their families so that it can be a mode of earning for livelihood for them. Since their medicines are found in the forests and also because they need to grow

some themselves, manual labour is also a barrier for elderly healers who can no longer dwell in the woods or work in the fields. In recent years, it is also seen that many people buy medicinal plants from the villages in bulk which has left the healers without access to the required medicinal plants themselves. There are multiple issues which are leading to a decline in the ancient knowledge which is now drifting away in the winds of ignorance.

It is time to think of a solution to safeguard such a valuable treasure which, if it is not taken care of will turn to ashes along with the healers. As a researcher, and also based on my understanding, I think it is important to listen to their voices before taking further steps. In a sense, instead of plucking a flower and placing it in a golden vase, it is better to nurture the whole plant which will last longer and bear seeds. What we do for them based on our understanding and what they actually need are two important things which should match. Policy makers should understand that it is not only to raise the living standard of the people but also keeping safe the knowledge which should be passed down. The younger generation should be sensitised regarding the importance of such things so that they become interested in acquiring the knowledge. There should be a proper channel and platform created for them so that they do not have to think twice before sharing their knowledge. Their knowledge should be their shield and not an obligatory choice for them.

I believe we have somehow been very ignorant and failed to acknowledge such people who hold such abundant knowledge about nature and healing. But it is never too late as long as the ship is in harbour. It is not that one should totally stop using modern medical facilities and opt for traditional healing, but the alternate should be looked after as well. Sometimes, even though we have choices the alternate choice is the only choice we are left with so keeping it safe may be something we can do before being left with no choice.

[The writer is Research Scholar, Department of Anthropology, Sikkim University]

10 companies of ITBP dispatched to violence-hit Arunachal

NEW DELHI, FEB 24 (PTI): As many as 1,000 paramilitary troops have been dispatched to Arunachal Pradesh as widespread violence erupted in the state over the recommendation to grant permanent resident certificates (PRC) to six communities, officials said Sunday.

At least two persons have died as protests broke out on Saturday after the state government

announced that it was considering issuing PRC to six non-Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribes (APSTs) living in the Namsai and Changlang districts. The communities are Deoris, Sonowal Kacharis, Morans, Adivasis, Mishings and Gorkhas. Most of them are recognised as Scheduled Tribes in neighbouring Assam.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has dispatched 10 additional companies of

the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) for deployment in law-and-order duties in Itanagar and other violence-hit places, an official said.

The state government will deploy the troops as per the requirement of the local administration. Five ITBP companies have already been deployed in the state, the official said. A company of paramilitary comprises 100 personnel.

The ITBP personnel have been sent on an urgent basis as Itanagar and other areas have witnessed widespread violence, destruction of properties and vehicles on Sunday, officials said.

The mob has tried to set ablaze the residence of Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein and also tried to target residence of Chief Minister Pema Khandu, another official said.

Odisha launches boat ambulance service for remote areas

BHUBANESWAR, FEB 24 (PTI): The Odisha government has launched a boat ambulance service to ferry patients to hospitals in remote areas at a cost of Rs 5.40 crore, officials said.

Six boat ambulances, being added to the road fleet for now, will be part of the ‘108’ ambulance service.

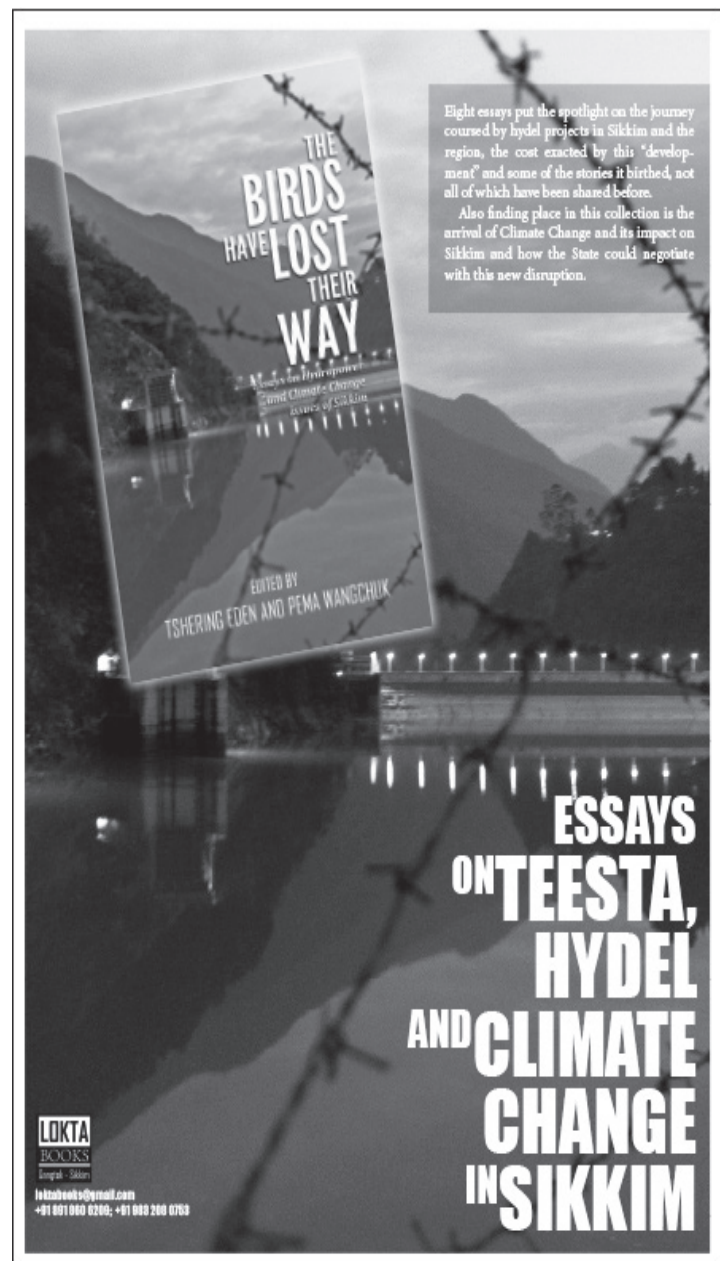
Two boat ambulances each have been sanctioned for Malkangiri and Kendrapara districts, and one each for Koraput and Kalahandi, a senior official said.

While the first such boat ambulance was introduced at Batighar under Mahakalapada tehsil in the coastal Kendrapara district on Saturday, the rest will be made operational in a phased manner, he said.

The service includes six boat ambulances and 60 jetties with walkway. The operational cost of the ambulances is estimated to be around Rs 90 lakh per annum.

The new facility will become a sort of a “vessel of hope” for people living in numerous far-flung, river-locked pockets of the state, the officials said.

In Kendrapara district, another boat ambulance will be deployed for Jamboo under Mahakalapada tehsil, said Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) Biswaranjan Pati.



Messi hits 50th hat trick to give Barca 4-2 win at Sevilla

Barcelona, Feb 24 (AP): Just when Barcelona was at its worst, Lionel Messi gave one of his best performances of the season.

Messi scored his 50th hat trick for club and country on Saturday in a 4-2 victory at Sevilla, helping Barcelona to take a big step toward retaining the Spanish league title.

Sevilla went ahead twice, but Messi hit back each time before he netted a third goal with five minutes remaining.

After taking his league-leading tally to 25 goals, Messi added an assist for Luis Suarez to round off the win before the whistle.

It was Messi's 44th hat trick for Barcelona, to go with another six for Argentina, according to the club.

"This doesn't mean the league is ours yet. There is a long way to go, but it was very important to win here to protect the advantage we have over our rivals," Messi said.

"The game turned against us but we knew how to pull it out."

Barcelona had drawn four of its previous five matches and its only goal in three games had been a penalty by Messi. A setback in Seville would have given Atletico Madrid and Real Madrid the



chance to spark up the title race when they play on Sunday.

Instead, Messi almost singlehandedly ensured Barcelona opened a 10-point gap over Atletico and a 12-point advantage over Madrid.

Barcelona also rediscovered its scoring form in time for a critical week of back-to-back clashes with Madrid.

The fierce rivals meet

in the second leg of their Copa del Rey semifinal on Wednesday after a 1-1 draw at Camp Nou, before clashing again in the league next weekend.

"We went through a patch when we weren't playing our best and that makes everything more difficult. We were having trouble converting our chances," Messi said.

"When everything flows, things go well

for us, as we saw today. Today we were back to playing like we know how. We played a great match."

Sevilla outplayed Barcelona through much of the first half and was twice ahead thanks to Jesus Navas and Gabriel Mercado.

But Messi responded both times with strikes that produced the same result: goalkeeper Tomas

Vaclik helplessly pawing thin air as the ball sailed over his head.

Messi cancelled out Navas' 22nd-minute opener four minutes later with an exquisite volley, as the Argentine blasted Ivan Rakitic's cross into the top corner of the net.

Messi equalised a second time in the 67th after Rakitic recovered the ball, laid off for Ousmane

Dembele, who found Barcelona's all-time top scorer alone on the edge of the area and he curled the ball into the corner.

Messi finally put Barcelona in charge when he nonchalantly chipped the ball over Vaclik.

"Not only did Messi score three great goals, it was how he scored them," said Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde.

"There was a lot at stake in this match. We weren't playing well and then he appeared. That is Messi."

Sevilla fell into fifth place, with Getafe moving up into the Champions League spots after beating Rayo Vallecano 2-1.

Defender Samuel Umtiti played his first match for Barcelona after being sidelined since late November with a left knee problem that has plagued him since helping France win the 2018 World Cup.

Umtiti, who played the full 90 minutes, has only made nine appearances for Barcelona this campaign.

In other results, sixth-place Alaves drew 0-0 with relegation-threatened Celta Vigo, while Athletic Bilbao won 1-0 against Eibar. Raul Garcia scored a first-minute goal for Athletic, which is up to eighth.

India assured of five medals at Iran boxing tourney



NEW DELHI, FEB 24

(PTI): India were assured of five medals in the Makran Cup Boxing Tournament in Chabahar, Iran after Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Satish Kumar (+91kg) and four others advanced to the semifinals of the event.

Satish, who is also a former Asian Games bronze-medallist, blanked Turkmenistan's Baky Toychyev 5-0 to enter the last-four stage, where he will square off against Eeman Ramzan.

Others who entered

the semifinals were Manjeet Singh Panghal (75kg), Sanjeet (91kg), Lalit Prasad (52kg) and Deepak (49kg).

Manjeet defeated Iraq's Ameer Mohaisen 5-0 to enter the semifinals, while Sanjeet (91kg), the gold-medallist from last year's India Open, got the better of Hungary's Adam Hamori.

Lalit Prasad (52kg), the reigning national champion, had no trouble going past Mahdi Habibi 5-0. Deepak, on the other hand, beat Beigi Mir.

Red & Golds camp stay cautious before Aizawl game

Kolkata, Feb 24 (PTI): East Bengal would like to settle for nothing less than full points when they take on Aizawl FC 17th round I-League encounter on Monday in their bid to remain in title contention.

East Bengal are currently placed third with 32 points from 16 games, five less than current leaders Chennai City FC, who are on top of the league table with 37 points from 17 games.

In between the two are, dark horse Real Kashmir FC with 33 points from 17 games and a win against Aizawl will enable East Bengal to gain the second position behind Chennai with only two points adrift.

For Aizawl, it will be a chance to beat East Bengal twice in this edition having won their home leg by 3-2 margin in November last year.

East Bengal have conceded only 17 goals this season with the likes of Costa Rican World Cup-

per Johnny Acosta, Borja Gomez and Chullova manning the defence.

Aizawl FC's forward line comprising Zikahi Dodoz, Kromah and Jaryan have flattered to deceive with only 17 goals from 16 games to show for their efforts.

With the likes of Mexican Esqueda and one of the best finds of Indian football Joby Justin in the forward line, the hosts have a lethal attack force up their sleeves who have been creating trouble for all the opponents this season.

Aizawl, on the other hand, would have major defensive worries, having leaked as many as 24 goals in sixteen games so far. They haven't been able to score many as well, managing only 17 goals from 18 games so far.

Incidentally, Joby is the third highest goal scorer (top scorer among Indians) in the current season with nine goals to his kitty.

Confident India women eyeing series-clinching win against England in 2nd ODI



MUMBAI, FEB 24 (PTI): Their tails up after a morale-boosting win in the opener, a confident Indian women team would look to seal the three-match series against world champions England when they meet in the second cricket ODI here on Monday.

India women couldn't have asked for a better start to the series, defeating the current world champions by 66 runs in the opener at the Wankhede Stadium on Friday.

The win not only gave a fillip to their confidence but also enabled India grab crucial two points in the ICC Women's Championship as the race for securing direct qualification spots for the 2021 World Cup heats up.

India need to hold on to its position in top four of the world rankings till 2020 to get a direct berth in the 2021 World Cup and in this context, a second successive victory on Monday would do a world of good for the hosts.

The hosts have a lot of positives to take from the win, especially the clinical performance of its bowling unit led by left-arm spinner Ekta Bisht.

Bisht starred with the ball with figures of 4 for 25 as Indian spinners made England dance to their tunes.

England batswomen struggled in the middle overs as they failed to counter the variety pro-

vided by Bisht, leg-spinner Poonam Yadav and off-spinner Deepti Sharma (2/33).

Upfront veteran Jhulan Goswami (1/19) and Shikha Pandey (2/21) gave India a perfect while defending the modest 202-run target.

On the batting front, young opener Jemimah Rodrigues has been in fine touch while Smriti Mandhana, who made 24, would be looking to make up for the lost opportunity in the series opener.

Skipper Mithali Raj, who made 44 and is still going strong in the 50-over format, is the backbone of India's batting line-up but she would look for support from the likes of Deepti Sharma, Mona Meshram and young Harleen Deol, who got a chance in place of injured Harmanpreet Kaur,

Going into Monday's game, the only cause of concern for India is that they frittered away a good start provided by openers Jemimah and Mandhana. The duo shared 69 runs for the first wicket to set the platform for a big score.

But the middle-order fumbled and it was then left to Mithali and wicket-keeper Tania Bhatia (25) and later Goswami (30) to do the resurrection work.

Stunned by the defeat, England is expected to come out strongly to remain in the hunt and

keep the series alive.

But the real challenge for England would be to figure out how to deal with India's spin trio in helpful conditions.

Skipper Heather Knight is leading from the front but she needs support from the likes of Danni Wyatt, Sarah Taylor and Tammy Beaumont.

All-rounder Natalie Sciver too had a good outing with both bat and ball in the last game.

England's bowling, on the other hand, has been impressive and the visitors have the firepower in Sciver, Sophie Ecclestone, Georgia Elweiss and experienced pacer Anya Shrubsole to trouble the Indians.

Teams (from): India Women: Mithali Raj (Capt.), Jhulan Goswami, Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Taniya Bhatia (wicket-keeper), R Kalpana (wicket-keeper), Mona Meshram, Ekta Bisht, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Poonam Yadav, Shikha Pandey, Mansi Joshi, Purnam Raut, Harleen Deol.

England Women: Heather Knight (Capt.), Tammy Beaumont, Katherine Brunt, Kate Cross, Sophia Dunkley, Sophie Ecclestone, Georgia Elweiss, Alex Hartley, Amy Jones, Laura Marsh, Nat Sciver, Anya Shrubsole, Sarah Taylor (wicket-keeper), Lauren Winfield and Danni Wyatt.

Match starts at 9 AM.

Nagaland AG makes statement in House to buttress CM's point

KOHIKA, FEB 23 (PTI): The Nagaland advocate general Saturday appeared in the state Assembly to buttress Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio's argument made earlier in the House that he is within his rights to authorise any minister to reply to MLAs' questions.

Opposition Naga People's Front (NPF) staged a walk-out during the Question Hour on this issue earlier Saturday, alleging that the ruling People's Democratic Alliance (PDA) was not following the laid down rules and procedures of the House.

Leader of Opposition T R Zeliang expressed unhappiness over Urban Development Minister Metsubo Jamir replying to a supplementary of

the Rural Development (RD) Department.

Rio, who is also the minister in-charge of RD, then informed the House that he has authorised some of his cabinet ministers to reply to some of the questions.

Any minister can reply to any questions, Rio said and insisted that it has been the general practice of the Assembly in the past.

Alleging that such measure is a breach of privilege, Zeliang demanded that the Leader of the House state the rules under which such s precedence was set.

As Rio did not respond, he walked out with the opposition MLAs.

Later addressing the media at his chamber in Assembly, Zeliang said there has been no such

precedence nor any laid down rule for one minister to reply to questions on another department. It has to be the Leader of the House or the minister in-charge only."

The government, meanwhile, asked Advocate General K N Balagopal to come the House and make a statement on the issue.

"The CM is well within his rights to give such authority to any minister, given the leave of the Speaker and therefore any other minister can reply to questions," he said.

It is based on the principle of collective responsibility, Balagopal said adding that the Article 164(2) of the Constitution The Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the Legislative Assembly.

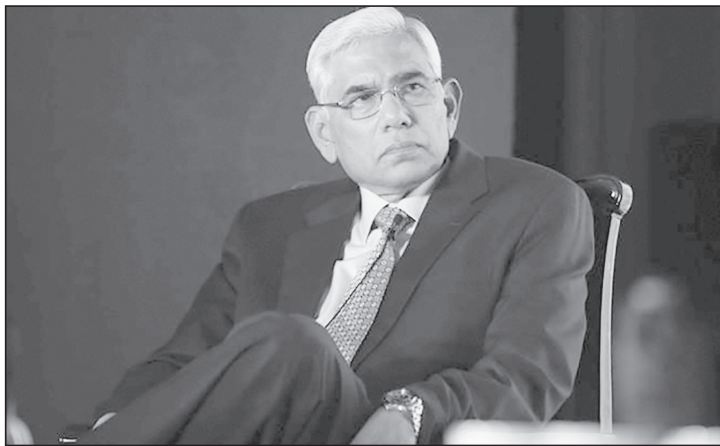
Pakistan should be isolated like it happened with South Africa during apartheid: Vinod Rai

New Delhi, Feb 24 (PTI): Committee of Administrators chief Vinod Rai Sunday said the sporting community "needs to ostracise Pakistan" for fomenting terror activities just like South African was banned from international cricket due to the country's policy on apartheid.

There had been calls to boycott India's June 16 World Cup group league game against Pakistan in Old Trafford in the wake of Pulwama terror attack in which more than 40 CRPF personnel were killed.

The BCCI has already written a letter to the ICC urging "all nations to sever ties with countries from which terrorism emanates".

But the former CAG wants to look at the bigger picture rather than just one match as there is a possibility that India may have to play them again in semi-final or final.



"We would be shooting in the foot if we don't play Pakistan in the World Cup. Our aim should be to ostracise Pakistan as a cricketing nation," Rai told PTI.

"As I have said earlier, all cricketing nations should sever ties with them," Rai said.

He cited the example of South Africa, which was banned for 21 years from 1970 till 1991 due to the apart-

heid when black South Africans were racially discriminated.

"I believe something similar needs to be done with Pakistan. They should be banned from all sporting activities just like it happened with South Africa," Rai said.

The CoA chief also said that the matter will be officially tabled at the ICC chief executives meet during the quarterly conference in Dubai.

The issue wasn't a part of the agenda but now that BCCI has officially written a letter, and the matter will be up for discussion.

"The matter will be officially tabled at the ICC chief executives meet and Indian board will express its concern," he said.

When asked whether a consensus can be built in order to isolate Pakistan in the sporting world, the veteran bu-

reaucrat said that it is done at the political level.

"It is done at the government level where you talk to other nations in order to build consensus," he said.

Opinions have been divided on the calls for boycott with former India captain Sourav Ganguly and senior off-spinner Harbhajan Singh wanting the June 16 match to be called off.

However, they haven't clarified what happens if Pakistan make it to the semifinals or the final.

On the other hand, the two of the biggest names in Indian cricket, Sachin Tendulkar and Sunil Gavaskar, want India to beat Pakistan as a walk over will mean giving two points on a platter to the arch rivals.

Skipper Virat Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri have maintained that they will "abide by whatever decision government takes."

Fear and hoping: expectations surge ahead of new US-Taliban talks

KABUL, FEB 24 (AFP): The US and the Taliban are to meet in Qatar for fresh talks Monday seeking an end to 17 years of grinding conflict in Afghanistan, with the stakes ratcheting higher as the spring fighting season approaches.

Marathon talks held in Doha last month have stoked hopes of a breakthrough after the two sides walked away with a "draft framework" that included a Taliban commitment to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for international terror groups.

It was the most substantial engagement by Washington with the militants since US forces ousted them from power in 2001.

But there is still no accord on a timetable for a US withdrawal or a ceasefire -- both major issues on which previous efforts have foundered.

This time Washington's special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, who has spearheaded the months-long effort, is expected to face an expanded Taliban negotiating team headed by Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, the Taliban's former deputy minister of foreign affairs.

Neither side has stated how long they expect the meetings to last or the details of what will be discussed.

Analysts say this round will likely see the Taliban push for the



removal of its leaders from a UN travel blacklist, matched with pressure from the US for the militants to open a dialogue with the Afghan government.

"Both sides are going into this process with open minds and a sense of urgency as the weather gets warmer and fighting season draws closer," Graeme Smith, a consultant based with International Crisis Group, told AFP.

The Taliban have steadfastly refused to negotiate with Kabul, whom they dismiss as "puppets". They have also stated that, without a withdrawal timetable, further progress is "impossible".

US President Donald Trump's apparent eagerness to end America's longest war, the Afghan government's fear of being sidelined, and the coming of spring all weigh on the process.

"Eyes are on the Tal-

iban to see if they are capable of compromising," said analyst Michael Semple. "Can they come up with a sufficient compromise to agree to a formula for an intra-Afghan dialogue that absolutely involves the current Afghan government?" Khalilzad, he added, "has stirred up the peace process in a way that nobody over the previous two decades had".

The gathering momentum has spurred fresh peace demonstrations and cautious hope in Afghanistan.

But there is also growing unease, with fears the government is being pushed aside and that progress which many Afghans have paid for with their lives could yet be undone if the US rushes for the exits.

According to fresh UN figures released Sunday, more civilians were killed in the Afghan war in 2018 than during any other year

on record -- with 3,804 people killed and another 7,189 wounded.

Women's groups and civil society organisations have warned that a speedy withdrawal or lenient deal with the Taliban could pave the way for a return of their repressive rule, or an even bloodier civil war.

Many watched in astonishment earlier this month as Taliban militants shared meals and prayers with Afghan political leaders, including presidential contender Mohammad Atta Noor and former president Hamid Karzai, in Moscow.

But not one representative from the current administration of President Ashraf Ghani was present at the informal talks, deepening the sense of anxiety.

Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are also playing a role in negotiations, as Russia and China watch closely, and

many observers fear regional disputes could yet derail the process.

Pakistan, which has long wielded influence over the militants and been seen as key to any peace push, has already suggested that soaring tensions with its nuclear arch-rival India could disrupt the talks.

But Taliban expert Rahimullah Yusufzai said this time around Pakistan's stance may be more chest-thumping bravado than an actual threat. He said that with the US and the Taliban talking to each other directly, "I think Pakistan's role will not be that important now".

The talks have been buttressed by heavy snowfall across Afghanistan, sharply reducing fighting and providing much-needed space for negotiations.

But Yusufzai warned that another bloody fighting season will likely kick off once the snow melts, as the Taliban seeks to maintain its momentum on the battlefield to maximise pressure at the negotiating table.

"I think they have to keep up the momentum until a ceasefire," he said.

Others warned that more bloodshed might undercut the fragile gains the talks have achieved so far. "It will be more challenging to pursue peace in the months that come if the Taliban... resort to a large-scale spring offensive," said Semple.

Pak lawmaker says 'atmosphere beginning to thaw' after his meetings with Indian leaders

LAHORE, FEB 24 (PTI): A Pakistani lawmaker from Prime Minister Imran Khan's party has met top Indian leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as Islamabad started backdoor contacts with New Delhi to defuse tensions between the two sides in the wake of the Pulwama terror attack, a media report said Sunday.

"The government has begun backdoor contacts with India and the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, who was in India last week, has met Prime Minister Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj," the Express Tribune reported.

"I have communicated a positive note to the Indian leaders and I hope there will now be a change in their behaviour," Vankwani said on Saturday while talking to the paper over telephone.

He also met Minister of State for External Affairs General VK Singh, who has also served as the chief of

the Indian Army.

The Sindh-based PTI leader, who is a lawmaker on minority seat, is in India as part of a 220-member delegation from 185 countries who attended the Kumbh Mela on an invite of the Indian government.

His visit comes amid heightened tensions between the two countries in the wake of February 14 suicide attack by Jaish-e-Mohammad that killed at least 40 CRPF soldiers in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Days after the Pulwama attack, Prime Minister Modi said security forces have been given free hand to avenge the dastardly act.

Vankwani said he met

Modi during an event and the Indian Prime Minister met him warmly, the paper reported.

He said he told Modi that he had come with a positive message and wanted to return with a positive message. He said later on Modi's directive, Swaraj also held a 25-minute-long meeting with him, the paper said.

"I told the Indian foreign minister that in Pakistan its captain's (Imran Khan) government now; he is a Pathan and he does what he says. We assure you that no Pakistani institution is involved in Pulwama attack. If India provides evidence, we will facilitate the investigation," the paper quoted Vankwani as saying.

According to the PTI leader, he told Swaraj that the two countries need to take lessons from past and not to hold on to it. "Enmity can be brought to an end by befriending the enemy," he said, adding that he himself has returned after Ganga Ashnan (ablution) and never tells lies.

"I told them that we need to get out of politics of accusations," he was quoted as saying by the paper.

According to Vankwani, after the meeting he "felts that the atmosphere was beginning to thaw."

"Indian PM during his Rajasthan rally has hinted at holding dialogue with Pakistan," he added.

Pope compares child sex abuse to 'human sacrifice'



VATICAN CITY, FEB 24 (AFP): Pope Francis on Sunday compared the sexual abuse of children to human sacrifice as he addressed the Catholic Church's top bishops at the end of a landmark summit to tackle paedophilia.

"Our work has made us realise once again that the gravity of the scourge of the sexual abuse of minors is, and historically has been, a widespread phenomenon in all cultures and societies," he said.

"I am reminded of the cruel religious practice, once widespread in certain cultures, of sac-

rificing human beings - frequently children - in pagan rites," he added.

Francis was speaking after a four-day meeting which he had opened by calling for "concrete measures" on tackling priests and handing 114 senior bishops a roadmap to shape the debate on how to stop a global scandal.

"If in the Church there should emerge even a single case of abuse - which already in itself represents an atrocity - that case will be faced with the utmost seriousness".

The ongoing scandals have hit countries

around the world, with recent cases affecting Australia, Chile, Germany and the US.

Francis said those who priests who pray on children are "tools of Satan".

"No explanations suffice for these abuses involving children," the Argentine pontiff said.

"The echo of the silent cry of the little ones who, instead of finding in them fathers and spiritual guides encountered tormentors, will shake hearts dulled by hypocrisy and by power."

"It is our duty to pay close heed to this silent, choked cry," he added.

Iran launches cruise missile from submarine during drill



Tehran, Feb 24 (AP): Iran says it has launched a cruise missile from a submarine for the first time during an ongoing annual military drill in the Strait of Hormuz.

The semi-official Fars news agency reported the launch on Sunday and released an image showing a green submarine on the surface of the water launching an orange missile. It says other submarines have the same capability.

Iran frequently touts its military arsenal, much of which is manufactured locally because of international sanctions. The Strait of Hormuz, at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, is a crucial bottleneck for global energy supplies, with about a third of all oil traded by sea passing through it.

Tensions have risen since the US withdrew from Iran's 2015 nuclear agreement with world powers and restored wide-ranging sanctions.

A stern memo about Manafort says he 'brazenly violated' law



WASHINGTON, FEB 24 (AP): Former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort committed crimes that cut to "the heart of the criminal justice system" and over the years deceived everyone from bookkeepers and banks to federal prosecutors and his own lawyers, according to a sentencing memo filed by special counsel Robert Mueller's office.

In the memo, submitted Saturday in one of two criminal cases Manafort faces, prosecutors do not yet take a position on how much prison time he should serve or whether to stack the punishment on top of a separate sentence he will soon receive in a Virginia prosecution.

But they do depict Manafort as a longtime and unrepentant criminal who committed "bold" crimes, including under the spotlight of his role as campaign chairman and later while on bail, and who does not deserve any leniency.

"For over a decade, Manafort repeatedly and brazenly violated the law," prosecutors wrote. "His crimes continued up through the time he was

first indicted in October 2017 and remarkably went unabated even after indictment." Citing Manafort's lies to the FBI, several government agencies and his own lawyer, prosecutors said that "upon release from jail, Manafort presents a grave risk of recidivism."

The 25-page memo, filed in federal court in Washington, is likely the last major filing by prosecutors as Manafort heads into his sentencing hearings next month and as Mueller's investigation approaches a conclusion. Manafort, who has been jailed for months and turns 70 in April, will have a chance to file his own sentencing recommendation next week.

He and his longtime business partner, Rick Gates, were the first two people indicted in the special counsel's investigation. Overall, Mueller has produced charges against 34 individuals, including six former Trump aides, and three companies.

Manafort's case has played out in stark contrast to those of other defendants in the Russia investigation, such as

former national security adviser Michael Flynn, who prosecutors praised for his cooperation and left open the possibility of no jail time.

Manafort pleaded guilty to two counts of conspiracy arising from his Ukrainian political consulting work and his efforts to tamper with witnesses. As part of that plea, he agreed to cooperate with Mueller's team, a move that could have helped him avoid a longer prison sentence.

But within weeks, prosecutors say he repeatedly lied to investigators, including about his interactions with Konstantin Kilimnik, a business associate who the U.S. says has ties to Russian intelligence. That deception voided the plea deal.

The sentencing memo comes as Manafort, who led Donald Trump's 2016 campaign for several critical months, is already facing the possibility of spending the rest of his life in prison in a separate tax and bank fraud case in Virginia. Mueller's team endorsed a sentence of between 19.5 and 24.5 years in prison in that case.



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SUPER PUMPED! Co-stars Jude Law & Brie Larson joke around during a press conference for Captain Marvel in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Don't like hero worshipping, want audience to celebrate my art: Girish Kulkarni

MUMBAI, FEB 24 (PTI): Two National Awards and several critically-acclaimed performances later, Girish Kulkarni has caught the attention of global audience with "Sacred Games" and the actor says he is now aware of his responsibility as a public figure.

Though he has featured in award-winning Marathi films like "Vihir" and "Deool", Kulkarni is known to the Hindi audience for his work in "Ugly" and "Dangal". For the actor, his turn in "Sacred Games" as politician Bipin Bhonsle was "magical". "What happens when a show becomes this popular across the world is that more people talk about you. You get more likes and retweets on Twitter and you feel slightly happy," Kulkarni quips.

"But it adds on to the sense of responsibility. Not just as an actor but even otherwise you become aware of your responsibility. It is obviously good that my performance has resonated with so many and it's a great feeling," the actor told PTI. Kulkarni says though he is aware of his popularity, he would want the audience to celebrate his art.

"I don't want people to gather around me. I want them to applaud me in a theatre or wherever they consume my art. If personally, I'm not

doing anything great, don't follow me. I don't like hero worshipping so they should just celebrate my art." The actor can be seen in new Marathi film, "Firebrand", streaming on Netflix.

Directed by National Award winner Aruna Raje, the film touches upon the concept of modern-day relationships, its complexities and chronicles the story of a woman who rises above challenges.

Kulkarni says Maharashtra "is more inclined towards spirituality and pragmatic progressive movements in the state" and that reflects in Marathi cinema. "We also have theatre as a coherent part of our tradition which is reflected in cinema. Most of the people who come to cinema are from theatres. That's why the subject, approach or treatment always leans on towards exploring something new."

The actor says as Marathi films have a limited reach in comparison to Hindi movies, the focus of the filmmakers is not on business but on art. "Marathi filmmakers aren't necessarily keen about the business aspect, they are more inclined towards the art. But in Hindi cinema the scale becomes so big because you're catering to a larger audience, you're compelled to think about the business," he adds.



Bradley Cooper is doing some good at the 2019 Oscars

They say a star is born not because of the number of awards he/she wins, but by what he/she does, and Bradley Cooper is a shining example of that.

The A Star is Born director and main lead is putting his star power to good use at the 91st Academy Awards taking place this weekend. Joining up with Swiss luxury watchmaker IWC Schaffhausen for a unique charitable cause, Cooper is set to wear an exclusive timepiece to the biggest night in Hollywood. The watch that Cooper will wear for the award show is the watchmaker's iconic Big Pilot's Watch Single Piece, and will feature a one-of-a-kind engraving of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's famous quote in his book, The Little Prince: "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly".

Following which, the watch will then be auctioned by renowned auction house Sotheby's with the full proceeds going to the Antoine de Saint-Exupéry Youth Foundation. An-

other special touch? The auctioned watch will be accompanied by a personal note signed by Cooper himself. Through this, IWC Schaffhausen will

of the cornerstones of our CSR effort," said Christoph Grainger-Herr, CEO of IWC Schaffhausen. "I am pleased that, together with our brand ambassador



support Arrimage, a charitable organisation that teaches visually impaired children how to read drawings using their sense of touch. "Supporting disabled children and adolescents is one

Bradley Cooper, and the Antoine de Saint-Exupéry Youth Foundation, we have the opportunity to support the association Arrimage."

How's that for having a big heart?

My heart is heavy: Janhvi remembers mother Sridevi on first death anniversary

MUMBAI, FEB 24 (PTI): A year has gone by since Indian film industry lost its first female superstar, Sridevi and on her maiden death anniversary daughter, actor Janhvi Kapoor says her heart still feels heavy. Janhvi, who made her acting debut last year in July with

da movies but became a national film icon courtesy her Bollywood films.

Sridevi made her Hindi film debut as a child artiste in 1975 hit "Julie" and continued ruling the South Indian film industry where she established herself as a leading her-

eral others. "Mr India" director Shekhar Kapur said he still finds it difficult to come to terms with Sridevi's sudden demise.

"Still can't get over that this bundle of life, of energy, of love, left us when she has so much much more to give," he wrote. Sridevi took a break from acting after 1997 film "Judaai" to focus on her marriage with producer Boney Kapoor and daughters Janhvi and Khushi.

She made a successful comeback 15 years later with Gauri Shinde's "English Vinglish". The actor also had a starring role in 2015 Tamil film "Puli" and followed "English Vinglish" with another successful outing 2018's "Mom", which was her last film. She also won a National Award posthumously for her performance in the movie. Shinde remembered Sridevi as the "biggest talent" on earth. "I miss her laughter, miss her saying my name 'Gauuuurri' only she said it in this unique way. I miss her calls, our dinners, her warm hug. (I) Miss the biggest talent that there was on this earth," the director told PTI.

Veteran actor Shabana Azmi took to Twitter and wrote, "A year already. #Sridevi. You will live on through your work." West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee also remembered the actor. "Fondly remembering Sridevi, legendary actress, on her death anniversary. She is gone too soon," Banerjee wrote on Twitter.

Choreographer-turned-filmmaker Farah Khan said Sridevi has been her source of motivation from the beginning of her career. "She was so supportive, so encouraging, getting to choreograph a Sridevi show or a song for her was like a dream. No wonder I never got awed or starstruck with any other star in my entire career because I started from the TOP! There never was and never will be anyone like SRIDEVI... Love her always," she wrote alongside a picture from a early '90s world tour with the actor.



"Dhadak", says her mother will always be there in her heart. Sridevi passed away, aged 54, due to accidental drowning in a Dubai hotel on February 24, 2018. Her sudden death left family, friends and thousands of fans in a state of shock.

"My heart will always be heavy. But I'll always be smiling because it has you in it," Janhvi wrote on Instagram, alongside a picture of her sitting in her mother's lap holding hands.

Sridevi's sister-in-law, designer Maheep Kapoor shared a series of pictures with the actor on Instagram and wrote, "Will always remember the good times."

In an impressive career, spanning five decades, Sridevi dominated the commercial space in cinema in the '80s and '90s. She reversed the trend of the male-dominated film industry by her acting prowess. Her name guaranteed a film's success. She started acting at the age of four and made her debut in 1969 with M A Thirumugham's Tamil film "Thunaiyan". She continued working in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kanna-

oine with films such as "16 Vayathinile", "Sigappu Rojakkal", "Meendum Kokila" and "Moondram Pirai". In Bollywood, she made her debut as a lead actor in 1978's "Solva Sawan" and followed it up with a number of commercial hits such as "Himmatwala", "Mawaali", "Tohfa", "Mr India", "Chandni", "Lamhe", "Nagina" and "Khuda Gawah" among sev-

ARIES: If you choose to ignore every bleeping device and message thread for the next 48 hours, don't apologize, Aries! This is a restful, "me first" kind of weekend. Taking care of yourself and enjoying a few scintillating one-on-ones is all you need to focus on! The moon is in private, internal Scorpio and your eighth house of strong emotions, intimacy and eroticism!

TAURUS: With a Scorpio moon activating your partnership realm all weekend, two heads (and hearts) are better than one! What you don't want, however, is another half who can't hold their own next to you. When you're on, you're a force of nature, Taurus, and anyone who's going to team up with you needs to be an equal.

GEMINI: You might have to assume the mantle of authority today, Gemini, so be ready to step up to the plate. Someone is NOT carrying their weight, and if you don't say something, nothing is going to change. Ack! Rather than pretending it's not the case or tiptoeing around the issue, address it directly.

CANCER: Even if you're just running out for coffee or a quick grab-and-go at the farmer's market, spruce yourself up a little. With the moon in aesthetic Scorpio and your amorous, glamorous fifth house, you could be in for a weekend of surprises. You never know who you might run into at the beekeeper's honey stall—or where a random conversation might lead.

LEO: Home is where your head, heart and hustling hands are all weekend, as the Scorpio moon hovers in your domestic fourth house. Don't rush to do work that can hold till Monday—and don't be too quick to tend to a friend who needs a pep talk. You've got a dozen household projects that have been in the pipeline for too long already, and now is the perfect time to put your desires front and center. Change that light fixture; put the new bedding on and maybe shop for your dream sofa.

VIRGO: Whatever was dragging you down last week, let it go, Virgo! The Scorpio moon is beaming down in your playful third house, beckoning you to get out and

interact with your favorite band of merry-makers. Link up with friends who have the pulse of the cultural scene and mix it up with some let-your-hair-down fun like karaoke or a burlesque show.

LIBRA: Are you waiting for this magic moment to arrive where your schedule just opens up? Reality is, you're the one setting the pace for your life. If you keep go-go-going at breakneck speed, you're going to burn out eventually. Preempt that from happening, asap. This weekend dangles the perfect carrot. The moon will be in introspective Scorpio both days, giving you a chance to hit reset on those wildly tipping scales.

SCORPIO: With la luna floating through your sign all weekend, you have planetary permission to take all the "Scorpio time" you need! Start by looking at your calendar. What do you wish you could magically erase? It's okay that you've come down with a case of reverse-FOMO and want to sit everything out until next week. Anyone who adores you or cares about your wellbeing will understand!

SAGITTARIUS: Clear the excess from your calendar and plan to put your own needs and desires first this weekend, Sagittarius. The moon is hunkered down in introspective Scorpio and your internally focused twelfth house for the next two days, and anything too crowded or cacophonous will fry your circuits. Apologize to anyone you might disappoint—or ask if they're open to shifting plans around!

CAPRICORN: Hole up at home base and unplug for the next two days? Sorry, Capricorn—not with the Scorpio moon lighting up your communal eleventh house. People are your priority this weekend, especially the ones whose sense of adventure is matched only by their amazing taste in food and bands! Take the reins and play social director or let your innermost circle know that the Sea Goat is down for whatever fun is in the offing.

AQUARIUS: With the moon beaming in your career zone on both Saturday and Sunday, you'll find it hard to leave work at the office. Even if you're physically engaged in

other activities, mentally you'll still be mulling something you didn't finish (or complete to your standards) when you logged out on Friday. So here's a thought: Instead of being an apparition at brunch or your friend's gallery opening, duck home and devote a finite amount of time to getting this done.

PISCES: Get up and get OUT! With the Scorpio moon jetting through your nomadic ninth house, the weekend is like a two-day treasure hunt for all the coolest hangouts. And guess what, Pisces? They might not be found in your zip code. Maybe it's time to pack a bag for a quick road trip or perhaps a cheap, last-minute flight to a friend two states away. (Cough, cough: Do we feel a Monday sick day coming on?) Or just stay home and play tourist in your own town. Any change of scenery would be an instant mood booster. Check out a different live-music venue; eat at an authentic restaurant in another part of town. Are there any foreign films showing or outsider-art shows you could patronize? On Sunday, indulge your interest in the mystical side to life.