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Summit **TIMES**

Vol 04 | Issue 60 | Gangtok | Sunday | 03 March 2019

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS FOR TRADERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

- Exemption from GST to businesses with a turnover of upto ₹40 lakh
- Exemption from income tax to businesses with a turnover of upto ₹60 lakh
- Businessmen with turnover of upto ₹1.5 crore can now opt for 'Composition Scheme'



NAMUMKIN AB MUMKIN HAI



AYUSH Hospital inaugurated in Gyalshing

GYALSHING, 02 MAR (IPR): A 50-bed Integrated AYUSH Hospital was inaugurated by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling at Kyongsa, Gyalshing, here in West Sikkim today. This facility was dedicated within a month and a half of inaugurating a 1,000-bed Multi Speciality Hospital at Gangtok on 14 January 2019.

The three-storied AYUSH Hospital has been established at a sanctioned amount of Rs 6.98 crore. Construction had begun on 21 October and was completed in the last week of February 2019.

The hospital will be providing healthcare in all AYUSH disciplines. AYUSH, it may be recalled, is the abbreviated form of - Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy.

The Hospital has 43 rooms - Registration &



Record Room, Waiting Hall for patients and attendants, Medical store

and Reception, Laboratory, Dispensing Room, Hospital Superinten-

dent, Record room and office, Administrative

Medical Officer Room, Kitchen, Lavatory at the Ground floor and six

examination and case demonstration rooms, dressing room, lab for pathological examination, two storerooms, theatre room, two Resident Doctors' rooms, 10-bed Male & Female Wards, Nurses Duty room etc.

The top floor has six private rooms, 10-bed Male and Female wards, panchakarma unit, Shirodhara, vasti, vamana virachana, steam bath, Yoga hall, staff room and rehabilitation & therapy room.

The inaugural programme was also attended by the Health Minister Arjun Kumar Ghatani, RM&DD Minister SB Subedi, area MLA Chandra Maya Subba, public representatives, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Health, Vishal Chauhan, Director AYUSH Dr. Keshree Rai, health officials and other dignitaries.

Academic Block of Gyalshing Government College inaugurated



GYALSHING, 02 MAR (IPR): Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling, attended the valedictory function of the College Fest cum inauguration of the Academic Block of Sikkim Government College, Gyalshing, today.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by HRDD Minister, RB Subba, RMDD Minister, SB Subedi, UDHD Minister, NK Subba, Health Minister, AK Ghatani, Additional Chief Secretary (HRDD), GP Upadhyaya, along with MLAs, Advisors, Chairpersons of different Boards and other dignitaries.

The Chief Minister in his address to the students spoke on their well-being and showed his deep concern for their future. He mentioned that the students are the building blocks of the state and the nation at large. He encouraged them by stating that the State Government has done everything in its power to empower the youth of Sikkim by giving them free education system which has made the state a cent per cent literate state in India.

He welcomed the students to take part in the state building process through the attainment of proper and a qualitative education. He

stressed upon the various schemes available for the students who want to achieve their dreams of becoming someone worthwhile in the state. Schemes like Chief Minister's Meritorious Scholarship scheme where 50 students each year are given the chance to study in various schools of India and Sikkim, Merit Scholarship Schemes, Free Education in the state and others similar schemes are for the students of Sikkim to take advantage of them and relish it for themselves.

He advised the students that the state has provided avenues for development which the students should celebrate and make use of. He stated that the State is proud of the students' ability to perform hence their contributions would be worthwhile to the society. He also mentioned that Sikkim's Education Policies are made keeping in mind the rural public for which the rural populous should be taking full benefit of. He asked the students and the youths of Sikkim to be responsible citizens of tomorrow.

He also stated that the Medical College would soon start in the coming Academic Session where

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SDF Govt suppressing religious freedom: HSP

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 MAR: Hamro Sikkim Party (HSP) has strongly condemned and denounced the "repression unleashed by the Pawan Chamling government on the spiritual congregation named Heavenly Path Organisation."

HSP has also expressed solidarity with the ongoing peaceful protest through dharna at Gangtok by members of Heavenly Path Organisation to highlight their demand of permitting their spiritual guide to visit Sikkim and their being able to practice their religious beliefs without any restraint from the government.

The party has accused the SDF govern-

ment of creating a claustrophobic atmosphere of intolerance and authoritarianism in the state. In the case of Heavenly Path, the party has alleged that the same high-handedness is being observed by open violation of the freedom of practicing any religion.

The Chamling Government's obstruction in this regard is illegal, unconstitutional and against the interest of the nation, HSP has said.

The party has further called upon the Government to meet the Heavenly Path Organisation members and take immediate steps to address their grievances so that democracy and the Constitution prevail in Sikkim.

DSA prez resigns, considers contesting Assembly elections

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 MAR: Lha Tshering Sherpa, President, Denzong Sherpa Association, announced his resignation from the post today.

"I have successfully completed my tenure as President from the year 2014 till date," he writes in a statement issued today, adding that he has "relentlessly worked" for the social and political upliftment of Sherpa community in Sikkim throughout his term, having raised the issue with both, the state and central governments on several occasions.

His efforts, he adds, have met with limited success in "the absence



of genuine political representation in the state assembly," which, he adds, has been a major obstacle towards achieving the rights and interests of Sherpas in Sikkim. "Therefore, with an

objective to ensure genuine representation of Sherpa Community in the State Assembly of Sikkim, I am resigning from the post of President, Denzong Sherpa Association with imme-

diated effect," he explains.

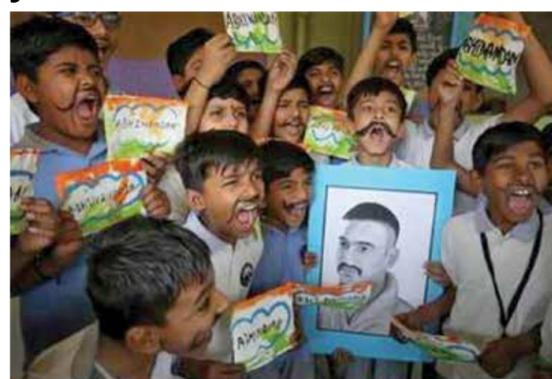
He states that the decision of joining a political party or contesting independently was under consideration and will be intimated to all concerned in due course of time.

Boundless joy in Abhinandan's alma matter as he returns safely

BENGALURU, MAR 2 (PTI): As Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman became the toast of the nation overnight, KV-NAL in Bengaluru basked in the glory of having the most valourous student, for whose safety the entire country prayed in unison.

While everyone in the school heaved a sigh of relief with the news about Abhinandan's safe return, his alma mater Kendriya Vidyalaya (NAL) proudly displayed Abhinandan's picture just at the entrance of the school.

"BRAVO! Wg Cdr Abhinandan Varthaman IAF (KV NAL Alumni 1998-1999) We, the family of KV-NAL, Bangalore sincerely salute you and pray



for your safe return to the motherland. JaiHind," read the poster with his picture.

As the news poured in about the Indian pilot Abhi-

nandan being captured in Pakistan, M S Anand Shankar rang up his mother Durga Shivakumar from the USA to tell her that the pilot was none other

than his junior in the school.

A teacher herself in the school, Durga Shivakumar started recollecting who the boy was and then her son told her that Abhinandan's wife Tanvi was KV-NAL's alumni.

"This description made it easy for me to recall both Abhinandan and Tanvi. I did not teach him, but I know him as a stout chubby boy, who very actively participated in sports and extra-curricular activities.

He was the leader of one of the five 'houses'," Durga Shivakumar told PTI.

The Kendriya Vidyalayas have a tradition of dividing the entire school, including teachers, into four or five houses

where competitions take place amongst them.

Abhinandan had joined KV-NAL in the 11th standard.

Prior to it, he was in KV-DRDO. Within a year of his joining, he left such a deep imprint on his teachers that they made him the leader of the house.

"At that time only he became the leader of the house. He had such capabilities," recalled Manoharan Pillai, the principal of the school.

Pillai said he was not a staff in the KV NAL then, but whatever account people narrated about Abhinandan gave him goosebumps and he turned emotional.

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National Science Day observed at CAEPHT Ranipool



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 01 MAR:

The College of Agricultural Engineering & Post Harvest Technology (CAEPHT), Ranipool, a constituent college of Central Agricultural University, Imphal observed National Science Day-2019 on 28 Feb, 2019, a press release informs. The theme for this year was 'Science for People and People for science'.

Sir CV Raman, Nobel laureate, had discovered the Raman Effect on 28 Feb in 1928.

The programme started with an "Idea Competition" among the students of the college where students presented their innovative ideas and projects to solve the pressing issues faced by the society on Agriculture, Energy and Environment.

Bharat Singh got first prize for his project on Solar Water Distiller while a team comprising Vishal Gupta and I Law got second prize for their project on Air Filter in

the competition.

In the next phase of the programme, a meeting comprising the students and faculty of CAEPHT was organized under the chairmanship of Dean, Prof PP Dabral, CAEPHT. The meeting started with the inaugural address highlighting the importance of the day by President, Prof NS Chauhan, Institution Innovation Council (IIC), CAEPHT followed by address by PI, Dr Sujata Jena, Institution Biotech Hub. Former in-charge Dean, Prof RP Misra, CAEPHT addressed the house and urged the students to be creative in solving the various issues faced by our society. Prof PP Dabral distributed the prizes to the winner of the Idea Competition followed by his address where he asked the students to nurture the idea of thinking and innovating.

The programme was jointly conducted by the Institution Innovation Council and Institute Biotech Hub, CAEPHT.

UN chief welcomes...

Varthaman's release was being watched with bated breath across India as the IAF pilot was accorded a hero's welcome as he crossed onto India through the Wagah Border.

The IAF pilot's release was seen as a major step towards defusing a near-war situation triggered by India's retaliation over Pakistan's continued support for terrorism.

Tensions between India and Pakistan flared up after a suicide bomber of Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) killed 40 CRPF personnel in Kashmir on February 14.

Amid mounting outrage, the IAF carried out a counter-terror operation, hitting what it said was a JeM training camp in Balakot, deep inside Pakistan on February 26. The next day, Pakistan retaliated with a large air formation, comprising 24 fighter jets, including F-16s.

Varthaman was in one of the eight MiG-21s that took on the invader and shot down an F-16, according to officials.

During the dogfight, his plane was hit and he bailed out, landing in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, where he was taken into custody by the Pakistani army.

On Thursday, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan told a special joint sitting of Parliament that his government was releasing the pilot as a "peace gesture". However, India has been maintaining that the Pakistani decision is in consonance with the Geneva Conventions.

Boundless joy...

"I could not stop my tears from flowing as I learnt that the school which I am heading today had groomed the brave IAF pilot," said Pillai.

Suddenly, the entire school got into scrambling through the records to dig out old photographs of their brave alumni and chanced upon quite a few of them.

The school conducted a special prayer Friday morning for the safety and well being of Abhinandan.

"Our joy knew no bounds when Abhinandan returned to India safely. Once he overcomes the trauma he underwent, we will invite him to 'his school'," said Pillai.

On Thursday, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan had told a special joint sitting of Parliament that his government was releasing the pilot as a "peace gesture".

Abhinandan Varthaman returned home to a hero's welcome Friday night from his nearly three-day captivity in Pakistan, a major step towards defusing a near-war situation triggered by India's retaliation over Pakistan's continued support for terrorism.

Abhinandan was captured on February 27 by Pakistan following a dogfight between the two air forces in which his MIG-21 was shot down.

Awareness camp on EVM & VVPAT in various schools

GANGTOK, 02 MAR (IPR): With the introduction of VVPAT by the ECI and making it compulsory to be used along with the EVM by upcoming Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly Election 2019, the need to create awareness amongst the voters about the VVPAT before Election is essential. Hence, Office of the District Election Officer,

East District is organizing an awareness camp on EVM & VVPAT in various Senior Schools (Secondary, Secondary and Junior High Schools), Bazar, Colleges and Universities of East District as per the District Action Plan prepared for Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP). Dedicated officials from Election cell and

District Collector staff have been assigned to carry out the programme in coordination with the nodal officer of the respective Schools (ELC) and the BLOs of the concerned polling stations.

Awareness camp started on 25 Feb, 2019 and so far many schools namely Sonamati Memorial SSS, Singtam SSS, Samdong SSS, Lower

Samdong Secondary School, Rhenock SSS, Chujachen SSS, Rangpo SSS (Mining), Tika Lall SSS, Rangpo Bazar and Singtam Bazar have been covered by the camp successfully.

The students, teachers and public have participated during the programme and have casted mock poll vote substantially. Election machineries including

EROs, AEROs, SOs and BLOs have tremendously helped DEO to organize the programme in their respective venues concerned.

Upcoming schedules in the drive is to cover the schools like Marchong, Dikling, Ranka, Assam Lingzey, Gaucharan, Deorali, Modern, TNHSS, Arithang JHS, Luing etc. apart from school students, the

concerned AEROs have been directed to organize awareness camp in the Colleges, Universities, local factories and monasteries falling under their respective jurisdiction.

The DEO, East has also set up a permanent EVM & VVPAT awareness booth in the DAC premises to cater the general public visiting the place.

Gyalshing gets first Organic Input Retail Store



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 02 MAR:

Mevedir an ICS service provider with its major operations in West Sikkim opened its Organic Input Store in Gyalshing Bazaar today. The store is located adjacent to Hotel Ivory on the Gyalshing Pelling road.

Under the directive of the Sikkim Organic Mission such Organic Input

Stores are being opened across the state, a press release informs.

This initiative has been undertaken with the sole objective of meeting the certified inputs needs and requirements of the farmers who have to wait for the department to come and meet their requirements, the release mentions.

The inauguration

program was inaugurated by the Gyalshing Municipal Chairperson, IK Neopany in the presence of ADO, Ganesh Gurung, and other officials and local gentries and Mevedir field functionaries.

The Organic Input Retail Outlet sells authentic certified inputs and seeds. The stores was well stocked with veg-

etable seeds, major nutrients and plant growth promoters, biofertilizers, biopesticides and various gardening and agricultural tools and equipment's. The opening day's sales crossed Rs 2000, the release mentions.

These retail outlets would also serve as agri clinics in the area and at a later point of time qualified agronomists would be deputed to undertake follow-up with farmers and provide technical back stopping.

Mevedir was represented by its Manager and area In-charge, Pranai Thapa and Deepak Adhikari. The store's in charge Kumar Gurung was very happy that the farmers would greatly benefit and time use of inputs would boost the production and control diseases and pests.

DEO holds meeting with representatives of political parties



NAMCHI, 02 MAR (IPR): A meeting with the representatives of various political parties was held at the chamber of DC (South) cum District Election Officer (DEO), Ragul K today. Present amongst others were SP (South), Manish Verma, ADC (South), Satyan Pradhan, SP (Traffic), Linda Palmo alongside other officials and representatives from other political parties namely that of SKM, SDF and Congress.

The DEO explained

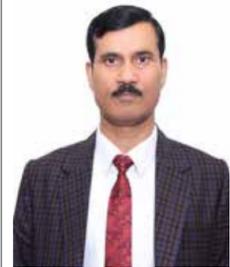
in brief about the do's and don'ts laid by the Election Commission of India (ECI) that the registered political party need to adhere to. Mr Ragul urged the participants to go through the ECI website in order for them to be well-versed with the various rules and regulations of the commission.

He updated that there are a total of 160 polling stations under DEO (South) and informed that Booth Level Officers (BLOs) has been appointed in those stations. Ad-

ditionally, he updated that the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) has arrived in DAC, South and that the first level checking has already commenced. Furthermore, he requested for peaceful, free and fair conduct of the upcoming elections.

During, the course of the meeting Chief Accounts Officer, Sunil Sharma explained in detail the various facets of election expenditure and strongly encouraged the attendees to maintain and submit the election accounts.

NEEPCO gets new Director of Personnel



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 02 MAR:

Anil Kumar has assumed the charge of Director (Personnel) of North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited on 01 March, 2019, a press release informs. Prior to this, he was Executive Director (HR) in the organisation.

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US slaps new sanctions on Venezuela regime as Russia ups support

WASHINGTON, MAR 2 (AFP): The United States and Russia clashed Friday over how to assist crisis-wracked Venezuela, with Moscow pledging new relief channeled through President Nicolas Maduro and Washington slapping sanctions over the blocking of US aid it tried to push through the border.

A day after Russia and China vetoed a US and European resolution at the UN Security Council that called for unimpeded aid deliveries, Washington said it was targeting six Venezuelan military officers for stopping last weekend's US-led convoy.

Four people were killed in the melee as Maduro's forces prevented the 178 metric tonnes of rice, beans and other food from crossing into the country from Colombia. The

leftist strongman says the aid is a pretext for a US-led invasion. "We are sanctioning members of Maduro's security forces in response to the reprehensible violence, tragic deaths and unconscionable torching of food and medicine destined for sick and starving Venezuelans," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement.

The six include Major General Richard Jesus Lopez Vargas, the commander of the Venezuelan National Guard. The sanctions freeze any assets in the United States and penalize US financial dealings with the officials.

The United States also revoked the visas of 49 Venezuelan officials and their family members, the State Department said. Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido, whom

Washington has recognized as interim president, had hoped to triumph in bringing in the stockpiles of food, which the United States coordinated with Colombia and Brazil.

Guaido has said 300,000 people could die without an influx of aid into Venezuela.

The United Nations says 2.7 million Venezuelans have fled since 2015 as the socialist economy crumbles, with basic supplies out of reach to the masses.

More than 50 countries recognize Guaido as Venezuela's rightful president -- but Maduro enjoys strong support from Russia, which is eager to challenge US interventionism, as well as China, which is concerned over the fate of billions of dollars Beijing has lent to Caracas.

Second Edition of ICACCP concludes at SMIT



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 02 MAR:

The Second Edition of the International Conference on Advanced Computational and Communication Paradigms (ICACCP)-2019 at Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, Majhitar, East Sikkim concluded on Friday.

The conference was organized by the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, co-sponsored and supported by various international organizations, a press release informs.

On the third day of the program, speakers and the participants witnessed the rich culture

of Sikkim in the form of Bhutia Dance, Nepali Dance, Yak Dance and Snow Lion Dance.

On the fourth day, the curtains came down on the ICACCP 2019 with a valedictory speech by co-convenor. The last speaker for the conference, Senior Director, Indrajeet Sanyal of Ericsson India Global Services, gave a brief insight into future technologies.

As the ceremony came to an end, the awards for the best paper presentation were awarded to Bose Institute, Sibun Parida, Kolkata, Christ University, V Vaidhehi, Bangalore and from NIT, Amarnath Pathak, Mizoram.

SKM holds peace rally in Namchi



SUMMIT REPORT NAMCHI, 01 MAR:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha's district working committee (South) conducted a peace march at Namchi bazaar today. The rally was participated by large number of SKM workers affiliated to district committee with the message to restore democracy in Sikkim.

An SKM worker charged with various offences in an FIR filed by an SDF worker surrendered at Namchi police

station, a press release informs. The allegations are baseless according to the party.

The SKM worker was later released on bail following which SKM supporters welcomed him in Namchi town, it is mentioned.

The message of today's rally was to tell SDF that it should stop conspiring against SKM and stop using police administration to suppress the people's movement led by SKM.

Academic Block...

students would be able to enrol for free MBBS courses. He also mentioned that the education has been made free so that the general populous would be able to be educated. He also congratulated the teachers of Sikkim and the Education Department for their contributions in making Sikkim a hub for qualitative education.

The Chief Minister also shared his concerns on the cases of suicides amongst the youths which is a loss for the state and needs to be dealt with very cautiously. He urged the students not to take one's life rather cherish it so that Sikkim can be proud of their deeds and their abilities to perform. He stated that their existence is to prove their worth to the State and the nation. He also advised that their determination to reach their goals will determine the way to their success.

Lastly, speaking on the demands of the Sikkim Government College, Gyalshing he stated that priority would be given to the completion of the College Campus and the remaining infrastructures for the students' betterment.

Workshop to train Biologists on data management and analysis

GANGTOK, 01 MAR (IPR): A training workshop on "Data Management and Analysis for Biologists using R" is being organized by the department of Zoology, Sikkim University, from 25 Feb-9 Mar, 2019.

The workshop is being held under a collaborative project "Key Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity Components in Socio-Ecological Landscapes of Darjeeling-Sikkim Himalaya: Deriving Management and Policy Inputs and Development of Mountain Biodiversity Information System", jointly implemented by Sikkim University and Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE) funded by the Ministry of Environment of Forests and Climate Change under the National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS) through GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Sustainable Development (GBPNIHESD).

Biologists and ecologists often struggle to deal with bigger datasets and therefore a strong analytical approach and the knowledge on recent statistical tools are very important to understand and interpret such datasets.

Robust statistical tools and packages help researchers analyse and

present their findings more effectively. The R language and its several packages are now gaining popularity across many disciplines and are the most powerful tools used for analysis, visualization and interpretation of biological data.

The objective of this training workshop is to introduce the participants to R software and basic analytical approaches/packages with emphasis on biological data. The workshop seeks to cover the basics of R programming, data management and analytical approaches.

There are three invited instructors for this course who shall be giving hands-on training to the participants on data collection and analysis. Among them Shishir Rao and Aneasha Jayadevan, alumnus of National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bangalore and are currently associated with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Bangalore are experts in R tools and analytical approaches.

Similarly, Dr Kailash GAira, Scientist from GBPNIHESD has specialized in biostatistics and modelling.

There are 27 participants in the workshop from the University and national level institutes and organisations based in Sikkim.



Bhanu Park inaugurated after beautification

REBYNA RANA GANGTOK, 02 MAR:

Gangtok MLA, Pintso Chopel Lepcha inaugurated Bhanu Park following its beautification today in the presence of former MLA and former Minister, NK Pradhan.

The total budget of the entire beautification of Bhanu Park was Rs. 27 lakh approximately.

The MLA, in his statement, said language is the most important aspect of any community, and so is Nepali language for the Nepali community. Due to their language, the Nepali speaking community has been brought together.

"We must not limit the language to ourselves. We must encourage coming generation and youngsters towards de-

velopment and promotion of Nepali language," he added.

Also present were former Chairperson cum SDF functionary, Manita Pradhan, former Police Officer, BK Roka, president Nepali Sahitya Parishad, Rudra Poudyal, General Secretary NSP, Jeewan Sharma, CLC President Shekar Pandey, UDHD officers and general public as well.

Samjhauta Express services restored; Train to run from India on Sunday: Railways

NEW DELHI, MAR 2 (PTI): The Samjhauta Express will leave for Pakistan from Delhi on Sunday after the two neighbours agreed to operationalise services at their ends, a senior railway official told PTI.

The announcement came a day after Pakistan released Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman.

The official said the first train from India will leave on March 3.

While Pakistan had cancelled its services right after an air strike by the Indian Air Force, India cancelled the operations of the Samjhauta Express on February 28.

The Railway Board in an order had said all operations of the Attari Special Express, Delhi-Attari-Delhi, which together with the Pakistani line from Wagah-Lahore is known as the Samjhauta or Friendship Express, will remain cancelled.

It had also said that the cancellation was due to "purely operational reasons".

Sources said after the missive about Pakistan's resumption of services was conveyed to the board, it was decided that services on the Indian end will resume too.

The train will start running from the Indian side on Sunday, while on the Pakistan side it will leave Lahore on Monday for its return journey, the official said.

On the Indian side the train runs from Delhi to Attari and from Lahore to Wagah on the Pakistan side.

The Samjhauta Express, named after the Hindi word for "agreement", comprises six sleeper coaches and an AC 3-tier coach.

The train service was started on July 22, 1976 under the Shimla Agreement that settled the 1971 war between the two nations.

Google News organises training for Sikkim journos and students



ARPAN PRADHAN GANGTOK, 02 MAR:

Google News Initiative (GNI), a division of Google organised a day-long training for journalists and mass communication students of the State. GNI has been organising such trainings in different parts of the country covering more than 30 cities.

A daylong Google News Initiative Poll-check training was conducted here at Press Club of Sikkim today.

The day long training had a Certified Google trainer, Jaikishan SG as the resource person and was attended by local journalists, Mass Com students of Sikkim University and few journalists from Siliguri. GNI is an initiative taken by Google to fight fake news during elections.

Assistant Professor, Assam Don Bosco University, Mr Jaikishan imparted the training to 20 participants which in-

cluded journalists from Sikkim, Siliguri and students of Mass Communication department, Sikkim University.

The training here in Gangtok was funded and organised by Google and the training in Gangtok was coordinated by Dechen Ongmu who has already completed the GNI training in Kolkata.

Keeping elections in mind the training covered topics like verification and fact checking, YouTube live, digital security and safety, video and image verifications and others.

The programme had the presence of president Press Club of Sikkim, Joseph Lepcha wherein he thanked the GNI and the entire Google team and Mr Jaikishan for the successful conduct of the above training in his address.

He has expressed his willingness to organise more such trainings for journalists in Sikkim.

Governor felicitates R-Day Parade team from Sikkim



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 02 MAR:

Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad today felicitated a six-member team comprising of four National Service Scheme volunteers and two officials from Sports and Youth Affairs Department at Raj Bhavan, a press release informs.

Secretary, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Dr RK Tamang was also present on the occasion.

It may be mentioned that the team had represented the State in the

Republic Day Parade at Rajpath, New Delhi in the last two years. It is customary to have the volunteers felicitated by the Governor every year once they represent the State in Republic Day Parade in New Delhi.

The Governor expressed his pleasure on meeting the volunteers and conveyed his blessings to the team members and volunteers in particular. He stressed on the need to inculcate the community leadership among the youths and volun-

teers and added that NSS provides the right platform for youth to understand the country, its history and its diverse heritage.

The Governor urged the student volunteers to make use of their time to excel in the chosen field and fulfill the expectation of parents, society and the nation at large.

Secretary, Dr RK Tamang on the occasion apprised the Governor about the activities sponsored and supported by the State government in relation with NSS.

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
STATE TEACHERS' RECRUITMENT BOARD
GANGTOK-737101

No: 23/SSTRB/19 Dated: 01/03/201

NOTICE

In continuation to employment advertisement No. 19/SSTRB/19, dated: 04.02.2019 inviting eligible local candidates for filling up of 249 vacancies of Post Graduate Teacher through Direct Recruitment, this is to inform that those candidates who are in the final semester of B.Ed. course are allowed to submit their application for the post of PGT.

S/d
Controller of Examinations'
Sikkim State Teachers' Recruitment Board.

R.O:- 751/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19 dt.01.03.2019

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
SOCIAL JUSTICE, EMPOWERMENT AND WELFARE DEPARTMENT
(INTEGRATED CHILD PROTECTION SCHEME)
GANGTOK.

No.480/SJE&WD/ICPS/2019 Dated:-02/03/2019.

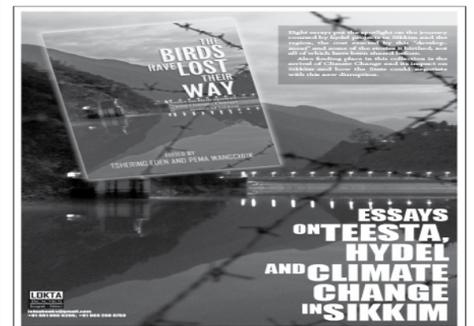
NOTICE

Reference our employment notice no. 449/SJE&WD/2019 dated 14.2.2019, the date of interview for various posts advertised under Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) vide the same, is scheduled on 05/03/2019 (Tuesday), from 10.30 am onwards. The venue for the interview is Conference Hall, SJE&WD, 5th Mile, Lumsey, Tadong, Gangtok.

Only eligible candidates who have applied for the post as per mentioned criteria will be considered. He / She must produce original documents at the time of interview.

Sd/-
Additional Secretary-cum Director, ICPS
Social Justice Empowerment & Welfare Department
Government of Sikkim.

R.O. No. 753/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19 Date: 02.03.19




ANTHYESTHI KRIYA

The **ANTHYESTHI KRIYA** of our beloved late **Smt. Champawati Basnet**, wife of late Shri B.B. Basnet, who left for heavenly abode on 21st February, 2019 falls on **5th March, 2019.**

All relatives, family friends and well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence at Development Area, Bodhi Marg, Gangtok. We also express our gratitude to all those who stood by us during our time of bereavement.

RS Basnet, Smt B Basnet, PS Basnet,
Smt S Basnet, Smt Kamala Sharma,
DP Sharma, CV Basnet, PV Basnet,
DV Basnet, Jeewan Basnet, Rohan
Sharma, Avinash Sharma, Smt
Bhawana Basnet, Prerna Sharma,
Prabhat Basnet
MOBILE - 9434028015

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Suicides, Still Unaddressed

Awareness camps won't suffice if causes are not known

For a state having to live with the notoriety of having one of the highest suicide rates in the country, Sikkim manages to shrug off its responsibility towards saving lives surprisingly effectively. Death, due to any reason, is a very personal loss. But even while accepting that the norms of privacy require such losses to be mourned in private, when the loss of life is due to suicide, a trend which has reached alarming levels in Sikkim, one hopes that better trained minds and more involved [and responsible] people measured up to the challenge and studied the incidents in more detail. Their enquiry, should it offer a clear explanation, will also point out the course corrections the society needs to adopt to save lives.

This is regrettably still not happening, and the real danger is that given Sikkim's small size, even a slight dip in the number of reported suicides sees it drop from the top of the suicide rate list. When that happens, everyone heaves a faked sigh of relief that the menace has been curbed. But that would not be the case, because, unless clearly and effectively addressed, suicides will remain a very worrying reality irrespective of where Sikkim ranks on the national suicide list. The shock of having become the suicide capital of the nation did not shake things up in the regard and lives, across all age-groups and social strata continue to be lost due to what have to be avoidable reasons; reasons which could have been addressed provided Sikkim bothered to understand the causes, addressed it and provided the required support and counsel. If even the shock of a disturbing number of youth deciding to opt of life does not catalyse mediation, nothing will.

Everyone knows that untreated depression festers into manic levels, triggering suicidal tendencies. We have known that much for a while. What we do not know is what triggers are pushing even a 9-year-old (yes, children that young have also committed suicide in Sikkim), or teenagers for that matter, to such levels of depression that they are committing suicide in what should be the most carefree age. It is no defence that teen or preteen suicides are rare [the last instance of a preteen committing suicide in Sikkim was in 2013 and then there was one in 2009 when an 11-year-old girl hanged herself with a school tie one afternoon after returning from school].

A suicide always makes disturbing news and the psychological health of a State dregs low when a State as small as Sikkim adds ever younger people to the list of victims. It does not take an expert to explain that suicides are born from depression, that much is obvious. It is no longer enough to be told that psychiatric counselling needs to be reached to more people at more places. That should have already happened by now. Awareness camps will no longer suffice, the concerned agency should start investing more of its training in trying to understand and explain why depression is so pervasive in Sikkim and where Sikkim is failing, as a State and as a society, in trying to contain depression from turning morbid and fatal. When the suicide-rate spikes in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra or in Andhra Pradesh, the reasons are known – crop failure. When teen suicides climb in June-July across the country every year, experts know the reason – they blame the board exam results and academic pressure.

Across the country and the world, the reasons prompting suicides are understood in reasonably clear detail and it naturally follows that efforts are mounted to suppress the triggers. No such enquiry has been invested to understand why so many in Sikkim end their lives. The times are now desperate for a detailed analysis to be undertaken.

WRITE US:

Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence.

Mail us at: news@summittimes.com

We talk about artistic inspiration all the time – but scientific inspiration is a thing too

TOM MCLEISH
theconversation.com

I don't know why it took so long to dawn on me – after 20 years of a scientific career – that what we call the “scientific method” really only refers to the second half of any scientific story. It describes how we test and refine the ideas and hypotheses we have about nature through the engagement of experiment or observation and theoretical ideas and models.

But something must happen before this. All of this process rests upon the vital, essential, precious ability to conceive of those ideas in the first place. And, sadly, we talk very little about this creative core of science: the imagining of what the unseen structures in the world might be like.

We need to be more open about it. I have been repeatedly saddened by hearing from school students that they were put off science “because there seemed no room there for my own creativity”. What on earth have we done to leave this formulaic impression of how science works?

SCIENCE AND POETRY

The 20th century biologist Peter Medawar was one of the few recent writers to discuss the role of creativity in science at all. He claimed that we are quietly embarrassed about it, because the imaginative phase of science possesses no “method” at all. In his 1982 book *Pluto's Republic* he points out:

“The weakness of the hypothetico-deductive system, in so far as it might profess to cover a complete account of the scientific process, lies in its disclaiming any power to explain how hypotheses come into being.”

Medawar is equally critical of glib comparisons of scientific creativity to the sources of artistic inspiration. Because whereas the sources of artistic inspiration are often communicated – they “travel” – scientific creativity is very much private. Scientists, he claims, unlike artists, do not share their tentative imaginings or inspired moments, but only the polished results of complete investigations.

The romantic poet William Wordsworth, on the other hand, two centuries ago, foresaw a future in which:

“The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us.”

Here is the need for ideas to “travel” again – which, if Medawar is correct, they have still failed to do. By and large poets still don't write about science (with some notable exceptions such as R S Thomas). Nor is science “an object of contemplation”, as the historian Jacques Barzun put it. Yet the few scientists who have vocalised their experience of formulating new ideas are in no doubt about its contemplative and creative essence. Einstein, in his book with the physicist Leopold Infeld, *The Evolu-*

tion of Physics, wrote:

“I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.”

You don't need to be a great scientist to know this. In my own experience I have seen mathematical solutions in dreams (one dream of a mathematical solution even coming to me and independently and identically to a collaborator on the same

meets a human need, in ways complementary to art or music. Above all I could not deny the extraordinary way that personal stories of creating the new mapped closely onto each other, whether these sprung from an attempt to create a series of mixed-media artworks reflecting the sufferings of war, or the desire to know what astronomical event had unleashed unprecedented X-ray and radio signals.

A common narrative contour of a glimpsed and desired end, a struggle to achieve it, the ex-



night), and imagined a specific structure of protein dynamics while sitting on a hillside.

There is a large literature on “creativity” in science, but I have found nothing that really speaks to the lack of discussion of scientific inspiration today or to the pain of lingering experiences in education that set sciences and the arts and humanities in conflicting and opposed camps.

STORIES OF CREATIVITY

So I set off to ask scientists I knew to narrate, not just their research findings, but the pathways by which they got there. As a sort of “control experiment”, I did the same with poets, composers and artists.

I read past accounts of creation in mathematics (Poincaré is very good), novel-writing (Henry James wrote a book about it), art (from Picasso to my Yorkshire friend, the artist late Graeme Willson), and participated in a two day workshop in Cambridge on creativity with physicists and cosmologists. Philosophy, from medieval to 20th century phenomenology, has quite a lot to add.

From all these tales emerged a different way to think about what science achieves and where it lies in our long human story – as not only a route to knowledge, but also as a contemplative practice that

experience of constraint and dead-end, and even the mysterious “aha” moments that speak of hidden and sub-conscious processes of thought choosing their moments to communicate into our consciousness – all this is a story shared among scientists and artists alike.

In my resulting book – *The Poetry and Music of Science* – I try to make sense of why science's imaginative and creative core is so hidden, and how to bring it into the light. It's not the book I first imagined – it just wouldn't permit a structure of separate accounts of scientific and artistic creativity. Their entanglements run too deep for that.

Instead there emerged three “modes” of imagination that both science and art engage: the visual, the textual and the abstract. We think in pictures, in words, and in the abstract forms that we call mathematics and music. It has become increasingly obvious to me that the “two cultures” division between the humanities and sciences is an artificial invention of the late 19th century. Perhaps the best way to address this is simply to ignore it, and start talking to one another more.

[the writer is Professor of Natural Philosophy in the Department of Physics, University of York]

Michael Cohen's verbal somersault, 'I lied, but I'm not a liar,' translated by a rhetoric expert

JENNIFER MERCEICA
theconversation.com

Michael Cohen, who admits to lying, also says he's not a liar.

Can we separate what someone does from who they are? Cohen thinks we should and it would help us to understand both him and Trump better.

Cohen, Donald Trump's former personal attorney and fixer, testified before Congress about his former client Wednesday.

Cohen claimed that he wanted “to correct the record” about his previous testimony. Correcting the record now, Cohen hoped, would prove to the nation that lying was what Cohen did, but not who he is.

“I have lied, but I am not a liar,” said Cohen. “I have done bad things, but I am not a bad man,” he assured Congress.

At issue in Cohen's testimony, therefore, were the points of stasis, a Greek term used here to mean “points of argument.”

Those stases centered on fact and quality: What happened and how should we judge it?

As a scholar and teacher of rhetoric and argumentation who is finishing a book about Trump's presidential campaign, I paid close attention to how Cohen explained his actions on Trump's behalf to Congress.

Cohen relied on the argumentative strategy of dissociation – it's not this, it's that – to carefully separate his actions from his essence and Trump's actions from Trump's essence.

EXONERATE COHEN, IMPLICATE TRUMP

According to this strategy a person who lies is not necessarily a liar; a person who does bad things is not

necessarily a bad person.

The strategy invites audiences to separate the elements of an apparent unity – the person who does the thing is the thing – so that each can

one of the more heated exchanges of the testimony.

Cohen's testimony wasn't just about his own essence, it was also about Trump's essence.



be judged separately. By doing this, Cohen attempted to exonerate himself and implicate Trump in several fraudulent schemes and attempted to define Trump's essence as a “racist, a con man, and a cheat.”

Trump called Cohen a liar when he tweeted – and then retweeted while Cohen was testifying – that Cohen was disbarred for “lying and fraud” and that he lied again in his testimony. Cohen is a liar who lied, it is his essence, claimed Trump.

Likewise, Republican lawmakers who questioned him rejected Cohen's attempt to dissociate actions from essence.

“If you've lied, then you are a liar,” Georgia Rep. Jody Hice told Cohen, in

“Mr. Trump is an enigma,” testified Cohen. “He is complicated, as am I. He has both good and bad, as do we all.”

Cohen explained to Congress that Trump's complicated nature, like his own, could best be understood by separating Trump's actions from his essence.

According to Cohen, Trump's actions made him appear to be something that he is not. Like the Trump brand's signature gilding, what was manifest on the outside was not what was on the inside. Trump's exterior may glitter with gold, but according to Cohen, Trump does not have a heart of gold.

“The bad far outweighs the good,” said Cohen. Trump “is capable of be-

having kindly, but he is not kind. He is capable of committing acts of generosity, but he is not generous. He is capable of being loyal, but he is fundamentally disloyal.”

BETWEEN ACTION AND ESSENCE

A central issue of Cohen's testimony was about the distinction between appearance and reality, between his and Trump's actions and their respective essences.

Cohen has invited the nation to render two separate judgments about himself and about Trump. The nation ought to render opposite judgments, argued Cohen, but both cases ought to be decided based upon a person's essential character.

To make sense of Cohen's testimony, the fundamental question is this: How should the actions of people like Trump and

Cohen be judged?

Is a person a liar because they lie? Is a person kind because they appear to be kind? Should we dissociate the quality of the person from their actions? The fate of the nation may hang on its citizens' ability to judge correctly.

“Mr. Cohen, you call Mr. Trump a cheat,” Kentucky Rep. James Comer said to Cohen during the testimony.

“What would you call yourself?” Comer asked.

Cohen answered: “A fool.”

Was Cohen a fool – or did he merely act foolishly?

[the writer is Associate Professor of Communication, Texas A&M University]

VIP Buses in Myanmar Roads

C. K. LEPCHA

If anyone was to ask our mode of transport while traveling across Myanmar, it has been the bus – night bus to be more specific. The first stretch from Tamu to Mandalay was on a van but after that, it has been the trusted night bus to each new city we go.

These days' people that I know hardly to travel by bus because flight fares have gotten cheaper and they think it saves a lot of time and the unnecessary hassle of traveling by road. But for me, being stationed in Shimla means I take the night bus from Delhi to Shimla and back every time I have to travel out of state. So, my long standing affair with night buses is at a place where I can't live with or live without.

But traveling by night buses in Southeast Asia has taught me to save both time and money. Air travel within the country is slightly more expensive in Myanmar than in India so we have taken the night bus journey like that's the only way to travel from one city to another.

There are certain perks starting with the fact that bus fares are usually very affordable and can be bought easily. Secondly, night bus travel means we sleep on the bus and actually gain a day for traveling instead of when you travel during the day and lose out on that travel time too. Also, when one wakes up in the morning, one is rested and have arrived in a new city ready to explore. Thirdly, we save money for the night's halt at a hotel which we could use for another city that we could squeeze in between. So it's a win-win situ-

ation when you have limited time and want to maximize your trip in a new country.

These VIP buses in Myanmar are large buses somewhat like those Volvo buses one finds with the Himachal Transport. It is usually clean and comfortable to begin with as the bus steward hands you a kit with a small toothbrush, toothpaste and face towels. The steward himself is neatly dressed and converses with tourists in his modest English. There is usually a TV or two on the bus but most people request it to be switched off. At



one time, the bus was playing an episode of the Jodha Akbar dra-



ma series and the only ones who seemed to enjoy was the steward and the driver. This also tells us of

realize our influence in these filmy affairs because the farther one travels east, our Hindi serials gets dubbed in different Southeast Asian languages.

While one may not find time to interact with local people on these bus rides, the driver usually stops for food/ bathroom break at these local joints that provides ample opportunity to observe and even make conversation with the Burmese people. These stops are fun because you can choose from the local food, local snacks, local fruits that is available and if you don't want any of those, the buses are quite a sight to catch too.

Parked in the front lot of the restaurants, one can see the amount of artwork that has gone in designing the VIP buses. When we hurriedly got on the bus, we did not realize that our bus was 'The Grand Canyon' complete with silhouetted cowboys and the setting sun. There was one with Mt. Fuji and sakura while other



buses had hippie vibes

along with Disney and Hollywood hits. The painting on these buses reminded me of South Asian trucks but the bus paintings were slightly different. It was more contemporary and attractive. It felt a little like jumping from one movie set to another because each bus had its own theme. So no two buses were the same and it was an easy indicator for passengers

to find their buses I hope.

It was perhaps also a way to cover up for the Myanmar roads that seemed to carry a few too many pot holes and rough riding across the country. While we may be wrong in judging the roads and infrastructure of the country, my friend rightly put what I was thinking, "we may have better roads, but Myanmar definitely has better buses than India".

Manipur to increase monthly pension for retired journalists

IMPHAL, MAR 2 (PTI): The Information and Public Relation Minister of Manipur Th Bishwajit Singh Saturday said the process to increase the monthly pension for retired journalists and ex-gratia for families of the deceased scribes is underway.

A cabinet memo regarding this has been prepared as well, Singh said in the assembly, while responding to a query raised by a legislator, O Surjakumar.

"The cabinet will soon pass the welfare scheme despite being delayed due to some obstacles," Singh said.

He told the assembly that at present the monthly pension for retired journalists is Rs 4,000 and it will be increased to Rs 10,000.

The family pension (for families of the deceased journalists) will be increased from Rs 2,000 to Rs 5,000 per month, Singh said.

Singh also said that the one time ex-gratia for families journalists, who died in unfortunate incidents, will be increased from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 5 lakh.

The retirement age of journalists in the state is 60 years, officials said.

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Materials and Memories in Darjeeling Hills

RONGNYOO LEPCHA,

The British came to India to expand their colonies, looking for riches they could add to their treasury and labourers who could work at cheaper rates. The relationship between the two countries was one of exploitation, the former a parasite who only fed on the nutrition of the latter and took all that it wanted for 200 years. There is no denying that they brought with them various opportunities and development but they took more much more than what they offered. As they grew their roots in India they had to face many problems one of which was the heat. The British wanted an escape from the harsh Indian summer and luckily for them the country provided just the right abode in Darjeeling. The British found refuge in these hills where the cool mountain breeze would calm their scorched souls. These hills would be used as summer homes for the colonizers one of which became known as 'The Queen of hills' and its name stuck in minds across the world famous for its world renowned tea.

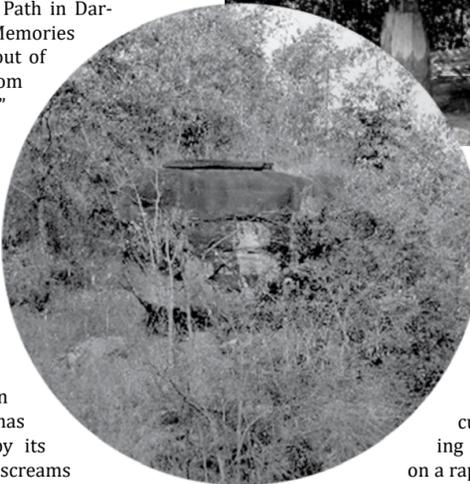
Continuously shrouded in fog, Darjeeling seemed hidden from the rest of the world and for those who could get into this misty land would be spellbound by its beauty. The view of Mt. Kanchenjunga on a clear day is magic to the eyes, the boulevard of rhododendrons mark the onset of spring and in the autumn wild sunflowers smiling along the tea gardens are a feast to the eyes as one climbs up to Darjeeling. The hills light up during the tourist season as people from far and near come to consume the scenic splendours Darjeeling has to offer. The snow clad mountains, old British heritage are always the favourites. With time the town has grown more than its capacity as the cluster of houses began to grow and the natural resour-

ces began to shrink including the most important one that was water. Now water is available only on wooden carts in buckets of blue yellow and white held by men to be sold.

The town as Parimal Bhattacharya states in his book No Path in Darjeeling is Straight: Memories of a Hill Town, grew out of "the need to escape from the uncertainty of life" came looking for jobs secure homes that would build a strong foundation for their children and in best never ending race people gave their own to make a living.

Despite its unmeasurable beauty the place has seen much darker days. It has seen streets ablaze by its own people and heard screams of justice. It has seen red on the streets for those who were sacrificed in the dogmatic clashes. For months there was nothing except silence but an echo that constantly haunts the people, a demand for separate recognition. The struggle to deviate and form a separate identity has been going on since a very long time but people have been constantly laid waste to disappointment. Landslides snatched away life turning them into nothing but rebels. With all this chaos underneath the cloak of the mists led to many changes and as contact among communities increased the cultures diluted.

FIELDWORK REFLECTIONS



In my quest for materials and objects, I was met by the most memorable experiences. Though many assume that the Lepcha culture of Darjeeling has been diluted on a rapid rate, there are still many cultural pockets that are alive and operating. There are still families worshipping the mountains on a daily basis when most of us have already adopted Buddhism and its deities. There are histories that are written and there are the ones that are not but still remembered at heart.

Memories can serve a great piece of papyrus and events as inks engrave the pieces of histories collected every day, and what better way to reignite these memories than to travel to places these histories originated. Here there are places hidden in plain sight carrying the treasure of the old gods. At the bottom of Dhajea Busty near the border to Mirik lays Jey Dum a treasure box made of stone sealed away which according to the Lepchas carries the treasures from Mayel Lyang and was left there. Who knew the story of the two major rivers Rongnyoo and Rangeet would continue on this part of Mayel Lyang. The treasure chest is believed to be left there by the daughter of Rongnyoo and Rongeeet as she too like her mother and father wanted to explore the plains and for her journey she carried all the jewellery given by her mother Rongnyoo and left home. As she reached the border of Mayel

Lyang, she realised her mistake of bringing the valuable jewellery, so she left it at the border of Mayel Lang and continued her journey. A little further Suhu-ji which today is known as cap dhunga as it looks like nature's cap. The view of Namsong Partam was a memorable one, Kurseong sitting right above it on the right was Mirik and on the Left was Darjeeling town and in the middle sits a huge plain ground where the Lepchas used to celebrate Namsong (yearly celebration on the advent of new year) today just used for picnics and an annual small scale. Though the scale is smaller the effort is still exists and until this continues there is light at the end of the tunnel.

All these stories are still alive in the memories of the people. With the problem of finding a space in Darjeeling, the Lepcha night schools are still operating within homes as some are generous enough to provide a space and supporting those willing to learn. Dokemoo Lee (Lepcha traditional house) are being rebuilt one recently built is at Dhajea Busty which also acts as a homestay for tourists. Change in inevitable but the willingness to learn and preserve are important. If we look closely every culture living in close vicinity with each other has some characteristic borrowed for the other and vice versa, the Lepchas are no different it's just the level varies from place to place depending on the situations that were appropriate for contact. The idea of conservation is a recent one rose out of the need to protect the coming generation from oblivion, it always has been and will be for the future and the generations to come that people work hard. As long as the willingness and the effort to learn is still alive among the conscience of people the culture is certain to survive.

[the writer is a PhD Scholar, Department of Anthropology, Sikkim University]



US freestyle skier Logan suspended over drug test

LOS ANGELES, MAR 2 (AFP): Olympic slope-style skiing silver medalist Devin Logan has been given a drug suspension after testing positive for the banned cannabis derivative tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the United States Anti-Doping Agency said.

Logan, who won silver at the 2014 Sochi Olympics, blamed the positive test on inaccurate labelling of a product she had used before competing at the Copper Grand Prix in December, where the test was taken.

The 26-year-old's six-month suspension was backdated to the date of her drug test on December 7, and reduced to three months after she completed a USADA anti-doping educational tutorial, the agency said on Friday. "I made a serious mistake and I accept that completely," Logan wrote on Facebook.

"I was using a CBD (cannabidiol) product that I felt was helping me, but I trusted that the product did not contain any more than the tiny trace elements of THC that it said on the packaging." After the positive test, however, Logan's team analysed the substance she had taken and discovered THC levels "much higher than labelled."

"I know this is not an excuse," she said.

"I should not have trusted the product and I want this to be a serious lesson for anyone using CBD products.

"They may have benefits, but using CBD products comes with major risks and I am the proof of those risks.

Johnny Depp slaps USD 50 million defamation lawsuit on Amber Heard

LOS ANGELES, MAR 2 (PTI): Hollywood star Johnny Depp has filed a USD 50 million defamation lawsuit against his ex-wife and actor Amber Heard for accusing him of domestic violence in an article.

According to The Blast, the 55-year-old actor's lawsuit is his response to Heard's Washington Post op-ed that she wrote last year, in which she claimed to be a victim of abuse.

"Ms. Heard is not a victim of domestic abuse, she is a perpetrator," says the suit, while calling the allegations against Depp as "hoax".

Heard "purported to write from the perspective of 'a public figure representing domestic abuse' and claimed that she 'felt the full force of our culture's wrath for women who speak out' when she 'spoke up against sexual violence,'" Depp's lawyers stated in the lawsuit.

In the op-ed, Heard, 32, had revealed that she lost out on a number of film roles as a result of the "full force of our culture's wrath for women who speak out". She had also claimed that she received death threats after she accused Depp of domestic violence.

ATK hope to finish on high against inform Delhi

KOLKATA, MAR 2 (PTI): Their qualifying hopes dashed, two-time former champions ATK will look to conclude their campaign on a winning note when they face an inform Delhi Dynamos in the Indian Super League here Sunday.

ATK suffered a crushing 1-3 defeat to Mumbai City at home for their second successive loss and sixth overall to be eliminated from the playoff race.

For a brief period, after the season resumed in January, it looked as if ATK had completely turned things around.

With the signing of Edu Garcia, ATK looked like a potent threat, picking up an impressive 2-1 against Jamshedpur FC earlier this month.

However, dropping points at FC Pune City and then losing 0-3 at FC Goa meant they were back in the elimination zone



before Mumbai completed the formalities in the previous match. Under tremendous pressure, it would be interesting to see how ATK coach Steve Coppell manages the team against the resurgent Dynamos, who are on a six-match unbeaten run.

"Who knows whether or not I'll be here next

season. It's not my decision. We still have one game left this season."

"The league will get more demanding so you need more good players who are resilient and have the ability to win games.

"We haven't been consistent enough this season and I didn't feel our balance of the

first 11 matches in the competition without a single win, the Dynamos have found their mojo back but it's too little for them as they also are out of the playoff race and have two matches left in the season.

The highlight of their season came during their outing against Bengaluru as the Lions came from behind to beat the table toppers 3-2.

On the attacking front, Delhi have the ability to cause problems with the likes of Ulises Davila and Lallianzuala Chhangte in their ranks.

Indian youngster Daniel Lalhlipui made a big impact against Bengaluru with a brace and will be hoping for yet another fine show against the home team ATK.

In defence, Gianni Zuiverloon and Marti Crespí will be tasked with keeping the likes of Kalu Uche, Garcia at bay.

Inter get Champions League jitters with Cagliari loss



PARIS, MAR 2 (AFP): Inter Milan's hopes of enjoying an untroubled run into the Champions League next season suffered a setback with a shock 2-1 defeat at Cagliari.

Inter remain in third place but can slip to fourth -- and the last automatic qualifying spot for the Champions League -- if city rivals AC Milan see off Sassuolo at the San Siro on Saturday.

Should fifth-placed Roma defeat Lazio on Saturday, then they will

go level with Inter on 47 points. Inter, still without an unsettled striker and skipper Mauro Icardi, slipped a goal down in Sardinia on Friday after 31 minutes when Luca Ceppitelli headed home.

Lautaro Martinez levelled with another header seven minutes later from a cross by former Cagliari player Radja Nainggolan.

But with half-time approaching, Leonardo Pavoletti restored his team's lead with a smart

volley. Cagliari could have heaped further misery on Inter in stoppage time at the end of the game but Nicolo Barella missed a penalty kick.

Friday's result represented another twist in a rollercoaster season for Luciano Spalletti's side.

After defeats to Torino and Bologna, Inter then put together back-to-back wins over Parma and Sampdoria before being held to a 3-3 draw at Fiorentina after having led 3-1.

UNSC blacklists Osama bin Laden's son, seen as successor of Al Qaida leader al-Zawahiri



YOSHITA SINGH UNITED NATIONS, MAR 2 (PTI): The UN Security Council has designated Hamza bin Laden, the son of slain Al Qaida chief Osama bin Laden, under its sanctions list, describing the terrorist, thought to be based near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, as the "most probable successor" of the group's current leader Aiman al-Zawahiri.

The UN Security Council's 1267 ISIS and Al Qaida Sanctions Committee listed 29-year-old Hamza bin Laden on Thursday, the day the US announced a reward of up to one million dollars for information about him.

Saudi Arabia also announced Friday it had revoked the citizenship of Hamza bin Laden via a royal decree in November.

A Security Council press release said al-Zawahiri has announced that the Saudi Arabia-born Hamza bin Laden is an official member of Al Qaida. Hamza bin Laden has called for followers of Al-Qaida to commit terror attacks. Is seen as the most probable successor of al-Zawahiri, the powerful 15-member Council said.

The sanctions list subjected him to a travel ban, assets freeze and an arms embargo.

An assets freeze under the Sanctions Committee requires that all states freeze without delay the funds and other financial assets or economic resources of designated individuals and entities.

The travel ban entails preventing the en-

try into or transit by all states through their territories by designated individuals.

Under the arms embargo, all states are required to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale and transfer from their territories or by their nationals outside their territories, or using their flag vessels or aircraft, of arms and related materiel of all types, spare parts, and technical advice, assistance, or training related to military activities, to designated individuals and entities.

Just hours before the UNSC Sanctions Committee designated Hamza bin Laden, the US State Department's Rewards for Justice Program announced a reward for up to USD 1 million for information leading to his identification or location in any country, saying he is emerging as a leader in the Al Qaida franchise.

"Since at least August 2015, he has released audio and video messages on the Internet calling on his followers to launch attacks against the United States and its Western allies, and he has threatened attacks against the United States in revenge for the May 2011 killing of his father by U.S. service members, the State Department said.

In January 2017, the State Department had listed Hamza bin Laden as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, freezing all of his assets based in the United States or in the possession or control of US persons. The designation also prohibited US persons from engaging in transactions with him.

Bengaluru FC sign Alex Barrera on short-term deal

BENGALURU, MAR 2 (PTI): Bengaluru FC have signed midfielder Alejandro 'lex' Barrera Garcia, the Indian Super League club announced on Saturday.

The 27-year-old midfielder joins on short-term deal till the end of the season replacing Australian Erik Paartalu who has been ruled out of action since picking up an injury against Chennaiyin FC on February 9.

"Losing Erik Paartalu ahead of games that will decide the season for us has been a big blow. He was crucial in our midfield and his winning character helps us in the tough games. But we have to accept the circumstances and move on.

"In Alex we have a temporary replacement who brings with him experience and physicality

in the middle of the pitch. We are sure he will help us as we enter the home stretch," said Blues' head coach Carles Cuadrat.

The midfielder, who will be plying his trade outside Spain for the first time, said he was upbeat about the opportunity to take the field for the Blues.

"Since I was playing regularly before coming to India, I am fit and want to get onto the field as soon as possible. I want to work with the team and the players to get comfortable with all the boys quickly," said Barrera after completing formalities.

Barrera becomes the sixth Spaniard at the club this season and believes the presence of fellow countrymen in the side will help him settle quicker ahead of the play-offs.

Kane at the double in NZ's record 715-6 against Bangladesh



Hamilton (New Zealand), Mar 2 (AFP): New Zealand's first innings record 715 for six, including a double century from Kane Williamson, put them in total control of the first Test against Bangladesh after three days on Saturday.

New Zealand's huge total gave them their biggest ever first innings lead of 481 and by stumps, with two days remaining, Bangladesh were 174 for four, still 307 behind.

On an explosive day of batting in which 438 runs were scored, Tamim Iqbal gave Bangladesh a flying start to their reply as they raced to 88 without loss.

But when Neil Wagner's relentless barrage of bouncers captured the wicket of Shadman Iqbal for 37, it quickly became 126 for four.

Mominul Haque and Mohammad Mithun barely registered and Tamim was caught behind for 76.

The opener ducked under a Tim Southee bouncer but left his bat held high with the ball ricocheting off the periscope into the gloves of BJ Watling. Soumya Sarkar on 39 with Mahmudullah on 15 held the innings together for 13 overs through to stumps.

New Zealand skipper Williamson resumed the day on 93 and calmly worked his way to his 20th century, the most by a New Zealander, and in his 71st Test he passed 6,000 runs faster and with a better average than any of his

countrymen. At the other end, Neil Wagner and Colin de Grandhomme pounded the bowling as New Zealand piled on 264 runs from 45 overs and went 25 runs passed their previous best 690 against Pakistan in 2014.

Mehidy Hasan, while he bagged two wickets, bore the brunt of the assault and finished with the most expensive Test figures ever for Bangladesh of two for 246 from 49 overs.

Pre-lunch, Williamson was content to take a backseat as nightwatchman Wagner blazed away for 47 runs -- 42 from boundaries -- in their 60-run stand.

It was Ebadat Hosain, on debut, who made the breakthrough with his maiden Test wicket to deny Wagner a maiden fifty when he shaved the edge of the bat and wicketkeeper Liton Das completed the dismissal. Big-hitting Colin de Grandhomme took New Zealand past their previous record score of 690 with a huge six, one of five in his whirlwind innings of 76 not out.

The foundations for New Zealand's domination were laid by openers Tom Latham and Jeet Raval with their 254-run partnership after Bangladesh had been rolled in their first innings for 234. When Williamson reached 100 it became only the 13th time in cricket history, and the second time by New Zealand, that the first three batsmen had reached three figures.

Novel talks of love, Great Bengal Circus and tiger woman



NEW DELHI, MAR 2 (PTI): A historical novel places a tragic love triangle in an era of patriotism, as the Great Bengal Circus becomes a metaphor for a frustrated social revolution, while also shedding a light on the first female trapeze player.

"Tiger Woman" by Sirsho Bandopadhyay and translated by Arunava Sinha from the Bengali version "Shardulsundori" is set in the Calcutta of the 1880s.

Nationalism is on the rise and Bengali intellectuals are leading the protest against British rule in India. In this charged climate, ardent patriot Priyanath Bose prepares to set up the

first Bengali circus.

Soon he discovers an exceptional young girl, Sushila, and trains her to be a trapeze artist. As the circus flourishes and big animal acts are introduced, Sushila and the tigers become the star attractions.

But the prize Sushila craves is unattainable, as Priyanath, a married man, is forced to reject her love for him. Jilted, she begins a relationship with a fellow circus artiste, but he may not be as loyal as Sushila believes, and his escape acts are now a bigger hit than 'Sushilasundari and the Tigers'.

Things were going on as usual when one

day Fortune, the tiger, attacked Sushila. Her shoulder, neck and one side of the face had been mangled by the tiger's claw.

There were deep gashes from the tiger's teeth, the flesh sliced open, streaming with blood.

Though Sushila survived this life-threatening accident, the tiger's mauling incapacitated her for the rest of her life. She did not return to the circus, although she did get a regular pension. She died in 1924 at the age of 45.

Bandopadhyay's debut novel is brought out in English by Pan Macmillan India.

US seeks information on Pakistan's potential misuse of F-16s

LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, MAR 2 (PTI): The US is seeking more information from Pakistan on the potential misuse of American-made F-16 fighter jets by it against India in violation of the end-user agreement, the State Department has said.

The Indian Air Force on Thursday displayed parts of an AMRAAM beyond visual range air-to-air missile as evidence to "conclusively" prove that Pakistan deployed US-manufactured F-16 fighter jets during an aerial raid targeting Indian military installations in Kashmir after India's anti-terror operation in Balakot.

Pakistan on Wednesday categorically said that no F-16 fighter jets were used and denied that one of its planes had been downed by the Indian Air Force.

"We are aware of these reports and are seeking more information," a State Department spokesperson told PTI when asked about report that Pakistan has violated end-user agreement with the United States in this week's border clash with India. "Due



to non-disclosure agreements in Foreign Military Sales contracts, we cannot discuss the specifics of end user-agreements contained within," Lt Col Kone Faulkner, a Defense Department spokesperson told PTI.

The United States, which is the largest seller of high-tech defence equipment globally, has a strong end-user monitoring agreement, and as a matter of practice takes all allegations of misuse of defense articles very seriously.

But before making

any judgement or arriving at any conclusion, it needs to establish some facts on the ground, if there has been any violation by Pakistan to the F-16 end-user agreement it signed with the United States.

Publicly available documents reveal that US has imposed nearly a dozen restriction on Pakistan related to its use of F-16.

During a Congressional hearing on July 20, 2006, John Miller the then Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs, had told lawmakers that the United

States has "very carefully considered" the potential risks of the diversion of US technology and equipment."

While the exact details of the restrictions were discussed in a closed-door session, and thus remains classified, Miller then broadly outlined some of the restrictions, which he said were over a "dozen new and unprecedented elements" of the security plan for Pakistan.

Miller then told lawmakers that the security provisions also include

semi-annual inventories of all F-16 aircraft equipment and munitions, including related technical data, and more frequent inventories for other systems.

"There is a two-man rule, so to speak, for access to this equipment and restricted areas, and F-16 flights outside of Pakistan or participation in exercises and operations with third nations must be approved in advance by the United States government," the then top State Department official said, according to the transcripts of the hearing.

Qureshi says Indian pilot not released under 'any pressure'

ISLAMABAD, MAR 2 (PTI):

Pakistan was not under "pressure" or "any compulsion" to release Indian pilot Abhinandan Varthaman, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said on Saturday, a day after the IAF Wing Commander returned home.

India has been maintaining that the Pakistani decision is in consonance with the Geneva Conventions.

Pakistan was under intense pressure from the US, the UAE and Saudi Arabia to de-escalate the tensions with India in the wake of the Pulwama terror attack and release the Indian pilot.

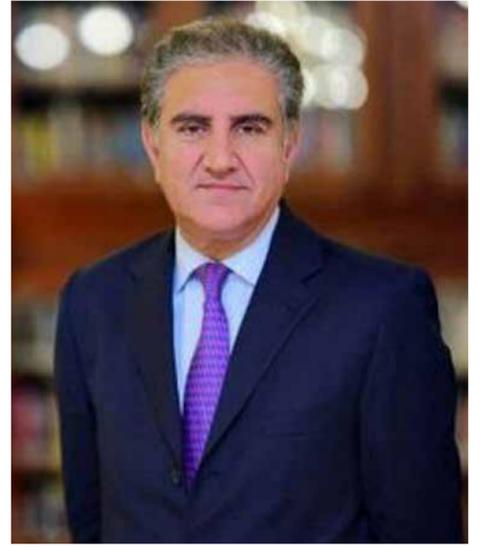
In an interview with BBC Urdu, Qureshi said: "We wanted to convey to them (India) that we do not want to increase your sorrow, we do not want your citizens to be miserable, we want peace."

Varthaman returned to Pakistan on Friday to a hero's welcome, nearly 60 hours after he was captured following a dogfight when his MiG 21 was shot down.

Qureshi dismissed the notion that the captured IAF pilot was released owing to pressure or as a compulsion.

"Pakistan will not allow anti-state elements to risk the peace of the country or the region. We plan on taking action against extremist groups," Geo news quoted him as saying.

India has repeatedly told Pakistan to act against terror groups operating from its soil and recently handed



over dossier containing "specific details" of the involvement of the JeM in the Pulwama terror attack and the presence of camps of the UN-proscribed terror outfit in Pakistan.

"There was no pressure on Pakistan to release him nor any compulsion," Qureshi told BBC Urdu.

He said that Pakistan does not want the peace of the region to be risked over politics.

"Pakistan does not want to go in the past, but if it goes in the past, then we will have to see how the attack on Parliament, Pathankot and Uri took place and that is a long story," the foreign minister said.

Qureshi reiterated that if evidence is shared against Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), then action will be taken. On Friday he admitted that JeM's chief Masood Azhar was in Pakistan.

The IAF pilot's release was seen as a major step towards defusing a tense situation triggered by India's retaliation over Pakistan's continued support for terrorism.

Tensions between India and Pakistan flared up after a suicide bomber of Pakistan-based terror group JeM killed 40 CRPF personnel in Kashmir on February 14.

Amid mounting outrage, the IAF carried out a counter-terror operation, hitting what it said was a JeM training camp in Balakot, deep inside Pakistan on February 26. The next day, Pakistan retaliated with a large air formation, comprising 24 fighter jets, including F-16s.

Varthaman was in one of the eight MiG-21s that took on the invading Pakistan Air Force jets and shot down an F-16, according to Indian officials.

UK minister signs extradition order for wanted bookie Sanjeev Chawla

ADITI KHANNA

LONDON, MAR 2 (PTI): UK Home Secretary Sajid Javid has ordered the extradition of alleged bookie Sanjeev Chawla to India to face charges of cricket match-fixing dating back to 2000.

The UK Home Office confirmed on Saturday that the minister had given the go-ahead for Chawla to be sent to India after Westminster Magistrates' Court had over-ruled its previous ruling earlier this year to find no bars to his extradition. Chawla, a key accused in the cricket match-fixing scandal involving former South African captain Hansie Cronje in 2000, has 14 days from the date of the order to file an application to seek leave to appeal against the order.

"On 27 February 2019, the Secretary of State (Javid), having carefully considered all relevant matters, signed the order for Sanjeev Chawla's extradition to India," said a Home Office spokesperson.

"Sanjeev Chawla is accused in India of match fixing in international cricket," the spokesperson said. This is the second extradition order for India to be signed by Javid, the senior-most Pakistani-origin minister in the UK Cabinet, after he ordered the extradition of embattled liquor tycoon Vijay Mallya last month to face fraud and money laundering charges amounting to an alleged Rs 9,000 crores in India.

Mallya has since filed an application seeking leave to appeal against the order, which is currently pending in the UK High Court.

It is yet to be confirmed if Chawla will file a similar application against his extradition order, which follows a long-drawn legal battle since his arrest in June 2016. Following

an initial extradition trial, Westminster Magistrates' Court in London had concluded in October 2017 that while the 50-year-old had a prima facie case to answer, his human rights could not be guaranteed in Delhi's Tihar Jail, where he was to be held.

This ruling was challenged in the UK High Court by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), arguing on behalf of the Indian authorities. In a judgment handed down in the Royal Courts of Justice in London in November last year, Lord Justice Leggatt and Justice Dingemans upheld the Indian government's appeal and directed the District Judge at Westminster Magistrates' Court to review the order against the 50-year-old.

The High Court judges accepted the assurances provided by the Indian government that the accused will be accommodated in a cell to be occupied exclusively by him, with proper safety and security and complying with the personal space and hygiene requirements the court expects. India had also made further guarantees on medical facilities and protection from intra-prisoner violence in the jail.

In January this year, the lower court issued a fresh order in favour of Chawla's extradition, which was sent to the UK home secretary, who formally signs off on the order under the India-UK Extradition Treaty.

According to court documents in the case, Chawla is described as a Delhi-born businessman who moved to the UK on a business visa in 1996, where he has been based while making trips back and forth to India. After his Indian passport was revoked in 2000, he obtained a UK passport in 2005 and is now a British citizen.

At least 23 Afghan security forces killed in Taliban attack on US-Afghan base



KANDAHAR, MAR 1 (AFP): At least 23 Afghan security forces were killed in a Taliban attack on a joint US-Afghan base in southwestern Afghanistan, officials said Friday, as fighting continued during a pause in peace talks between the insurgents and American negotiators.

Details of the heavy toll from the hours-long assault on Shorab military base -- one of the largest military installations in the country -- followed earlier claims by local and US officials that Afghan forces had successfully repelled the attack, killing four militants.

The pre-dawn assault, claimed by the Taliban, saw militants enter the base in Helmand province and engage in firefights with Afghan forces.

Hours later, Ghafoor Ahmad Jawed, a spokesman with the Ministry of Defence, said: "The operation is over -- 23 security forces killed, 15 injured and 20 insurgents killed."

Omar Zwak -- a spokesman for the provincial governor -- also confirmed the toll, saying the Taliban deployed at least seven suicide bombers who were killed during the fighting.

A US official told

AFP that no Americans were killed or wounded in the attack.

The Taliban control or contest more than half of Helmand's districts and regularly deliver sharp blows to Afghan forces, who have been struggling to hold off insurgents across the war-torn country since taking the lead from NATO forces in late 2014.

The assault on Shorab comes as US and Taliban negotiators in Doha have temporarily halted peace talks, which are set to restart over the weekend.

US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad earlier this week called the latest meetings in the months-long diplomatic push "productive", saying the two sides "will take the next two days for internal deliberations, with plans to regroup on Saturday."

Negotiations are believed to be progressing after high-level talks last month ended with a "draft framework" on the potential withdrawal of US troops and a pact to prevent Afghanistan from harbouring terrorists.

A New York Times report published Thursday hinted that US forces could leave Afghanistan within five years under a Pentagon plan offered

as part of a potential deal with the Taliban to end the nearly 18-year war.

The US has also pushed for a ceasefire and the opening of a dialogue between the Taliban and the Kabul government -- demands that have been repeatedly rejected by the insurgents.

The Taliban were quick to dismiss the existence of the plan, saying they were unaware of any such proposals made during the negotiations.

"No talks have been held in the meetings regarding an interim government and elections, nor has the US side proposed anything regarding staying in Afghanistan for four or five more years," the insurgents said in a statement Friday.

The Afghan government and civil society groups have voiced repeated concerns that an abrupt US withdrawal could spark an even bloodier civil war or a return to hardline Taliban rule.

Heavy snowfall across large swathes of Afghanistan has led to a sharp reduction in violence this winter, but warmer weather in the country's south will likely spark an increase in bloodshed with the arrival of the spring fighting season.

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Ali Fazal's next Hollywood project expected to roll from Jan 2020



After "Victoria and Abdul", Ali Fazal is starring in another Hollywood project, which is expected to go on floors next year.

Fazal started out in Hollywood with a cameo in the seventh installment of the "Fast and Furious" franchise before bagging the lead opposite Judi Dench in "Victoria and Abdul."

"It's a biopic, a war drama. But it's going to take time. I'm very new in the market there, barely one film old so they have to attach big names to it in the other cast. That's happening right now," Ali told PTI.

The actor says there's also one indie project but he has to wrap up his commitments here first.

"We were supposed to start the biopic by the end of this year but I think now it will be January 2020. I've to finish my commitments here first."

The actor will also be shooting for Amazon Prime Video's India original "Mirzapur" season two.

The first season of the show, created Puneet Krishna and directed by Gurmmeet Singh, featured an ensemble cast of Pankaj Tripathi, Ali, Vikrant Massey, Shweta Tripathi, Rasika Dugal, Divyendu Sharma and Kulbhushan Kharbanda

"The series is going further because the writing is not one dimensional, there are so many layers. In part two, the audience thinks it will be all about revenge but there's so much more that will happen.

"My best wishes to 'Sacred Games' too because I'm excited about that as an audience," he said.

On the film front, the actor will be next seen in Tigmanshu Dhulia's "Milan Talkies", scheduled to release on March 15.

Carrie Coon, Finn Wolfhard in talks for new 'Ghostbusters' movie

LOS ANGELES, MAR 2 (PTI): "Stranger Things" star Finn Wolfhard and actor Carrie Coon are in negotiations to star in Jason Reitman's new "Ghostbusters" film.

The much talked about film will see Coon and Wolfhard playing mother and son, sources close to the production told Variety.

Coon, 38, is best known for the series, "Fargo" and "The Sinner". She most recently starred in Steve McQueen's "Widows".

Wolfhard, 16, is currently awaiting the release of season three of his smash-hit Netflix show "Stranger Things". He will also reprise his role from "It" in the film's upcoming sequel.

Reitman, whose directorial credits includes movies such as "Juno", "Up in the Air" and most recently the political drama "The Front Runner", had confirmed in January that he will be directing the latest installment of the famed franchise.

His 72-year-old father, Ivan Reitman, had directed the original "Ghostbuster" films which featured Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis as parapsychology professors who hunts ghosts.

The filmmaker recently came under fire on social media after he made the statement that he plans to hand over the reins of "Ghostbusters" franchise to its fans. Reitman had said that his take on the beloved franchise will be a love letter to the fans.

The 41-year-old director's comments were seen as a potshot on the 2016 all-female "Ghostbusters" reboot that featured Melissa McCarthy, Leslie Jones, Kristen Wiig, Kate McKinnon, and Chris Hemsworth.

After an uproar, Reitman tweeted an apology. "Wo, that came out wrong! I have nothing but admiration for Paul and Leslie and Kate and Melissa and Kristen and the bravery with which they made 'Ghostbusters' 2016. They expanded the universe and made an amazing movie!" he wrote on the microblogging site. Reitman's "Ghostbusters" film will hit the screens on July 10 next year. He is currently writing the screenplay in collaboration with Gil Kenan.

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Ariana Grande Sends Heartfelt Message to Her Fans: You Saved My Life

Ariana Grande is sending some love to her loyal followers.

In just over two weeks, the pop star will embark on her Sweetener World Tour, the highly-anticipated culmination of two back-to-back No. 1 albums and months of hard work. So it only makes sense that Ariana confessed she was "for sure deep as f--k in my feelings" in a lengthy Instagram message posted on Friday evening.

"I just want to say how grateful I am for my life, for the people in it, for the ups and challenges, for the laughter and the pain, for this music and for the lifelong friendships I've made thru making it (that includes my friendship with y'all)," Grande wrote.

"I can't really fathom all that has happened over the past few years," she continued, likely referencing the death of Mac Miller and her split from Pete Davidson, both of which took place within a span of weeks. "I don't

even really know where I'm going with this post but I'm just grateful to be here still. and excited to see you. I'm prolly gonna cry a lot."

And as recently as a few months ago, the singer revealed, she wasn't ready to get back on the road.

"I told my team I wasn't even in an okay enough place to tour or work at all and my friends, you guys and this music really saved my life and turned everything around," Ariana explained. "I'm still healing but I feel a lot lighter as of late and I think this is really going to be such a beautiful time. Thank God we are doing this. I can't imagine what else I'd do and I want you to know how thankful I am."

Grande's tour officially kicks off March 18 in New York and continues through the end of July. The European leg commences in London on August 17 and concludes two months later.



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