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SummitTIMES

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

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Rain wrecks Mangan-Sintam road connectivity

WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 27 SEPT:

The Mangan-Sintam road has been blocked at several spots this evening owing to the continuous downpour. The road was blocked by landslides at Samdong near Panchayat Bhawan, Aapdara near NHPC Gate in East Sikkim.

The road has also been blocked at Tintek Khola where the river is in spate and vehicles have not been able to cross this stretch. The water level in Marchak Khola rose this evening which has caused panic in 9th Mile village of Kambal ward as the water has been diverted towards roadside.

The public of 9th Mile somehow managed to divert the water and save several houses from danger. Many commuters plying to Mangan were stranded at Samdong and Aapdara. The road is expected to be restored by Friday.

One-man committee submits report on re-verification of SSC and Col

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 SEPT:

The One Man Committee set up to examine the re-verification and digitalisation of Sikkim Subject Certificate and Certificate of Identification submitted its report to the Government on 01 Sept, earlier this month and is awaiting the government's response on the report.

Justice (Rtd) Maloy Sen-gupta, former judge, High Court of Sikkim, was appointed by the government to examine the 31,180 doubtful cases of falsification of Sikkim Subject Certificate and Certification of Identification as well as issuance of Certificate of Identification in the smart card format which would contain all necessary details for instant verification.

The state government had issued a notification on 04 Sept last year constituting a Committee headed by Justice Maloi Sengupta, Tsegyal Tashi [Secretary, Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department], Jagat Bahadur

Rai [SSJS, the then Law Remembrance cum Secretary, Law Department] as Member Secretary of the seven-member committee, along with former Secretaries, Dup Tshering Lepcha, LM Pradhan, TN Kazi, and MB Gurung.

The committee was directed to examine the issue of falsification of Col and Sikkim Subject Certificate and to make recommendations on issuance and digitalisation of Col in smart card format containing the relevant information.

The court, on various occasions, had observed that there should be a clear identification in digitalisation to identify the descendants of Sikkim Subject holders having Col, Col made from the land records, issues related to 72000 citizenship issued in 1989 with concurrence of Government of India and people residing in Sikkim after 1975 for specific purposes.

Biraj Adhikari, the then president of Sikkim National People's party [SNPP], filed a Public Interest Litigation

seeking court direction for investigation of doubtful cases of 31,181 falsification of Col in 2015.

The State Government in its report in Sept 2017 had said that out of 31,188 cases, 15,788 cases were reported 'Minor' & "Not Obtained" which requires no verification adding that the Department has not received 11,152 cases from the district offices which says that 'Record not Received from the District Offices' [East-7019, West-1172, South-2695 and North-266].

The Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department had issued an Appeal in the year 2010 that Pink Cards were to be issued to genuine Sikkim Subject Holders, because it was in the knowledge of Government that 31,180 cases of falsely acquired citizenship documents had been reported.

The petitioner, Mr Adhikari, had alleged that even after knowing about the 31,180 reported false cases of Sikkim Subject Certificates

and Certificate of Identification, the Government did nothing and the persons holding such certificates are taking illegal benefits thereof. The Division Bench also directed the petitioner to submit the list of benefits taken by Sikkim Subject holders and Certificate of Identification holders and other people who do not possess such certificate.

It may be mentioned here that Biraj Adhikari and his party workers had filed a complaint in the Sadar Thana in Gangtok in 2010 on the issue. The police had said in their RTI response, that only the District Collector is competent to register such complaints. Later they also filed complaints with the District Collector but got no response, according to Mr Adhikari.

Amicus Curiae appointed to assist the Court, Jorgay Namkha, had also submitted its report after the court ordered the court constituted committee to examine the cases of falsely acquired SSC & Col.



Sanjeev Sharma impressed with Sikkim cricket team as he takes charge as coach

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 SEPT:

Sikkim cricket team coach, Sanjeev Sharma, a former India International, in a statement issued today, has thanked the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) for appointing him as coach of Sikkim team and stated that although he was initially daunted by the task, he is now excited by the prospect of working with an impressive pool of talent and have the backing of a dedicated staff.

"The day I received the mail about my new assignment as a coach, I felt it will not be an easy task, as it was for the very first time Sikkim

will be playing first-class and list-A tournaments of BCCI. Later, I came to know that no professional players will be hired in the team as the state association has decided to play only with local players," he said.

However, once he joined the team at KIITS, Bhubaneswar, where Sikkim had a week's Preparatory Camp, he was impressed by the overall performance of individuals, he added.

"We had very limited time for the camp and also we lacked practice matches but all the support staffs and the team worked hard on skills, meetings and counsel-

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PLUS AND MINUS FROM PM SPEECH

PM's Pakyong address: Reading between the lines

JIWAN RAI

Sikkim's opportunity to hear two speeches from Prime Minister Modi in about three years is a privilege which is rare and therefore historic. Both the visits by the Prime Minister were to mark major milestones in Sikkim's civilizational journey – the first to declare the state as India's first and only organic state and the second to inaugurate the state's first airport. Both times, Sikkim showed an unusually intense eagerness to listen to Narendra Modi, arguably the best orator in Hindi amongst all the Indian PMs. But it was not hard to see that there was a marked difference in the two speeches given in January 2016 and September 2018.

Unlike his 2016 speech, this time he was very discreet in his commendation of the state government. He started with a poetic description of how impressed he was with the beauty of Sikkim. But he was quite chary of wholeheartedly complimenting the state government for Sikkim's achievement in sanitation and organic farming. And then he dwelt much on a description of how the new airport was going to bring comfort to highlanders living a hard life in difficult terrain.

The 14 thousand crore rupees that he talked about was not a part of the central grant released by the BJP government but was rather money invested in hydro-power development by developers. Then he talked about the Rs 1500 crore given by the national Energy Grid of India for the transmission of electricity. Then he talked about Sikkim's share of over 350 crore for the National River Conservation Plan. He chose not to



Pic: Wangchuk Bhutia

give the disclaimer that it has not yet been released. But this part of his speech did trigger a knee jerk reaction among a section of people in the state.

He attributed a major chunk of his speech to highlighting the special emphasis his government is putting on the development of the NE. He talked about road construction, railway connections, airports and big bridges. He has been a very lucky Prime Minister to have come to the government when several mega projects started by previous governments were

"The Prime Minister choosing not to address the demands put forward by the state government offended the general public."

ripe for inauguration. The 9.15 kilometer long Dho-ha Sadiya Bridge over the Brahmaputra river is one example. This longest bridge in the NE was started in 2011 during the UPA regime. India's longest road tunnel with a length of 9.28 km, the Chenani-Nashri Tunnel on NH 44 in Jammu and Kashmir, was also started in 2011 but inaugurated by PM Modi in 2017. The Udhampur-Katra rail link in Jammu started in 2009, the rail line for

"He could not name a single mega project that his government started in Sikkim."

Meghalaya, the Uri-II Hydro Electric Project (HEP), Kashmir started in 2005, the Sardar Sarovar project started in 1961 and the Kudankulam nuclear power plant started in 2002 were a few other projects which he got the opportunity to inaugurate. He did not share the credit with the previous governments that started the projects. But then, why would he?

In a real sense, Prime Minister Modi was treading on thin ice when he talked about how the BJP government changed its approach to the development of NE. The Pakyong airport was also approved by the UPA government in 2008. The foundation stone of the railway link to Sikkim was laid in 2009. He could not name a single mega project that his government started in Sikkim. He made a subtle attempt to woo public support by saying what the BJP government was doing for the state. Those lines were so insubstantial that he could not name a single achievement that he could take credit for. It was too conceited of him to shamelessly take the entire credit for the airport.

Understandably, he crafted his speech tactfully, in a way, to keep the state BJP happy by not mentioning the state government in any way. The change in the tone and

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An Opportunity for Little Artists to Share Big Ideas on Energy Efficiency

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Last Date
26th October, 2018

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(4, 5 & 6 Standard)

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- Saving Energy, a bright idea
- Saving Energy for sustainable life

GROUP B
(7, 8 & 9 Standard)

- Save Energy for others
- Conserve Energy, Save Nation
- Wind, Water, Sun, Energy for Long run

3 Level Painting Competition - School, State, National

State/Union Territory Level

Awards	Group 'A'	Group 'B'
First Prize	Rs 20,000/-	Rs 20,000/-
Second Prize	Rs 15,000/-	Rs 15,000/-
Third Prize	Rs 10,000/-	Rs 10,000/-
Consolation (10 nos)	Rs 5,000/-	Rs 5,000/-

National level

Awards	No of Prizes	Amount	No of Prizes	Amount
First Prize	(1nos)	Rs 1,00,000/-	(1nos)	Rs 1,00,000/-
Second Prize	(4nos)	Rs 50,000/-	(2nos)	Rs 50,000/-
Third Prize	(8nos)	Rs 25,000/-	(3nos)	Rs 25,000/-
Consolation (10 nos)	(10nos)	Rs 10,000/-	(6nos)	Rs 10,000/-

For more information please contact:

State Nodal Officer's address for Sikkim

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Special Outreach Program on Poshan Abhiyaan

GANGTOK, 27 SEPT [PIB]: A special outreach program (SOP) on Poshan Abhiyaan was conducted at the Angawadi Workers Training Centre (AWTC), Syari, Thursday, with the aim to sensitize the anganwadi trainees and panchayat members of the latest initiatives undertaken by the government across the country on a war footing to accelerate high-impact nutrition programs.

The mission looks at improving the nutrition outcomes through effective monitoring and timely intervention.

Speaking at the program, Dr Melozina Lepcha, additional director, National Rural Health Mission, made an engaging power point presentation on the causes of malnutrition among Indians of various age groups and how emphasis on proper nutrition among infants, children and adolescents can help leverage the mental and physical health of the entire nation.

Speaking on the causes, symptoms, and treatment of Anemia, Dr Lepcha explained how proper nutrition helps in alleviating the condition that is seen in almost 50% of India's population currently.

"Lack of hemoglobin in our blood reduces oxygen supply to our organs, thus making us feel weak. It not only hampers our physical wellbeing but also makes our brain lethargic. If students are lethargic, they tend to skip school and college, which in turn will affect their education. If the workforce is lethargic, it will affect their output, thus hampering the performance of our services and industries. Therefore, for a nation to become



prosperous, it is imperative that the citizens are healthy," she remarked.

GM Subba, Nodal Officer, AWTC, spoke on the importance of nutrition among adolescents, especially the girls and the challenge of stunting among adolescents.

"Teens are becoming more independent and making many food decisions on their own. Teens tend to eat more meals away from home than younger children. They are also heavily influenced by their peers. They may be eating too much of the wrong types of food, like fast-food, or processed foods. This result is stunting which has become a major public health challenge in India," he opined.

Mr Subba spoke in detail on the prevalence and factors associated with stunting and how under nutrition worsens the problem.

Phurmit Lepcha, Chair-

person, Sikkim Social Welfare Board, was present as the chief guest. In her address, Ms Lepcha underscored the need for orienting the environment towards the initiative, exchange ideas and to explore avenues of co-operation and partnerships for support, as well as, reaching-out to the beneficiaries for effective behavioural change to accelerate a stronger mission for Malnutrition-Free India.

Sanjit Tamang, Panchayat Head, Syari, present as the guest of honor, informed the gathering of the various challenges being faced at the panchayat level in sensitizing the people on the dangers of malnutrition.

Laxman Tamang, In-charge, AWTC, Syari, in his vote of thanks lauded the effort made by various ministries and departments of the central and the state governments in mitigating the effects of malnutrition.

The SOP was jointly orga-

nized by Press Information Bureau and Field Outreach Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India in collaboration with AWTC, Syari.

POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission) was launched on 08 March, 2018 in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan. The programme through use of technology, targeted approach and convergence strives to reduce the level of Stunting, Under-nutrition, Anemia and Low Birth Weight in Children, as also, focus on Adolescent Girls, Pregnant Women & Lactating Mothers, thus holistically addressing malnutrition.

By synergising frontline functionaries and volunteers like, DAY-NRLM Self help groups, ANMs, Co-operatives, Swasth Bharat Preraks etc., the Ministry is planning to reach 11 crore people and thereby convert the mission into Jan Andolan.



Mamring school celebrates World Tourism Day

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 SEPT:

Government Senior Secondary School, Mamring, East Sikkim celebrated World Tourism Day 2018 at the school premises today, a press release informs. This year's world tourism day was celebrated on the theme "Tourism and digital transformation".

Panchayat President of Amba Mamring GPU, Durga Lal Sewa, attended the celebration as the chief guest. The daylong programme was attended by local Panchayats of Amba and Taza GPUs, SMC president and members of the school, officials from HRDD Pakyong BAC, retired employees, National award-winning Teachers, Students and Teachers from Tareythang SS and Amba SS, local gentries, teachers and students of the host

school, etc.

Students put up an exhibition on different fields such as Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Health science, History, Information Technology (gadgets & software development), Tourism (adventure and traditional sports, river crossing, traditional and Sikkimese food items, etc.).

The visitors interacted with the participants of various exhibitions. Several visitors were interested in measuring their blood pressure and getting their height, weight and body mass index measured, the release mentions. Chemical and physics experiments were also witnessed by the guests and visitors.

Sikkimese cultural items, costumes, historical artefacts, recycled products, rare wooden items, Indian, Nepalese and

Bhutanese numismatics (coins and currencies), were also exhibited.

The guests enjoyed participating in different sports such as Dart, hit the basket, etc and also tasted local delicious dishes prepared by the students.

Students delivered speech on the history and importance of World Tourism Day and Tourism Industry.

The programme was designed by teachers SK Pradhan, Rajesh Rawat, Roselima Lepcha and Suman Kumar Sharma supported by all the staff and students of the school. More than 450 visitors visited the exhibitions, the release adds.

Such an event was organised for the first time with the collaboration of Tourism, I.T. and Science Streams of the school, the release mentions.

Sanjeev Sharma impressed with Sikkim cricket...

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in every day during the camp. I would also like to thank Sikkim Cricket Association on giving me the full charge to select the final team for Vijay Hazare Trophy and having faith in me for selection," he has conveyed on record.

The Sikkim coach has gone on to point out that there are "hard games" ahead but the main focus will be on playing the full overs.

"Though all the teams include professional players, I have made it sure that it won't affect my team's mentality and performance on the field and so far the team has dealt with it positively. We crossed 200 runs in two matches while chasing and have played 50 overs in full. We have a good side altogether. The captain Nilesh is playing well and has a very good game temperament, the 99 runs first wicket partnership with Faizan against Arunachal was an

excellent performance by both the players, Ashish being the most promising player, all-rounder's like Plazor and Lee Yong are consistently performing good, the bowlers are equally doing well and the seniors in the team is proving themselves an asset with Amos Rai bowling full spell in every match and being effective on the opponents," he has further communicated to Sikkim team fans.

A day after the Sikkim's match with Arunachal Pradesh, there was a managers meeting with the BCCI officials in Anand, Gujarat where Saba Karim, General Manager, Cricket Operations in India appreciated the initiative taken by Sikkim Cricket Association of playing with only local players and the house also gave a standing ovation on teams performance against Arunachal, it is further informed.

Parakram Parv to mark surgical strikes anniversary on 28 Sept

GANGTOK, 27 SEPT [PIB]: The Indian Armed Forces are observing "Parakram Parv" from 28 Sept to mark the second anniversary of the Surgical Strikes on terrorist camps across the Line of Control and to showcase the courage, valour and sacrifice of the Armed Forces. The event in Sikkim will be organized at West Point School, Gangtok on 28 and 29 Sept and at the OBC School, Kamrang, Namchi on 29 Sept. The event will include weapons display, selfie corner, screening of movie on surgical strikes, motivational lecture and career counselling and information kiosks, and band display.

In the aftermath of the attack on Indian Army's Jammu and Kashmir based Uri Brigade Headquarters in September 2016, numerous civil and military response measures were initiated by the Indian government against Pakistan. Of these, the step that became widely popular and resonated with the nation was the 'Surgical Strikes', a series of near simultaneous raids on a number of launch pads across the Line of Control.

Undeniably, the murderous attack on the Uri base was a watershed event following which India's approach underwent a discernible shift, as demon-

strated with a hardening of posture along the LoC and the way it dealt with ceasefire violations (CFVs). While surgical strikes were not a novelty in themselves, India for the first time acknowledged having carried the cross border raids, with the larger message intended at signaling the adversary of the change in India's approach to respond to terrorism. The strikes were a nationally coordinated move, followed by a public acknowledgement by the armed forces and the government with the greater message of strikes seemingly being a major paradigm shift in the way India responded to provocations by the Pakistani army.

Seen as demonstrating India's will- ingness and capability to use force for responding to cross-border aggression, the surgical strikes were a huge success.

For Pakistan, it was necessary to use the dent created by the shock nature of the public declaration of the surgical strike and follow it up with a diplomatic onslaught that also signaled some demands and requirements that India sought such as reduction in ceasefire violations or reduction in infiltration, with the promise of more strikes or similar punitive action if those demands were not met.



World Tourism Day observed at Lingi Paiyong School

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 SEPT:

World Tourism Day was observed by Travel and Tourism (Vocational Section) of Lingi Paiyong Senior Secondary School on Thursday, informs a press release from the school.

The theme for this year's celebration was Digital Transformation for Tourism. Yogesh Bhandari was present as chief guest on the occasion. Headmaster of the school welcomed the guests by offering khadas.

Students of the vocational trade put up stalls to show culture and traditions of different communities which is the very essence of village tourism. Karuna Gautam, faculty tourism explained the audience about the day and its importance. Karuna Gautam also coordinated and conducted the whole programme which was attended by students, teachers and Panchayat staffs. The day was also marked as the traditional dress day of the school.

PM's Pakyong address: Reading between the lines

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substance of his speech might have been caused by the proximity of the general election. But overall, he looked unprepared or rather, lacked oomph to address the significant issues that people were eager for him to speak on. This was evident in his response to the three major political demands reiterated by Chief Minister Chamling. Our long-winded, oracular Prime Minister chose to be as brief as the amount of time it takes not to address the matter at all. So nonchalant was his response that even a child listening to him got the sense that he was not one bit concerned about those issues. He once again augmented my belief that, when it comes to understanding regional aspirations, the national leaders have their heads in the clouds.

The Centre must know that Sikkim needs budgetary help for developmental projects as this young state has an infrastructural gap to grapple with but that does not fulfil the core need of this Himalayan state. The Prime Minister choosing

not to address the demands put forward by the state government offended the general public. If he thought that the allusion to crores of rupees, which largely consists

"He once again augmented my belief that, when it comes to understanding regional aspirations, the national leaders have their heads in the clouds."

not directly to Sikkim. But any attempt to sidetrack the core issue of Sikkim is an anathema. One of the biggest legacies from the last Chogyal is his unwavering stance on shunning bribery. When he was pushed to the wall by the Congress government during his last days, facing the worst possible financial crisis, he did not budge an inch and refused to give his assent to the merger. The Sikkimese people in general have accepted the merger but Sikkim's civil liberties can never be compromised with money. The current government has never clubbed the demand for budgetary

aids with the core agenda during both the visits by PM Modi. This is no mean gesture.

A young local journalist once told me that the new generation of Sikkimese people

are more worried about jobs than seat reservations. We tend to miss the actual construct and complexities of Sikkimese society when making such an assessment. In the post-merger era, nothing is more significant to Sikkim than the preservation of the distinct identity of the Sikkimese people. How else can Sikkim survive in an aggressive diverse, multi-ethnic, many-layered, multi-lingual India with the fastest growing population? Therefore, anything that augments a sense of Sikkimese distinctiveness in India is vitally significant. The relevance of seat reservations in the State Assembly will become increasingly strong with passing years. More so in the contemporary political dispensation where advocacy for a Uniform Civil Code (One India, One Nation, One Law) is gaining unprecedented currency. The ramifications of the UCC on Article 371 F, in particularly clause (k) could be far reaching.

"It was too conceited of him to shamelessly take the entire credit for the airport."

The distinct identity of the Sikkimese also has a special significance with the Nepali communities which face an "immigrant" tag time and time again. Chief Minister Chamling's argumentation about the distinctive historical roots of Sikkimese Nepal must be understood in this context. The constitutional recognition of the remaining Sikkimese communities as Scheduled Tribes, therefore, is a cornerstone political agenda in Sikkim politics but Prime Minister Modi did not even utter a word on this. The exemption of income tax for Sikkimese people has a tremendous significance in the same context which is therefore one of the biggest accomplishments of the present state government. These emotional and symbolic aspects have such significance that Sikkim may never choose to live without them.

[The writer can be contacted at jiwanr@gmail.com]

Gangtok on Friday, 28 Sept

Temp: 29°C/16°C
Forecast: A morning thundershower in parts of area; otherwise, time of clouds and sun.
Sunrise: 05:20 AM
Sunset: 5:23 PM

Orientation held for BRC/ CRC coordinators of West District.

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 27 SEPT:

A two-day orientation programme for 20 BRC and CRC Co-ordinators of West District concluded here today at DIET, West.

West Sikkim, being an Aspirational District, had a very fruitful session on Adolescence Population Education by Dr. Genevive Syangbo who appraised the group about the research conducted by SCERT on "School Need and analysis" where all the AEOs, ADs and CRC/BRC coordinators were required to conduct school visits and administer the tools.

Other sessions were on POCOS Act by DCPO, West, Chumsang Palden, Multigrade Teaching, Stress Management, Innovative practices of Govt. Schools.

PL Subba, Deputy Director HRDD West, was present for the valedictory function as chief guest accompanied by Dr. Genevive Syangbo, Assistant Professor, SCERT as guest of honor.

Deputy Director addressed the gathering by urging all to shoulder commitments with responsibilities, he mentioned that he was aware of all difficulties and deadlines of the work at BAC level but still requested all to work honestly and to stay focussed. He appreciated DIET, West Team for their relentless effort to enhance the quality of teachers' by providing such Trainings to them. The programme ended with the distribution of certificates to all participants.

HAVE A STORY

TO SHARE?

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Corrigendum: the R.O. No. issued by IPR Dept, Govt. of Sikkim against Election Department advertisement under caption "Advertisement for Empanelment of National level Master Trainers" published in SummitTimes vol 3 no 248 dt. 20.9.18 & vol 3 no. 249 dt. 21.9.18 should have been written as R.O. No. 361/IPR/PUB/Classi./18-19 dt. 19.9.2018 instead of RO. 316/IPR/PUB/Classi./18-19 dt. 19.9.2018. Error is regretted. - Editor.



EMRS Swayem observes Swachhata Pakhwada

SUMMIT REPORT MANGAN, 27 SEPT:

Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS), Swayem, North Sikkim observed Swachhata Pakhwada and Rastriya Poshan Maah on Wednesday at the school conference hall.

Deputy Speaker SLA cum Area MLA, Sonam Gyatso Lepcha was the chief guest of the function. Director Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, Gopal Sadhwani, attended the programme as special guest accompanied by Sonam Lepcha [Director Text book, Exam and Scholarship HRDD], D Pradhan [Joint Director HRDD North], Theney Bhutia

[Up-adhakshya North], Norden Lepcha [Joint Director Welfare Department], Zilla and Panchayat members of the Namok Swayem ZPU/GPU, SMC members were invited as special guests.

An awareness rally was carried out from Deythang to EMRS Swayem with all the dignitaries, students and teachers.

Principal EMRS Swayem, DB Mishra, addressed the gathering and welcomed the guests. All the guests shared their opinions on the programme and issues of EMRS. Students presented a colourful cultural programme.

Inspector Nutrition cell gave a valuable talk to the gathering on

nutrition and its values.

The chief guest requested the Director to resolve some issues related to the school and also urged him to fulfil demands like auditorium, football stadium, boundary wall, gate and teachers quarters. He also informed that Joint Director, HRDD should visit all the schools of Dzongu and North Sikkim to take stock of the situation in schools located in remote areas.

Director MoTA, Mr Sadhwani has assured that the demands will be taken up and the Ministry will try to fulfil them in the next budget.

Lastly, the programme concluded with vote of thanks by Lendup Dorjee Lepcha [Teacher EMRS].

State level steering committee meeting held for Mission Antyodaya

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 27 SEPT:

A state level steering committee on Mission Antyodaya was held today under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, at Mannan Bhawan. The meeting was attended by HoDs and officials of the departments involved in rural development.

Mission Antyodaya is a state-led Initiative for Rural Transformation to make 50,000 Gram Panchayats poverty-free across the country by 2020. The Government of India announced the Mission to achieve poverty free status in the selected clusters in the country.

It is a convergence framework for measurable effective outcomes on parameters that transform rural lives and livelihoods.

In the meeting the Secretary, RMDD, DR Nepal, explained Mission Antyodaya, its status and implementation in Sikkim and sought support from all the participating departments to take the mission seriously to achieve its objectives.

Dr. P. Senthil Kumar, Commissioner, RMDD, explained that the Mission seeks convergence of all related government interventions/ programs/ schemes at Household/ GP level as the basic unit for planning by following saturation approach by pooling resources, both human and financial, to ensure sustainable livelihoods and achieve poverty free status.

The Mission encourages partnerships with professionals, institutions and enterprises to further accelerate the transformation of rural livelihoods.

The thrust of the mission is not only on physical infrastructure but also on social infrastruc-

ture of agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry with priority given to SHG expansion in the selected clusters.

In Sikkim, 33 Gram Panchayats have been identified and approved by the government as Mission Antyodaya Villages.

The coordination mechanism has been devised at various levels to facilitate convergence of various government programs of at least 28 Departments.

To further the objectives of the Mission, Mission Antyodaya baseline data collection survey has been completed for all 33 MA villages.

All remaining GPs are planned within next 15 days and also preparation of GPDP is expected to be completed by December 2018. Therefore all stakeholders to attach priority at planning level itself and implement the planned activities in order make Sikkim a poverty free state.

During the presentation, the role of the participating departments was discussed at length and informed that every department needs to nominate a Mission Antyodaya Co-ordinator for the their department - preferably one of the officials in the State Level Executive Committee of MA.

An Office Order on the same, along with their contact number and email may be shared to the Mission Director, Mission Antyodaya - Commissioner/RMDD. The role of the MA coordinators was explained as one to analyze the gap in MA villages related to their department, facilitate funding and implementation to fulfill the gaps, regularly monitor the parameters in MIS at www.missionantyodaya.nic.in for their department

and update the achievements, review of implementation in respect of Mission Antyodaya at departmental level in every quarter and submit the progress to Mission Director, Antyodaya - Commissioner/RMDD and coordinate both intra departmentally and interdepartmentally on all aspects related to Mission Antyodaya.

Similarly, in addition to Departmental MA Coordinators, various levels of coordination were discussed and finalized at the SLSC.

At District Level, Concerned District Collectors will function as Dis-

trict Mission Antyodaya Coordinator, at division Level, the Concerned ADC (Dev) will function as Divisional MA Coordinators and at Block Level, the Concerned BDO will function as Block MA Coordinator. Their role will be to coordinate the MA activities in their jurisdiction. During the discussion, the way forward on Mission Antyodaya was discussed, all the participating department involved in the discussion and agreed to take forward the mission in their respective department.

The Chief Secretary, in his address, empha-

Pop Up Pasal to connect and promote local entrepreneurs



NITESH R PRADHAN GANGTOK, 27 SEPT:

Pop Up Pasal, an interactive program which seeks to provide an opportunity for locals to interact with various brands and labels from all over India and give local entrepreneurs a platform to put up their work is all set to open for Gangtokians on 30 Sept at Ridge Park. The program will continue till 30 Sept.

The program has varied features like shop-

ping, kids festival, activity centers, pet zones, grooming section for ladies and spa facilities, etc.

Chief Coordinator, Dechen Paden Saring, stated that the aim of the event is to encourage sustainable living, support the Go Green campaign and encourage use of bio degradable products.

Organiser, Juilee Kurein stated that the program also focuses on children and creating new avenues of interactions with many fun activities.

Exchange of ideas between local entrepreneurs and those from cities like Delhi, Jaipur and Chandigarh has also helped the entrepreneurs here, she added.

There will be around 35-36 stalls which would also include one area for kids. These would house many entrepreneurial products from Sikkim on display for sale.

The organisers inform that Chief Minister Pawan Chamling will attend the inaugural function as the chief guest along with wife Tika Maya Chamling and other Ministers.

Studio Ensemble, Namchi along with Empire Creations are presenting the event.

The entry fee will be Rs 100 per person for 12

years and above.

Local, regional and national brands like Echostream, Scoobo, Atrangi, Tizori, Itwari a regional brand focusing on bamboo fibres, Orbban, Edufun Kolkata, Korean Cosmetics, Vedic spoon, pet accessories, Himalayan spa, Namchi Designer Candles, Fidgety Fingers, Beautiful Earth and more would be setting up stalls in the program.

Around 30 local entrepreneurs will be present in the festival with their products.

The organizers have thanked people of the state especially entrepreneurs for their support and have added that there has been a tremendous response with organisers having to close down bookings for spaces.

Further, they have thanked Commissioner, Gangtok Municipal Corporation, Power department, Excise department and PHE department.

Organizer, Priyanka Basnet, informed that the program offers something for everyone and hopes to accommodate all sections of society.

Tickets are available at various outlets in the capital including Selvis, Buddha Bar, Loafing Around, Infinity, Birds, Beasts and Relatives and Local Cafe.

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

No Excuses

A privileged few are foisting insularity in the name of nationalism

The nation needs to accept that what is being passed off as a majoritarian right-wing government is actually a minority, regressively upper caste insularity disguised in shallow nationalism. Evidence of this sliver-sized representation unloading its offensive version of what defines India is manifesting in the gau-rakshak lynch mobs, the normalization of misogyny and spite through state-endorsed fictions like love-jihad and the easy mindlessness with which lives can be snuffed because long-demolished (at least officially) caste barriers are being erected again. And now, perhaps because the rabid intolerance could not be explained to mass sentiment, experiments are being tried out to excite what are clearly hate crimes as ill-informed attacks – people from minority groups being lynched on suspicions of being child lifters or thieves. The results remain the same. At times, trouble is instigated and then victimization is claimed.

Thanks to a mass media which has capitulated on its responsibility to inform and explain, being liberal and rational is now being painted as a character flaw and sycophancy and iconoclasm being sold as nationalism. India, however, is more enduring than the acting chops or decibel range of those who want to scream and hate the country into the dark ages when everything was worked around the petty sensitivities of a privileged few. And while the idea that India will reclaim its tolerance is reassuring, it should not be taken as a cue to remain uninvolved. The citizens need to stay engaged, inform themselves better and consciously tune out the propaganda so that they can hear the concerns of the real India. And places on the margins, places like Sikkim also have a role to play, if not for anything else, then to hold on to its sanity and not get caught in the vortex that is sucking too many institutions and places and mindsets to their nadir.

One of the horrors revisiting the country at present is the violent enforcement of the caste structures. Sikkim, which appears to be sipping the kool-aid of saffron chauvinism with abandon, needs to be especially wary of this since it has still not completely erased this scar from its society. That the caste system exists comes as no surprise, but the fact that it continues to be enforced should have everyone hanging their heads in collective shame. The caste system, and let us have no one claiming in Sikkim that it is a solely Hindu construct because it's observance has infiltrated every other community, is one battle that the nation has lost; not for want of laws or quotas, but because the mindsets continue to remain insular. Here, the caste system is not observed as strictly in the towns because it is a practical impossibility in the cheek by jowl existence in such places, but in the rural belts, where human interaction and social exchanges underline survival itself, the system still holds out. It is all very fine for the townsfolk to turn up their noses in disgust and feign embarrassment, but fact remains that the system remains rooted because of the pseudo posturing and ill-informed intellectuals directing efforts at social reforms from the comfort of city sitting rooms. Reality checks were not taken as often and tokenism continued to stand in for grassroots initiatives. What failed in Sikkim, failed the country as well.

Barely a decade ago, Sikkim was confronted with a situation where a village on the shoulder of the capital would not allow members from the scheduled castes access to a place of worship. This, despite specific laws in place which ban such regressive practices. When ordered to open their doors for all castes, the people concerned decided instead to shut their doors to everyone on the pretext of repairs. The only agencies engaged in the reform were cops and courts. The rest of Sikkim watched from the sidelines. What is also disturbing is that victims shy away from making a more forceful enough protest and appear to have learned to live with it. It would, however, be wrong to believe that they suffer the insults willingly. They are forced to; not because the caste system is enforced, but because they are unsure of the support mechanism that can help them take on this system. They know of the laws, but what they also know is that they will have to battle these forces on their own. They have not seen enough commitment, either in their leaders or associations or in the society at large, to add a battle for self-respect to their daily grind for survival. It takes more than laws to demolish centuries-old practices, and as we are now learning as a nation, it only takes a few regressive minds to wrest some control for these demons to climb back into our lives.

Gone are the times when one could excuse those who enforce the caste system as not being necessarily evil or villainous, but just generations groomed on a different set of sensibilities. They need to be called out for their refusal to change because in our inability to do so, we are freeing the hands of fascist agencies to unleash a violence which also leaves blood on our hands. It is not okay to kow-tow to Delhi with Sawa-chhta Abhiyans in the name of the Mahatma if his more important message of tolerance and amity are ignored or his position against untouchability ignored.

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Memories of trauma are unique because of how brains and bodies respond to threat

JACEK DEBIEC
theconversation.com

Most of what you experience leaves no trace in your memory. Learning new information often requires a lot of effort and repetition – picture studying for a tough exam or mastering the tasks of a new job. It's easy to forget what you've learned, and recalling details of the past can sometimes be challenging.

But some past experiences can keep haunting you for years. Life-threatening events – things like getting mugged or escaping from a fire – can be impossible to forget, even if you make every possible effort. Recent developments in the Supreme Court nomination hearings and the associated #WhyDidntReport action on social media have rattled the public and raised questions about the nature, role and impact of these kinds of traumatic memories.

Leaving politics aside, what do psychiatrists and neuroscientists like me understand about how past traumas can remain present and persistent in our lives through memories?

BODIES RESPOND AUTOMATICALLY TO THREAT

Imagine facing extreme danger, such as being held at gunpoint. Right away, your heart rate increases. Your arteries constrict, directing more blood to your muscles, which tense up in preparation for a possible life-or-death struggle. Perspiration increases, to cool you down and improve gripping capability on palms and feet for added traction for escape. In some situations, when the threat is overwhelming, you may freeze and be unable to move.

Threat responses are often accompanied by a range of sensations and feelings. Senses may sharpen, contributing to amplified detection and response to threat. You may experience tingling or numbness in your limbs, as well as shortness of breath, chest pain, feelings of weakness, fainting or dizziness. Your thoughts may be racing or, conversely, you may experience a lack of thoughts and feel detached from reality. Terror, panic, helplessness, lack of control or chaos may take over.

These reactions are automatic and cannot be stopped once they're initiated, regardless of later feelings of guilt or shame about a lack of fight or flight.

BRAINS HAVE TWO ROUTES TO RESPOND TO DANGER

Biological research over the past few



decades has made significant progress in understanding how the brain responds to threat. Defense responses are controlled by neural systems that human beings have inherited from our distant evolutionary ancestors.

One of the key players is the amygdala, a structure located deep in the medial temporal lobe, one on each side of the brain. It processes sensory threat information and sends outputs to other brain sites, such as the hypothalamus, which is responsible for the release of stress hormones, or brain stem areas, which control levels of alertness and automatic behaviors, including immobility or freezing.

Research in animals and more recently in people suggests the existence of two possible routes by which the amygdala receives sensory information. The first route, called the low road, provides the amygdala with a rapid, but imprecise, signal from the sensory thalamus. This circuit is believed to be responsible for the immediate, unconscious responses to threat.

The high road is routed through the cortical sensory areas and delivers more complex and detailed representations of threat to the amygdala. Researchers believe the high road is involved in processing the aspects of threats of which a person is consciously aware.

The two-roads model explains how responses to a threat can be initiated even before you become consciously aware of it. The amygdala is interconnected with a network of brain areas, including the hippocampus, the prefrontal cortex and others, all of which process different aspects of defense behaviors. For example, you hear a loud, sharp bang and you momentarily freeze – this would be a low road-initiated response. You notice somebody with a gun, immediately scan your surroundings to locate a hiding spot and escape route – these actions wouldn't be possible without the high road being involved.

TWO KINDS OF MEMORIES

Traumatic memories are intensely powerful and come in two varieties.

When people talk about memories, most of the time we refer to conscious or explicit memories. However, the brain is capable of encoding distinct memories in parallel for the same event – some of them explicit and some implicit or unconscious.

An experimental example of implicit memories is threat conditioning. In the lab, a harmful stimulus such as an electric shock, which triggers innate threat responses, is paired with a neutral stimulus, such as an image, sound or smell. The brain forms a strong association between the neutral stimulus and the threat response. Now this image, sound or smell acquires the ability to initiate automatic unconscious threat reactions – in the absence of the electric shock.

It's like Pavlov's dogs salivating when they hear the dinner bell, but these conditioned threat responses are typically formed after a single pairing between the actual threatening or harmful stimulus and a neutral stimulus, and last for life. Not surprisingly, they support survival. For example, after getting burned on a hot stove, a child will likely steer clear of the stove in order to avoid the harmful heat and pain.

Studies show that the amygdala is critical for encoding and storing associations between a harmful and neutral stimuli, and that stress hormones and mediators – such as cortisol and norepinephrine – play an important role in the formation of threat associations.

Researchers believe traumatic memories are a kind of conditioned threat response. For the survivor of a bike accident, the sight of a fast approaching truck resembling the one that crashed into them may cause the heart to race and skin to sweat. For the survivor of a sexual assault, the sight of the perpetrator or someone who looks similar may cause trembling, a feeling of hopelessness and

an urge to hide, run away or fight. These responses are initiated regardless of whether they come with conscious recollections of trauma.

Conscious memories of trauma are encoded by various sites in the brain which process different aspects of experience. Explicit memories of trauma reflect the terror of the original experience and may be less organized than memories acquired under less stressful conditions. Typically they're more vivid, more intense and more

persistent.

AFTER THE MEMORIES ARE MADE Memories are biological phenomena and as such are dynamic. Exposure to cues that trigger the recall or retrieval of traumatic memories activates the neural systems that are storing the memories. This includes electrical activation of the neural circuits, as well as underlying intracellular processes.

Reactivated memories are susceptible to modification. The character and direction of this modification depends on the circumstances of the person recalling the memory. Retrieval of implicit or explicit traumatic memories is usually associated with high levels of stress. Stress hormones act on the activated brain circuits and may strengthen the original memory for trauma through a phenomenon known as memory reconsolidation.

There are clinical strategies to help people heal from emotional trauma. One critical factor is the sense of safety. Retrieval of traumatic memories under safe conditions when levels of stress are relatively low and under control enables the individual to update or reorganize the trauma experience. It's possible to link the trauma to other experiences and diminish its destructive impact. Psychologists call this post-traumatic growth.

It is an ethical imperative to consider the circumstances under which traumatic memories are recalled, whether in the course of therapy, during police investigations, court hearings or public testimonies. Recalling trauma may be a part of the healing process or may lead to re-traumatization, persistence and continued detrimental effects from traumatic memories.

[The writer is Assistant Professor / Department of Psychiatry; Assistant Research Professor / Molecular & Behavioral Neuroscience Institute, University of Michigan]

SC strikes down law on adultery; says it is unconstitutional, dents individuality of women

NEW DELHI, SEP 27 (PTI): The Supreme Court Thursday declared that adultery is not a crime and struck down the anti-adultery law, saying it was unconstitutional as it dented the individuality of women and treated them as "chattel of husbands".

The apex court's five-judge Constitution bench was unanimous in striking down Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code dealing with the offence of adultery and holding it as manifestly arbitrary, archaic law which is violative of the rights to equality and equal opportunity to women.

Section 497 of the 158-year-old IPC says: "Whoever has sexual intercourse with a person who is and whom he knows or has reason to believe to be the wife of another man, without the consent or connivance of that man, such sexual intercourse not amounting to the offence of rape, is guilty of the offence of adultery."

Adultery was punishable by a maximum five years in jail or fine or both.

A five-judge bench comprising Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices R F Nariman, A M Khanwilkar, D Y Chandrachud and Indu Malhotra said that unequal treatment of women invites the wrath of the Constitution.

The top court, which held adultery as a relic of the past, said the autonomy is intrinsic in dignified human existence and Section 497 denudes women from making choices.

The apex court pronounced four sets of concurring judgements to declare penal provision on Adultery and section 198 of CrPC dealing with prosecution of offences against marriage as unconstitutional.

"We declare Section 497 IPC and Section 198 of CrPC dealing with prosecution of offences against marriage as unconstitutional," said the Chief Justice, who wrote the judgement for himself and Justice Khanwilkar, adding that any provision treating women with inequality is not constitutional and it's time to say that "husband is not the master of woman".

Justice Malhotra, the lone woman judge on the bench, said Section 497 is clear violation of fundamental rights granted in the Constitution and there is no justification for continuation of the provision.

Justice Nariman termed Section 497 as archaic law and concurred with the CJI and Justice Khanwilkar, saying that the penal provision is violative of the rights to equality and equal opportunity to women.

Justice Chandrachud said Section 497 destroys and deprives women of dignity and is destructive of women's dignity, self-respect as it treats women as "chattel of husbands".

The CJI said adultery dents the individuality of women and it is not a crime in countries like China, Japan and Australia.

Adultery might not be cause of unhappy marriage, it could be result of an unhappy marriage, Justice Misra said.

The CJI began reading the judgement by saying the beauty of the Constitution is that it includes "the I, me and you".

He said equality is the governing parameter of the Constitution and section 497 of the IPC is manifestly arbitrary the way it deals with women.

The bench held that adultery can be treated as civil wrong for dissolution of marriage.

There can't be any social licence which destroys a home, the CJI said, but added that adultery should not be a criminal offence.

The court said adultery can be a ground for civil wrong, a ground for divorce but not a criminal offence.

Justice Chandrachud said autonomy is intrinsic in dignified human existence and Section 497 denudes women from making choices and held adultery as a relic of past.

Legislature has imposed a condition on sexuality of women by making adultery as offence, he said, adding that section 497 is denial of substance of equality.

The CJI and Justice Khanwilkar said mere adultery cannot be a crime, but if any aggrieved spouse commits suicide because of life partner's adulterous relation, then if evidence is produced, it could be treated as an abetment to suicide.



19-year-old woman gang-raped in West Bengal

JALPAIGURI (WB), SEP 27 (PTI): A 19-year-old woman was allegedly gang-raped in an under-construction building in Jalpaiguri district, police said Thursday.

The incident happened on Tuesday evening at Jahuri Talma in Jalpaiguri Sadar block, when the woman was going to her sister's place, the police said.

According to the woman, two youths stopped her cycle, grabbed her and took her to an under-construction building, a police officer said, adding, three other persons were waiting there and she was gang-raped.

A local resident went to the spot after he heard the woman crying, the officer said.

The accused fled the scene as soon as the man reached the spot, the officer added.

The man took the woman to his house and informed her parents, and the woman's father lodged a complaint with the Jalpaiguri Women Police Station on Wednesday, the police officer said.

"We have arrested two accused. We hope to arrest the other three soon," the Officer-in-Charge of the police station, Upasana Gurung, said.

The accused would be produced before a court Thursday, Gurung said.

The woman was sent to Jalpaiguri Sadar Hospital for medical examination, a police officer said.

Tea industry should benchmark itself: Commerce Secy

KOLKATA, SEP 27 (PTI): Union Commerce secretary Anup Wadhawan Thursday said the tea industry should benchmark itself against best practices so that it can compete in the international market against countries like Sri Lanka.

"There are fundamental challenges on the production side as productivity was falling. The gardens are no more viable as they used to be. The industry needs to benchmark itself against the best practices to raise production and compete in the international market against countries like Sri Lanka", he said.

The initiatives should come from the industry side for branding and marketing of tea and also for value addition.

"The government will support the efforts of the industry", he said at the AGM of Indian Tea Association (ITA).

Deputy chairman of Tea Board Arun Kumar Ray said the consumption pattern was stagnating. "There is a need to bring in growth in the market. We do have the funds and come to the rescue. The industry has to take the initiative", he said.

British Council scholarship for Indian students: Obe

ITANAGAR, SEP 27 (PTI): British Council, India Director, Alan Gemmell Obe Thursday said the Council would give scholarship to 500 students from India for academic exchange programme in United Kingdom universities.

The British Council will give scholarship to 500 Indian students for academic exchange programme in 44 UK universities this year, he said.

Obe said so far 105 women from India including six from North East have already availed scholarship from the council to study at university in UK.

"We are hopeful that more students from Arunachal and other states of the north east will avail the scholarships being provided by the Council," the director said.

He said over the last few years there was significant increase in visa application by Indian students.

"This has clearly indicated that the students from India are



more interested to study in UK universities," he added

"The year 2018 marks 70 years of the British Council in India. We've supported the ambitions of millions of young people through our work to train over one million teachers in government schools and by investing in thousands of scholarships and academic exchanges," he said.

The British Council director said "our mission is to inspire people in Britain and India to build connections for the next

70-years."

The council, which is getting into an agreement through MoU with North Eastern Council (NEC) next month that will allow them to train teachers in English language in the region, is planning to organise a conclave of North East education ministers in New Delhi soon in partnership with NEC.

"The conclave will provide a platform for the education ministers of the region to discuss issues related to the education

sector and to find out solutions," he said.

Obe said, the councils main focus is on English teaching to teachers in government schools and so far trained about one million teachers in the country in the last 10 years.

"We believe in the role of teachers in transforming education and we want to develop real expertise working in government schools in North East," he said.

On the cultural field, Obe said, the council has been trying to promote artists from North East and accordingly a music video album was created where 12 artists from North-east including Tashi Lama from Arunachal performed.

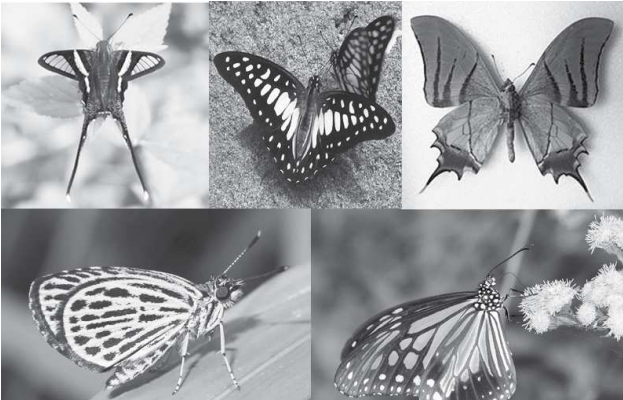
As part of 70 years celebration in India, the Council has sponsored Nubya Garcia, a London-based saxophonist and composer who will be performing at Ziro music festival.

171 species of butterfly recorded in Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal

ITANAGAR, SEPT 27 (PTI): As many as 171 species of butterfly have been catalogued in Yazali area of Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh during the fifth Ziro Butterfly meet.

Some of the rare species spotted during the two-day meet, organised by an NGO NgunuZiro, include White Dragontail, Veined Jay, Bispot, Black Prince, Large Yeoman, Tiger Hopper, Red Base, Jezebel, Grey Pansy and Chocolate Tiger, the NGO said in a press statement.

The meet's recommendations include submission of proposals to



the government for declaration of 'Kaiser-e-Hind' as a state butterfly and

the Talle Wildlife Sanctuary as a butterfly sanctuary, the statement said.

Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Koj Rinya said that the Lower Subansiri

district could be developed as a butterfly hub. She welcomed all to visit the Talle Wildlife Sanctuary where rare butterflies were found.

NgunuZiro has been organising Ziro Butterfly Meet every year to spread awareness about the importance of all creatures and to promote conservation effort.

Butterfly lovers from Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Assam participated in the meet.

The fifth edition of the Ziro Butterfly Meet, concluded on Sunday, was sponsored by the state tourism department.

Homestays set to play significant role in travel mart



KOLKATA, SEPT 27 (PTI): Homestays will grow and play a significant role in tourism as the country's travel market is projected to grow at an annual rate of 11-11.5 per cent to USD 48 billion by 2020, a consultant said.

"There is no doubt that the country's hospitality industry must diversify its offerings to keep up with this exponential growth and tap its potential. Alternative accommodations such as homestays - which currently occupy only a small section of the market - will grow in stature and play a significant role," Anarock Property Consultants Chairman Anuj Puri said Thursday.

The country witnessed 15.6 per cent annual increase in foreign tourist arrivals in calendar year 2017 as against the previous year.

"Homestays are indisputably one of the means to cater to growing demand. Rising disposable incomes, focused government measures to boost the travel industry and the growing appetite for travel is accelerating this growth," Puri said without giving any

number of homestays now.

As per the government data, the country will need more than 2.5 million rooms across the hospitality industry to meet the snowballing demand by 2020. In its efforts to bridge the growing demand-supply gap, the union government has provided several incentives to home stays, the consultant said.

The government has also relaxed the licensing rules for people seeking to convert their property into certified homestays and is developing a centralised data base. It is also urging the state governments to exempt homestays from service taxes and levies including water charges, electricity and other commercial charges to attract more homeowners to convert their property into homestays, Puri said.

Simultaneously, it is working with on line aggregators like Airbnb that list home stay property and introduce guest houses and bed-and-breakfast options.

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Asia Cup Final: India ready to tame depleted Bangla Tigers

DUBAI, SEP 27 (PTI): India will be aiming to reassert their continental supremacy while an injury-hit Bangladesh will hope to shrug off stage fright when the two sides square off in the grand finale of the Asia Cup here Friday.

A passionate Bangladesh turned out to be the party-poopers on Wednesday as they wrecked the prospects of an India-Pakistan summit clash with a gutsy performance despite losing key players to injury.

On paper, India will remain overwhelming favourites to win the tournament for a record seventh time while Bangladesh will be hoping to be third-time lucky in a summit clash.

Final of any tournament is a one-off game in complete isolation from how a team has performed in the tournament. Even the most consistent teams have slipped on the proverbial banana peel when it has mattered the most.

Add to this the fact that the Indo-Bangla cricketing rivalry has grown in intensity.

But what is definitely a dampener for Bangladesh heading into the final is the injury woes that the side is facing.

Star batsman Tamim Iqbal is already out with a fractured hand and Bangladesh will also not have premier all-rounder Shakib-Al-



Hasan in the line-up owing to a finger injury.

He is expected to undergo surgery which will also force him out of the home series against Zimbabwe starting September 30.

For India, it will be a different test though.

A victory in the Asia Cup without their skipper and best batsman Virat Kohli will be a big statement going into next year's World Cup.

Not to forget, the Asia Cup trophy will be a healing touch after 1-4 Test series defeat in England.

The team's exploits in shorter

formats have always successfully papered over the deficiencies when it comes to playing quality five-day cricket in adverse conditions.

An Asia Cup triumph can partially divert attention from the England debacle.

After resting five regulars

during a wake-up call from Afghanistan in their tied Super Four encounter, the order is expected to be restored in the summit clash.

The crack opening pair of skipper Rohit Sharma and his deputy Shikhar Dhawan will be back at the top of the order while Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Yuzvendra Chahal will bolster the bowling.

A lot will depend on the start provided by Rohit (269 runs) and Shikhar (327 runs) as the middle order has looked shaky at times.

Ambati Rayudu has looked set in all the games but has not finished off well while Kedar Jadhav and Mahendra Singh Dhoni have struggled in middle overs.

Dhoni's struggle is the biggest worry as a total of 240 plus could prove to be challenging on a slow track if the team bats second.

The only match where the Indian middle order was tested was the Afghanistan game where they came a cropper despite a century opening stand by the makeshift pair of KL Rahul and Ambati Rayudu.

A significant batting contribution from Dhoni is expected as he might again come in at No.4 in order to face more deliveries.

The Bangladesh bowling attack is one of the most potent in 50 over cricket with Mustafizur Rahman, Rubel Hossain, and Mashrafe Mor-

taza ready to test batting line-ups.

Mustafizur has a lot of tricks up his sleeve while Mashrafe's experience comes in handy. However, not having Shakib in the line-up could prove to be a major setback for the side.

In batting, the team will bank heavily on the ever-dependable Mushfiqur Rahim, who has been the 'crisis man' along with the very stylish Mahmudullah Riyadh.

They will be challenged by an in-form Jasprit Bumrah. Tackling the guile of Kuldeep Yadav, deception of Yuzvendra Chahal and probing questions from Ravindra Jadeja will also be quite a task for the Bangladesh line-up.

Squads:

India: Rohit Sharma (c), Shikhar Dhawan, Ambati Rayudu, Dinesh Karthik, MS Dhoni (wk), Kedar Jadhav, Ravindra Jadeja, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jasprit Bumrah, Manish Pandey, Siddarth Kaul, KL Rahul, Deepak Chahar.

Bangladesh: Masrafe Bin Mortaza (captain), Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mohammad Mithun, Litton Kumar Das, Mushfiqur Rahim, Ariful Haque, Mahmudullah, Mosaddek Hossain Saikat, Nazmul Hossain Shanto, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Nazmul Islam Apu, Rubel Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Abu Haider Rony.

Match starts 5pm (IST).

Usain Bolt has until January to showcase his soccer skills

GOSFORD, AUSTRALIA, SEP 27 (AP): Usain Bolt has a few more months to prove his soccer prowess in Australia.

Central Coast Mariners coach Mike Mulvey said Thursday that he will wait until January before assessing the progress of eight-time Olympic gold medalist sprinter Bolt, who's set to play in his next pre-season match for the Mariners in mid-October.

Bolt, who hopes to earn an A-League contract with the team based north of Sydney, will likely play Oct. 12 against Sydney league side Macarthur South West United. The Mariners begin the regular season on Oct. 21 in Brisbane against the Roar.

"If I get to start it will be a big thing for me," Bolt said.

"It shows that the



work that I've been putting in since I've been here is really paying off and the coach has confidence in me and he sees the improvement and the work I've been putting in."

Bolt saw his first action for the Mariners on Aug. 31, playing 20 minutes against a Central Coast selection side. He played the entire second half against the North Shore Mariners on Sept. 19, when he again alternated between left wing and

striker.

Mulvey said Thursday that Bolt was progressing.

"In the initial dispatches talked about he needed time, I said at the time we will give him 12 months if need be," Mulvey said.

"But I think a reasonable assumption would be around about Christmas time, January, we should be really judging on whether he's really improved or not improved. He's slowly getting there.

RBI eases cash reserve rules to ease liquidity

MUMBAI, SEP 27 (PTI): The Reserve Bank of India Thursday allowed banks to dip further into statutory cash reserves in a bid to ease a liquidity squeeze afflicting the nation's money markets.

RBI in a statement said banks could 'carve out' up to 15 per cent of holdings under the statutory liquidity reserves to meet their liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) requirements as compared to 13 per cent now.

This resulted from a rise in the facility to avail funds for LCR to 13 per cent from 11 per cent, effective October 1, RBI said in a statement.

The move by the central bank follows concerns over tight liquidity conditions and banks' unwillingness to lend to NBFCs.

RBI said it "stands ready to meet the durable liquidity requirements

of the system through various available instruments depending on its dynamic assessment of the evolving liquidity and market conditions."

Citing proactive steps taken in the last few days, RBI said it conducted open market operation (OMO) on September 19 and provided a liberal infusion of liquidity through term repos in addition to the usual provision via the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF).

It further said that another OMO will be conducted Thursday to ensure adequate liquidity in the system.

As of September 26, banks had availed of Rs 1.88 lakh crore through term repos from the Reserve Bank, the apex bank said in a statement.

"As a result of these steps, the system liquidity is in ample surplus," it said.

Saina sails into Korea Open quarterfinals

SEOUL, SEP 27 (PTI): India ace Saina Nehwal progressed to the quarterfinals of the USD 600,000 Korea Open after seeing off Korea's Kim Ga Eun at the BWF World Tour Super 500 tournament here Thursday.

Former world number one, who had won a bronze at the Asian Games and gold at Commonwealth Games this year, defeated Kim Ga Eun 21-18 21-18 in a 37-minute women's singles pre-quarterfinal.

Fifth seed Saina will cross swords with 2017 world champion and third seed Japanese Nozomi Okuhara.

Saina has a 6-3 head-to-head count against the Okuhara but she has lost to the Japanese in the last two meetings.

The Indian made a rampaging start, jumping to a 10-2 lead but Kim narrowed the gap to 8-11 at the break.



After the breather, Saina continued to move ahead, grabbing a 16-10 lead but the Korean reeled off six straight points to draw level at 18-18. However, Saina ensured there were no hiccups, grabbing the required three points to pocket the opening game.

Kim came back strongly in the second game, surging to an 8-1 advantage but the experienced Saina slowly clawed her way back to

10-13 and then claimed seven points on the trot to turn the tables on the Korean, reaching 17-13.

From there on, Saina sealed the contest, despite Kim's attempts to fightback.

Saina had reached the final of Indonesia Masters in January and the only tournament she won was the Commonwealth Games in April, beating compatriot P V Sindhu in the final at Gold Coast.

Religion and fashion can go together: Mariam Farid

DOHA, SEPT 27 (PTI): Leading Qatari woman athlete Mariam Farid, who competes wearing a hijab, says she would never compromise on her identity but would not mind blending a bit of fashion with religion.

At a young age of 15, Mariam had played a significant role in Qatar winning the bid in November 2014 to host its first ever IAAF World Championships.

As Qatar's ambassador, she had delivered an emotional speech, convincing the panel to accept their bid which emphasised on breaking barriers and changing the western world's perception about the Arab world.

Four years after that successful bid, Mariam is now preparing herself to deliver on the promise when Doha will host the Championships next year.

She is aiming to produce a strong show in the 400m hurdles event.

"In the beginning, I used to wear a long shirt and then a short shirt but now I try to find something easier and comfortable. It's (Hijab) not going to make me less faster. Even if it slows me down, it is, what makes me comfortable, this is my identity. It should not bother anyone," said Mariam.

To prove her point that running with her body covered, won't compromise her speed, she cites example of Australian athlete Cathie Freeman, who became the women's 400m Olympic champion in 2000 while running with full body-kit, her arms and head covered.

And she is not the only one who wears hijab. In 2016, when Kariman Abuljadayel became the first Saudi woman to compete in the 100 metres at the Rio Games, she also wore full body-kit.

However, Mariam would like to modify the hijab, a must for women in many Islamic countries. Maybe 10 years down the line when she is done with athletics career, she wants to manufacture hijabs that would complement the beauty of a woman.

"I want to start my own business, which helps



in empowering and inspiring younger generation of women. None of the brands are appreciating women wearing hijab in sports. It will be a good idea to open the doors," she said.

"Recently Nike gave me a hijab. Whatever it is, but it looks bad (laughs). We need brands like Nike and Adidas to do (design) something beautiful for us."

So how different the hijab, she wants to introduce, would be from the one worn now?

"Beautiful. I should not look awkward. Just because I am wearing a scarf, it should not make me look

less beautiful. It should be fashionable. Of course, religion and fashion can go together."

Coming from a family of seven, which has five doctors, Mariam says she does not feel pressure to perform before the home fans.

"A champion is not made in one day or one year. It takes years. I started three-four years back. I don't feel pressure. One year to go, nothing is impossible."

When Mariam, all of 20 and without a major medal in her kitty, says that she is her own role model, the Qatari may sound cocky.

However, the strong-willed hurdler says it is important to be confident because If you are not, people around you will try to break you.

"Not everyone wants to see you happy. Majority would want see you fail. I don't want to sound arrogant but I am my own role model. I feel I can do whatever I want to do. I have my own goals and passion," she said.

What makes her so confident at such a young age?

"That's my character. I don't accept people telling me that I can't do this or that," said the communications student at Northwestern University in Doha.

Supremely-confident Mariam, coached by Tunisian Awatef Hamrouni, admits that she has flaws too.

"I am not patient enough. This part is killing me. Coach says it will take lot of time (to do well in big championships). I am confident, one day, I will do something big.

"400m hurdles is easy to succeed fast. I am tall and it helps me to jump easily. Jumping the hurdle is break for me from running. So I have a break at every 10 hurdles. It's easy for me."

She also insists that the Arab world is not how the West looks at it.

"Western world have this stereotype that we don't do sport. We (women) sit at home, we are not allowed to move outside. It's a perception and its wrong. Yes, it was not in our culture, 15-20 years ago but now we have strong teams, where a lot of girls are playing," she said adding that they do train with boys too.

Mariam says hosting World Championship will break a lot of stereotypes.

"It's very powerful message to the Arab world, to the Muslims and to the people in this region, that we are not less than anyone. No one could imagine that a small country like Qatar could host world championships."



Jamsenpa dedicates her award to all women

ITANAGAR, SEP 27 (PTI): Everest Anshu Jamsenpa Thursday said she has dedicated the Tenging Norgey Adventure award which she received on Tuesday to all women.

Jamsenpa was conferred the Tenzing Norgey Adventure award by President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday.

"I would like to give them (women) the message that I know how hard it is to be born as a woman and to achieve something on your own is even harder. But perseverance pays off. Keep moving ahead never give up, believe in you," she told PTI over phone from New Delhi.

"I am feeling elated, thrilled, excited and very happy, congratulations have been showering on me and many like you asked about my feeling. My reaction was simple that good deeds never go unrewarded. If you really deserve you will get it sooner or later," she said.

The 32-year-old mother of two said "This is the highest award in the field of adventure sports and what more could I ask for."

Jamsenpa had scaled Mt Everest twice in a span of five days in May last year.

China slams US B-52s fly over disputed seas as 'provocative'

BEIJING, SEP 27 (AFP): The Chinese defence ministry on Thursday denounced flyovers by US B-52 bombers over the South China Sea and East China Sea as "provocative" actions amid soaring tensions between the two global powers.

The Pentagon said Wednesday the heavy bombers had taken part in a combined operation with Japan over the East China Sea and had flown through international airspace over the South China Sea a day before.

"Regarding the provocative actions of US military aircraft in the South China Sea, we are always resolutely opposed to them, and will continue to take necessary measures in order

to strongly handle (this issue)," Chinese defence ministry spokesman Ren Guoqiang told a monthly news briefing.

China has claimed large swaths of the strategic waterway and built up a series of islands and maritime features, turning them into military facilities.

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam have competing claims to the region, and an international maritime tribunal ruled in 2016 that China's claims have no legal basis.

Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Dave Eastburn said this week's flights were part of "regularly scheduled operations."

The United States rejects China's territorial claims and

routinely says the military will "continue to fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows at times and places of our choosing."

Washington this week enacted new tariffs against China covering another USD 200 billion of its imports while it last week sanctioned a Chinese military organisation for buying Russian weapons.

China has reacted angrily, and this week scrapped a US warship's planned port visit to Hong Kong and cancelled a meeting between the head of the Chinese navy and his American counterpart.

US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis said he was not con-

cerned the US transit flights would increase tensions with China.

"If it was 20 years ago and they have not militarised those features there, it would have just been another bomber on its way to Diego Garcia or whatever," he told Pentagon reporters, referring to the US military base in the Indian Ocean.

"So there's nothing out of the ordinary about it, nor about our ships sailing through there."

The Pentagon chief went on to say there is no "fundamental shift in anything."

"We're just going through one of those periodic points where we've got to learn to manage our differences," he said.

Maldives opposition seeks foreign help for transition

COLOMBO, SEP 27 (AFP): The Maldivian opposition appealed to the international community Thursday to help ensure a peaceful transition of power amid fears that strongman Abdulla Yameen may cling onto power despite his shock election defeat.

The joint opposition, which includes four political parties that successfully put forward the little-known Ibrahim Mohamed Solih at Sunday's vote, called for external help to re-establish democracy in the tiny Indian Ocean archipelago.

"In this regard, we look towards our friends and partners in the international community to assist us, as we move forward in trying to create a Maldives in which all citizens can enjoy peace, prosperity and justice," the opposition said in a



statement.

It did not say what form of assistance was requested, but opposition sources said they were looking for strong foreign warnings to Yameen to go quietly.

The statement came hours after the country's military chief and the head of police issued veiled warnings on television against Yameen trying to cling onto power.

Yameen decisively lost Sunday's election, despite all his main rivals being in prison or in exile, sparse media coverage of

the opposition, and monitors and the opposition predicting vote-rigging.

Formal results will be announced by the election commission on Sunday and Yameen -- who on Monday conceded defeat -- must hand over power to successor Solih on November 17 at the end of his five-year term.

But rumours have abounded on social media and elsewhere that Yameen could file an election petition seeking the delay of the announcement.

This prompted military chief Major General

Ahmed Shiyam to appear on a private TV channel on Wednesday night promising the results would be honoured.

"The people have spoken," Shiyam said. "I want to assure the Maldivian people that the military will protect the will of the people."

Election commission chief Ahmed Shareef confirmed that Yameen's party has lodged several complaints of suspected voting irregularities.

"We will look into these concerns," Shareef said.

But he added that there were no grounds for him to delay the announcement of the formal results.

On Wednesday, the opposition accused Yameen of delaying the release of high-profile political prisoners despite calls by Solih for their

release.

Shortly after his shock defeat, Yameen freed five prisoners.

But scores of others -- including Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, his estranged half-brother and former president -- remain incarcerated.

There was no immediate comment from the government.

Yameen jailed or exiled most of his rivals during his turbulent five-year term.

Suspecting a plot to impeach him, in February Yameen declared a state of emergency and arrested top judges as well as political opponents.

Yameen's rule dented its image as a honeymoon paradise and attracted alarm abroad -- both the US and the EU had threatened financial sanctions unless the democratic situation improved.



PM Modi, French Prez Macron get UN's highest environmental honour

UNITED NATIONS, SEP 27 (PTI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron have been jointly awarded with the UN's highest environmental honour for their pioneering work in championing the International Solar Alliance and promoting new areas of cooperation on environmental action.

Modi and Macron are among the six of the world's most outstanding environmental change-makers recognised with the Champions of the Earth Award.

"This years' laureates are recognised for a combination of bold, innovative and tireless efforts to tackle some of the most urgent environmental issues of our times," the UN Environment Programme said.

Modi and Macron have been jointly recognised in the Policy Leadership category for their pioneering work in championing the International Solar Alliance and promoting new areas of levels of cooperation on environmental action, including the French president's work on the Global Pact for the Environment and Modi's "unprecedented" pledge to eliminate all single-use

plastic in India by 2022.

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an Indian initiative jointly launched by Modi and the French president in November 2015 in Paris on the sidelines of COP-21, the UN Climate Conference.

The ISA is a treaty-based international body for promotion of solar energy in alliance with solar-rich countries located fully or partially between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.

Cochin is showing the world that our ever-expanding network of global movement doesn't have to harm the environment. As the pace of society continues to increase, the world's first fully solar-powered airport is proof positive that green business is good business, UNEP said.

The other winners of the 2018 Champions of the Earth Awards are Joan Carling, recognised with the lifetime achievement award for her work as one of the world's most prominent defenders of environmental and indigenous rights. Carling has been at the forefront of the conflict for land and the environment for more than 20 years.

California almonds bloom after going 'nuts' due to drought

SHAKOOR RATHER

MODESTO (CALIFORNIA) SEP 27 (PTI): California almonds, which cater to about 80 per cent of the global demand, have fully recovered from a four-year drought that ended in 2016, with the harvest returning to record levels this year, according to growers and promoters of the resilient crop.

Almonds are becoming more important to California and to consumers worldwide, who are eating more of the tree nut per capita than ever, amidst criticism for the crop's extensive water usage.

Fuelling the boom is robust foreign demand, particularly from markets like India and China, where the industry has been promoting almonds as a healthful snack.

The state harvested an estimated 1.85 billion pounds of shelled almonds in 2013-14, which was slightly less than the 1.88 billion pounds in 2012-13, according to the Almond Board of California (ABC).

However, after dropping during the drought, the 2017 almond crop rebounded to a record 2.14 billion pounds of shelled nuts, the board said.

"California almond orchards spread over 1.33 million acres in 2017, spanning 500 miles. 2018 forecast for almond production is 2.45 billion pounds, on 1.07 million bearing acres," said Richard Waycot, President and CEO, ABC.

"The world tree nut production is 4,187,108 metric tonnes and almonds form about 30 per cent of the total nut production followed by walnuts at over 20 per cent," he said.

With 6,800 growers and 101 processors, the board said, almonds form California's top valued agricultural export and number one US specialty crop export.

California's Central Valley has



mild winters and abundant sunshine which makes it the perfect place to grow almonds.

Harvest begins in August and ends in mid-October before winter rains begin. Almond varieties are harvested separately, meaning the harvest process occurs 2-3 times.

Winter rains in the valley and snow-melt from the surrounding mountains replenish the groundwater annually to some extent, but drought has parched the valley since 2011.

There is a robust system in place where growers can bring water from mountains full of snow, said Danielle Veenstra, Manager, Reputation Management & Sustainability Communications at ABC.

Almond-picking is also a highly mechanised process, which attracts farmers concerned about migrant-worker labour shortages, and its long history in the state creates a level of expertise competitors can not match.

Veenstra said that over the past 20 years, almond farmers have improved their water use efficiency by 33 per cent, producing more crop per drop.

She said 87 per cent of farmers practice demand-based irrigation instead of using a fixed schedule.

Almond farmers, said Veenstra, use efficient micro-sprinkler or drip irrigation at nearly two times the rate of farmers state-wide.

"To help sustain groundwater levels, almond farmers and researchers are experimenting with flooding orchards in the winter to recharge underground aquifers," she said.

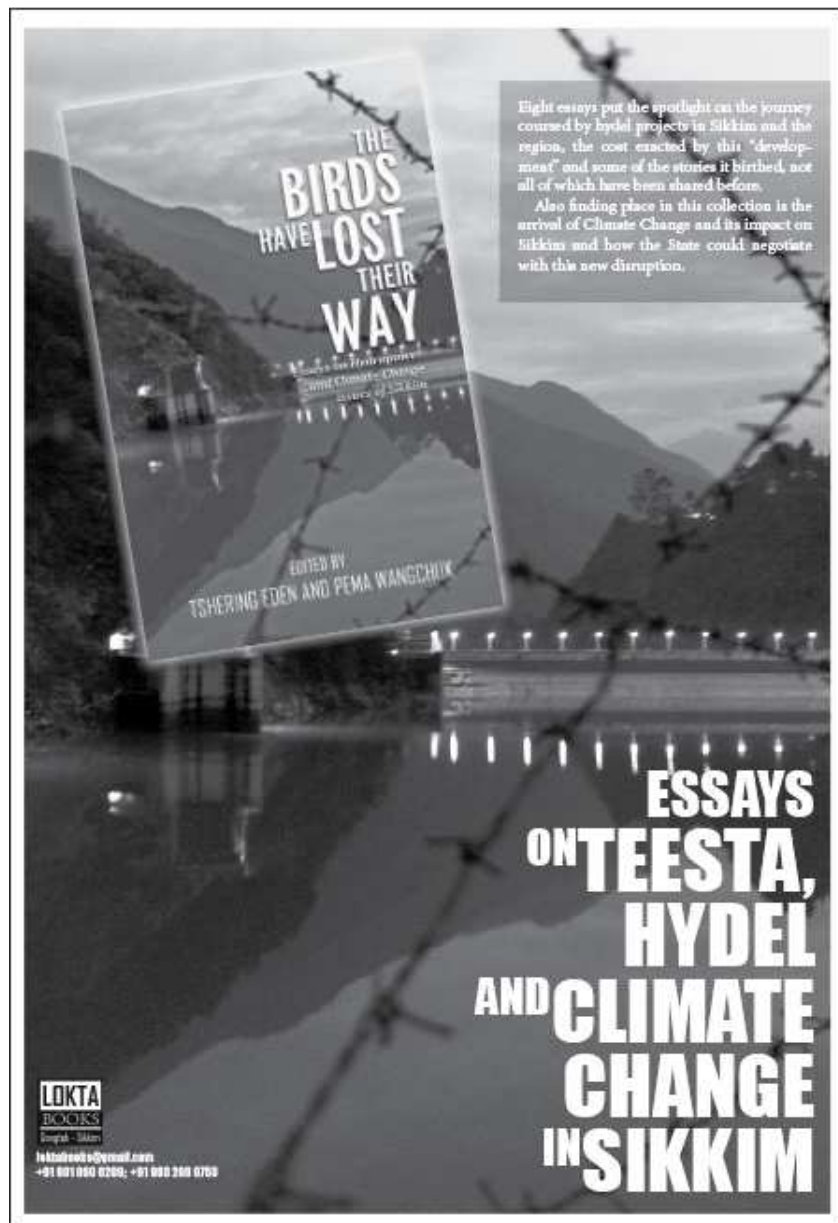
Before the drought, the big concern for almonds was the supply of pollinators.

Honeybees began dying in alarming numbers in 2006 due to a phenomenon named Colony Collapse Disorder. Millions of bees mysteriously disappeared, leaving farms with fewer pollinators for crops.

Explanations for the phenomenon have included exposure to pesticides or antibiotics, habitat loss and bacterial infections.

Beehives are now more expensive as permanently higher death rates require faster replacement of hives, said a grower who works in an almond farm near Modesto.

However, almond demand has given growers incentive to pay more for bees that are trucked in from across the US to help pollinate trees, with the crop being the single biggest user of commercial pollination services.





MINAJ & HAMILTON! Nicki Minaj and Lewis Hamilton just seemingly confirmed they are dating. The rapper and race car driver got up close and personal while speeding around the deserts of Dubai. Nicki straddled the Formula One racer in a Versace ensemble as they zoomed around the sand dunes together. In the selfie shared by Nicki, she wrote, “Caribbean tingz what I on. Me & Lewis gettin paper like what ink dry on.”

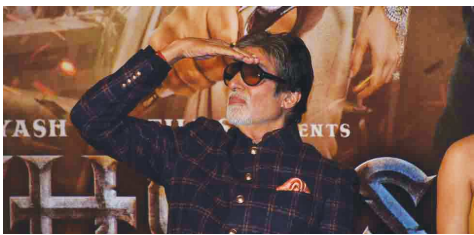
Aamir urged me to do Nagraj Manjule's 'Jhund': Bachchan

MUMBAI, SEP 27 (PTI): Amitabh Bachchan Thursday said his “Thugs of Hindostan” co-star Aamir Khan asked him to take up Nagraj Manjule's next “Jhund”.

Bachchan will play the role of a professor who builds a soccer team with street kids in “Jhund”, which is the “Sairat” helmer's first Hindi directorial.

“I remember, when I discussed that with Aamir, he told me I must do this film. And you know what happens when Aamir endorses something... So I am doing that,” Bachchan told reporters.

“We will start working on the film from November. It is a real life story. It is about underprivileged children and those staying in slums, a sporting team is made with these bunch of actors,” he added.



The actor was speaking at the trailer launch of “Thugs of Hindostan”.

“Thugs of Hindostan” brings together two powerhouse performers - Bachchan and Khan on screen for the first time.

The duo were earlier supposed to star in “Rishta” years ago, but the project never took off.

Aamir said, “We had a film together that Indra Kumar was going to make called ‘Rishta’, it was announced very long back. But due to

several reasons it could not be made.

“Since then I was waiting to get an opportunity to work with him in a film. I am glad it happened now. I don't have the guts to say ‘no’ to a film with Amit ji.”

Bachchan also heaped praises on the “Dangal” star, calling him “a brilliant actor and a marketing genius”.

He also suggested Khan to direct him in a film.

Also featuring Katrina Kaif and Fatima Sana Shaikh, “Thugs” releases November 8.



Meghan Markle's 'British Accent' Sparks Social Media Frenzy Again

Meghan Markle's “accent” has Twitter in a frenzy once again. Over the summer, social media went wild over a clip of the Duchess of Sussex speaking in what seemed to be a slight British accent during a public appearance in Cheshire, England. Now, Twitter is buzzing once again over a clip of Meghan in Queen Elizabeth II's documentary, Queen of the World, which first appeared online over the weekend. In the clip, Meghan is reunited with her Givenchy wedding dress from her May nuptials with Prince Harry.

'AANDHADUN' WOULD BE GAME CHANGER FOR ME: AYUSHMANN KHURRANA

MUMBAI, SEP 27 (PTI): Bringing unorthodox subjects on celluloid, Ayushmann Khurrana realised it was time for him to change gears and experiment by challenging himself as an actor.

In an interview with PTI, Ayushmann talked about why it was essential for him to pick up Sriram Raghavan's “Aandhadun”.

“It was a deliberate decision to move away from that space of doing slice-of-life films. I believe you don't have to change yourself with every film, establish yourself in a particular genre and then break the mould. If you are changing with every film then where is the surprise? You will get exhausted as an actor,” he said.

The actor says he realised that this film offered him the perfect opportunity to break away from the image of playing a middle class boy.

“I was ready to do this film as soon as possible. This film would be a game changer for me as I have been doing slice-of-life films and I have established myself in a particular genre successfully. I wanted to break that mould.”

To Ayushmann's surprise, Raghavan had seen some of his films and liked the kind of work he was doing.

“He told me that I am a good actor but he doesn't



see me in a thriller space. It will be an interesting casting as nobody expects you in my film.

“We shot two scenes. We did certain blind scenes and it was great experience. While I was doing it, he was like let's discuss dates now. I am a guitarist and he was convinced that I would learn piano as I know the chords, and all.”

Ayushmann, 34, recalled that as a struggler he used to audition for films a lot but once he became an established actor, he stopped doing it.

What Ayushmann enjoyed the most, he says, is the way the “Badlapur” director narrated the story of this forthcoming film.

“It was a very fascinating narration as he will ask you questions in between like ‘what will happen next’ as he wants to gauge the reaction of the actor. That keeps you on your toes and you keep

thinking, what is going to happen now.

“But he is always thinking ten steps ahead of the viewer. His style is amazing. I was excited about his world. I loved ‘Ek Hasina Thi’, it was a game changer for Saif Ali Khan and ‘Badlapur’ for Varun Dhawan, now I hope this film works for me.”

In this genre, Ayushmann feels it is important for actors to do their job earnestly as there is no method to get it right.

“One has to own that character and those lines. Whatever the body language is, you have to imbibe that for your role. It is a different zone. Acting in slice-of-life is easier than this as there was no reference point. Playing blind pianist was doubly challenging.”

Releasing on October 5, “Aandhadun” also features Tabu and Radhika Apte in pivotal roles.

#MeToo movement needed in Bollywood: Tanushree

The #MeToo movement brought out the ugly side of Hollywood and led to the downfall of several powerful men, but Tanushree Dutta says such a thing should happen in Bollywood so that she can get justice for an incident that she claimed happened in 2008.

In a recent TV interview, Dutta reiterated her claim that a veteran actor had misbehaved with her on the sets of a film.

During the interview, she also alleged that the actor had the tacit support of the film's makers.

“They called me a slut, an unprofessional... when I spoke about it eight to ten years back. Nobody has right to say anything to me,” Dutta told PTI.

Recounting the incident and its aftermath, she claimed, “When I tried to escape they called the media, they called some people to mob lynch and attack my car. My parents were there inside and even I was inside, it was horrific. So from harassment situation to a mob lynching situation...”

“They made sure that we did not escape from the studio, they locked the gates and then the cops came and they got us out... So when we filed the police report, they filed a counter complaint and because of the counter FIR, my dad, hair dresser and spot boy had to go through so much harassment over the next couple of years.”

Dutta said there is social stigma and character assassination that a person goes through when she talks or tries to talk about

such incidents.

The actor said she wants to spread a message through her story so that other women get encouraged to share their stories.

“This is not for me. I live in America, I am busy with life. My approach is like an American in a way, so I am okay with talking about it. This is for the benefit of others... Here is a person who spoke ten years ago, taking names and shames, doing it now also. This is like providing strength. Like to see justice done, for example for rest of the country, like stop working with these actors.

“I am not doing it for hidden agenda. These things are happening so it is like encouraging others. This I hope encourages people,” Dutta said.

She lamented that the impact that #MeToo had in Hollywood was not felt in Bollywood as actors have packaged themselves as “saints” here.

“These film actors in our country know the technology of how to package and present themselves so they come across as saintly and people don't know what is happening behind their back. People keep mum because of this ideology that this person had a name so how do we speak against this person,” she said.



ARIES: Don't get discouraged if it seems like everyone but you is getting a piece of the pie, Aries. Your time will come, but it probably won't be today. While you may want to sink into tender feelings and sensitivity, others may want to float on the surface and dabble in fantasy worlds. Feel free to escape in your own world for a while, but don't be surprised if others don't follow.

TAURUS: Make some room for long communications with good friends, Taurus. This is an important day to get the word out to people you love. Keep things light and energetic, which you do well anyway. Express your showmanship and make sure your bright presence lights up every room you enter. The world is your stage, so act the role you enjoy

the most - your true self.

GEMINI: You may be the party-pooper today unless you do something to remedy your serious tone, Gemini. This is a day for light, social activities and fun-loving times with friends. Don't worry if things don't seem rational. Sometimes it's the unlikely route that ends up being the best. Don't discount the fanciful and bizarre. Take a walk on the wild side.

CANCER: You're the missing piece of the puzzle today, Cancer. As a result, people will look to you for answers. The good news is that you'll have them at the ready. Trust yourself. Information and new ideas may be flying around, and you may be called upon to make sense of it all. Don't be afraid to err on the side of the fanciful.

LEO: You may run into trouble if you penetrate too deeply today, Leo. Keep things light and energetic if you can. Ironically, the harder you push to get something done, the more roadblocks you're apt to encounter. Things will flow easily if you're willing to let them. Give up some control and let a more whimsical energy lead the way.

VIRGO: Give your adventuresome, world-traveling spirit room to soar, Virgo. This is a good time to embrace and express your dreams. Write them down, talk to others, and say them out loud. Communication and information are key elements today. Things may move quickly, so stay alert and tuned into the energy that's buzzing all around you. The best things in life may come on a whim.

LIBRA: Stop planning and start doing. There may be pressure to leave your normal routine and do something on a whim, Libra. Although this may not be your usual way to do things, it certainly isn't a reason not to. Let your mind explore new realms. Feel free to pick up loose pieces of an old dream that you left hanging in midair. Rekindle your passion for life.

SCORPIO: The answer for you today is “yes.” Explore, reach out, and expand your mind to the far corners of your world and beyond, Scorpio. There's no need to be tied down to reality. Don't restrict yourself to linear thinking. Take time out and enjoy the clouds. Information you receive should be extremely helpful in the pursuit of your wildest dreams.

SAGITTARIUS: Today you should take action in areas where you usually keep quiet, Sagittarius. The more you explore your mind, the safer you'll feel in your external reality. Be confident of your dreams. This is a day to connect with others about the things that feel most pleasurable. Indulge and enjoy. Take action. You have everything you need to make it all start working for you.

CAPRICORN: There's a light, uplifting flavor to the day, Capricorn, which you should latch onto and take charge of. You'll find that there's a rather dreamy yet expansive quality to this energy that encourages you to soar higher and achieve more. Jump on opportunities, but be careful that you don't act based on misguided information. Pipe-dreams will get you nowhere.

AQUARIUS: Try not to take things too seriously today, Aquarius. Realize that the best plans are sometimes the ones that were never made in the first place. Keep the lines of communication open and don't discount things that sound off the wall at first. Dream big and don't restrict yourself by thinking that your radical ideas have no basis in reality.

PISCES: This is a tremendous day for you, Pisces. You may find that dreams really can come true. Make sure you stay abreast of communication and periodicals. Let your fingers dip into many different pies and keep a notepad handy. Your brilliant strokes of inspiration may come on a whim, so be ready to receive them. The genius within you yearns to spring forth.