



**SAATHI OFFSITE
TRAINING CAMP
FOR 90 STUDENTS**
pg02

**CM LAUNCHES
MITHO DELIVERY
WEBSITE** pg03



**TOURISM
AWARENESS PROG
AT TIMBUBONG
GPU** pg02

SummitTIMES

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

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**India, China
handling
differences
with
'sensitivity
and maturity':
PM**

NEW DELHI, AUG 21 (PTI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said India and China are handling their differences with "sensitivity and maturity" by not allowing them to become disputes and this was evident from peace in border areas.

Modi also termed India-China relations as a factor of stability in the world and appreciated the increased momentum of high-level contacts between the

turn to pg02

CM announces **75%** tax exemption for Start-up beneficiaries

**NITESH R PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 21 AUG:**

Chief Minister Pawan Chamling today announced 75% tax exemption for entrepreneurs who avail the Chief Minister's Start-up Scheme in the state.

This was announced at the World Entrepreneurs' Day organised by the Entrepreneurs' Hub at Samman Bhawan.

The CM has asked youth to take advantage of such opportunity for empowerment rather than a relief or a grant. He further stated that an entrepreneurial venture will also be started to help the entrepreneurs of Sikkim.

Further, he asked the stakeholders to take note of market demands while venturing into such opportunities.

Talking about man made tourism infrastructures in the state including religious sites he stated that huge opportunities have opened up for the state which are original and has linked ancient beliefs and culture with modernity, economy and tourism.

Organic value based, agro based, ecotourism based, leisure tourism, adventure tourism, city



tourism, education tourism and various other forms of tourism are the new opportunities government has been delving into, to make Sikkim a unique and sustainable tourism destination of the world.

He held that now there is a need for the youth to enter into transportation related ventures due to the high volume of tourists arriving in the state.

While stating that there is a "fatigue syndrome", the CM asked the youth to have positive attitude to do something through which all problems can

be solved.

Adding further he said that employment is being incorrectly defined with those not having government jobs being given the tag of an unemployed.

He appealed to citizens particularly the youth to be a master and take ownership of the society with such opportunities. "Let's be a seeker and provider of opportunities," he said.

On the recent Land Bill that the Sherpa community has criticized, he said that he can't fulfil their demand of providing land rights to the community under

Article 371F since it falls under the domain of the Parliament of India.

He also informed of the state working towards the goal of carbon neutrality and further stated that all government schemes will have 1% of the budget allocated for fulfilment of this goal.

The welcome speech was presented by Devika Gurung while another entrepreneur Rewaj Chettri also a member of the entrepreneurs' hub stated that 15000 Sikkimese youths have availed benefits along with 2000

turn to pg02

Ganga Prasad appointed Governor of Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 21 AUG: Ganga Prasad has been appointed the Governor of Sikkim by the President of India as per a notification issued today. Along with him, the President has appointed Governors of six other states.

Governor Shrinivas Patil's tenure had ended on 13 July and has been on extension since then.

Ganga Prasad was earlier appointed as Governor of Meghalaya in October 2017. Mr Prasad was a member of the Legislative Council in Bihar for 18 years and a former leader of the opposition in the Bihar Assembly. He was a businessman by profession but started his political career as a Jan Sangh member in 1967 and held various organisational posts in it as well as in Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Ganga Prasad was born on 08 July, 1937 in Patna, Bihar. He holds a B



Com degree and is a senior political leader who has had life-long affiliations with BJP. In the year 1994, he was elected as a Member of Legislative Council (MLC), a position he held till 2012.

As his political career progressed, he grew in prominence as well. When NDA came to power in Bihar, Ganga Prasad held the crucial position as the leader of Bihar Legislative Council. During his tenure as an MLC, he led the opposition from the front for 5 years in the State Assembly. He has also been the General Secretary of BJP in Bihar.

GJM delegation meets Rajnath; seeks ST status to Gorkhas

NEW DELHI, AUG 21 (PTI): A six-member delegation of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha today met Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and apprised him about the long pending demand of the Gorkhas living in West Bengal and northeastern states for granting the Scheduled Tribe status.

The delegation, led by Darjeeling MP and Minister of State for Electronics S S Ahluwalia, apprised him about the long pending demands of 11 Gorkha communities living in West Bengal, Sikkim and other northeastern states for granting of the ST status, a release issued by the GJM said.

Ahluwalia also requested the



home minister to immediately convene an official meeting, as promised last year, to consider the

pending issues and address the grievances of people in Darjeeling and neighbouring regions.

Ahluwalia recalled that the agitating members of the GJM had withdrawn their 104-day long agitation on September 26, 2017, following an appeal from the home minister.

The minister informed Singh that there was an urgent need to look into the long pending demands of the local people, who faced acute hardship during the last year's agitation.

The home minister has assured the delegation that a meeting will be convened soon, the release said.

To rebuild lives, Kerala needs doctors, nurses, packed food: Alphons

NEW DELHI, AUG 21 (PTI): Union Tourism Minister K J Alphons today flagged the need for ready-to-eat cooked food, doctors and nurses in flood ravaged Kerala, saying people are now getting back to whatever is left of their homes with the waters receding.

The minister also issued an appeal to skilled workers like plumbers, electricians and carpenters to come to make homes livable and help the state regain normalcy.

At least 216 people have lost their lives in the rains, floods and landslides and over 7.24 lakh people have been displaced.

"As the flood is receding in Kerala people have to move to whatever is left of their homes. Need ready to eat cooked food, clothes and an army of electricians, plumbers and carpenters," Alphons said on Twitter today, tagging Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP chief Amit Shah.

He issued a series of tweets



highlighting the requirements of the people.

"I appeal to General Public: What Kerala requires... - pre cooked individually packed dry food, an army of electricians, plumbers, carpenters to make homes livable.

"Doctors and nurses who can go down to the villages as there is apprehension about the possibility of outbreak of diseases. New clothes, if it can be distributed through NGOs," he said.

The minister also thanked the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) for providing the state huge quantities of tetra pack milk and public sector oil companies which came together and handed Rs 25 crore to the Kerala chief minister for flood relief.

The massive flood in Kerala has been declared a calamity of severe nature, the Union Home Ministry has said. The lakhs of displaced have been sheltered in 5,645 relief camps.

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India, China handling differences with 'sensitivity and maturity': PM

contd from pg01

two countries across all spheres, including in areas of defence and military exchanges.

He made these remarks when State Councillor and Defence Minister of China General Wei Fenghe called on him here today, according to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office.

"Termining India-China relations as a factor of stability in the world, the prime minister said that maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the border areas is indicative of the sensitivity and maturity with which India and China handle their differences, not allowing them to become disputes," the PMO said.

Prime Minister Modi also warmly recalled his recent meetings with President Xi Jinping in Wuhan, Qingdao and Johannesburg.

The Chinese defence minister's four-day visit to India, beginning today, is being seen as a significant development by officials on both sides to improve communications and atmospherics between militaries of the two countries after last year's 73-day Doklam standoff.

According to official sources here, the primary objective of Wei's visit is to deliberate with Indian defence establishment on implementation of decisions taken by Modi and Xi in their informal summit in Wuhan in April, including for improving mutual trust and avoid repeat of any Doklam-like face-offs.

In the summit, Modi and Xi had resolved to open a new chapter in ties and had directed their militaries to boost coordination along the border, months after the most serious military face-off in decades between the two nuclear-armed neighbours in Doklam triggered fears of a war.

Wei, who is a key member in China's State Council -- the executive organ of China's central government -- is scheduled to hold restricted as well as delegation-level talks with Sitharaman tomorrow.

CM announces 75% tax exemption...

contd from pg01

registered members.

Fourteen entrepreneurs were also felicitated by the Chief Minister on the day.

Mr Sikkim 2018 Manhunt poster was also unveiled by the CM along with website launch of Mitho home delivery.

New product of Temi Tea, Cordyceps was also launched today along with the launch of organic yacon product.

The program was attended by Speaker KN Rai, Ministers Ugen T Gyatso, AK Ghatani and a host of entrepreneurs from across the state.



World Photography Day celebrated at New Secondary School

SUMMIT REPORT
NAMCHI, 21 AUG:

Govt. New Secondary School, Namchi, observed World Photography Day today with a 'Mobile Photography Contest-2018' open to students and ex-students on the theme, "Discover your talent, showcase your skill."

The results of the contest were declared today and the prize distribution conducted at the school auditorium.

BEST PHOTOGRAPHS

AWARD (3 Nos. Rs 500/- AND CERTIFICATES EACH)

A. NATURE/LANDSCAPE CATEGORY:

I. Master Suraj Prasad
II. Miss Swikriti Subedi
III. Master Amit Tamang
2. BEST PHOTOGRAPHS AWARD: (2 Nos Rs 500/- AND CERTIFICATES EACH):

B. STREETS CATEGORY:

I. Miss Anita Subba
II. Master Sayendra Sah
3. BEST PHOTOGRAPHS AWARD (1 Nos Rs 500/- AND CERTIFICATE):

C. MACRO/MINIATURE

CATEGORY

I. Miss Pundimith Lepcha
4. POPULAR PICTURE AWARD (Chosen by staff members through secret vote)(1 Nos Rs 400/- AND CERTIFICATE)

I. Master Salwindra Sah
5. CREATIVE PICTURE CATEGORY (1 Nos: 400/- AND CERTIFICATE):

I. Master Sonal Chettri

6. MOST LIKED PICTURE CATEGORY (1 Nos. 300/- AND CERTIFICATE):

I. Master Salwindra Sah

7. CONSOLATION PRIZE: (6 Nos. 200/- AND CER-

TIFICATES)

I. Miss Uden Bhutia

II. Miss Barsha Sharma

III. Master Aditya Manger

IV. Master Sudhan Sah

V. Miss Monalisa Rai

VI. Master Bishal Chettri

8. JURY PANEL CONSO-

LATION PRIZE (SPON-

SORED BY JURY PANEL):

I. Miss Sushmita Chettri

II. Master Saurav Prasad

III. Master Rahul Sundaray

IV. Miss Rizeula Sherpa

V. Master Bijoy Das

9. CERTIFICATE OF

PARTICIPATION TO

ALL THE CONTESTING

PARTICIPANTS.

SAATHI offsite training camp for 90 students

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 21 AUG:

An offsite-training camp was organized for 90 students of Ranka Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Lingee Govt. S. Sec. School, Lingmoo Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Lingdok Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Mangshila Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Hee-Gyathang Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Chujachen Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Mangalbaria Sr. Sec. School and Kaluk Sr. Sec. School, a press release informs. The students were escorted by their respective teacher coordinators.

The various sessions were organized to help peer educators develop the knowledge and skills needed to work at school level and reduce behavioural health disparities and improve well-being of fellow students, the release informs.

The first session was on life skills and the objective of the session



was to promote positive health practices and reduce risky behaviour. Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

Manorath Dahal, trained teacher coordi-

nator, was the resource person for the first session. Second session was on basics of counselling by Pragyan Deep Dewan who gave brief idea of counselling to the students. The third one was on Legal aspects of substance abuse by SI from Ravangla Police station, CK Subba who highlight-

ed the legal aspects of substance abuse. Last session was experience sharing by KC Nima from Freedom Facility.

The camp concluded with feedback and confession session with the students and sharing session of teacher coordinators from all the schools, the release adds.

Shantinagar Gaon Sudhar Samiti celebrates Nepali Bhasa Diwas

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 21 AUG:

Shantinagar Gaon Sudhar Samiti celebrated Nepali Bhasa Diwas with plantation drive, poetry and talks on development of Nepali language, a press release informs.

The celebration was organised in two phases; the morning phase saw Ashoka saplings being planted around the Badminton Court, near Rani Khola Walkway, Shantinagar. More than two dozen saplings were planted by members of the Shantinagar Gaon Sudhar Samiti led by its president, Krishna Chettri. The saplings were gifted by Madan Tamang of Singtam, the release mentions.

The second phase of the program was held at the residence of LN Pradhan (Chief Advisor, SGSS) at Shantinagar. Poetry recitation and talks on development of Nepali language were part of the second phase.

Noted Nepali writer



from Singtam, Mohan Pradhan 'Neeraj' was the chief guest of the day. Mahesh Dahal 'Raley', poet from Chisopani, Singtam was the guest of honour. Other guests present on the occasion were CP Pradhan, Praja Pradhan, Kamal Gurung, HN Sharma, LP Chettri, KB Sundas and others.

Lokesh Mukhia (Darjeeling), Surya Kharel

and Nandu Dutraj (both from Bardang), Mahesh Dahal (Chisopani) and Shital Pradhan (Shantinagar) recited poems. Mohan Pradhan Neraj, Mahesh Dahal and Nandu Dutraj were presented mementos by the SGSS president.

Speaking on the occasion, Neeraj appreciated the efforts of Shantinagar Gaon Sudhar Samiti for organizing such an im-

portant event. He further said that literature these days is limited to four corners of a room. He urged the Samiti to organize a Kavi Gosti and provide platform for all those hidden and long lost poets.

PP Upreti, Advisor, SGSS was the host of the program while TB Pradhan, Advisor, SGSS gave the vote of thanks.

Tourism awareness prog at Timburbong GPU



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 21 AUG:

A daylong awareness programme on tourism was held at Timburbong Gram Panchayat Unit of West Sikkim under Soreng-Chakung constituency attended by a large number of educated unemployed tourism aspirants of the GPU.

Executive members of Soreng Tourism Development Association made a power-point presentation on the theme.

The potential of Ru-

ral & Adventure Tourism in and around Soreng-Chakung was delved into by Dhusan Rai, a tourism entrepreneur and vice president of Soreng Tourism and Development Association.

Tourism prospects, opportunities for young and aspiring entrepreneur marketing concepts etc. was explained by Kamal Rai, general secretary of STDA while the concept of two-way tourism was explained by Arjun Basnett, an STDA member.

Hospitality, Home Stay and other prospects in and around Soreng-Chakung and activities carried out thus far by STDA was explained by Mahendra Dahal, the STDA president.

Many youth showed interest in tourism and decided to participate in future activities and expressed willingness to take up tourism entrepreneurship.

Panchayat President, Timburbong GPU, Budhiman Subba, was present as chief guest.



Health & Hygiene awareness at Mamring Govt School

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 21 AUG:

Mamring Senior Secondary School here in East district held a sensitization programme for students on Menstrual Hygiene for Girls, Health & Hygiene, Hand washing and Food habits during the morning assembly today.

Principal Prahlad Sharma, along with the teachers Nerisha Rai, GT (Science), and Sukriti Basnett, PGT (Geography), took the sessions and banners related to the subjects were also displayed, a press release informs.

played, a press release informs.

Ms. Rai demonstrated the seven steps of hand-washing and also took a separate counselling session on menstrual hygiene for girls.

Ms. Basnett, in turn, spoke on food habits.

In conclusion, the Principal highlighted the importance of health and hygiene, food habits etc.

Counselling programs are a regular feature during the morning assembly at the school, the release adds

Farmers' Meet cum Advance Sericulture Training held in Jorethang



ARPAN PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 21 AUG:

The Directorate of Sericulture under Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department organized a Farmers' Meet cum Advance Sericulture Training for the sericulture project beneficiaries of the first phase under Intensive Bivoltine Sericulture Development Project, IBSDP of North East Region Textile Promotion Scheme at Jore-

thang on Monday.

The programme chaired by Suraj Kumar Thatal, Additional Director Sericulture had resource persons Smita Shilal [DFO Sericulture] and DR Sharma [Project Consultant] speaking on various aspects of sericulture farming involving mulberry farming, disinfection, rearing of silkworm and other technical aspects.

ST Lepcha [Scientist

In charge REC Mamring) spoke on function of regional extension centre and various trainings imparted to the farmers. Additional Director, Suraj Kumar Thatal spoke on future prospect of post cocoon technology and urged the farmers to reap maximum benefit from the scheme.

The programme also witnessed an interactive session with the progressive farmers.

**Gangtok on
Wednesday,
22 Aug**

Temp: 26°C/18°C
Forecast: Considerable cloudiness, a thundershower.
Sunrise: 05:09 AM
Sunset: 6:08 PM

Girl complains to police about 'Momo Game' challenge

JALPAIGURI, AUG 21 (PTI): A college girl here filed a complaint with the police today about an unknown caller who allegedly tried to incite her into participating in 'Momo Game' challenge, a new virtual suicide game.

The 'Momo Game' is said to be a successor of the notorious 'Blue Whale Game' and has made headway in several countries.

The first year college girl in her complaint said that she had posted in the social media after a spat with her mother during the day that she wished to take her own life.

She soon received a Whatsapp message over her mobile phone from an unknown number allegedly inviting her to take the Momo Game challenge. When she sought to know the sender's identity, the person revealed it verbally, she claimed.

Scared over the situation, the girl claimed she had informed her elder brother, who warned her against participating in the game. She then informed the police.

An investigation has been launched, the police said.

Stray dog concern grips Singtam

SUMMIT REPORT SINGTAM, 21 AUG: Putting leftover food out on the pavement for stray dogs to feed on is a common practice everywhere, but a large section of people in Singtam have been considering free-ranging street dogs to be a nuisance. Instances of such dogs attacking pedestrians, especially children, only heighten the fear.

"Even when we feed dogs near our colony, we feel unsafe as there have been many cases of dog-bites reported in and around the society as narrated by our neighbours. Concerned department needs to address this situation at the earliest," expressed one of the locals.

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CM launches Mitho Delivery website

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 21 AUG: The Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling launched the official website of Mitho Delivery today at Samman Bhawan. The new website which was designed and developed in Sikkim can be accessed on www.mithodelivery.com.

Mitho Delivery has partnered with over 100

entrepreneurs, restaurants, bakeries & kitchens to deliver varied and delicious cuisine at the comfort of your home/office. The service is currently active in Gangtok, Ranipool, Singtam, Majitar & Rangpo and will be available in Namchi soon.

Users on the platform will now be able to search for their favourite restaurants and order delicious food online. The start-up

that coined the viral tagline 'Bhok Lagyo? Call Mitho' believes that this move is essential to scale up and provide faster and convenient services to customers.

The website also allows its users to review restaurants, book tables, shortlist favourite restaurants, buy event tickets and view restaurant details.



SAATHI leads drive against sale of tobacco products and alcohol to under-age youngsters in Singtam

YOGEN THATAL SINGTAM, 21 AUG:

Led by MH Khewa, a SAATHI [Sikkim Against Addiction Towards Healthy India] coordinator, a team of SAATHI members along with student peer educators of Singtam Government Senior Secondary School conducted an awareness drive visiting every liquor and paan shop in Singtam bazaar

today.

The purpose of the visit was to instruct the shop-owners and staff not to make tobacco or alcohol sales to under age persons and students.

It was noticed that in many instances, children were being sent by parents or elders to buy these items for them. Today, the shopkeepers were instructed that

even when the purchase is not for personal consumption by children, the law prescribes that such items cannot be sold to them.

The impact of today's drive, one shall see in the days to come because he sight of youngsters consuming tobacco products or even alcohol while still in their school uniforms is not an uncommon sight here.

SC pulls up WB govt for having only two CWC in 23 districts

NEW DELHI, AUG 21 (PTI): The Supreme Court today pulled up the West Bengal government for having only two child welfare committees (CWCs) working in 23 districts with reports suggesting that children were being sold and trafficked in the state.

Having only two CWCs operational in 23 districts of West Bengal is "not fair" to the children, the top court said and asked why it had not taken steps to fill up the vacancies in the CWCs.

"You have issues of babies being sold in West Bengal. You see how serious this problem is. Babies are being sold there. It is a very, very serious problem. Somebody has to wake up at some point of time," a bench headed by Justice Madan B Lokur told the counsel appearing for West Bengal.

"Reports say that there is trafficking of children in West Bengal. If trafficking is going on, these children need to be looked after," the bench, also comprising Justices S Abdul Nazeer and Deepak Gupta, said.

When the counsel for the state said interviews were going on to fill up the vacancies in CWCs, the bench asked why was it not done earlier. "It is not that this has suddenly came out of the blue. This is absolutely wrong," the bench retorted.

The issue cropped up when the bench was hearing a matter relating

to exploitation of children living in orphanages.

The bench asked the counsel for the Centre it appeared that not a single CWC was operational in some districts of West Bengal.

Responding to the query, the Centre's counsel said that CWCs were working in only two out of the 23 districts there.

"How can only two CWCs look after 23 districts," the bench shot back.

The West Bengal counsel said that process of interviews for CWCs was going on and within a week or two, some more CWCs would become operational in the state.

"You cannot say that it will be done within one or two weeks. We do not know how many children will be trafficked by then," the bench said.

When the state's counsel said other agencies were also there to look into the issue, the bench asked, "Why do you have other committees when the law does not permit it? It is not fair to the children. The responsibility is of the CWC and not of other agencies".

During the hearing, the bench also expressed shock over the discrepancy in two surveys showing a difference of around two lakh minors residing in child care institutions (CCIs) across the country.

Phenomenal Malala screened in Mangan

SUMMIT REPORT MANGAN, 21 AUG:

The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao initiative today screened a film by Asmita Tamang, "Phenomenal Malala" here today.

The short film, produced by Chivalrous Club students of Neil Tara Academy, Gangtok, and directed by Asmita Tamang, stars Kalina Pradhan in the role of Malala Yousafzai, the 13 year old who stood up against the Taliban so that girls could receive an education in her village.

The programme was chaired by DM (North),



Karma R Bonpo, who is also the chairperson of BBBP Scheme, North district, accompanied by ADC

(Dev.RMDD),SDM Dzongu, BDOs, DCPON(N), CDPO's of North Sikkim, students, officers and teachers.

The programme also included a skit on BBBP performed by students of Neil Tara Academy.

Demonstration on Herbal Spray at Pastenga ward

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 21 AUG:

International Panacea Limited, a Service Provider Agency under Sikkim Organic Mission, Government of Sikkim, organized a ward level programme at Pastenga ward of Assam Lingzey GPU, East Sikkim on preparation of Herbal Spray against fungicide and blight, a press release informs.

Field Executive, Chuki Bhutia demonstrated the use of the Herbal Spray which is a very useful and powerful remedy for fungicide and blight. The solution can be prepared in house by the farmers. Ms Chuki explained the required materials and method of preparation to the farmers, the release mentions.

Apart from the demonstration pro-



gramme, Ms Bhutia briefed about the documentation process of Or-

ganic Farming. All the farmers thanked the Field

Executive for providing remedy of pest management.



LIONS CLUB RANGPO PAYS HOMAGE TO VAJPAYEE

GANGTOK, 21 AUG: Lions Club of Rangpo paid homage to former Prime Minister of India, Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee today, a press release informs. Members of the club prayed for the departed soul and offered flowers and lit candles to pay homage to the departed soul. Delegates from different pharma companies were also present in the condolence meeting.

Manipur hospital doctors call indefinite ceasework

IMPHAL, AUG 21 (PTI): Functioning at the state-run Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS) was affected after over 100 senior resident doctors (SRs) today launched an indefinite ceasework over "anomalies" in rules.

A senior official of the hospital, who refused to be quoted, said the normal functioning of the hospital was affected by the ceasework and admitted patients were being looked after by nurses.

The doctors did not attend the Out Patient Department clinics and patients had to return, the official said.

The anomalies in rules are depriving the SRs from being promoted

to Assistant Professors as the administration is going for direct recruitment to those posts, Resident Welfare Committee Spokesperson S Bikramaditya said.

There were at least 77 SRs who are being deprived, he said claiming that there is no established scheme for career advancement of the SRs and the JNIMS authorities had repeatedly been ignoring their demand on this.

What triggered the doctors' agitation appeared to be an advertisement for direct recruitment of Assistant Professors.

Terming this as "unacceptable", Bikramaditya demanded cancellation of the advertisement.

PLOT FOR SALE: Plot measuring 30x40 and 40x60 both on Road side at Shyari, Gangtok, East Sikkim for sale. Contact: **7384620040/ 7477406169.**

SIKKIM STATE LOTTERIES

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SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Accident Prone

Sikkim needs to study why its roads see so many accidents and its hospitals sign so many referrals

At around this time last year, there was an enquiry underway on what caused a bus mishap near Mangan in North Sikkim which had claimed three lives and left 40 injured. It was hoped that the enquiry did a thorough enough job to ensure that lessons were learned and corrective measures undertaken to avoid a repeat. To its credit, the SNT bus service is among the most reliable modes of travelling in Sikkim and last year's mishap was after an eleven year gap. That said, there is always room for improvement and only a proper investigation by professionals could have established whether the accident was caused by human error, engine failure or road conditions, because once the cause is established, amends can be made and road travel made even more secure. And the issue is not about buses, because, as already mentioned, they remain the safer modes of passenger movement as compared to private vehicles, jeeps and two-wheelers in Sikkim. It is important to establish whether these mishaps are caused by poor driving skills, poor vehicular health or poor roads.

It might not be out of place here to suggest that a proper appraisal is made of the reliability of roads in the State. The monsoon has not been kind on road surfaces and repairs have been too piecemeal for too long to inspire much confidence. A proper check-up to verify the load-bearing capacities of roads across the state appears to be in order.

And while the experts deploy their expertise to address the issues flagged above, a parallel soul-searching should also look into the preparedness of health-care infrastructure for situations like the one which visited the district hospital at Mangan on the day of the accident last year. Except one injured passenger, the remaining 39 were referred to Gangtok. While there can be no challenging the fact that injured patients should receive the best of treatment, including referrals if so required, one is also bound to wonder how a district hospital found itself equipped enough to handle only one of the 40 injured accident victims. Staffing does not appear to be the issue and neither can be the efficacy of doctors and nurses, but what even the collective experience of the health workers cannot cover up for is the lack of equipment. Could that be the reason why district hospitals are forced to perform like first-aid centres? If so, then clearly an upgrade is required because district roads are prone not only to mishaps, but the districts themselves also frequently visited by natural disasters which can cause large-scale injuries. The district hospitals should hence be equipped with the best possible personnel and equipment to handle trauma cases.

Even to a non-medical mind, referrals appear ill advised when it comes to accident victims because not only do the patients have to be left without a doctor watching over them (for the duration of the road journey), but also because they have to travel over road surfaces which do not lend themselves too well to travel for those with possible internal, or for that matter any, injuries.

The concerned authorities should now resolve to carry out a detailed appraisal of roads and their stability and also check the road-worthiness of the fleets pressed into passenger service here. They should then confer with nurses at the PHSC level to doctors at PHCs, CHCs and district hospitals and specialists at STNM Hospital and invite them to draw up a wish-list of support staff and equipment required to deliver the best possible care for the level of complications they are expected to handle at their level. Once this list is secured, arrange for the funds and make their wishes come true and draw up a check-and-balance system to discourage excessive referrals. If this happens, a giant leap would have been taken towards ensuring improved healthcare in Sikkim like governments are fond of saying, right at the doorsteps of the people.

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Kofi Annan understood the limits of diplomacy, as well as why it's important never to give up

JOHN J STREMLAU
theconversation.com

Kofi Annan served as United Nations Secretary-General during a pivotal decade in modern world history – from 1997 to 2006. I would argue that his most important legacy was to focus the UN more on preventing and resolving deadly conflict within its sovereign members, while still trying to maintain peace and security among them.

How he developed and pursued ways and means to do this began much earlier in his UN career and persisted until his untimely death last week.

The UN was created in 1945 by 51 sovereign states and empires that had just survived two of the worst wars in history. With the winding down of empires, UN membership grew to nearly 200 countries. By the late 1990s most countries were at peace internationally. And despite their continuing ideological and other differences, they have, ever since, avoided another world war.

But domestic peace was to prove more illusive. The UN lacked the norms, institutional capacity and political resolve, to prevent and resolve deadly conflicts within states, while maintaining peace among them. Although Africa accounted for nearly a third of the UN's members, it was also the world's poorest and most conflict-ridden region. And it lacked the means to effect major reforms in the world body's post-World War II hierarchy, structures and procedures.

Annan knew the UN system and its strengths and limitations better than anyone. He had spent 35 years working on the problems of refugees, management and finance, and peacekeeping having joined it in 1962 as a young budget officer in the World Health Organisation.

He had also felt the sting of governments and public opinion that regarded the UN as a necessary last resort, when all other options have failed, due to lack of national or regional capacity, resources or political will. This was most evident when it came to complex emergencies in Africa.

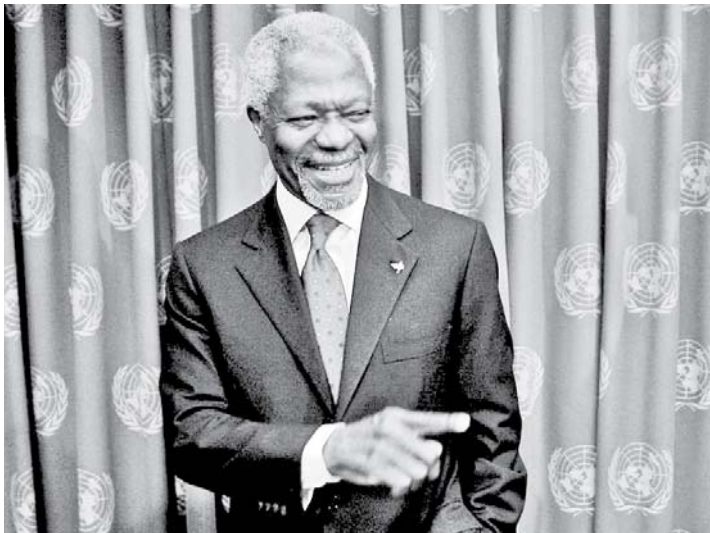
HIS MESSAGE FOR AFRICA

Six months after becoming Secretary-General, Annan chose to address the 1997 summit in Harare of leaders of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in a way that none of his predecessors had done.

His central point was that Africa's peace and development required Africa's leaders to hold one another more accountable to how they managed their domestic affairs. This was particularly true when it came to the protection of human rights and democracy.

In language uncharacteristically passionate for such occasions he declared:

"I am aware of the fact that some view this concern a luxury of rich countries for which Africa is not ready ... I find these thoughts truly demeaning.... Do not African mothers weep when their



sons or daughters are killed or maimed by agents of repressive rule? Are not African fathers saddened when their children are unjustly jailed or tortured? Is not Africa as a whole impoverished with even one of its brilliant voices is silenced?"

He concluded by emphasising that "human rights are African rights", noting that "Africa needs external assistance, and Africa deserves it, but in the final analysis, what stands between us and the future is ourselves".

Four years later, the OAU was replaced by the African Union (AU). What was notable was the unprecedented inclusion of a provision for collective intervention to protect any group of Africans facing local threats of mass violence or genocide.

Less extreme, but more generally applicable, was the principle of non-indifference in each other's internal affairs. This is most evident in its auxiliary African Charter for Democracy, Elections and Governance which was unanimously endorsed in 2007 and finally ratified in 2012.

As a result, all African governments are now obligated to hold regular periodic national elections. They are also obliged to invite the AU to send teams of pan-African observers to monitor and judge whether they are a credible reflection of the popular will.

Annan would not claim credit for these developments. But, his efforts were surely prescient and gave political impetus and legitimacy to the hard diplomatic work of South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, and other advocates of a more capable regional organisation and sub-regional organisations.

EMBRACING CIVIL SOCIETY

Also notable in his 1997 address to the OAU was his call for civil society to play its part. This reflected what was to become one of his major innovations as UN Secretary-General – his openness and willingness to reach out, listen too, cooperate with and occasionally adopt policies advocated by civil society groups.

I personally know of at least four examples. All were Africa-related but also global in nature and very much to his credit as we honour his legacy.

- During the 1980s he participated in a series of efforts by the International Peace Academy, an NGO established to help train and better inform and prepare for expected UN peacekeeping operations, mostly in Africa. This capacity should have been institutionalised in the UN, but was thwarted by the US and Soviet Union. Both feared that the other might somehow gain a Cold War advantage. The NGO never fully succeeded and would have probably failed without Annan's frequent personal and sustained engagement.

- As Secretary-General he made cooperation with the independent Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflicts his personal priority. He attended commission meetings and encouraged the

involvement of key offices across the secretariat. As a member of the commission staff, I appreciated how extensively he used policy relevant scholarship by teams of academics on a range of conflict prevention topics. His aim was to build support within and beyond the UN for more comprehensive efforts to prevent complex emergencies within states.

- After leaving office he continued to promote, and often lead, civil society efforts to help the UN and the world, beginning in Africa. In 2006 he became the founding chair of Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). AGRA aims to increase the incomes and improve the food security for 30 million farming households in 11 African countries by 2021.

- In his home country Ghana, I watched with admiration how his Foundation sponsored presidential debates in which candidates publicly pledged to support the decision of the national electoral commission. And when the opposition won by less than .005% of the votes in the 2008 election, their pledge held.

- And, best known, has been his chairmanship of the Elders, a group of world leaders committed to advancing peace, especially in Africa, and founded by Nelson Mandela.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSISTENCE

I last met with Annan several years ago when he was on Elders' business and I asked what he thought of Robert Mugabe holding on to power more than a decade after his pro-democracy appeal to the OAU Summit in Harare.

He told me that near the end of his UN term he had visited Mugabe and inquired whether he might consider bidding farewell to his people after decades of service. He said, Mugabe asked in reply: "Why? My people aren't going anywhere."

Annan noted that this response was both a sign of the limits of diplomacy, as well as the reason never to stop trying.

[the writer is Visiting Professor of International Relations, University of the Witwatersrand]

Pakistani elections are flawed, but poor rural voters are taking control

SHANDANA KHAN
MOHMAND
theconversation.com

Despite being dogged by allegations of electoral engineering and vote-rigging, this year's hotly contested general election in Pakistan should be – cautiously – celebrated. As a new government is sworn in, the country is marking a milestone in its tumultuous political history: the first time three democratic elections held in a row at regular intervals.

This is a big step forward – and for some Pakistanis more than others. Repeated competitive elections are a very good thing for all of Pakistan's voters, but above all, they are good news for poorer rural voters. And, if the country's political parties want to sustain what is still a fragile and teetering democracy, they need to start building a support base among these people.

The Pakistani electorate is widely thought of as deeply polarised, having dug in its heels behind one or the other of the largest competing parties. But this is a largely urban phenomenon. Most of Pakistan's voters – about 65% – live in rural areas and



are far less inclined to identify with political parties than their urban counterparts. This doesn't mean they don't care about politics – they turn up in sizeable numbers to vote during elections (in recent local government elections, they even exceeded those in urban areas). So, without a strong identification with political parties and their agendas, why do they vote in such reliable numbers?

With very little research available

to explain this, it's not surprising that all kinds of stereotypes abound. Two ideas in particular have become entrenched: on the one hand, that rural voters are effectively electoral cannon fodder – unthinking, uneducated, ignorant and coerced by enduring feudal lords – and on the other, that they simply sell their votes to the highest bidder.

The truth is rather more complicated. While there are indeed some

voters who are coerced or others who will happily sell their vote, my research shows that a majority of rural voters know the value of their vote and wield it quite strategically in an increasingly competitive environment.

KEEP THEM GUESSING

In my forthcoming book, *Crafty Oligarchs, Savvy Voters: Democracy Under Inequality in Rural Pakistan*, I looked in detail at the politics of 35 villages in Punjab, the political heartland of the country, and found that these sorts of explanations don't capture social and agrarian changes in Pakistan's rural areas.

Local landlords, who often play a role as local power-brokers, can no longer wait at home for supplicants to come to them. Instead, they're obliged to regularly canvass voters on the doorstep. On top of this, they're faced with ever more demands from myriad groups of voters, very few of which relate to money: requests for greater action against absent teachers and doctors, for a veterinary hospital, for road repairs and, most often, for street paving and drainage systems.

turn to 05

Floods wash away Onam, Bakrid spirit in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG 21 (PTI): With over 10 lakh people still in relief camps in Kerala, their homes devastated by the savage monsoon that has claimed 223 lives since August 8, 'Onam' and Bakrid are going to be a subdued affair this year in the state.

While 'Onam' falls on August 25, Bakrid is being observed in the southern state tomorrow.

Considered the state's harvest festival, 'Onam' falls in the beginning of Chingam, the first month of Malayalam Calendar and is celebrated with joy and enthusiasm all over the state by people across communities.

Elaborate feasts, folk songs, elegant dances and energetic games mark the annual festival.

But this time, many families have decided against any festivities.

Sixty-two-year-old Sister Christabelle, former Principal of St Teresa's college in Kochi, said there will be no onam celebration for the regular and retired staff this year and the money will be used for relief works for flood victims.

Mariamama Varghese, President of the Elders Forum in Panampilly Nagar in Kochi, said onam celebrations have been cancelled due to floods.

Onam commemorates the return of a mythical, righteous king, Mahabali and brings together communities across the state in



unified revelry probably unheard of in any other part of the country or outside.

Elaborate, sumptuous feasts of 'Onam sadya,' with at least 10-15 side dishes, are served in houses, with the feast ending with delicious payasam (Kerala dessert), which ensures that the message of oneness and hope is spread far and wide.

Due to floods, there have been several cancellations for 'Onam-sadya' as well.

Caterers have said there have been heavy cancellations from various offices and organisations, which have decided to do away with any celebrations.

The state government has also cancelled Onam celebrations.

The Kerala Tourism's decision to organise Champions Boat League on the lines of Indian Premier League (IPL) from this year starting with Nehru Trophy boat race also took a beating due to the

flooding.

Pulikali (Tiger Dance), among the folk art forms of Kerala, which is held in Thrissur with artisans donning tiger masks and sporting the painted stripes of the big cat and dancing to the rhythm of traditional percussion instruments on August 28 is also likely to be cancelled.

Expressing her dismay over the unexpected cancellation of Onam celebration in the state, Juli,

a German tourist told PTI: "I was waiting to see the Onam festivities about which I have heard a lot. But, I am saddened by the turn of events due to floods. I am cutting short my Kerala trip and moving to Goa."

The Cochin Port Trust said its employees have contributed Rs 65,000, which they had collected for their Onam celebrations, for the relief work.

Meanwhile, many Muslims in the state have also decided to keep Bakrid celebration a low key affair this year in the backdrop of the sufferings of the people in the flood-hit state.

According to C Rahim, a senior journalist with a gulf-based newspaper, the Muslim community has not yet recovered from the shock of the floods to celebrate any festival.

"Houses of many of the people where the community lives in large numbers in Thrissur, Kozhikode and Malappuram districts are still under water. Many of them have not gone back to their homes," he told PTI.

People who have gone for Haj are also much worried about the relatives at home, he said.

This year, the murderous monsoon has left the state's economy in shambles, many are penniless and the people of the state are in no mood to celebrate.

Ammini, a 55-year-old in a relief

camp, said she and her family had to rush out with only the clothes they wore 'Everything is lost. We do not have anything left. There is nothing to look forward to.'

"My son is bedridden.. I do not know where to go from the camp with my son, daughter-in-law and their child as there is no home left," she said.

"We do not know how to take our life forward. Onam is not now in our minds..." she said unable to hold back tears.

After Nipah, the Ramzan sales were affected in Malabar (north Kerala) areas.

Now with unprecedented floods, there is no sales at all in the region. In normal course, during onam and Bakrid there is good sale in the state, a small trader in Kozhikode said.

In Kozhikode, a group of policemen have come together and prepared 1000 kits of essential items like sugar, pulses, rice etc to be distributed to the most needy who return home from camps.

"Over 90 per cent people have gone back from camps in the district to their homes.

There are many people who are in a very bad state and so it was decided to distribute kits to them as the festivals are just round the corner even though there may be no celebrations," a police official said.

WB colleges can extend admission deadline beyond Aug 20

KOLKATA, AUG 21 (PTI): Colleges in West Bengal can extend the date for admission to undergraduate courses beyond the deadline of August 20 if there are vacant seats, state Education Minister Partha Chatterjee has said.

Asked about reports of hundreds seats lying vacant in several colleges in the city and all over the state, Chatterjee told reporters yesterday that it would have to be looked on a case-by-case basis.

"If the concerned college has the required infrastructure, if the governing body of the concerned college seeks extension of deadline for admission owing to some seats still lying vacant, they can still continue with the admission process, on a case-by-case basis," the minister said.

On July 17, the state government had extended the last date for admission to undergraduate

streams in colleges from mid-July to August 20.

Asked about reports of hundreds seats lying vacant in several colleges in the city and all over the state, Chatterjee told reporters yesterday, it would have to be looked on a case-by-case basis.

"If the concerned college has the required infrastructure, if the governing body of the concerned college seeks extension of deadline for admission owing to some seats still lying vacant, they can still continue with the admission process, on a case-by-case basis," the minister said.

Chatterjee said the admission quota stipulated by the university, with which the concerned college is affiliated to, should be adhered to.

The minister had earlier said that students should not crowd a few educational institutions for admission.

West Bengal rolls out new IT policy

KOLKATA, AUG 21 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has unveiled a new IT policy to make the state as one of the leading states in the country in the sector.

Banerjee rolled out the policy while launching the Bengal Silicon Valley Hub in New Town, a fast-growing planned satellite city in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, last week.

The new policy will be focused on 3D printing, big data analytics, animation and gaming besides, cyber security, INTERNET-of-Things (IoT), robotics, drones, fin tech, artificial intelligence, Industry 4.0, quantum computing and others, a notification said.

"West Bengal has surged ahead economically and seeks to leverage IT for social welfare and economic development.

The state's vision is to

become one of the leading states in India in the IT, ITes, ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and ESDM (Electronic System Design and Manufacturing) sectors," it said.

"The policy strives to unlock the vast potential of the IT&E to design a paradigm shift in the sector, all the while fostering social welfare," it said.

The policy also aims at accomplishing following strategic objectives such as creating new jobs in the sector besides, up-skill, reskill and skill the population of the state to empower them for targeting jobs in the digital economy.

"It also aims at enhancing brand West Bengal as an epicentre of cutting-edge R&D in IT and promote innovation and enhance contribution to the global value chain. And also foster social benefits through digital technology and create an



empowered populace," it said.

The notification also claimed that the policy would "enable West Bengal to transform into a knowledge-driven, technologically-enabled welfare society with extensive use of IT and ITes,

there increasing employment opportunities and promoting the state as a preferred investment destination."

The new policy would also focus on augmented reality and virtual reality besides, block chain, cyber security/cyber forensics and data science.

"The objective of an IT&E policy for West Bengal is to prepare the state for the future. The new policy also stressed priorities would be given to skill building, ecosystem build-up, entrepreneurship promotion, spreading the benefits of the IT revolution in tier II, tier III cities," it said.

It has also stressed on the robust physical

infrastructure referring to the third largest road network of the country, including 4,000 km of railway tracks and the second largest metro rail network.

Referring to the zero man-days lost in the last five years, the policy described West Bengal as a state has a leading rank among all the states in the context of Ease of Doing Business (EoDB). It has also referred to West Bengal as a power surplus state.

In fact, the policy has also stated that to reach this vision three pillars have been conceptualised.

"West Bengal as a hub of innovation with a fo-

cus on emerging technology, operationalisation of high-technology clusters, making the state the preferred IT/ITes/ESDM destination, rising the electronics value-chain, hand-holding green cities are key priorities," it said.

West Bengal has been described in the policy as the fourth largest state economy in the country, growing at 15.64 per cent gross value added (GVA).

The state IT Minister Bratya Basu told PTI that the policy would help take forward the state in the IT MAP in the country. He is looking forward to IT majors to invest in the state.

Pakistani elections are flawed...

contd from pg04

The landlords then put these demands to national and provincial politicians. Some are met, others not – and should they fail, the local landlords could lose votes in future elections.

One local landlord, worried about losing votes, explained to me that "it is important to think about what is good for the constituency, and to focus on who can provide it. This is the primary basis upon which political support is decided." To cobble together this support, local landlords have had to change how they interact with poorer voters.

In some villages, emerging political leaders from poorer groups are demanding a seat at the negotiating table whenever politicians come through on the campaign trail. They believe – rightly – that they are better able to represent their own needs than their wealthier village leaders. A common strategy is for voters to put pressure on competing landlords aligned with different parties, and to keep them guessing about whom the voters support until the bitter end.

Armed with this strategy, rural voters can milk elections for all they're worth. And that goes

some way towards explaining why so many of Pakistan's voters describe themselves as "undecided" in pre-election polling.

BOTTOM-UP POWER

Some local landlords seem to be getting the hang of this. One political organiser who represented the poorest groups in his village told me that landlords had now learned to "speak our language". Another suggested that democracy had made landlords humbler in their interactions with voters. Under these circumstances, politics is a matter of negotiation rather than coercion or ideology.

So far, no single political party has locked these votes up. What matters to rural voters isn't the political party their elected representatives belong to, but whether their representatives are close to power and are able to provide goods and services.

This pattern of voting has two major implications. First, it means the collective interests of the rural poor are not projected upwards in national politics. While negotiations between voters and local leaders – and between these leaders and politicians – meet voter demands on an ad hoc basis, voter

interests never become the subject of public policy that can respond to their needs as a whole. Second, this bottom-up model forces Pakistan's political parties to compete by attracting "electable" politicians – endlessly manipulable and malleable by non-elected institutions – who come together not to strengthen their parties, but to win elections.

For parties to be able to survive such pressures, and to be able to sustain democracy in the process, they must organise and build core support bases of their own amongst rural voters, represent their interests when in power, and effectively provide public services in order to further reduce the relevance of local notables.

Pakistan's teetering democracy is far from ideal, and the 2018 election may well have raised more questions than it has settled. But regular competitive elections mean that poorer voters' votes and voices matter to elites – a situation that has few parallels within Pakistan's extremely unequal socio-economic order.

[the writer is Research Fellow, Governance Team, Institute of Development Studies]

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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FC Pune City signs England's Matthew Mills

PUNE, AUG 21 (PTI): Indian Super League (ISL) club FC Pune City has signed English centre back Matthew Mills to strengthen their defence for the 2018-19 season.

The club announced today his inclusion in the team through a media release.

FC Pune City CEO Gaurav Modwel-said, "Matthew comes with a lot of experience, having played so many seasons in England. That's a big boost for our existing team, especially for young players in the team."

Mills started his career with Swindon Town before joining Southampton in 2003. He then went on to play for Coventry City and Bournemouth.

In 2006, he signed a contract with Manchester City and made his debut against Chelsea in March 2006.

In 2008, Mills joined Doncaster Rover, making 41 appearances in his first full season of 2008-09 and later moved to Reading Football Club, leading the team in the 2011 Championship play-off.

Mills then went to Leicester City followed by a move to Bolton Wanderers, making 87 appearances before moving to Nottingham Forest.

He also represented England U-19 and helped the team qualify for the European U-19 Championship in March 2005.

FC Pune City head coach Miguel Angel Portugalsaid, "Matthew is a player of great calibre and with his experience adds a lot of value to our defence line.

"He will bring a lot of leadership in our backline and gives options to the team since it's going to be a long season this time around."

Mills said, "The club's ambition to reach new heights maintaining a healthy balance between young and experienced players is a refreshing and exciting prospect."

Farmer's son Chaudhary shoots Asian Games gold on senior debut at 16

BHARAT SHARMA

PALEMBANG, AUG 21 (PTI): Saurabh Chaudhary, all of 16, today became only the fifth Indian shooter to claim a gold in the Asian Games history, beating a field of multiple world and Olympic champions in the 10m air pistol finals, here.

Chaudhary, competing in his first senior event, showed maturity and calmness well beyond his age to snatch the lead from 2010 World Champion Tomoyuki Matsuda on the penultimate shot in the 24-shot final.

Another Indian making his international debut, 29-year-old Abhishek Verma, shot 219.3 to secure bronze.

Chaudhary, son of a farmer based in Kalina Village in Meerut, aggregated 240.7.



The 42-year-old Matsuda from Japan misfired on the 23rd shot, an 8.9, to settle for silver. He scored 239.7.

Chaudhary also set a Games record with his sensational effort. His last two

shots were a 10.2 and 10.4, giving him the decisive lead. The Japanese's last two shots were an 8.9 and 10.3.

Expectations were high from Chaudhary as he had broken the world record on

way to winning a gold in the Junior World Cup in Germany a couple of months ago.

But not many thought that he would emulate the golden feat achieved by the likes of Jaspal Rana, Randhir Singh, Jitu Rai and Ronjan Sodhi at such a young age.

"I did not feel any pressure," said Chaudhary, who picked up the sport only three years ago when asked about the competition that included Matsuda and Jin Jingoh from South Korea, the multiple-time Olympic and world champion.

He did not show any sign of nerves even in the qualification held earlier in the day, bossing it with a 586. Jongoh was second in the qualification while Verma finished sixth.

Chaudhary, a student of class XI, will be off to the World Championships after the Games.

He learnt the tricks of the trade at Amit Sheoran's academy at Benoli near Baghpat, 53 kilometers from Meerut. Whenever he is home, he helps his father in the farming business.

"I like farming. We don't get much time off from training but whenever I do, I go back to my Village (Kalina) and help my father," said Chaudhary.

Like Chaudhary, Rohtak-based Verma also picked up the sport three years ago.

The 29-year-old lawyer-cum-shooter did begin well but saved his best for the last to win bronze.

"I was nervous in the beginning seeing a field like that. But then I composed myself. It is my first international event and I have won a medal. It feels great of course," Verma, who hails from Rohtak, told PTI.

In the fifth series, he shot a couple of 10.7s to get himself into medal contention. He consolidated from there, producing a solid finish.

He and another teen sensation Manu Bhaker had disappointed in the mixed team event, failing to qualify for the final.

"The fact that Manu and I failed to qualify in mixed team, we were not disappointed. We learnt a lot from that failure," he said about that missed opportunity.

India secure 2 medals at world youth boxing without a fight

BUDAPEST, AUG 21

(PTI): The Indian boxing contingent was assured of two medals at the world youth championships even before the competition got underway after two women pugilists got direct entry into semifinals owing to the small size of the draw here.

Sakshi Gaidhani (81kg) and Neha Yadav (+81kg) made the last-four stage to put India on the medal table without the exchange of a single blow in the event, which will get underway today.

While Saskhi will face Russia's Anastasiia Rybak, Neha will square off against Ukraine's Maria Lovchynska in their respective semifinal clashes.

Three other Indians got first-round byes into the quarters in the women's draw, while two others made the pre-quarters directly.

Divya Pawar (54kg), Manisha (64kg) and Astha Pahwa (75kg) will know of their quarterfinal opponents after the preliminary stage. Sakshi (57kg) and Jony (60kg) will start in the pre-quarterfinal stage.

"We have built-up nicely towards these world championships, we had massive success at the Asian Youth Championships and hopefully the boxers will continue the form in the world championship," national youth coach for women Bhaskar Bhatt told PTI.

Bhatt is being seen as a major contributor to India's strong showing in the women's youth circuit and was at the helm when the country pulled off top finish with five gold and two silver medals at the world youth championships last year. He is also nominated for this year's Dronacharya award for his contribution to the sport.

India had claimed three gold medals in the women's event of the Asian championship through Nitu, Manisha and Lalita (69kg). All three are in fray at the world event.

In the men's draw, Asian silver-medallist Ankit (60kg), Akash (64kg) and Vijaydeep (69kg) will start their respective campaigns in the pre-quarterfinals after getting opening-round byes.

PALEMBANG/JAKARTA, AUG 21 (PTI):

An athlete not old enough to grasp the enormity of his feat struck gold, a seasoned but scarred pro found his silver lining and a man here for hobby collected a bronze as shooters dominated India's medal haul in the Asian Games today.

The 16-year-old Saurabh Chaudhary, son of a farmer, became the youngest Indian shooter to strike gold with a Games record of 240.7 in the 10m air pistol event in a field of Olympic and world champions, the one in which lawyer-cum-marksman Abhishek Verma (219.3) picked up a bronze to justify his hobby in Palembang.

"I did not feel any pressure. It doesn't help," said Chaudhary, a class XI student who picked up the sport only three years ago, when asked about the competition that included world champion Tomoyuki Matsuda of Japan and Jin Jong-oh from South Korea, the multiple Olympic and world champion.

Then came Sanjeev Rajput, a life and career scarred by allegations of rape by a woman he was in a relationship with. The 37-year-old, with his silver in the 50m rifle 3 positions event, continued his efforts of regaining a sense of at least professional normalcy. In normal circumstances, it would have counted for a mild disappointment given that he led after the kneeling and prone rounds. But today, Rajput hoped that he could secure back a job, something that he lost after the allegations were made.

"I hope to get a job now. Let's see," said Rajput.

A medal trickled in from the wrestling arena in Jakarta with Divya Kakran picking up a bronze in the women's 68kg category.

And the maiden bronze secured in sepaktakraw yesterday remained just that after India lost the semifinal to powerhouse Thailand in Palembang.

Speaking of securing medals, one was assured

in combat sport wushu. N Roshibini Devi advanced to the semifinal in women's 60kg Sanda event in Jakarta.

The Indian men's and women's kabaddi teams also secured emphatic wins against their respective opponents to qualify for the semifinals. The men's team bounced back from the shock 23-24 defeat against South Korea to beat Thailand 49-30 in its fourth and final Group A match. It had beaten Bangladesh 50-21 and Sri Lanka 44-28 before losing to South Korea.

In the women's competition, India played two matches and emerged victorious in both to top Group A with an all-win record and qualify for the semifinals.

In the first match of the day, the Indian women's team defeated Sri Lanka 38-12 before trouncing Indonesia 54-22 in its final group match.

On the tennis courts of Palembang, top seeds Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan breezed into the men's doubles quarterfi-

nals while Ankita Raina entered the last eight of the women's singles.

Not to say there weren't disappointments, the biggest of them being star gymnast Dipa Karmakar, who failed to make the finals of her pet vault event, the one which brought her into national limelight after a fourth place finish at the Olympics. She, however, made the balance beam finals with a seventh place in the qualifying round.

The heartbreak moment of the day was swimmer Viradhawal Khade missing a medal by one hundredth of a second in the 50m freestyle event. Khade

improved his national record but ended fourth with a timing of 22.47sec.

The Indian women's volleyball team slumped to its second consecutive defeat, losing 0-3 to Vietnam in a Pool B preliminary match. The Indians gave a good fight to their opponents in the first two sets before losing the encounter 18-25 22-25 13-25 that lasted an hour and six minutes.

Also, the women's handball team's campaign ended with a fourth successive defeat. India lost 19-49 to North Korea in their final Group A match to bow out of the competition without locking any points.

Final round of 3x3 Pro Basketball League in Mumbai in Aug-end

MUMBAI, AUG 21 (PTI):

The finale of the inaugural season of 3x3 Pro Basketball League (3BL), the first-ever FIBA recognised league in India, will be held here on August 25 and 26.

The final round of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA))-recognised three a side event will be held at Phoenix Marketcity in suburban Kurla.

The sixth and final round of 3BL will see teams Delhi Hoopers, Mumbai Hustlers and Bangalore Machas fight to establish dominance in the first season, a media release said today.

The home team, Mumbai Hustlers, posted strong show in the fifth round, with a tremendous performance from Bikramjit Gill in the quar-

ter-final match.

In the fifth round, with Bikramjits game-play and skills, Mumbai Hustlers played incredibly well, but Delhi Hoopers remained leaders in the score charts, followed by Ahmedabad Wingers and Bangalore Machas.

Surprise performances were seen from Aizawl Legends and Jaipur Regals as they put on strong fronts against the big teams and this round could be a chance for them to prove themselves.

Rohit Bakshi, League Commissioner, 3BL, "I'm happy to have seen the talent develop and grow over these past few months. India definitely has a lot of potential for a medal at the next Olympics and Commonwealth Games in 3x3 basketball."

Asiad Shooting: Sanjeev Rajput wins silver in men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions

PALEMBANG, AUG 21 (PTI):

Indian shooter Sanjeev Rajput clinched a silver medal after letting slip early domination in the men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions event at the 18th Asian Games here today.

The 37-year-old shot 452.7 to claim the silver medal, while China's Hui Zicheng notched up the gold medal with a score of 453.3. Japan's Matsumoto Takayuki bagged the bronze with 441.4.

Rajput dominated the proceedings in the kneeling and prone positions. However, an erratic



show in the standing round put paid to his hopes of a gold.

He recovered from 7.8 in the third series of the kneeling po-

sition to end in the top position with a score of 151.2.

Rajput continued his impressive run in prone, leading from start to finish after consistently shooting 10s. He had a total score of 307.1 after 30 shots.

In the standing position, Rajput led after the first series with a score of 355.6 but his slide coincided with Zicheng raising the bar.

Rajput had won the gold medal at the 50m rifle 3 positions in the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

Ruchir Sharma's next: How and why democracy works in India



New Delhi, Aug 21 (PTI): Global investor-writer Ruchir Sharma's new book looks into how Indian democracy works and analyses its glaring foibles and surprising strengths.

"Democracy on the Road" is the result of Sharma's travels through India, where he has been following election campaigns - from Naxalite areas on the border of Nepal to the southernmost tip in Tamil Nadu - for the last 20 years.

From Gujarat to Bengal, and from Punjab to Kerala, Sharma has traversed tens of thousands of miles along eight-lane highways and, more often, pot-holed, monsoon-ravaged

dirt roads, talking to ordinary voters and leading politicians in remote villages and megacities like Mumbai and Kolkata, publisher Penguin Random House India said.

"Along the way he and his band of up to 20 journalists have interviewed many of the giants of Indian politics, and many of those interviews are excerpted in the book, offering telling and sometimes searing new portraits of fig-

ures from the Gandhis, Modi and Advani to Jayalalithaa, Mayawati, Kumar and Gehlot," it said.

The book will be published in February 2019.

"India comes alive at election time and I have been fortunate to witness up close more than two dozen elections since the 1990s. There is no other travel experience that is as fascinating as journeying the Indian countryside during the campaign season

and I am now very excited to share my impressions of how and why democracy works in our nation," said Sharma.

According to Meru Gokhale, editor-in-chief (literary publishing) at Penguin Random House India, "The book 'Democracy on the Road' is Ruchir Sharma's deeply insightful take on Indian politics. India needs to read it before the 2019 elections."

Sharma is the author of books like "The Rise and Fall of Nations: Forces of Change in the Post-Crisis World" and "Breakout Nations: In Pursuit of the Next Economic Miracles".



Malaysian PM to scrap China-backed \$22 bn projects

BEIJING, AUG 21 (AFP): Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad confirmed during a visit to Beijing today that three China-backed projects totalling USD 22 billion will be cancelled until his country can find a way to pay its debts.

The projects include a railway connecting Malaysia's east coast to southern Thailand and Kuala Lumpur, and two gas pipelines.

"I explained to (the Chinese leaders) why we can't have the ECRL (East Coast Rail Link)," Mahathir told Malaysian reporters at the end of his five-day visit.

"It's about borrowing too much money, which we cannot afford, we cannot repay, and also because we don't need those projects for Malaysia at this moment... our problem now is how to solve our financial deficit."

Mahathir is trying to reduce Malaysia's national debt, which has ballooned to some USD 250 billion.



After meeting Premier Li Keqiang yesterday, Mahathir said he believed China would help Malaysia resolve its fiscal problems. The Malaysian leader also warned against "a new version

of colonialism happening because poor countries are unable to compete with rich countries just in terms of open free trade".

The USD 20 billion rail project was contracted with China's largest engineering firm, China Communications Construction Company, and mostly financed by a loan from the Export-Import Bank of China.

Malaysia's finance ministry said in July that 88 percent of the cost of two gas pipeline projects costing 9.4 billion ringgit (2.32 billion) had been paid to the Chinese contractor despite only 13 per cent of the work being completed.

One pipeline is in Malaysia's Sabah state on Borneo island and the other runs from Malacca in peninsular Malaysia to the northern state of Kedah.

In May Mahathir shelved separate plans to build a high-speed railway between Singapore and Malaysia which had been agreed several years ago, saying it was too costly.

Despite the threat to revise China-linked contracts, Mahathir sought to strengthen business ties with Beijing during the trip.

China is the top trading partner of Malaysia, which is home to a substantial ethnic Chinese minority.

Relations were warm under the previous government of Prime Minister Najib Razak, and Chinese investment in the country surged as Beijing signed deals for major infrastructure and construction projects.

But critics said there was often a lack of transparency and the terms, such as interest rates on loans, were unfavourable to Malaysia, fuelling suspicions about Najib's real motives.

Najib and his cronies are accused of plundering billions of dollars from a sovereign wealth fund, 1MDB. Najib, who has been charged over the scandal, denies any wrongdoing.

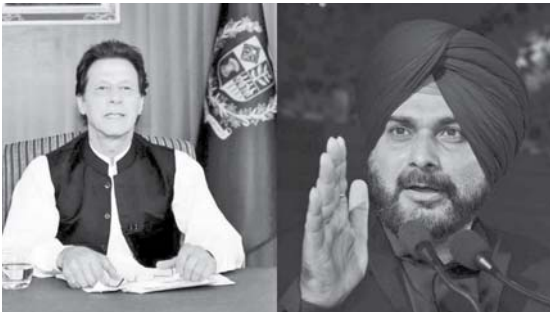
Imran Khan comes out in support of Sidhu, calls him ambassador of peace

ISLAMABAD, AUG 21 (PTI): Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan today came out in support of Navjot Singh Sidhu who is embroiled in a controversy after attending his oath-taking ceremony, saying those who are criticising the Punjab minister are doing a great disservice to peace in the subcontinent.

Sidhu had attended the event in Pakistan on August 18. He was slammed by the Opposition and earned displeasure even from his own chief minister Amarinder Singh over his decision to visit Pakistan and hug its Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa.

The former cricketer today held a press conference in Chandigarh to defend his decision.

"I want to thank Sidhu for coming to Pakistan for my oath taking. He was an ambassador of peace



and was given amazing love and affection by people of Pakistan," Khan tweeted soon after Sidhu's press conference.

"Those in India who targeted him are doing a great disservice to peace in the subcontinent - without peace our people cannot progress," Khan said.

To move forward, Khan said Pakistan and India must engage in dialogue and resolve their conflicts, including the Kashmir issue.

"The best way to alleviate poverty and uplift the people of the subcontinent is to resolve our differences through dialogue and start trading," he said.

Sidhu during the press conference said his visit to Pakistan was not "political" but just on a "warm invitation from a friend".



Muslims celebrate Eid al-Adha as pilgrims conduct hajj rites

MINA (SAUDI ARABIA), AUG 21 (AP): Muslims are celebrating Eid al-Adha as over 2 million pilgrims from around the world, including India, carry out the final rites of the hajj in Saudi Arabia.

Pilgrims walked to a complex in Mina on Tuesday to throw pebbles at three columns. Muslims believe the devil tried to talk the Prophet Ibrahim out of submitting to God's will there.

Muslims believe Ibrahim's faith was tested when God commanded him to sacrifice his only son Ismail. God stayed his hand, sparing his son. In the Christian and Jewish version of the story, Abraham is ordered to kill his other son, Isaac.

The final days of hajj coincide with the Eid al-Adha holiday, or "Feast of Sacrifice," to commemorate Ibrahim's test of faith. Muslims slaughter livestock and distribute the meat to the poor.



El Salvador establishes ties with China after severing relations with Taiwan

KJM VARMA BEIJING, AUG 21 (PTI): El Salvador, one of the 18 countries which has recognised Taiwan as a separate nation, today broke off ties with it and established diplomatic relations with China as Beijing continues to chip away Taiwan's dwindling allies, alluring them with its economic clout.

Taiwan has accused China of buying countries with its dollar diplomacy.

Salvadoran foreign minister Carlos Castaneda and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi signed a document here, establishing diplomatic relations by recognising the 'One China' policy under which Taiwan and Tibet are part of China's mainland.

China made the 'One China' policy a prerequisite for countries to establish diplomatic ties with it.

With El Salvador establishing diplomatic ties with China, the

number of countries, which recognise Taiwan as a separate nation, have come down to 17.

Taiwan's foreign minister Joseph Wu alleged the Central American nation's move is the result of crude actions by China.

We will not engage in dollar diplomacy with China, Wu was quoted as saying by Taiwanese media.

He said El Salvador had been asking for huge funding for a port development project which Taiwan cannot afford as it would leave both countries in debt.

Refuting the dollar diplomacy charge, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said El Salvador's move is a political judgement and decision rather than a bargaining chip.

"Salvador government has decided to establish diplomatic relations because they recognised the 'One China' principle with no economic preconditions. China highly

appreciate this. I want to remind the Taiwan side that establishing diplomatic relations with People's Republic of China represent a trend of the time and will of the people, he said.

The 17 countries which have diplomatic links with Taiwan are Belize, Haiti, Nicaragua, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Guatemala, Paraguay, Honduras, Saint Lucia, Swaziland, The Holy See, Kiribati, Nauru, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, the Marshall Islands and Palau.

Besides chipping away allies of Taiwan, Beijing has also stepped up pressure on the island nation by blocking it from a number of international events and conducting military drills close to the country.

China views Taiwan as its inalienable part which has to be reunited with the mainland, even by force.

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

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

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

EDITED BY TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

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JENNY FROM THE BLOCK! Singer and producer Jennifer Lopez performs onstage during the 2018 MTV Video Music Awards at Radio City Music Hall in New York City.

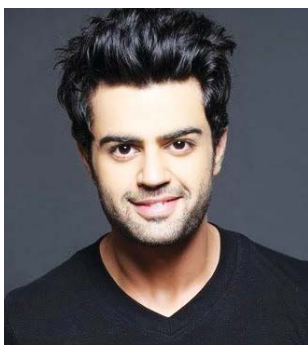
People should stop slotting actors: Maniesh Paul

MUMBAI, AUG 21 (PTI): Actor Maniesh Paul, who will be playing a dark character in short film "Black Briefcase", believes it is wrong to slot actors.

Paul, who is considered one of the most successful show hosts, says it becomes difficult for an actor to break from an image.

"People should stop slotting actors as a comedian, action star or a romantic hero, an actor is an actor and he/she can do everything. I think I am actor, an entertainer and I want to do films that excite me," Maniesh told PTI.

"As an actor I want to do different stuff. People know I host shows. I do lot of comedy and the films that I have done have been in comic (space) so I wanted to



offer something new to them," he added. Paul said doing "Black Briefcase"

was an attempt to do something that would appeal him as an artiste.

"It is not that I was running away from comedy. It becomes difficult to break an image but I don't focus on things. I look at what I want to come out with different films. I don't want to do films just because it is coming from a good banner or has stars in it. I want to do film in which I have something to do as an actor."

In the film, produced by his brother, Vevek Paul, the actor plays the role of a terrorist.

"It is a short film of 15 minutes. It is a dark character, which I have not done earlier. It was challenging as I was entering into new zone."

Jack Nicholson and George Miller called Cher 'too old, not sexy'



LOS ANGELES, AUG 21 (PTI): Veteran singer-actor Cher has revealed filmmaker George Miller and Jack Nicholson did not want to cast her in "Witches of Eastwick" because they found her "too old and not sexy".

The 72-year-old icon told the story about her 'Witches of Eastwick' co-star during a recent concert in Atlantic City.

According to the Hollywood Reporter, Cher said the director and the actor made her feel insecure about her age.

Cher said that she was "dreading" turning 40 in 1986. But, after a "fantastic" birthday party her attitude towards turning old improved.

"So I went to sleep, dreaming these fabulous thoughts of being 40 and it was good. And I was going to get all these movies and I was just so happy. And in the morning, my telephone rang

and the man said, 'Hi, Cher, it's George Miller.' I said, 'Hey, George.' He was the director of 'Witches of Eastwick'. So he said, 'I just wanted to call and tell you that I don't want you in my movie and Jack Nicholson and I think you're too old and you're not sexy.' Good morning, 40!"

She added that tears "started streaming down my old face. I was heartbroken. I wanted this movie so badly. Usually, in Hollywood, if you insult somebody, you hang up. He didn't want to hang up. He just wanted to tell me everything: 'I hate the way you walk, I hate the way you talk, I don't like the color of your hair, I don't like your eyes.'"

Cher hit back at Miller and eventually won the lead role of Alexandra Medford in "Witches of Eastwick", starring alongside Nicholson, Susan Sarandon and Michelle Pfeiffer.



Kalki Koechlin to walk for Gaurav Katta at Lakme Fashion Week Winter/Festive

MUMBAI, AUG 20 (PTI): Actor Kalki Koechlin will be the showstopper for designer Gaurav Katta's maiden show at the Lakme Fashion Week Winter/Festive 2018.

The designer will be presenting his collection "Souvenirs of British India" on the final day of the fashion extravaganza, which runs from August 22 to 26.

The collection narrates an elegant story of Independence and empowerment with the gold and silver embellishments, tinselled silk, sables and other accessories.

It is inspired by the classical murals and roof paintings in Rajasthan from the British era.

The designer has chosen royal combination of colours in modal silk, net, cotton velvet and georgette for the women's wear whereas for menswear he has used silks and velvet among others.

"I am excited to be showcasing my collection for the very first time in the Lakme Fashion Week. 'Souvenirs of British India' is my attempt to take the restricted royalty from the British Era and transform it into fashion for the urban Indian woman of today," Gaurav said in a statement.

KNEW 'YAMLA PAGLA DEEWANA 2' WOULD TURN OUT BAD: DHARMENDRA

MUMBAI, AUG 21 (PTI): Veteran actor Dharmendra says "Yamla Pagla Deewana" was born out of a desire to make a comedy but while shooting for the sequel of the film, he realised that it was not turning out to be as expected.

The Deols - Dharmendra and sons, Sunny and Bobby - came together on screen for the first time in 2006 with the family drama "Apne".

They followed it up with the comedy "Yamla Pagla Deewana" in 2011, which was a huge hit, but its sequel did not do well at the box office.

"Apne" had made people cry so I told someone that next time I'll make you laugh. We didn't even have a script or anything ready then. We made 'Yamla Pagla Deewana' one. But there's this 'beemari' of franchise and sequel," Dharmendra told PTI.

"We had to make a sequel but it was taking time. Things were not falling into place and then even the screenplay wasn't good. I knew while doing the film that it's rubbish (bakwaas) and had told the crew that I'm not enjoying shooting it. One knows whether it's going right or



not," he added.

The trio are set to reunite for "Yamla Pagla Deewana: Phir Se" and Dharmendra hopes the audience enjoys the third part.

"I heard this story several times and I liked it. I really enjoyed listening to the script and we all have tried to make it as nice as possible. Hope the audience enjoys it now."

The 82-year-old actor is excited to return to a full-fledged film after a gap of five years.

"I've worked in two shifts, three shifts for 25 years now. I am enjoying this phase currently. I am fulfilling my hobby. Acting is my 'mehbooba' (lover) and I can't stay away from it for too long. I'm very

fortunate to be in films. You get love, admiration and what not from all over the world. It's a great blessing of God," he said.

The actor is also excited to see how audience reacts to some of the cameos in the film, including Salman Khan, Rekha, Shatrughan Sinha and Sonakshi in third instalment of "Yamla Pagla Deewana: Phir Se".

"Shatru and I have a good chemistry. We were in 'Dost' and several other films. Timing is the key in comedy. I am hopeful people will enjoy it," he added.

"Yamla Pagla Deewana: Phir Se" also stars Kriti Kharbanda and is scheduled to release on August 31.



Assamese film 'Xhoixobote Dhemalite' bags another award at US fest

NEW DELHI, AUG 2 (PTI): "Xhoixobote Dhemalite" (Rainbow fields), an Assamese film dealing with the sensitive issue of children growing up in violent times, has won another award - this time for screenplay at a US festival.

The Bidyut Kotoky-directed film bagged the best screenplay award at Treasure Coast International Film Festival in Florida. It received nominations in five categories.

"The film's story is based in Assam but people from halfway across the globe are relating to it. This goes to show that emotions across the globe are same. In 'Xhoixobote Dhemalite', we always believed that we are making a film for in Assamese language for the global audience," said Mumbai-based Kotoky.

Last month, "Xhoixobote Dhemalite" became the first Assamese film to be commer-

cially released in the US. Besides, it won three awards, including that of best film, in the Love International Film Festival, Los Angeles.

Based on true events, the film also features seasoned actors like Victor Banerjee, Nakul Vaid, Naved Aslam, Nipon Goswami and Nikumoni Barua.

The film is produced by 'India Stories', a Mumbai-based production house and co-produced by Kotoky's Dhruv Creative Productions and US-based Kurmasana Kreatees.

The Treasure Coast International Film Festival (TCIFF) is dedicated to the promotion of independent and foreign films as an art form.

This year, the TCIFF Lifetime Achievement Award was given to director and industry veteran Isaac Florentine. The inaugural film of the festival was Florentine's "Acts of Vengeance", starring Antonio Banderas.

ARIES: Your thinking is clear today, Aries, but it might be hard to take action on your thoughts. A restrictive force may seem to be holding you back. A sense of discipline is welling up within you, reminding you to add a touch of conservatism to whatever it is that you have in mind. Take the opportunity to pursue tasks that require you to be reserved and collected.

TAURUS: Your flamboyant approach may not get as much attention today as you'd like, Taurus. Don't push yourself to achieve something that isn't working. By insisting that something should be done your way, you'll only create enemies and bottlenecks in whatever task you're trying to accomplish. A thoughtful, conscious, reserved approach is going to win today.

GEMINI: You have exactly the right

amount of discipline and sense of duty to accomplish quite a bit today, Gemini. Your thinking should be clear. Your sense of time and restriction works in your favor to help you figure out any puzzles that present themselves. You have a strong will that helps you complete just about every task you undertake.

CANCER: Trying to talk your way out of tasks and obligations probably isn't the best way to win friends today, Cancer. In fact, this is a time to get yourself in gear and take responsibility for your actions. The time you spend trying to weasel your way out of something is better spent just doing the thing that you need to do. Be understanding and receptive of other people's objectives.

LEO: Just when you thought you had

everything figured out and planned correctly, another obstacle appears, Leo. Your first reaction may be to get upset. Rage won't help. You can't always control everything. There are bounds to be surprises. Plan for what you can, but know that there are often unknown forces working against your aims. Watch out!

VIRGO: The fire within you may be burning brightly, Virgo, but unfortunately, there isn't a great deal of fuel available to keep it going. It may seem as if people are trying to rain on your parade, but they're just trying to do their duty. Relax and contemplate what's going on around you. This may not be the best day to implement change and promote new ideas.

LIBRA: You may find that other people are the missing variable in the

equation that you seek answers to today, Libra. Don't feel like you have to come up with all the details and resolutions yourself. Work with those who also have something to contribute to the situation at hand. A quiet, disciplined approach is exactly what's needed to plow through any problem that needs fixing.

SCORPIO: By jumping around from place to place, Scorpio, you may end up feeling like you're getting nowhere. Instead of tackling many different tasks, today is better spent focusing your energy on one. Start from ground level and work up. Get to the root of the problem and many of the related issues will simply dissolve as you work.

SAGITTARIUS: Make a plan at the beginning of the day for what you

want to accomplish by sundown, Sagittarius. This is a good time to tackle many of the nitpicky tasks that require your attention. Be conscious of the fact that there are time limits and restrictions on some of the things you're working on. Keep on task and try not to get distracted by other people.

CAPRICORN: You might have to adjust your way of thinking in order to match the energy of the situations around you. While you may feel a desire to strike out into some new, adventurous activity, there's a strong resistance asking you to be more cautious and stable. Don't lose touch with your pioneering attitude, but don't fall prey to reckless behavior, either.

AQUARIUS: Your steady nature will be greatly appreciated today, Aquarius. A well thought out plan of attack

is the one that wins approval from the higher-ups. You know the best way to proceed and now all you need is the confidence to follow through with your ideas. Getting things started should be easier for you today since your mind is working in harmony with your heart.

PISCES: It's possible that you're feeling obliged to do something out of a sense of duty toward family or loved ones, Pisces. Take this time to help someone who's struggling with who they are and what they're doing in this world. Your concern for others reflects a noble sense of empathy that you should develop more regularly. We're only as strong as the weakest link. Do your part to strengthen the chain.