



GOLAY EXTENDS TAMU LOCHAR GREETINGS

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WORRY OVER KIDS' EXCESSIVE SMARTPHONE USE IS MORE JUSTIFIED THAN EVER BEFORE

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DANCE ACADEMIES JOIN HANDS TO HOST MONTH-LONG DANCE WORKSHOP

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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Rahul meets Bhutan PM

NEW DELHI, DEC 29 (PTI): Congress President Rahul Gandhi Saturday met Bhutan Prime Minister Lotay Tshering here and the two discussed bilateral relations.

The meeting took place at a local hotel.

The Bhutanese prime minister is on a state visit to India and had earlier met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday.

Tshering arrived here on Thursday on his first foreign visit after taking charge as PM of the Himalayan nation last month following his party's victory in the general elections.

Permanent NDRF battalion for Arunachal

ITANAGAR, DEC 29 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh was given a permanent battalion of the National Disaster Response Force on Saturday and Chief Minister Pema Khandu laid the foundation stone for the 12th battalion headquarters at Hollongi, near here.

Speaking on the occasion, Khandu said the permanent stationing of the NDRF battalion in Arunachal Pradesh will not only help the state, but will also be available for service to neighbouring Assam.

He said the fight against natural calamities and man-made disaster in the state would be strengthened by the presence of NDRF and lives and property would be saved.

To fight calamities, the state police forces and the central police forces are also being equipped. Awareness and disaster drill are being conducted among the civilian population, Khandu said.

The chief minister thanked the MHA for the project and said it was due to the efforts of the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju that the battalion headquarters was being set up in Arunachal Pradesh.

More than 4000 stranded tourists evacuated from Nathula

REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 29 DEC:

More than 4000 tourists visiting Tsomgo Lake, Nathula and Baba Mandir on Friday, who had got stranded following heavy snowfall in the area, were safely evacuated today. A team of officials from Tourism Department led by Secretary, TT Bhutia supervised the evacuation and on their return to Gangtok, the Secretary addressed a press meet at the Tourism Information Centre, MG Marg.

He informed that due to heavy snowfall on 28 Dec, about 569 tourist vehicles carrying domestic and foreign national tourists were on a tour to Tsomgo, Nathula and Baba Mandir.

A total of 4100 domestic tourists and 99



foreign nationals got stranded as their vehicles were unable to return to Gangtok due to the heavy snowfall. The tourists

were rescued and were accommodated at Kailash Mansarovar Yatri Acclimatization Centre of Tourism Department located at

15th Mile and with Army Transit Camp at 17th Mile and 13th Mile.

Mr Bhutia said that the evacuation efforts

were supported by various organisations and on behalf of the department, he thanked all involved. "The department



would like to thank all the government machineries, check post of police department, Transport department for facilitating three buses for ferrying of standard tourists, all the tourism stakeholders like TAAS and special thanks to Army for extending all necessary support to tourists like food, accommodation, medical facilities, transportation and the Department of Health for

necessary support. I also would like to express my thanks to all the officers and staffs of Tourism and Civil Aviation department for successful evacuation of stranded tourists," said Mr Bhutia. Only one female tourist from Kolkata fell sick who was brought to STNM with help from Army Doctors and as of now she is well, informed the Secretary.

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2 Soreng teams in finals of All Sikkim Women's Football Tournament



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 29 DEC:

Soreng Girls Academy will take on Pragati Sangh, Soreng, in the finals of the 1st All Sikkim Women's Football Tournament here at Paljor Stadium on Sunday. In the second nail-biting semi-final match played this morning, Pragati Sangh defeated Maneybong Dentam Girls Academy in a tie-breaker.

Soreng Girls Academy, West Sikkim is already in the finals after defeat-

ing Dzongu Girls Football Academy, North Sikkim by 2-0 in the first semi-final match on Friday.

In today's match, Suzu Hang Limboo scored an early lead for Maneybong-Dentam in the 10th minute and soon completed her brace in the 22nd minute to extend the team lead to 2-0. However, Simran Gurung gave some relief to Pragati Sangh with her goal in the 27th minute. In the second half, Simran Gurung

scored the equaliser in the 57th minute to complete her brace.

With both team unable to score further, the match ended in 2-2 draw. In the tie-breaker through penalty shoot-out, Pragati Sangh players converted all four shots into goals while Maneybong-Dentam players managed to score just two goals from four shots. With the 4-6 victory, Pragati Sangh, Soreng secured its berth in the finals of the tournament.

CM greets Sikkim on Tamu Lochar

GANGTOK, 29 DEC [IPR]: Chief Minister Pawan Chamling and Mrs Tika Maya Chamling have extended warm greetings to the people of Sikkim, especially the Gurung community, on the festive occasion of Tamu Lochar.

Tamu Lochar is the New Year of the Gurung community and falls on the 15th day of the 'Poush' month of the Ne-

pali calendar, which coincides with 30 December this year. It is one of the biggest Nepali-Buddhist festivals celebrated in the Eastern Himalayas.

"I would like to wish the members of the Gurung community a very happy Tamu Lochar," the Chief Minister conveys, adding, "It gives me immense pleasure to see

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Governor's warm greetings on Tamu Lochar

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 29 DEC:

On the occasion of Tamu Lochar, Governor, Ganga Prasad has extended warm greetings and good wishes to the people of Sikkim.

In his message the Governor has said, "The festival of harvest falling in the month of Pausa, is primarily celebrated by our Gurung brethren. It marks the

arrival of New Year for our nature loving and agrarian populace. It is an occasion which further strengthens our commitment of peaceful co-existence and celebrates the vibrancy of our rich culture.

May this joyous occasion reinforce the bond of brotherhood, love and harmony among all sections of Sikkimese society."

North completes special coaching camp for CMSS hopefuls

SINGHIK, 29 DEC (IPR): The valedictory programme for the special coaching for Chief Minister's Merit Scholarship Test 2019 was held today at Singhik Secondary School with the Forest Minister, Tshering Wangdi Lepcha, District Collector North, Karma R Bonpo, Director HRDD, Sonam Lepcha, Joint Director HRDD north, officers of HRDD and parents of the students.

HRDD, North Sikkim, conducted a special coaching programme for 38 meritorious students



of the district at Singhik Secondary School.

Coaching was imparted by five teachers from various schools of the district. The entire coaching programme was funded by Teesta Urja Power Project and free board and

meals were provided to the students.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister informed that the Chief Minister had initiated the Merit Scholarship programme for students

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NEW FRIENDS SNOOKER CLUB

5TH WINTER OPEN SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP 2019

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

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

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

Winner: 85,000/- + Trophy
Runners Up: 42,000/- + Trophy
High Break: 10,000/- + Trophy
Best Player: 8,000/- + Trophy

Sponsored by: Summit TIMES

& SPARK M PRESENT

NEW YEAR EVE 2019

DJ TRON

STAG- 300
LADIES- 100
COUPLES- 300

JUNGLE PARTY FROM DUSK TILL DAWN

BONFIRE NIGHT

Venue: Dungmali Heritage Resort

DECEMBER 31ST
6:00 PM ONWARDS

Gangtok on Sunday, 30 Dec

Temp: 09°C/03°C
Forecast: Sunny to partly cloudy with a little rain in the evening, then a shower in spots

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

2018 Academic Session concludes at Lingi Paiyong School

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 29 DEC:

The 2018 academic session of Lingi Paiyong Secondary School came to an end on Friday with result distribution. The results for class pre-primary to eight were distributed by respective class teachers in the presence of headmaster, other teachers and some guardians. The students performing well in different classes were awarded with gifts, sweets and cash prize by the class teacher.

The result of Class IX was also declared and prizes were given to the best

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 29 DEC:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha president, PS Tamang [Golay], has extended warm greetings and best wishes to the people of Sikkim, especially the Gurung community, on the occasion of Tamu Lochar.

Highlighting the importance of the festival, he states, "Tamu Lochar is one of the most important festivals of the

Sikkimese Gurung community. Tamu is another name of Gurung community and Losar means New Year. Tamu Losar is the celebration of Gurung New Year. Tamu Losar marks the beginning of the Tamu Sambat or Gurung calendar year. Tamu Losar is celebrated on every 15th day of Pousha of the Nepali calendar, which normally falls during end of December every year. It is the time when family

members of all generations get together and exchange love and greetings. Gurungs, who call themselves 'Tamu' are very rich in tradition and culture. They come together to celebrate Tamu Losar and rejoice in various cultural processions, feasting and greetings. Celebrations take place wherein rallies in traditional attires and cultural programmes are organized".



Pak sends recommendations to India for visa-free travel of Sikh pilgrims through Kartarpur corridor

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD, DEC 29 (PTI): Pakistan has sent recommendations to India for facilitating visa-free travel of Indian Sikh pilgrims through the upcoming Kartarpur corridor, according to a media report here on Saturday.

Islamabad has given a 59-page document with 14 key recommendations to New Delhi, Express News TV reported quoting Pakistani diplomatic officials. The recommendations call for Indian pilgrims to be given free entry and that facilitation centres and security check-posts to be set up on both sides of the border.

The pilgrims shall be allowed in groups of a minimum of 15 people and Pakistan shall issue special permits to them.

Both countries will compile a record of visitors which will include their names,

travel records and other details, according to the recommendations.

The Indian government shall provide a list of pilgrims to Pakistan three days in advance and it will be mandatory for all visitors to bear a standard Indian passport.

The recommendations further say that all visitors shall be required to obtain a security clearance certificate from Indian authorities.

Pakistan shall issue permits to 500 visitors per day and local authorities shall reserve rights to admission.

On November 28, Prime Minister Imran Khan had laid the foundation stone for the corridor on the Pakistani side that will connect Gurudwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur to Dera Baba Nanak situated in Indian Punjab's Gurdaspur.



performers by class teacher, Jyoti Gurung.

Further, students eligible for improvement were

directed to prepare themselves during vacation to reappear for improvement examination to be held

in the month of February next year after reopening of school. The school will reopen on 01 Feb 2019.

More than 4000...

Permit to ply tourists to these destinations were not issued today and depending on the prevailing weather conditions the department will start giving permits, it is informed.

The road till Tsomgo is clear but there is still some snow left along the route which can be unsafe for vehicular movement, Mr Bhutia said.

Meanwhile, the Indian Army rescued around 3,000 tourists who were left stranded due to heavy snowfall along Jawaharlal Nehru Marg on Friday afternoon. The tourists were returning to Gangtok after visit-

ing Tsomgo Lake and Nathula when snowfall blocked the road.

The Indian Army unit posted in the Nathula border area came forward to rescue the helpless tourists. The tourists were brought to the two army transit camps at 13th Mile and 17th Mile, about 11 km away from Tsomgo Lake. Around 300 tourists were housed at 13th Mile while rest were given shelter at 17th Mile transit camp.

The Army personnel provided tea, hot meals, blankets and beds to the tourists for the night. About 250 tourists were given

medical treatment for hypertension, trauma, fractures and high altitude sickness.

On Saturday morning, breakfasts were provided to the tourists.

The Border Roads Organisation cleared the snow for traffic movement by Saturday afternoon after which the tourists were dispatched to Gangtok in batches. Some tourists left in their vehicles while others were given a lift by Army heavy vehicles up to different locations where transshipment vehicles were stationed.

The tourists extended their gratitude to the Army for saving their lives.

sand years ago. I hope the people from this community, especially the youth, preserve and promote their rich heritage and carry forward the legacy of their forefathers"

"May the festival usher in love, peace, happiness and well-being to the people of Sikkim."

CM greets Sikkim...

that every community in Sikkim has been putting in sincere efforts to showcase their culture and tradition in unique ways and most of all, share and celebrate the cultural integrity with one another. Sikkim truly represents the perfect picture of unity

in diversity.

"The rich history of the Gurung community has been well documented by scholars from all over the world. It has been archived that the community has been existing right from the beginning of civilization, about eight to nine thou-

North completes special...

from underprivileged backgrounds with the vision to provide equal opportunity to such students in receiving quality education.

He stated that Singhik Secondary School has the best infrastructure in the district and that this was the result of the joint effort of all to develop the school.

He stated that his government will further develop the school into a center of excellence in the near future.

HRDD Director, Sonam Lepcha, in turn informed that such special coaching camps were started in 2010 and that the current camp was the longest one.

He stated that the

Forest Minister, District Collector North, Teesta Urja Power Project and HRDD Department played a key role in successfully organizing the same.

Thus far, about 114 students from the district have availed the scholarship and he was hopeful that more students will qualify for it in the near future.

He also congratulated the teachers for having taken up the responsibility and challenge to coach the students.

The DC-North said that North District has a very low birth rate and only about 500 births are taking place. Therefore, it was important to provide all the children in the dis-

trict with quality education and convert the precious human capital. It is now an endeavour of the district to develop centres of excellence for education at various schools and ensure that quality education is imparted.

The District Administration is fully committed to achieving this goal and ensure that valuable human capital is developed well for the bright future of the district, he said.

The students attending the coaching camp expressed their gratitude towards the HRD Department for providing them the opportunity and stated that the experience gave them confidence to do well in future.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

email us:

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Com

Poshan Abhiyaan awareness in Dzongu

WANGCHUK BHUTIA DIKCHU, 29 DEC:

A special programme on "Poshan Abhiyaan" was organised at Sonam Choda Lepcha Memorial Secondary School, Upper Dzongu, today with Zilla member, Renzong Lepcha, as chief guest accompanied by AD/ HRDD, SL Giri, Head master, JT Lepcha, and school staff with panchayat president, SMC members and public of Lingdong-Berfok-GPU.

CDPO/ Dzongu, Netuk Lepcha, briefed the gathering about the Poshan Abhiyan which is a multi-ministerial convergence mission targeted at reducing stunting, malnutrition and anaemia in 315 districts of India in the 1st phase by 2022



through aganwadi services. He also spoke about the Pradhan Mantri Matritwa Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) and Janani Suraksha Yojana.

Later, HM, Mr Lepcha along with the guest visited organic vegetable green house maintained by the students of SCLMSS.

SDF mourns passing away of two founding members

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 29 DEC:

Sikkim Democratic Front has conveyed deep condolences on the demise of Hemlall Giri of Kopchey-Sundunglakha under Chujanchen constituency in East Sikkim and IB Gurung of Yuksom under Yuksom-Tashiding constituency in West Sikkim.

A condolence meeting was held at the SDF headquarters on Friday which paid rich homage to the departed souls and observed two-minute silence in their memory.

An SDF press release states that the SDF party was always with the bereaved families in such difficult times.

The release mentions that the late Hemlall Giri and late IB Gurung were founding members and sincere workers of the SDF and always contributed to the party from

their respective levels by taking the vision, policies and principles of the party to the people of Sikkim.

The late Mr Gurung was once elected panchayat secretary and also served as the Chairperson of STCS and Juvenile Board. It is informed that he was passed away Thursday evening at his residence and leaves behind his wife Tara Gurung, son Bishal Gurung and daughter Sabina Gurung.

The late Mr Giri was elected Gram Panchayat for four consecutive terms and served as panchayat secretary twice and was currently a CEC member of the party and in the committee of Farmer's Front. It is informed that he passed away Friday morning and leaves behind a wife, a son and four daughters.

Special teams to prevent eve-teasing on Mumbai

ROADS ON DEC 31

MUMBAI, DEC 29 (PTI): Over 40,000 police personnel will be on the road to ensure safety of New Year revellers in Mumbai on the night of December 31, a senior official said Saturday.

Special squads to curb harassment of women will be deployed at many places, he said.

"Over 40,000 policemen will be on bandobast (security) duty during the New Year celebrations," said deputy commissioner of police Manjunath Singe,

the city police's spokesperson.

The police will be assisted by the State Reserve Police Force and Home Guard while the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS) will also be on alert. "A special squad will be deployed at several places to curb eve-teasing and harassment of women," he said.

Crowded places are being checked by the Anti-Sabotage Squad and BDDS ahead of New Year's eve while marine patrolling will be stepped along the coast, the DCP added.

Anthyesti Kriya

The Anthyesti Kriya of late **Captain Modugu Vasudev Reddy** who passed away peacefully on the 20th December 2018 falls on the **31st December 2018**.

All relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to join us once again to offer prayers for the departed soul at our residence at Entel Motors Complex, 6th Mile, Tadong, Gangtok.

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who extended their kind help and moral support in our hour of bereavement.

Priya Reddy Ladakhi (daughter)
 Guru T. Ladakhi (son-in-law)

FLAT AVAILABLE FOR RENT

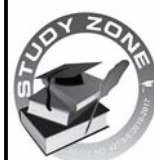
Fully furnished, 3 Bedroom flat available for rent at Church Road, Near Diesel Power House. Conveniently located by the roadside and a 5-minute walk from M.G. Marg. Suitable for Corporate Office and Guest House.

For further details please

Contact: 9434117887 / 9083826462

LAND FOR SALE

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



STUDY ZONE
 Mr. Dawchung Lepcha (Chairperson)

OUR COURSE OUTLINES:

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

OUR COURSE OBJECTIVES:

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

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

Dance academies join hands to host month-long Dance workshop

SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 29 DEC:

Tapashree Dance & Music Academy and Inspire Academy are jointly organising a month-long certified dance workshop, 'Spark' from 07 Jan here at Pal-jor Namgyal Girls Senior Secondary School. Interestingly, dance academies from in and around Gangtok have come together for this workshop.

The workshop will have experienced and versatile dancers from in and outside the State as trainers. The workshop will have the winner of Jhalak Dikhlaja Season 9 and second runner-up of Dance Plus, Season 3, Aryan Patra, Top 5 finalist of Dance Plus, Mingma D Lepcha and winner of High Fever Dance Ka Naya Tever, Nisha Rasaily. This was announced by Tapashree Dance & Music Academy director, Komal Gurung and Inspire Academy director, Roma Gurung in a press conference here today.

Ms Gurung mentioned that the month-long workshop will be held from 07 Jan to 03 Feb and the workshop



will conclude with a grand competitive event for the participants here at Manan Kendra.

She mentioned that the main objective of the workshop is to engage children in productive and creative activities and at the same time to guide young dancers to hone their talents. She expressed her happiness on the support from different dance academies of Gangtok to the workshop.

In the workshop, Aryan Patra will impart training in Hip Hop, Krumping and Western forms, Nisha Rasaily in Contemporary, Jazz and Latin forms and Mingma D Lepcha in Semi-Classical, Indian Contemporary

and Nepali folk.

Ms Rasaily mentioned that the workshop is a dance educational programme which will also have classes for fitness, aerobics, yoga and meditation for participants.

"Through this workshop we not only want to make them good dancers but we want to make our young dancers artists and performers," she said.

Ms Rasaily assured to organise more workshops if the response from this workshop is good.

The workshop is mainly for children above 8 years but the organisers have decided to conduct separate classes for children be-

low 8 years if there are at least 20 such children, informed Mingma D Lepcha.

"We have also decided to arrange PG accommodation for candidates from outside Gangtok," he added. He informed that his academy, Mingma's Dance Studio and Taal Music & Dance Academy were also jointly organising such workshop at Jorethang and Namchi in January.

Responding to media queries, Ms Rasaily stated, "I do not have any intention to start an academy in Sikkim but I would love to work with local dancers and artists in collaboration and to promote and support local artists of Sikkim."

Gangtok Kai Ko Sani Nani music video to release on YouTube

SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 29 DEC:

Nepali music video 'Gangtok Kai Ko Sani Nani' by Puran Tamang is all set to release on YouTube on 31 Dec. The music video is being presented by Gangtok-based Avish Films, featuring Rubina Chettri and second runner-up of Mr Sikkim Manhunt 2018, Anurag Baraily.

Lyricist, composer and singer, 28-year-old, Puran Tamang is from Kaluk in West Sikkim who is presently working as a game artist in Dehradun. The cinematographer, editor and director of this 4 min and 21 sec music album is Abhiskar Bhattari.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Tamang mentioned

that the song was composed two years back but he managed to make a video only recently. He added that this was his fourth music video and earlier music videos have received good response which encouraged him to take out this music video. He thanked the entire team of the music video for their support.

Likewise, second runner-up of Mr Sikkim Manhunt 2018, Anurag Baraily expressed his happiness and satisfaction with his work in the music video.

"I always to want to be an actor since childhood and this is my first music video. It was a learning experience for me," he said.

Governor attends Foundation Day of Apparel Training and Design Centre

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 29 DEC:

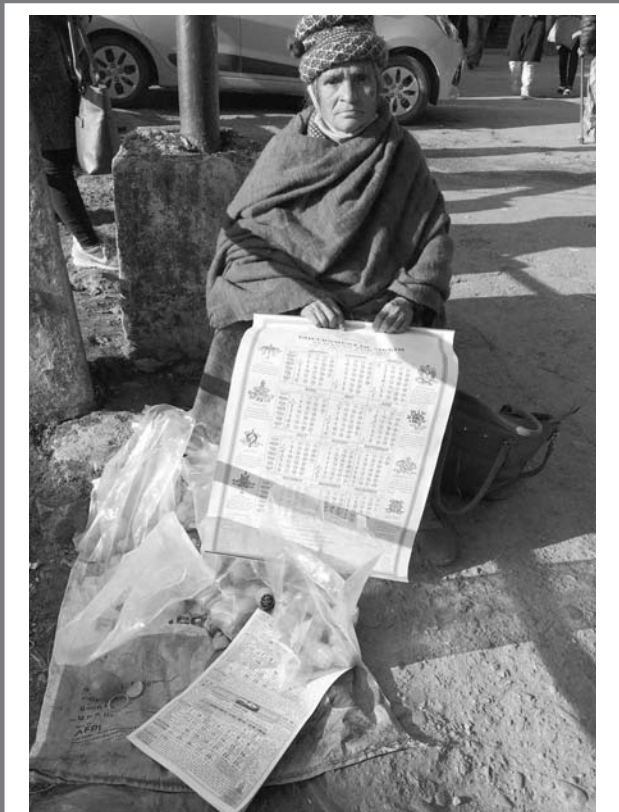
Governor, Ganga Prasad, today attended the 3rd Foundation Day of Apparel Training and Design Centre located at Shram Bhavan, Sokaythang, Tadong, a Raj Bhavan communiqué informs.

Mayor Gangtok, Shakti Singh Chaudhary, Addl. Chief Secretary to Governor, Dr. K Jayakumar, Secretary, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Department, CC Bhutia, Secretary Labour Department, LP Chettri, Senior Officials, Principal, faculty and trainees were present on the occasion.

The centre under Ministry of Textiles, Government of India is established in December 2015 in collaboration with Department of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of Sikkim.

The Governor released a compendium of the training centre and distributed certificates to the trainees who have completed their training of three and six months on apparel design and manufacturing.


Addressing the function, the Governor expressed his happiness on the activities of the centre and how it is empowering the womenfolk by providing them the required skills for apparel sector. Stressing on the need to promote entrepreneurship through various skill oriented training programs among the youth of Sikkim and transforming the youth population from job seekers to job providers, the Governor urged the participants and trainees to take advantage of Government of India flagship programmes like Make in India, Start Up India, Skilled India, etc. for economic empowerment.



Keep the Date

GANGTOK, 29 DEC:

Saru Maya Poudyal, 78, from Assam Lingey, sells the 2019 Govt of Sikkim almanac and fresh oranges at STNM Hospital. [from REBYNA RANA]



GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Sectt. Annexe I, Top Floor,
Sonam Tshering Marg, Gangtok – 737101, Sikkim
Phone No. (03592) 202601, Tele-Fax (03592)207426
Email: dit-sik@nic.in.


NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

The Department of Information and Technology, Government of Sikkim, seeks proposals from reputed and experienced registered Company/Proprietorship firm/Partnership firm in Sikkim to participate in competitive bidding for implementation of Check Post Management System @ Rangpo and Melli Check Post (including Supply and Installation of Software Solution, Security Surveillance, IT and non-IT equipments, Site preparation, Civil work, erecting of a canopy structure, electrical/ UPS with required wiring etc), commissioning, integration and maintenance” for a period of 3 (Three) years in Rangpo and Melli Check post, Sikkim.

The EOI document is available on the website www.sikkim.gov.in. Interested participants, who qualify as per the criteria mentioned in the EOI notification document, may submit their interest. The last date for submission of EOI is 12/02/2019.

R.O No. 562/ipr/pub/classi./18-19
Date: 29.12.2018

Additional Director.



ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

SINGTAM

Memo No:280/ AES/ R&B

Date: 26/12/2018

NOTICE INVITINGTENDER

For and on behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, Assistant Engineer- Singtam, Roads & Bridges Department, Singtam , invites sealed tenders under single bid system from the eligible contractors of **Class IV Grade** enlisted with Sikkim Public Works Department vide Notification No. 515/R&B/Secy, dated 12.06.2018 and notification no. 556/R&B PWD/Secy dated : 28.08.2018 for the construction of **fair weather roads**, through competitive bidding within the territorial jurisdiction of **CONCERNED Ward of the Gram Panchayat Unit of Tumin-Lingi Constituency** where the work is to be executed.

The details of works and time schedule are as under:

SL. No.	Name of Work	Cost of Work put to tender (in Rs)	Earnest Money @ 2.50% (in Rs.)	Cost of Tender documents (in Rs.)	Completion Time.
1.	Construction of Fair weather Road from Dahal Ch-upalakha Gaon to Dhanbari PMGSY Road in East Sikkim				
	Km 1 st	Rs. 42,38,496.00	Rs. 1,05,970.00	Rs.1,500.00	09 months
	Km 2 nd	Rs. 12,71,549.00	Rs. 31,789.00	Rs. 500.00	09 months
2	Construction of Fair weather Road from PMGSY Road to Nursery Gurasay in East Sikkim				
	Km 1 st	Rs. 42,38,496.00	Rs. 1,05,970.00	Rs.1,500.00	09 months
	Km 2 nd	Rs. 42,38,496.00	Rs. 1,05,970.00	Rs.1,500.00	09 months
3	Construction of Fair weather Road from Dhanbari PMGSY Road to Kageythang in East Sikkim				
	Km 1 st	Rs. 42,38,496.00	Rs. 1,05,970.00	Rs.1,500.00	09 months
	Km 2 nd	Rs. 21,19,248.00	Rs. 52,981.00	Rs.1,500.00	09 months

TIME SCHEDULE:-

1.	Date of submission of application with Bank receipt and TDR for issue of Tender Documents.	9 th January, 2019 (10.00 am to 4.00 pm) at respective Gram Prashashan Kendra where work is to be executed.
2.	Last Date and Time for submission of Tender	10 th January 2019 (10.00 am to 1.00 pm) at respective Gram Prashashan Kendra where work is to be executed.
3.	Date and Time for Opening of Tender	10 th January 2019 (1.30 pm) at respective Gram Prashashan Kendra where work is to be executed.

CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT

- Tender is open only to the eligible Contractors / Firms of appropriate Class/ Area.
- The intending tenders/ contractors should apply in writing for issue of Tender documents. The application would invariably be signed by the contractor himself/ herself. The tender document will not be issued to any person other than the INTENDING TENDERER. The application shall be submitted initially for each work listed above with all required documents.
- The applications should enclose attested copies of the (a) Goods & Service Tax Clearance Certificate (b) Validated / Updated Contractor Enlistment Certificate along with application. It is mandatory to produce the Original validated/ updated Enlistment Certificate during sale/ issue of the Tender Document for verification.
- The prescribed Non- Transferable Tender Documents (excluding the Tender Form) can be obtained during the period specified in (As above from the office of the Assistant Engineer- Singtam, Roads & Bridges Department, Singtam on production of requisite Bank receipt towards the cost of Tender Document (non-refundable) under the **Head "0059-80-800" cost of Tender Form (Roads & Bridges)**.
- Earnest money deposit @ 2.5% in State Bank of Sikkim shall be in the form of Deposit Receipt of Schedules Bank which includes deposit in the form of Temporary Deposit Receipts (TDR) in favour of the Accounts Officer, Roads & Bridges Department, Nirman Bhawan, Gangtok. Tender Form shall be issued only on production of the deposit receipts of 2.5% earnest money.
- The Tender Documents, including the Tender Form with quoted offer should be placed in a sealed cover with the name of the Tenderers and the name of the work superscripted on it. Supporting documents listed at Sl.No. (a)& (b) above should be enclosed with the offer.
- Sealed tenders may be deposited in the Tender Box in the office of the Assistant Engineer- Singtam, Roads & Bridges Department, Singtam on the date and within the time indicated above.
- Tenders will be opened by a Tender Opening Committee as prescribed by the Government in the presence of the tenderness on the date and time indicated above.
- The Tenderer should sign on every page of the tenders documents as Acceptance of the General Direction and Conditions of Contract and other laid down norms. The rate quoted should be both in figures and words and should be inclusive of GST all other Taxes and Levies. Over writing and correction should be avoided and if made should be authenticated. Incomplete/ Conditional tenders shall be rejected forthwith.
- In case of any discrepancy in rate (s) printed in the Schedule of Rates and Quantities issued with the tender documents rates as per approved Scheduled of Rates will be taken as correct. For items outside the SOR, the rates shall be as per the technically checked estimate/analysis. Decision of the Principal Chief Engineer cum Secretary / Head of the Department will be final in this regard.
- The work value, scope and quantum of work are subject to change, the contractor shall execute the work as per the directives of the Department. No claim on this account shall be entertained whatsoever. If any extra claim is made, it shall be as per the agreements rates.
- The Department reserves the rights to hold payments to the contractor unless test certificates are not produced by the contractor when called upon to do so.
- Avoidable damages due to negligence of the contractors shall be at his/her own risk and cost. The department shall not be liable for payment of such damages (if any), including accidents to labourer at site.
- The offer shall remain valid for a period of 90 days. The work should commence within 15 days from the date of issue of Work Order.
- All the conditions as mentioned in the NIT shall be deemed to be a part of the agreement to be entered with the contractor. Security deposit shall be collected by deductions from the running bills of the contractor @ 5% of the value of work done.
- The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
- The recoveries of Royalties on Forest products shall be as per rates notified by the Government from time to time and applicable on the date of payment. In no case, claim of any contractor for deduction as per rates incorporated in Analysis of Rates or Schedule of Rates or Rates on the date of tender shall be acceptable.
- Subletting of contract work is against the norms and if it comes to the notice, the original contract shall be cancelled and appropriate action shall be initiated as per the rules.
- The Department also reserves the right to increase, decrease, alter or modify the item of works as indicted in the NIT without assigning any reason thereof.
- In case the man powers employed by the contractor are from outside the State or neighbouring countries, it shall be the responsibility of the contractor to get them registered with the Labour Department, Government of Sikkim as per the relevant Labour Laws.
- Use of explosive shall be regulated as under:
 - Transportation, handling, storage and use of explosive (if necessary) shall be in accordance with the provision of the India Explosive Act and General Guideline, Circulars issued by the department and other competent authorities on the subject from time to time.
 - The rules and regulations issued by the Sikkim Public Works Department or any other competent authority shall strictly be adhered to with regard to transportations, storages, handling, and use of explosive at all times. Proper daily record of receipt and issue of explosives shall be maintained by the contractor.
- The contractor shall also make arrangement to have photographs of the works taken at least at three stages of the construction period i.e. beginning, middle and completion stage.
- Damages to properties in and around the work site must be avoided at all cost. The contractor shall be held responsible for any acts of negligence and shall be made to make good the damages.
- It is accepted to the tenderer to have inspected the site before submitting his bid. There may be possible site difficulties for which the tenderer should have their own correct assessment before submitting the bid.
- The cost of stock materials supplied from the departmental store will be deducted from the contractor's bills as per rules.
- The bidders shall produce a Certificate of Residence from the CONCERED GRAM Panchayat unit where the work is to be executed.**

R.O. No. 557/ipr/pub/classi./18-19
Date: 29.12.2018.

Sd/-
Assistant Engineer
Roads & Bridges Department.
Singtam Sub Division

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

New Option on LT Seats

A short-term solution has been proposed. Allow it to work

Another year draws to a close, and while Sikkim has much to celebrate for the year going by, there are some matters which remain unresolved and stranded at where they were nearly a decade and a half back. Reserved assembly seats for the Limboo and Tamang communities in keeping with their having become Scheduled Tribes is one of them. The two communities were included in the Scheduled Tribes list on 07 January 2003. This automatically entitled them to contest from Schedule Tribes seats, but when it comes to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim, they have not been able to do so despite the three assembly elections which have taken place since then.

An interesting development has arrived in Chief Minister Pawan Chamling's recent announcement that even if the seats are not reserved by the Government of India before the next election, his party will field five candidates from among the Limboos and Tamangs. This number is in keeping with what the population proportion of the two communities would be entitled to, may be even slightly higher. As things stand, this is a step towards addressing the issue in the absence of any other developments in Delhi. But it is only the first step. For this gesture to be really effective and fair, all parties which plan to contest the next election need to agree on which five constituencies all of them will field LT candidates from. It is possible that the confrontational attitude of political parties will see more of them follow SDF's lead and field 5 LT candidates, but refuse to field them from the same set of 5 constituencies. Since the days of clean sweeps appear to be over for Sikkim, this will mean that there are no guarantees that there will be five LT MLAs in the next assembly because that can happen only if LT candidates are fielded from the same set of constituencies. That way, irrespective of which party wins from which constituency, Limboos and Tamangs will be guaranteed five MLAs in the next Assembly. It will be interestingly to see if the political parties can agree on such an arrangement.

And the reason such a scenario is playing out is because reserving seats for the Limboo and Tamang communities is not an issue that is easily resolved. The enormously long time that has passed since they became entitled to such seats and the continuing delay should prove that. At one level, it is very straightforward in that with the inclusion of the two communities in the Scheduled Tribes list, assembly seat reservation for them becomes a mandated by the Constitution of India right. The prescribed calculation – seats in proportion to their population composition in Sikkim – is simple in understanding and demanding what is required, but complicated in how one can arrive at that figure or find the matching seats.

Yes, things are rarely ever very simple in Sikkim.

Thumb-rule apportioning of seats cannot be undertaken for the exacting and keenly specific requirements of matters which involve the Constitution and when the matter needs to be processed through multiple Ministries. The calculations are further vexed because they do not offer an easily worked out or universally acceptable proportion because of the existing set of reserved seats, which, because they do not follow the proportionate-to-population allotment, make additional reservations unreasonable for the populations left outside the reserved berths in the Legislative Assembly. A situation like this cannot be resolved solely by mathematics or rules and laws or even amendments to the Constitution of India and requires involved deliberations at all levels. The political rhetoric that has hounded the issue has effectively kept such deliberations, and hence the possible consensus, at bay.

The only clear commitment on how the reserved seats could be apportioned had arrived in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly back in December 2008, when the Chief Minister had tabled a resolution to increase the Assembly strength to 40, maintaining the BL seats at 12, Sangha at one and SC at two and then, from the remaining 25 seats, setting aside seats for the Limboos and Tamangs as Scheduled Tribes from their proportion to the population for whom the remaining seats are available (40 minus the 12 BL, 1 Sangha and 2 SC seats). This resolution was passed on 11 December, 2008. The year 2018 is coming to a close now, and despite the eight years that have lapsed since, there is no alternative workable formula presented by anyone. It was much the same back in December 2008, when straight off the bat, there were those who cried foul and disagreed. Of course the proposal is complicated, but this was never going to be a simple issue.

And while criticisms and condemnations are necessary reactions in a healthy democracy, the communities in question would have been well served if these responses were backed by alternate options on how else the political rights of the Limboos and Tamangs as Scheduled Tribes could be delivered without compromising the political expressions of any other community or section of Sikkimese population.

A new option has been thrown up; one that could address the complicated situation for now. Let us see if this option is allowed to deliver on its true potential.

Worry over kids' excessive smartphone use is more justified than ever before

JEAN TWENGE
theconversation.com

Parents who fear their kids are spending too much time in front of screens now have more reason for concern.

New research funded by the National Institutes of Health found brain changes among kids using screens more than seven hours a day and lower cognitive skills among those using screens more than two hours a day.

When studies find links between screen time and negative outcomes, some have argued that this is just the latest moral panic over technology.

After all, didn't the parents of baby boomers and Gen Xers worry that their kids were watching too much TV or talking on the phone too much? Those kids turned out OK, right?

So how are portable electronic devices, the chosen technology of today's kids and teens – a generation I call "iGen" – any different?

New research I've conducted on the relationship between portable device use and sleep provides some answers.

EVERYWHERE, ALL THE TIME

It almost goes without saying that today's portable devices – including smartphones and tablets – are fundamentally different than the living room television sets and rotary phones of the past.

Since researchers have been tracking TV watching habits, the average U.S. teen has never spent more than two-and-a-half hours a day watching TV. Yet as of 2016, the average teen spent about six hours a day immersed in digital media – more than twice as much time.

This large amount of time spent using digital media is enough to crowd out time once spent on other activities, such as interacting with friends face to face, reading or going out.

And unlike the telephone, digital media apps are designed to hook you. As former Silicon Valley executive Tristan Harris said of smartphone apps, "Your telephone in the 1970s didn't have a thousand engineers ... updating the way your telephone worked every day to be more and more persuasive."

Second, unlike TV or landline phones, portable devices can be car-

ried everywhere: to school, where teachers say they are a near-constant distraction, and into social situations, where a conversation can instantly be upended by reaching for a buzzing phone. (There's even a word for this: phubbing, a portmanteau of "phone" and "snubbing.")

Sure enough, people have reported enjoying a restaurant dinner with friends less when their phones were available, compared to when they weren't.

sleep and portable device use. Then we compared the results.

Drawing from a large survey of parents administered by the U.S. Census Bureau, we found that 2- to 10-year-olds who spent four or more hours a day on portable electronic devices – versus no time – were twice as likely to be significantly sleep deprived. TV time was also connected to less sleep, but not as strongly or consistently.

Among teens ages 14 to 17, those

some teens using them throughout the night – what some call "vamping."

That might explain why sleep deprivation among teens spiked after 2012 – just as smartphone use became common.

THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS?

To be clear, we did find that watching many hours of TV was associated with less sleep, especially among elementary-school age children. Watching over three hours a day of TV is also associated with de-



THE SLEEP FACTOR

Across many studies, kids and teens who spend more time with screens – including both TV and portable devices – also sleep less.

That could be because they spend so much time engaged with their devices that it's coming at the expense of sleep. But there's also a physiological reason: The blue light emitted by electronic screens tricks our brains into thinking it's still daytime, and then we don't produce enough of the sleep hormone melatonin to fall asleep quickly and get high-quality sleep.

Once again, some might argue that TV is just as bad: After all, it also takes up time and emits blue light.

But in a new paper, my co-authors and I decided to parse the two. We studied links between sleep and TV watching as well as links between

who spent four or more hours a day on portable electronic devices – versus no time – were 44 percent more likely to not sleep enough. However, once portable device time was statistically controlled, watching TV or playing video games on a console had little link to sleep time.

Why would portable devices be more strongly associated with losing sleep?

For one thing, TV is simply not as psychologically stimulating as a portable device like a smartphone, which, unlike a TV, doesn't exist to simply consume media. Smartphones have also become a huge part of social life, whether it's texting with friends or interacting with them on social media.

And unlike TV, smartphones and tablets can be silently carried into the bedroom or even the bed, resulting in

pression – though more weakly than portable device use.

So parents were right to worry about kids watching too much TV in the 1970s and 1980s. But their worries might not have been as justified as today's parents' concerns about smartphones.

So what is a parent – or anyone who wants to sleep well – to do?

First, it's best for smartphones and tablets to stay out of the bedroom after "lights-out" time. Nor is it a great idea to use the devices within an hour of bedtime, as their blue light influences the brain's ability to produce melatonin. Finally, as a general rule, two hours a day or less spent on portable devices is a good guideline. These rules apply to parents, too – not only kids.

Just don't binge-watch TV instead.
[the writer is Professor of Psychology, San Diego State University]

Will wearing your coat indoors make you feel colder outside? A scientist explains

MIKE EVANS
theconversation.com

If you've ever had to work in a draughty office, warehouse or classroom, you've probably been tempted to keep your coat on inside. And you were probably also advised against it because you wouldn't "feel the benefit" when you went outside. This might seem counter intuitive. If you're cold already, surely you should do whatever you can to retain warmth? It turns out things aren't that simple. To understand what's really going on, we need to know a bit about why we feel cold in the first place.

Your body is covered with tiny temperature sensors known as cold-sensitive receptors, located on specialised nerve fibres in the skin. When the temperature drops, these receptors start to signal to the brain, in effect encoding the temperature into the nerve. These cold receptors are sometimes called menthol receptors because they also respond to the chemical menthol, which gives a cool sensation when applied to the skin.

As these nerve fibres are distributed all around the body, they enter the central nervous system at different levels. Receptors on the arms, torso, legs or shoulders connect to neurons in the spinal cord, while those on the

face, head or mouth connect directly to the brain stem. But because the nerves conduct their electrical signals so rapidly, the distance from the cold body part to the brain has little effect on how quickly we detect the cold.

The signals travel to a multi-sensory gate-keeper in the centre of the brain, called

When you go outside (or anywhere that is colder than where you've just been), your nervous system detects the temperature through your exposed skin, in particular the face. Wearing a coat indoors is likely to raise your average skin temperature, including the exposed parts. So when you go outside, the air

your exposed skin down more quickly.

However, once you get over the initial sense of coldness, your coat will still do its job and you will feel its benefit. Your body is very effective at maintaining its core temperature of 37°C unless you are ill or experience extreme temperatures. Even if you

warm itself up. As they travel to the brain, the signals from your cold-sensitive receptors also pass to the hypothalamus, a complex collection of nerve cells at the base of the brain, the amygdala, and other centres beneath the hypothalamus, in the brain stem. The hypothalamus controls our response to temperature (among other things), and the amygdala engages our emotions.

When the signals activate these centres, your body will try to raise its temperature, particularly core temperature, by a coordinated system of shivering, moving blood away from the skin, and increasing your heart rate and breathing to boost the circulation and the oxygen and nutrients it provides. Through this multi-organ response, the body conserves heat by preventing heat loss through the skin and it generates heat through muscular activity and certain biochemical reactions.

This means that technically, you should be able to lose weight by being cold since the body is then forced to generate more heat. But we wouldn't advise going outside in winter without your coat on as a weight-loss technique. It's true that obesity can reduce life expectancy, but so can extreme cold, and much more effectively.

[the writer is Senior Lecturer in Neuroscience, Keele University]



the thalamus. From the thalamus, signals pass to the somatosensory cortex, which is what creates the sensation and awareness of feeling cold. From this, the brain can work out both the location of the cold spot on the body surface, and to some extent how cold it actually is. At temperature extremes, hot or cold, you also feel pain due to skin damage.

will feel colder, particularly on the exposed skin, than it would have done otherwise since the difference in temperature is now greater.

Your coat will insulate your body from this temperature drop, but not your face. This feeling would be accentuated even further if wearing your coat indoors made you sweat, which would cool

feel colder when you first go outside, your coat will help reduce your body's heat loss and make it easier to maintain your core temperature (as well as keeping the cold air away from your skin).

WARMING UP

Whether or not you've just put on your coat when you go outside, your body has an effective way of trying to

IEST alumni to take part in ‘nostalia’ run for charity



KOLKATA, DEC 29 (PTI): A group of former Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology (IEST) students will come together for a ‘nostalgic’ run along a 10-km stretch from the city as part of charity.

The 2018 edition of ‘Route 55’ -- a tribute to the lone bus route between the campus in Howrah district and central Kolkata’s Esplanade area till 1999 -- will see participation of alumni from 15 cities in India and abroad on December 30.

First started in 2013 by 10 former students of IEST, earlier known as Bengal Engineering and Science University (BESU), the initiative strives to give back to society as well as advocate personal fitness, the organisers said. The

pre-requisite to participate in the run is a donation of USD 55 (about Rs 3,800) to Sramajibi Hospital in Howrah.

“It is great feeling to see my students from around the world coming together to do their bit for the community,” IEST Director Prof Parthasarathi Chakrabarti told reporters on Friday evening.

Sandeep Chatterjee, a former student based in Hyderabad, said a portion of the donation is used to provide discounted healthcare to the drivers and conductors of Bus 55.

“We believe in giving back to the community that had formed an important part of our student lives ... Bus 55 has been an important part of the IEST lore and those living in the community,” Chatterjee said.

Nepal-India ties move upward with high-level visits in 2018

SHIRISH B PRADHAN KATHMANDU, DEC 29 (PTI): Nepal-India relations saw an upward trend in 2018 as high-level bilateral visits gradually helped remove the mistrust, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying New Delhi was ready to be the ‘Sherpa’ in the land-locked Himalayan nation’s quest to scale the mountain of success.

India was able to recover its lost ground in Nepal in recent months after a period of unease in bilateral ties following the violent agitation in 2015 by Madhesi, mostly of Indian-origin, who blocked Indo-Nepal border demanding more representation in Parliament and redrawing of provincial boundaries. The economic blockade severely affected Nepal, its economy and its ties with India.

India’s bilateral engagement with Nepal in 2018 began with External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj in February meeting Left alliance leader K P Sharma Oli days before his swearing in as prime minister.

After Nepal witnessed political instability for several years, the Left alliance came to power in the historic polls in December, 2017.

Known for his pro-China stance, Oli became Nepal’s Prime Minister for the second time in February. His first term as the premier from 2015 to 2016 saw straining of ties with New Delhi over the 2015 blockade.

Oli, who publicly criticised New Delhi for allegedly interfering in Nepal’s internal matters and accused it of toppling his government, however, changed his tone after his sweeping poll victory and said he wants to “update” relations with India “in keeping with the times”.

Oli said he favours a review of all special provisions of the Indo-Nepal relations. He also vowed to deepen Nepal’s ties with China to explore more options and get more leverage in his dealings with India.

The prime ministers of Nepal and India agreed to review, adjust and update the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 and other

bilateral agreements.

China, which has been investing heavily in Nepal blunting India’s influence in the country, was quick to congratulate the new Nepalese government and said that India, China and Nepal should step up “sound interaction for win-win outcomes”.

The highest level of visit between India and Nepal came in April when Prime Minister Oli, leading a 53-member jumbo delegation, visited India for a three-day visit which, he said, helped in clearing misunderstanding and mistrust, and strengthening mutual trust between the two neighbours.

During talks between Oli and Modi, the two countries agreed to conduct feasibility studies regarding construction of Raxaul-Kathmandu railway line and operating Nepalese steamers to transport goods and people from Nepal to other countries.

In May, Prime Minister Modi travelled to Nepal for a two-day state visit, his third visit to the country in four years.

Modi visited the

famed 20th century Janaki temple in Janakpur, dedicated to the Hindu goddess Sita. He and his Nepalese counterpart jointly inaugurated a direct bus service between Janakpur and Ayodhya - the two sacred cities for Hindus - to promote religious tourism in Nepal and India.

Describing his trip to Nepal as a reflection of his government’s commitment to “neighbourhood first” policy, Modi said Nepal has entered a new era and India would continue to support it.

He said India supports a “united, prosperous and strong” Nepal as he called for transforming the land-locked Himalayan nation into a land- and water-linked country.

Oli said Nepal is sensitive to India’s interests and would not allow its territory to be used against it.

Modi said India was ready to be the ‘Sherpa’ -- a member of the Himalayan community renowned for mountaineering skills -- to help Nepal scale the mountain of success, hailing

the Himalayan nation’s successful journey from bullets to ballots.

Oli, briefing Nepal’s Parliament on Modi’s state visit, said the visit has elevated bilateral ties to new heights.

In August, Modi visited Nepal for BIMSTEC conference and held talks with Oli during which India and Nepal exchanged a memorandum of understanding to build a strategic railway line connecting Bihar’s Raxaul city to Kathmandu.

This was the third meeting between Modi and Oli in 2018.

China made inroads into Nepal as Kathmandu started accessing internet through a Chinese optical fibre link laid across the Himalayan mountains, ending its sole dependency on India for connecting to the cybre space.

Nepal and China signed the protocol of Transit and Transport Agreement in September according to which the Communist giant agreed to allow Nepal to use four of its seaports and three land ports for third-country trade, re-

ducing its dependence on India to conduct international commerce.

The Madhesi agitation in 2015 forced Nepal to explore trade links with China and reduce its long term dependence on India.

In September, Nepal decided not to participate in the first-ever joint military exercise of BIMSTEC nations in Pune, amid reports that Nepal’s political parties had expressed concern over the drill.

In December, Nepal banned the use of Indian currency notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations, a move that could affect Indian tourists visiting the Himalayan nation where Indian currency is widely used.

Notwithstanding differences in India-Nepal ties and the growing Chinese influence in the Himalayan nation, the frequent high-level visits by the leaders of the two countries have helped promote goodwill, trust, understanding and cooperation and have injected fresh momentum to further consolidate age-old and multi-faceted relations.

FIELDWORK REFLECTIONS

The Fading Stories

MONGFING LEPCHA

“People have always been curious about the neighbors and more remote people. They have gossiped about them fought them, married them and told stories about them. Some of these stories or myths have been written down” - Erikson.

Stories have always been a part of everyone’s life. In fact, there is also a saying which says that “in the end we all become stories”. Apparently everyone is a story and everything is related to a story. Talking about stories, I have always been fascinated by stories especially because I have grown up listening to bedtime stories which fired my interest for stories. Those childhood stories did not just include fairy tales, but stories of the actual events and times of my grandparents’ days as they would be the ones narrating the stories every night. Reminiscing those good old days, they would tell how different times were and how different it became and for them it seemed like the change occurred in the blink of eyes. I would listen to the same story again and again and try to visualize it which at times would leave me with an inquisitive mind. Eventually, the story telling faded but the inquisitiveness for listening to stories remained. It is of utmost pleasure that my subject allows me to water that fascination for knowing the stories of people, places and things I come across. In my previous article I have mentioned that whenever I visit new places the first thing which draws my attention is the name of the place where a story always resides. So, I always get hold of the people who know more about the place and ask them about it. Interestingly, the stories are always sensible ones. Likewise, there are many stories in the form of folklores, songs and some as distant memories on a verge to fade away. Those stories in a way validate the existence of the place and people. The stories which need to be heard, treasured, the stories which might turn into nothingness leaving behind an empty space in our lives and existence.

This article does not focus on any particular story but rather focuses on how those stories are fading away with time. Story

telling is a common phenomenon among tribal community. In fact oral tradition which includes everything passed down on a verbal form is an important part of not just tribal communities but also of communities who are yet to be considered as a by-product of the modern world. The folklores, myths, songs, etc. which are part of the oral tradition includes the stories of life, season, legends, warriors, love, prayers, and many more. In earlier days when there were no means of entertainment such as televisions, radios, mobile phones, etc. people used to gather around and share those stories which seemed to have passed down to many generations until the new mode of entertainment gave a pause to the oral tradition. Such is the case among two communities located in different geographical regions where I had conducted my fieldwork. The first one is among the Vadabaija/ fishing community of Annavaram village, Andhra Pradesh, among whom oral tradition played a vital role once but now it is restricted to only few elderly people of that village. Oral tradition seems to be fading along with the traditional fishing method used by them. It is due to the fact that the younger generations are migrating towards the urban areas for better job opportunities hence leaving behind only the elder generation in the village. Of course one can never give a negative remark to the younger generations who choose to leave rather than carry forward the tradition as they too have rights for better living but looking it in the other way, the community and the people are paying a bigger price for it by losing a valuable treasure which has been passed down from generations. Now with the passing of time those stories will just be silent whisper in the memory lane unless it is turned into a written document and saved as lifeless mummy in the glass box. Although the tradition to some extent can be revived by the concerned ones but the question is who will put life in that mummy? Well, I leave this for the readers to answer. Now, another community where oral tradition plays a significant role is among one of the tribal communities i.e. the Lepcha community. I have conducted my fieldwork in many Lepcha villages of Sikkim and taking into consideration the oral tradition,



the sad part is in most of villages the stories have turned into ashes along with the storytellers. Everyone knew about the great stories known by the elderly people but situation may not have favored the listener and the storyteller to take a pause and pass down some great stories which now is just in bits and pieces. Now, those stories of the pasts will always remain incomplete. While I was in one of my fieldwork area, I also came to know that in earlier days during social gathering people would gather around and start singing songs in a particular tune and rhythm similar to the “lok Dohri” traditional musical competition among the Nepali community. I asked if anyone knows how it was sung and the answer was obvious one, no one knew and the ones who knew had already tuned into stories.

Similar, to this, there are stories of the places, events, of old times, of common things we see and use on a daily basis, and so forth, which connects the dots of our existence and yet we never feel like listening or at times tell-

ing those simply thinking that it is always there. But we might be wrong in thinking so, in not listening to those stories because in doing so we are in a way letting our treasure get buried in the sand of time. Treasure, which is so genuine and precious that it can be passed down to many generations without losing it’s very essence. Although it is an undeniable fact that we do not tend to care about things we have until we lose it. But all it takes is just a conscious mind and some time to own the treasure which may otherwise blend in silence leaving us poor and blank. There are reasons for why oral tradition and the stories are fading from communities where it is an important part of their tradition but I feel there should be just one reason for not letting it fade away, listen to those stories, tell those stories and be a part of those stories for all great stories are not found in books.

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

WW-II bomb found during dredging operations in Kolkata

KOLKATA, DEC 29 (PTI): A 1,000-pound aerial bomb dating back to the World War-II era has been unearthed at a dock here during routine dredging operations.

The area was cordoned off following the discovery of the bomb Friday and the police, Navy and the Army duly informed, said Kolkata Port Trust (KoPT) Chairman Vinit Kumar.

“The 4.5-metre-long aerial bomb, with US army markings, was located around 2 pm yesterday during dredging operations at Netaji Subhas Dock berth II. Initially, we thought it was a torpedo, but the Navy has confirmed that it is

a US-made bomb,” he told PTI. The explosive is likely to be defused with the help of officials from the Ordnance Factory, he added.

KoPT Security Adviser Gautam Chakraborti said the port authority may want to preserve the bomb once it is defused.

The explosive is still lying at the dock, he said, adding that the KoPT is trying to expedite the process of defusing it.

Commodore Subprobo K De, naval officer-in-charge, West Bengal, said the bomb does not pose any risk as it has several security locks affixed to it.

“It is a 450-kg aerial bomb fitted with brack-

ets to attach with fighter planes. There seems to be no threat from the bomb as it has locks affixed to it. Also, aerial bombs have to be dropped from a certain height to make an impact,” he explained.

De said there is not much that the Navy can do about the device.

“I hope the KoPT will seek help from the Ordnance Factory, which has expertise in making ammunition. If needed, we may contact Vizag naval base for assistance,” De said.

Netaji Subhas Dock, on the east bank of Hooghly river, was extensively used by the US Navy during World War II for its operations.



India close in on win as Australia reach 258/8 at stumps

CHETAN NARULA

MELBOURNE, DEC 29 (PTI): India came within sniffing distance of a defining victory before a stoic resistance by Australia's tail delayed the inevitable in the third Test here Saturday.

Pat Cummins scored a heroic half-century as Australia finished at 258 for eight at stumps on day four after being reduced to 176 for seven after tea.

At end of play, he had scored an unbeaten 61 runs, facing 103 balls and hitting five fours as well as a six, while Nathan Lyon was batting on 6, as they put on 43 runs for the ninth wicket.

Australia need another 141 runs for an improbable win, while India are two wickets away from a 2-1 series lead.

Post tea, Travis Head (34) and Tim Paine (26) took their sixth-wicket partnership to 22 runs. The duo cut down on risky scoring shots and played for time.

But they couldn't last long, as Head played on off Ishant Sharma (1-37) in the 51st over. Paine though continued his resistance and put on 19 runs with Mitchell Starc (18), seeing through 11 overs in this partnership.

Ravindra Jadeja (3-82) got the breakthrough with Paine caught behind and it seemed like Australia's last fight had gone out. But Cummins arrived at the crease to defy India, even as Starc was bowled off a rash



swing against Mohammed Shami (2-71). India tried everything possible to get the final two wickets, with skipper Virat Kohli even convincing the umpires to go for the extra half-hour/eight overs seeing the possibility of a result.

Cummins though stood defiant as he brought up his second Test half-century off 86 balls, capping a fine day of Test cricket after taking career-best figures of 6-27 in the morning session.

Earlier, at tea, Australia were reduced to 138 for five. Post lunch, Usman Khawaja (33) and Shaun Marsh (44) came out playing attacking shots and the scoring rate peaked at its highest

for the duration of this Test. The duo added 30 runs for the third wicket as India went on the backfoot a bit, and were waiting for breakthrough to come along.

It did as Shami trapped Khawaja lbw in the 21st over, but the batsman went for DRS review. It stayed in India's favour as he was too far back in his crease and was out plumb.

Shaun Marsh though continued to play his aggressive strokes and added 51 runs with brother Mitchell Marsh (10), as Australia crossed 100 in the 37th over.

Looking good for a tall score, Shaun Marsh was unlucky to be given out lbw against Jasprit

Bumrah (2-53) in the 33rd over. He went for DRS review as well and the ball was shown clipping the stumps only marginally, thus out on umpire's call.

Mitchell Marsh looked to attack Jadeja but it didn't work as Australia lost a third wicket in this session. He mishit the ball straight to Kohli at extra cover in a bid to clear the ropes.

Australia were placed at 44 for two at lunch after India declared at 106 for eight in their second innings with Pat Cummins taking career-best figures of 6-27.

Needing to bat five and a half sessions to save the match, Australia didn't get off to the best

start as Aaron Finch (3) edged Bumrah to second slip in the second over.

Mayank Agarwal couldn't latch on to a tough chance at short leg off Khawaja three balls later otherwise it would have been an even poorer start.

The batsman then added 27 runs for the second wicket with Marcus Harris (13). The duo checked their shot selection, even as India wasted a review against Khawaja in Jadeja's first over.

The spinner struck in the 10th over though as a bat-pad chance got stuck under Agarwal's arm at short leg and Harris had to walk back, causing further trouble for Australia.

In the morning, India

had batted 52 minutes and extended their second innings from overnight 54 for five even as threat of rain loomed large. Play started on time though and India were batting with a plan to reach the 400-lead mark as quickly as possible.

Mayank (42) opened up with a couple sixes off Nathan Lyon (0-40) and made intentions clear, but was bowled off Cummins before he could get a second half-century in his maiden Test.

Rishabh Pant (33) and Ravindra Jadeja (5) threw their bats around to add 17 runs. They didn't waste time in farming strike, with Cummins missing out on his five-wicket haul when Tim Paine dropped Pant early in the session.

He returned to pick up his sixth wicket when Jadeja gloved a catch to gully, beating his previous best of 6-79 against South Africa back in 2011. India declared with Pant's dismissal in the 38th over.

The visitors had scored 443 for seven declared in the first innings thanks to Cheteshwar Pujara's 17th Test hundred. Jasprit Bumran then picked career-best figures of 6-33 as Australia were bowled out for 151 runs in reply on day three, conceding a 292-run lead. The four-match series is level at 1-1 after India won the first Test in Adelaide by 31 runs and Australia claimed the second in Perth by 146 runs.

Advani adds two world titles to his growing kitty in memorable 2018



BHARAT SHARMA

NEW DELHI, DEC 29 (PTI):

The legend of Pankaj Advani grew bigger and had no competition in 2018 when India's finest cueist completed a grand double by winning the world billiards crown in the point and time format, extending his tally to a staggering 21.

The 33-year-old kept churning out world titles, proving that his game was getting better with age and there was a long way to go before his hunger for trophies could be satiated.

While Advani won the world championship in the point format for the third straight year in the edition that took place in Myanmar in November, he secured the time format trophy for the first time since 2015.

Advani, among the few who juggles smoothly between billiards and snooker, also lifted a major snooker trophy this year after he and Manan Chandra staged a dramatic recovery to beat Pakistan in the world team championship, which was held in Doha in March.

The duo was down 0-2 in the final before pulling off a sensational victory.

The Bengaluru-based cueist was expectedly pleased with his performance in another productive year.

"Considering I didn't play in too many tournaments this year, 2018 was superb especially in billiards - winning the nationals, Asian and World (point as well as time format) - making it a clean sweep," Advani told PTI.

"In snooker, lifting the World Team Cup along with Manan was special as it was my first major team trophy. And

then the Asian Tour victory in China was a new addition to my trophy cabinet," he added.

An ardent fan of tennis great Roger Federer, Advani has no plans to retire and remains as motivated as ever.

"Next year there are going to be many events. However, my focus will initially be to qualify for the international tournaments in snooker.

"As usual, the main challenge will be to strike a healthy balance between billiards and snooker so that I give myself a chance to excel and hopefully win in both versions of cue sport," he said. Advani also won the Asian billiards title for the seventh time, beating practice partner B Bhaskar in the final.

He had gone into the tournament as the defending champion and ended up winning the trophy for the second year in a row.

In the same event, India's Amee Kamani won the Asian Women's Snooker title by blanking her Thai opponent Siripaporn Nuanthakhamjan.

In the overall tally of world championships, Advani won as many as eight billiards finals in the time format and six in the shorter version with half of them coming in the last three years. He is also a three-time world snooker champion and two-time winner of the six-red format.

After bagging a grand billiards double in November, he was in no mood to stop as he ended the year with an unfinished break of 1092 to win the ECA Raman Nair Billiards in Bengaluru in December.

In his own words, it was a "magical way" to end 2018.

Saints await as Guardiola and City bid to stay in title race

SOUTHAMPTON, DEC 29 (AFP): Pep Guardiola faces a testing week that could prove crucial in arresting Manchester City's slump and reviving the defence of their Premier League title.

City end 2018 with a testing visit to Southampton before opening 2019 with leaders Liverpool coming to the Etihad, a game in which defeat for City could leave them 10 or more points off first place.

Such an outcome could prompt Guardiola to have a change of heart and invest in new blood in the January transfer window to try and revive their title challenge.

City's sudden collapse, with three defeats in their last four Premier League games, has been blamed on the absence of injured holding midfielder Fernandinho and the lack of a suitable replacement. The continued injury problems of French left-back Benjamin Mendy, and the recent loss of form of right-back Kyle Walker, have also presented Guardiola with a problem in the positions that are so key to his swashbuckling style of play.

Mendy's replacement Fabian Delph has turned in some sub-par displays and was sent off in City's most recent loss, at Leicester, earning him a three-match suspension.

All of which begs the question as to whether the self-styled world's wealthiest club will invest heavily in the transfer window. The Champions League, not won by Guardiola since Barcelona triumphed in 2011, remains a burning priority for the manager

and the club's Abu Dhabi owners, even though publicly they claim the Premier League title is their major target.

Guardiola has always insisted he will do no business in this window, waiting until the summer to strengthen a squad that, until the current run, looked deep enough to cope with any number of injuries or loss of form.

"When we created the squad at the beginning of the season, it was not to go to the January window except if we have problems," said Guardiola last month.

"But I have a deep squad and a lot of players cannot play when I trust them a lot. They believe I don't like them but that is not true."

Now, City appear to have those "problems" to which Guardiola referred and there is a distinct possibility that City will move to stem the current "crisis" by signing either midfield cover or a new left-back in the coming month. The former, certainly, is a major issue and one Guardiola tried to address in the summer with interest in Fred and, in particular, Jorginho before the duo chose to join Manchester United and Chelsea, respectively.

Tanguy Ndombele, the Lyon midfielder who impressed in his two meetings with City in the Champions League group stage this season, claimed this month Guardiola had tried to sign him in the summer.

The fact that UEFA have abolished the cup-tied rule for this season's competitions also means Ndombele could play for City in the knock-out stages of the Champions League.

Leaked video shows Musharraf seeking covert US support to regain power

LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, DEC 29 (PTI):

In an embarrassment to Pervez Musharraf, the former Pakistani dictator, in a leaked video, was purportedly seen seeking covert US support to regain power and telling American lawmakers that he was "ashamed" of the ISI being negligent about the al Qaeda chief Osama Bin Laden's whereabouts.

The undated video clips, which have been posted by dissident Pakistani columnist Gul Bukhari, also shows the self-exiled former president as saying that he thinks that the negligence of the ISI was "pardonable" as the CIA was also involved in same level of negligence on 9/11. Gen-

eral (ret'd) Musharraf, 75, was Pakistan's president between 2001 and 2008, before resigning to avoid impeachment.

The former army chief has been living in Dubai since March 2016 after he left for medical treatment and has not returned since, citing security and health reasons. He is facing the treason case for suspending the Constitution in 2007, a punishable offence for which he was indicted in 2014.

"All I am saying is, I have certain credentials from the past. I need to come (to power) again and I need to be supported. Not overtly, but in a covert manner. So that we win again," Musharraf is seen as

telling US lawmakers in one of the leaked video of the meeting.

When posed with tough questions, he rued that US lawmakers "are too involved in minor tactics".

He also claimed that Pakistan used the money, given by the US for fight against terrorist, to bring down the poverty from 34 per cent to 17 per cent.

To which, those present in the meeting, were quick to point out that none of the US Congress members voted for USD 20 billion aid to Pakistan in the last 10 years because of poverty.

Money was given to Pakistan to defeat al Qaeda and the Taliban, the lawmakers said, to

which the former Pakistan president sought the US to help him get back to power.

In the first video clip, he is seen walking in the corridors of the US House of Representatives. The video clips seems to be from 2012, after he was ousted from power.

In the third segment of the clip, Musharraf is seen in conversation with a lobbyist and Chairman of the powerful American Jewish Congress Jack Rosen during an informal get-together. One of those present in that meeting was Congressman Gary Ackerman.

He argues that there was no complicity in Pakistan not being able to find out Osama bin-Laden.

4 prehistoric migrations shaped India's population: Book

NEW DELHI, DEC 29 (PTI): The Indian population is a result of four major migrations, including that of the Aryans, into the country in prehistoric times, says a new book.

"Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From" looks at how and when modern humans first arrived in India; what evidence they left behind; who their descendants are today; who else followed them as migrants to this land; how and when farming started and the world's largest civilisation of its time was built; when and why this civilisation declined; and what happened next.

Based on recent genetic studies using ancient DNA as well as findings from disciplines such as archaeology and linguistics, journalist Tony Joseph writes that these migrations, including that of the Aryans from central Asia, were part of global population

movements that affected not just India but many regions of Asia and Europe.

The first modern humans arrived in India around 65,000 years ago as part of an Out of Africa migration that populated the entire world ultimately. The genetic lineage of these first migrants that the book calls First Indians' still dominate the Indian population and accounts for 50-65 per cent of the Indian ancestry today.

The second major migration happened 9000 to 5000 years ago, when agriculturists from the Zagros region of Iran moved into India's northwestern part and mixed with the First Indians and helped speed up the farming experiments that were already beginning in the subcontinent.

As a result, farming - especially of barley and wheat - spread like wildfire across the northwestern region, thus laying the foundation for the

Harappan Civilisation that in its mature phase lasted from 2600 BCE to 1900 BCE.

The Harappans, therefore, were a mixture of Zagros agriculturists and First Indians, the book claims.

The third major migration happened from southeast Asia around 2000 BCE, when farming-related migrations originally starting from the Chinese heartland overran south-east Asia and then reached India, bringing the Austroasiatic family of languages, such as Mundari and Khasi spoken in the eastern and central parts of the country.

The last major migration between 2000 and 1000 BCE brought central Asian pastoralists, who spoke Indo-European languages and called themselves Aryans, to India.

The scientific evidence for all of these migrations - for long the subject of vigorous debates among both scientists

and lay persons - is now coming from analysis of ancient DNA, or DNA collected from the skeletons of individuals who lived thousands of years ago. By looking at DNA from the same location at different periods, or from different locations at the same period, geneticists can work out which populations moved where and when.

India's current population mix also includes many minor migrations that happened during the historical period, says the book, published by Juggernaut, though these did not leave a significant genetic impact.

'Early Indians' uses the metaphor of a pizza to explain that the Indian population structure today. The First Indians form the base of the pizza, it says, since their ancestry is present in all population groups, no matter what region they live in, what caste they be-

long to, or what language they speak. Then comes the sauce that is spread all over the base of the pizza - the Harappans, who moved all over the country in search of new, fertile land when their civilization declined around 1900 BC.

The rest of the migrants are the cheese, the capsicum, the tomato and other vegetables spread on top of the pizza, though not in a uniform manner - some pieces have a larger share of one and less of the other.

Apart from the formation of the Indian population and the development of the Harappan Civilisation, the book also looks into when and how the caste system began.

Genetic evidence suggests that the caste system did not begin with the arrival of the Aryans', Joseph says, adding that it began nearly two thousand years later, around 100 CE, probably due to a shift in political ideology at that time.

Mememes emerge as social media art, comment and empowerment tool

RADHIKA SHARMA
It's all about art -- when M F Husain took brush to canvas, when Satyajit Ray got behind the camera and even when a clever somebody logs in to inscribe astute comment on image to produce what has come to be known as a meme.

And when India's twin obsessions cinema and politics combine, you get a meme that is not just just humour but a biting comment on contemporary times and also a tool of empowerment and expression.

According to Ramit Verma, creator of social media account 'Official PeeingHuman', memes are "time capsules" representing the culture prevailing at a particular point.

Like when a cow replaced antagonist Ganesh Gaitonde in a defining scene from Netflix's India original "Sacred Games", based on a book by author Vikram Chandra on Mumbai's underworld. It was a sure-shot viral meme -- a bovine standing amidst the burning mountain of Mumbai's trash in self-deified glory with the dialogue "kabhi kabhi lagta hai apun hee bhagwan hai" (it often feels that I am god) inscribed on it.

Bulls eye for the creator who used the pop culture medium to make a devastating comment on the current political climate and issues related to the cow and cow slaughter. The viewer may or may not have seen "Sacred Games" but the message hit straight home. Memes were

used to drive home other messages in 2018.

Films such as "Padmaavat", "Manmarziyaan" and "Kedarnath" and the controversies they raised blurred the lines between cinema and politics. And memes used India's obsession with the two and turned them into instant social media art.

What makes current affairs and entertainment industry gel is that both are articles of mass consumption and, in the age of internet, people need everything that is a touch away, said the man behind ROFL Gandhi, a popular parody account of Congress president Rahul Gandhi, requesting anonymity.

"We don't have the time and patience to read or even go through something as concise as a tweet. A meme is something you read with your eyes but don't have to apply much mind to," Vyshnav Vinod, one of the content creators of the Bengaluru-based "Unofficial Sacred Games", told PTI.

The viral cow meme was shared on Facebook by 'Unofficial Sacred Games'.

According to Vinod, the relatability of content, powered by the 'share' option, make memes an important part of the internet culture.

In 2018, memes gave due attention not just to incidents of mob lynching over alleged cow slaughter, credibility of leaders ahead of the 2019 general elections but also other issues.

"Shows like 'Sacred Games'

and 'Mirzapur' have interesting dialogues, cusswords and gruesome footage which is perfect material for the meme community. It's like either you make it or somebody else will make it," Vinod said.

According to 'ROFL Gandhi', memes lifted from a movie or a web series are tailor-made for political commentary and satire.

"Movies and web series are a mass thing. If you look at Bollywood, we expect people to know about an upcoming movie and even if you are not going to watch the movie, you will at least watch the trailer. People on social media are creating memes out of trailers," ROFL Gandhi, who wishes anonymity but prefers being called a "visionary troll", told PTI.

Citing "Mirzapur" as an example, he said no one initially cared for the crime thriller from Amazon Prime Video.

"Only a handful had watched the series. But after the memes, the appeal of 'Mirzapur', which caters to the middle class, suddenly caught on. It started being viewed as a mass entertainment series. In two weeks, all social media platforms were flooded with 'Mirzapur' memes," he said.

Memes sometimes also fuse past and present. Veteran actor Amrish Puri's dialogue Aao kabhi haveli pe from the 1986 fantasy film Nagina was used in a meme last year. And this year, "Stree", one of 2018's blockbusters, featured a song titled "Aao kabhi haveli pe", which hon-

oured its genre of horror comedy and was also lauded for its subversion of the 'witch' concept to question prejudices.

Using "Waah Modiji Waah Waah" as an outro in video memes to lifting the "Banda ye bindaas hai" song from the film "Aks" as a tool to critique the government, Verma of 'Official PeeingHuman' described a meme as a unit of culture.

"The content is so relatable because most creators are individuals drawing experiences, emotions and inspiration for such content from their personal life and that of others around them..." Verma told PTI.

He believes Indian politics and films go perfectly together.

"Since we are a film obsessed nation, I try to pick up filmy things from other content on the internet to use in my videos every now and then because it increases the shareability and relatability quotient," he said.

ROFL Gandhi predicts a short lifespan for memes, which may last for over a year or two.

"Seeing the history of social media, there is a time till when things will work. It's a phase. Maybe we'll find something more interesting to express ourselves," he said. But Verma is optimistic about memes playing a longer innings in pop culture.

"The term 'meme' might phase out in the future, but the kind of content it represents is not a fad. It is too empowering for the common person to give up on," Verma said.

6.9-magnitude quake hits Philippines triggering small tsunami



MANILA, DEC 29 (AFP): A 6.9-magnitude earthquake struck off the Philippine island of Mindanao on Saturday triggering a brief tsunami warning.

The quake struck southeast of Davao City at a depth of 59 kilometres, the US Geological Survey said, a week after a volcano-triggered tsunami killed more than 400 people in neighbouring Indonesia. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center warned "hazardous tsunami waves from this earthquake are possible" along the coasts of Indonesia and the Philippines.

However, waves were forecast to be less than 30 cm above tide level, it said, while Philippine monitors warned that "minor sea level disturbances" were to be expected. The Philippine government's seismology institute initially advised people to "stay away from the beach and not to go to the coast fronting the Philippine Sea," for about two hours after the quake.

But it later cancelled the tsunami advisory, saying that wave heights had returned to normal. Although people rushed out of buildings during the quake, the civil defence office said it expected no damage or aftershocks. The office said cities in the south of the country felt "moderately strong" shaking but the authorities in the affected areas said they had no immediate reports of damage or casualties from the quake.

The Philippines and Indonesia lie on the so-called Ring of Fire, a vast Pacific Ocean region where many earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur. The most recent major quake disaster to strike the Philippines was in 2013 when a 7.1-magnitude quake left more than 220 people dead and destroyed historic churches in the central islands.

Indonesia has been hit by two major tsunamis this year. More than 400 people were killed last weekend after an erupting volcano triggered a deadly wave that struck the coastlines of western Java island and south Sumatra.

A quake-tsunami in September killed around 2,200 people in Palu on Sulawesi island, with thousands more missing and presumed dead.

Egypt police kill 40 'terrorists' after Giza bus attack: ministry

CAIRO, DEC 29 (AFP): Egyptian police killed 40 "terrorists" in separate raids early Saturday, a day after a roadside bomb near the Giza pyramids killed three Vietnamese tourists and their guide, the interior ministry said. Two raids in the Giza governorate killed 30 "terrorists", while the remaining 10 were killed in the restive North Sinai, the ministry said in a statement.

It said authorities acted after receiving information the suspects were preparing a series of attacks against state and tourist institutions and churches. "Information was received by the national security that a group of terrorists were planning to carry out a series of aggressive attacks targeting state institutions, particularly economic ones, as well as tourism, armed forces, police and Christian places of worship," the statement said.

Police acting upon this information carried out simultaneous raids in the Giza governorate and in North Sinai, killing a total of 40 "terrorists", it said. In Giza itself two raids were carried out, the first killing 14 suspects and the second 16 suspects, while the rest were in the North Sinai capital El-Arish.

Police also found a large number of weapons and ammunition as well as bomb-making materials, the statement said. Early on Friday evening, a roadside bomb blast hit a tourist bus travelling near the Giza pyramids killing three Vietnamese holidaymakers and their Egyptian tour guide, officials said.

Bangladesh intensifies security as Hasina seeks re-election on Sunday



ANISUR RAHMAN
DHAKA, DEC 29 (PTI): Bangladesh stepped up security with thousands of army troops patrolling the streets along with paramilitary forces and police as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina seeks a record fourth term in Sunday's general elections.

Over 600,000 security personnel including several thousand soldiers and paramilitary border guards have been deployed across the country to help conduct the election in which 10.41 crore people are eligible to vote.

Security agencies have been asked to keep an extra vigil on religious minority communities as media reports said at least three Hindu households were set on fire by miscreants between December 16 and 26,

Bangladesh's telecoms regulator also ordered the country's mobile operators to shut down 3G and 4G services until midnight on Sunday "to prevent the spread of rumours" that could trigger unrest during the elections, the 11th since Bangladesh won independence from Pakistan in 1971.

According to the Election Commission, 1,848 candidates are contesting for 299 out

of 300 Parliament seats. The polls will be held at 40,183 polling stations.

Thirteen people have been killed and thousands injured in clashes between supporters of Hasina's ruling Awami League and activists of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Hasina, who is seeking to return to power for a third consecutive time, on Saturday feared the opposition could boycott polls in the middle of voting as part of a "political trick" to evade a "humiliating defeat".

"I want to caution all about the character of (main opposition) BNP... they may say in the middle (of the elections) that we are boycotting the polls," she said.

"In that case (opposition boycott) I will ask our candidates and other contenders to continue polls until the voting is ended," Hasina, 71, said.

The premier's comments came as the main opposition BNP is contesting the polls visibly in a dilapidated state in the absence of jailed party chief Zia, 73, and her fugitive son Tarique Rahman who is the acting party chief.

Zia, serving a 10-year prison term on graft charges, has been barred from contesting the polls while Rahman is living in London ostensibly to evade the law as a court has sentenced him to life imprisonment for masterminding a grenade attack on a rally in 2004 that killed 24 Awami League leaders and activists.

The BNP has stayed out of the parliamentary process since 2014 when it boycotted the general election over its demands for a poll-time non-party government.

It has returned to parliamentary politics as part of a new alliance - National Unity Front (NUF) - that was cobbled together three months ago with eminent lawyer Kamal Hossain as its convener. But the party is in a state of disarray in the absence of its two top leaders.

Election Commission last week allowed hardline Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami, a crucial ally of BNP, to contest the general elections, two months after it scraped the fundamentalist party's registration.

BNP earlier accused the election commission of being bias during the electoral campaign, a charge rejected by Chief Election Commissioner Nurul Huda.

Reacting on Hasina's

remarks, BNP's secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said There is no dispute in our party about taking part in the polls.

"But what we see, there is no festive mood anywhere and rather a sense of fright is prevailing across the country due to government intimidation," he said.

Chief Election Commissioner Huda in a nationwide address on Saturday acknowledged a media report about arrests of some polling agents of BNP candidates and called such action unwanted.

Unless someone is wanted under certain case, police must not arrest anyone...maintain utmost neutrality in discharging your duties, he said.

The opposition parties have alleged that thousands of its leaders and activists have been arrested to weaken them.

The Rapid Action Battalion or RAB on Friday night arrested eight people for circulating "provocative videos and rumours" on social media relating to parliamentary election.

Video-making materials, laptops and mobile phones were seized from the detainees, officials said.

You can contact Summit TIMES @ 03592 208698

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

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

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

LOKTA BOOKS
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NEW BLONDE! Singer Madison Beer is seen arriving at Peppermint club in West Hollywood sporting a new hairdo.

Bigg Boss 12: Top 5 Finalists Get A Last Chance To Justify Themselves

Sreesanth, Dipika Kakar, Karanvir Bohra, Deepak Thakur and Romil Chaudhary are the top five finalists of Bigg Boss 12, after a surprise mid-week eviction of Surbhi Rana. On Friday's episode, Bigg Boss gave the finalists a last chance to justify themselves on all the allegations which had been put against



them. Vikas Gupta (Bigg Boss 11 finalist) Jai Bhanushali were invited to be the moderators, along with a journalist. The contestants were called in turns to explain themselves after the moderators put forward the allegations put on them by the audience. Deepak was the first one to be called. He was questioned for playing the small town boy card only to his advantage.

Sreesanth, who came next, was questioned by Vikas Gupta about his anger issues

and why he uses his 'celebrity status' during arguments. After a long discussion with Sreesanth, it was time for Karanvir Bohra to take over the chair. Vikas Gupta questioned Karanvir's leadership qualities in the show and blamed him for his unselfish behaviour. Karanvir, in his defence, said that he has always tried to prioritise himself over others when required.

Dipika Kakar was questioned by Jai Bhanushali for only maintaining her bond with Sreesanth and not interacting much with the rest. He also asked her if she feels that her journey in Bigg Boss 12 was overshadowed by Sreesanth. Dipika disagreed to the allegations made against her and said she is proud of her and Sreesanth's friendship, which is one of the strongest bonds in the Bigg Boss house.

Romil Chaudhary was the last contestant to be called. Both Vikas and Jai opposed to his actions in the house and said he doesn't know how to maintain relationships.

On Saturday, Bigg Boss will show the five finalists their journey in the house and on Sunday, Salman Khan will host the

ARIES: You're ready to pick up your sword and do battle to get where you want to be this Saturday. And yet a quarter moon is parked in peaceful-warrior Libra, urging you to sheath your weapon. You can accomplish just as much with collaboration as you can with competition, Aries, don't worry about who'll wave the white flag first. Want to really throw your rival off their game?

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

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

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

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

LEO: Harmless hookup—or a long slide down a slippery slope? Today's lusty mashup of firecracker Mars and "wounded healer" Chiron in your seduction house could spark a stronger-than-usual attraction to danger. You might think you've got it under control, but the irresistible allure of a bad boy or girl might be too hot for even you to handle, Leo. While it's fine to flirt and play, be careful not to get in too deep too fast.

Shahrukh Khan's Pakistan fan returns home after 22 months in Indian jail

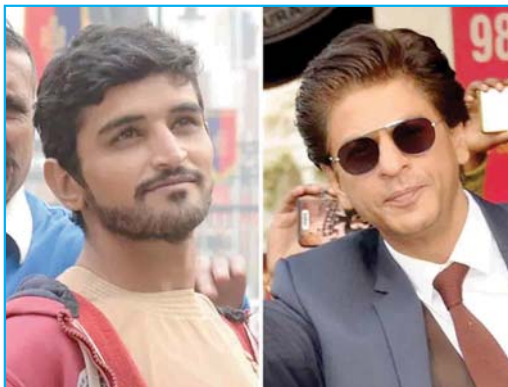
Peshawar, Dec 29 (PTI): A 22-year-old Pakistani national, who crossed over the border to meet Bollywood stars Shahrukh Khan and Kajol, returned home after spending 22 months in Indian jail.

Abdullah, a resident of Mingora of scenic Swat district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, was arrested by the Indian authorities on May 25, 2017 when he had come to witness the Beating Retreat Ceremony held every evening at the Wagah border gates.

He crossed the Zero Line after the ceremony and told the Border Security Force officials that he wanted to meet Shahrukh and Kajol.

He was repatriated on Wednesday through the Attari-Wagah border on the basis of an emergency travel certificate issued by the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi, officials

said. Upon arrival at his native home he was garlanded by his relatives, neighbours, friends and well wishers.



Speaking to local media in Swat, Abdullah said he crossed the border in a bid to meet Shahrukh and Kajol of whom he is a great fan.

"I was arrested by the India's Border Security Force and shifted to a police station before being sent to Central Jail Amritsar," he said.

"I wrote a letter to Indian Government through jail authorities for arranging a meeting with Shahrukh and Kajol but no reply was made to his request," he added.

Stating that his wish of meeting the duo Bollywood stars could not be fulfilled, Abdullah said that earlier he had applied for Indian visa to meet the two Bollywood stars, but the application was turned down. Abdullah appealed to the Pakistani citizens not to enter India through illegal ways. "I will not try again to enter India through illegal way," he said.

Why 2018 Was the Year Justin Bieber Truly Got Serious About His Future

Having effectively entered adulthood at the tender age of 14 when the baby-faced YouTube phenom signed his first record deal (that first studio album would go on to be certified triple platinum), Justin Bieber always assumed

telling E! News, "He has a lot coming up and is working on new music, and isn't focused on dating right now."

And while he had a collection of career highs already firmly in his pocket (12 American Music Awards, a \$99 million grossing 3D concert film and a Grammy for a track off his most recent album, 2015's Purpose) and he had come out of his self-imposed hiatus for a surprise performance at Coachella in April, even his professional momentum had ground to a halt since his decision to call a premature end to his 2017 Purpose World Tour with just 14 shows left on the docket.

Dare we say, one of the world's best-selling artists was in a bit of a rut and it was becoming hard to envision how he'd find his way out of it. It certainly didn't seem fathomable that he'd wrap up 2018 as a married man—lavishing non-stop praise on his wife, the increasingly bankable model Hailey Baldwin—with a promise to release new music soon.

But considering everything he'd already overcome in his two-plus decades on earth, shame on us for not being believers.



he'd be on an accelerated track.

After all by 15 he'd already "had a couple of girlfriends," as he put it to Chicago's B96-FM, and at 18 he was so serious about one of them—you may recall his romance with Selena Gomez?—that he was sharing a home with her doing "a marriage kind of thing," as he told Complex and getting his first real taste of the daily ins and outs of committing yourself to one partner.

So when he declared around that time to WWD that "By 25 or 26, I want to see myself, like, married or start looking for a family," it pretty much checked out. As he explained to the outlet in that 2011 interview, "I want to be able to have done what I wanted to do—to be successful, to do a movie or whatever. But if the time is right, I definitely want to be married by 25."

Though, this past spring, with his 25th birthday less than a year away, consider us among the skeptics who doubted he'd hit that particular milestone. His revived romance with Gomez seemed to have fizzled for what easily felt like the umpteenth time and his sole romantic prospect was 22-year-old model Baskin Champion who he'd gone cold on after a couple months of hanging out, with a source



Katrina opts out of Remo D'Souza's dance film



MUMBAI, DEC 29 (PTI): Katrina Kaif, who was all set to team up for the first time with Varun Dhawan for a dance film, to be directed by Remo D'Souza, Saturday announced that she has decided to opt out of the project due to date issues.

The film to be produced by Bhushan Kumar's T-Series, is touted to be India's biggest dance film.

The yet-to-be-titled film also features actor-choreographer-director Prabhudeva, Dharmesh Yelande, Raghav Juyal and Punit Pathak. The project was scheduled to release in November, 2019.

"Katrina Kaif had to opt out of Remo D'Souza's upcoming dance film owing to her hectic schedule for 'Bharat'. Katrina has always been a thorough professional. She decided to step out of the film as her dates were clashing with 'Bharat', which she is currently shooting for," Katrina's official spokesperson said in a statement. "Bharat", an official remake of the Korean film "An Ode To My Father", will depict the history of India through the life of an ordinary man. Reportedly, Salman Khan will be sporting five different looks, spanning over 60 years.

Salman, had recently revealed that, the shoot of the film will go on for 30 days. Katrina was roped in as the leading lady for the film after Priyanka Chopra walked out of the project owing to personal reasons.

"Bharat", also starring Disha Patani, Nora Fatehi, Sunil Grover and Tabu in pivotal roles, is slated to arrive in theatres on Eid 2019.

friction, especially if you get swept into a situation that involves making small talk with random people!

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

PISCES: Saturday's deeply connected quarter moon in Libra and your metaphysical eighth house makes you a psychic sponge, Pisces, so be careful what you allow yourself to absorb. You almost can't switch off your intuition, which is a blessing and a curse. And under this sensitive starmap, things might not be as they seem. Better to play it safe and avoid situations that could sap your energy, including (especially!) listening to other people's problems. Give 'em a hug, but let them know that today, the doctor is OUT.