



ASIM SHARMA WINS SIKKIM MOUNTAIN BIKING COMPTT
pg03

Inspired by sci-fi, an airplane with no moving parts and a blue ionic glow
pg04

BAJ BRINGS AUCTION OF BADMINTON PLAYERS IN A FIRST FOR SIKKIM
pg02



SummitTIMES

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

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EC lowers daily cash transaction limit of candidates for campaigning purposes

NEW DELHI, Nov 25 (PTI): In a bid to check the flow of excess money in electioneering, the Election Commission has lowered the limit of cash transactions by candidates for campaigning purposes from Rs 20,000 to Rs 10,000 per day.

In an instruction sent to all chief electoral officers, the poll panel said that for transactions beyond Rs 10,000, the candidates and parties will have to make payment using cross cheques, drafts or electronic means, including NEFT/RTGS, through the account of the candidate opened for electioneering.

In April, 2011, the EC had set the daily cash limit to Rs 20,000. But now it has been revised keeping in mind the amendments in section 40A(3) of the Income Tax Act in 2017.

The new changes came into being from November 12 and would have a bearing on assembly polls in Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Now, a candidate cannot receive a donation or loan in cash, in excess of Rs 10,000 from a single person or entity during campaigning.

The election watchdog has been pushing for greater transparency in election-related expenditure by parties and candidates. Like individuals, there should be a ceiling on expenditure made by political parties during polls, according to a 2015 Election Commission draft document based on the 'general agreement' among participants.

At present, while there is a ceiling on campaigning fund for individual candidates in electoral fray, there is no such cap on the money which political parties can spend for electioneering.

One-day special session of Delhi Assembly on Monday likely to be stormy

New Delhi, Nov 25 (PTI): A one-day special session of the Delhi Assembly on Monday is likely to be stormy as AAP legislators will discuss the recent attack on Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, while the opposition BJP MLAs will seek to corner the ruling party over issues concerning people.

On November 20, a man threw chilli powder at Kejriwal outside his office in the Delhi Secretariat. On November 22, the

turn to pg02

Labrang Monastery inaugurated after Rs 1 cr Retrofitting

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 Nov: Chief Minister Pawan Chamling today inaugurated the retrofitted and re-strengthened Labrang Palden Phuntsok Gompa at Upper Tumlong in North Sikkim. The 187-year-old monastery of the Nyingma sect had suffered damages in the Sept 2011 earthquake and has been retrofitted and re-strengthened at a project cost of around Rs. One crore.

Addressing the gathering of the devout, the Chief Minister pointed out that the State Government has consistently been dedicated to preserve and promote the Sikkimese Buddhist way of life and connecting with the rest of the world.

He pointed out how, since the statue of Guru Padmasambhava was completed in the year 2004, till the recent unveiling of the statue of Chenrezig at Sangacholing, Pelling, and the Buddha Park with the statue of Sakyamuni Buddha, Sikkim has be-



come a Singkhem with the Holy Trinity of Mahayana Buddhism established at important vantage points here.

Stressing that "seeing was believing" the CM invited the people to go over what the government has done in the past 24 years to decide for themselves how good these years have

been for Sikkim and the Sikkimese.

He also informed the gathering about the government's plans to establish a world-class Buddhist University in the State soon.

Sikkim, he remarked, was only state in the world which was practicing Buddha's 'non-violence', and said that this

reflected as much in the people-centric governance as in such initiatives as the Organic Mission which saves the earth and the people from toxic chemicals in food.

Sikkim is leading in the care for its fragile environment and rich bio-diversity and there will be definite benefits in the long run from Or-

ganic Sikkim, he said.

The CM also announced that statue of Lachen Gomchen will also be constructed in the area.

He also handed over cheques of Rs 20 lakhs to the Duchis of the Labrang, Phensong and Phodong, Kabi monasteries. He also announced an additional Rs

turn to pg02



Election 2019 between truth and bitterness: Chamling

GANGTOK, 25 Nov: The Sikkim Democratic Front is examining and evaluating its prospective candidates for Elections 2019, SDF president, Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, said today at a function at Labrang.

"This time, the electoral battle is between truth and bitterness," Mr Chamling said and appealed to party workers and the public to vote conscious of what was at stake.

While taking a dig into opposition, Chief Minister contended that confronting the people in a thin disguise was a group inimical to peace and one, which even in the Opposition, was harassing people with extortion demands. His comment was clearly in reference to a recent incident in Sikkim when Opposition party supporters were picked up on the complaint of a contractor who alleged that he was being pressurized with demands of 'percentage tax'.

Mr Chamling also announced 80 laptops to be provided to JNV, Phodong, students. These will be delivered in January next year, he informed.

Golay meets party workers at Dalapchand



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 Nov: Sikkim Krantikari Morcha president, PS Tamang [Golay], meet with his party workers of Chujachen constituency at Dalapchand, East Sikkim.

He was accompanied by SKM vice president and Zone-II incharge, Bishnu Khatiwara, VP KB Gurung, CLC Nirpath Gurung and other party workers.

While interacting with party workers he directed the constituency committee to constitute BLCs and WLCs within this month.

He called on all party workers to reach out to all sections of the society to collect feedback from them and detail all pending developmental works and issues of general public.

He advised party

workers to work united and spread the party's programmes, policies and future plans to the people.

Commenting on ongoing land settlement issue related to Pakyong Airport, he demanded immediate intervention of state government to resolve the matter in favour of the victims. He stressed that SKM was extending moral support to affected people.

Bharat-Nepal Sahitya Sangam at Gyalshing

SUMMIT REPORT

GIALSHING, 25 Nov: Press Club of Sikkim, in association with the Press Club of West Sikkim and Paschim Sikkim Sahitya Prakashan, organized a literary programme, Bharat-Nepal Sahitya Sangam-2018, here at the Bharatiya Nepali Shahitya, Sanskriti Anusandhan Kendra today.

The programme had the special presence of renowned literary figures from Nepal, Darjeeling and Sikkim. In attendance were Ninu Chapagai, President, Deokota Lusun Pragya Pratishthan as chief guest and the programme was chaired by Padmashri Kedar Gurung.

The delegation from Nepal was represented

by Ninu Chapagai, Sangeet Shrota, Khagendra Khushi, Indra Regmi, Bimal Niva, Purushottam Acharya, Ranendra Barali, Jiwan Sharma, Sita Sharma, Matrika Pokhrel.

Likewise, Darjeeling was represented by Kamal Bhattacharai and Kiran Kambang and Sikkim, pexpectedly, had a strong presence.

Peots from Sikkim Milan Pradhan, Uddhav Gopal Pradhan, Gobardhan Bastola, Rudra Kausik, Prem Mukhia Bairagi, Pramila Tamang, Mahananda Dahal and others were present.

Jiwan Sharma, a musician and singer from Nepal, performed while Dreamers Dance Academy, Gyalshing, students form Langang School and

turn to pg02

HC-appointed team visits Chungthang, meets project affected people



WANGCHUK BHUTIA

CHUNGTHANG, 25 Nov:

Following the Public Interest Litigation filed by Tseten Lepcha of Chungthang on behalf of the people highlighting problems ailing Chungthang and the surrounding areas due to lethargic project implementation and administrative overwatch with regard to the 1,200 MW Teesta Stage III HEP, a team from the High Court led by amicus curiae Narendra Rai and Tammana Chettri visited the project-affected area and interacted with the affected people who had turned up from all the wards of the Chungthang Gram Panchayat Unit accompanied by Panchayat members and experts.

Advocates representing Teesta Urja were also present.

The affected people of Chungthang raised several grievances with the

visiting team highlighting that the project developer has not fulfilled their demands pertaining to the safety of the area.

There is little love lost between Teesta Urja and the affected people when it comes to the safety of the area. The people argued today that they had made sacrifices for development of the nation but have received only a bitter experience since the commissioning of the project.

The also contended that Teesta Urja, the project developer, has not done any developmental work under its CSR commitments thus far in the area.

The issue of vibrations which had spread much panic in Chungthang when it was first noticed in June earlier this year, continues to remain unaddressed, the pointed out.

The people also pointed out to landslides triggered

turn to pg02

Senior journalist still haunted by 26/11 sounds and images

EKNATH MAKNE

MUMBAI, Nov 25 (PTI): The staccato bursts of gun fire, smoke plumes billowing out of the iconic Taj Mahal hotel, bullet-riddled bodies at local hospitals and cries of the victims' kin still flash through Vijay Vaidyas mind.

Ten years after the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, which claimed 166 lives and left over 300 injured, the 78-year-old senior journalist recalls the stories of valour by security personnel and the resilience shown by Mumbaiers.

Ten terrorists, armed with automatic weapons and grenades, went about firing indiscriminately, carrying out bomb

explosions and holding innocents hostage as a fight back by security forces continued for the next 60 hours.

Vaidya, who lives in north Mumbai suburb Borivali, said he was at his home when he learnt about the terror attack. He rang up then Opposition leader in State Assembly and present Environment Minister Ramdas Kadam and together they headed t south Mumbai from Kadam's Kandivli residence.

Vaidya said they saw a taxi damaged in a blast in Vile Parle. They headed towards the GT Hospital in south Mumbai, where bodies of policemen

killed in the attack were kept.

The duo was joined by BJP leader and now Maharashtra Education Minister Vinod Tawde and proceeded towards the Gateway of India, near the Taj hotel.

"All the street lights there were off. The Taj was engulfed by fire. Police had cordoned off the area. The injured in the hotel attack were being taken to Byculla-based JJ Hospital," Vaidya recalled.

From the Gateway, the trio moved towards Nariman House in Colaba, where terrorists were suspected to have holed up.

The scene at the JJ Hospital was heart-wrenching with bodies of victims lying there and

their kin mourning the dead, he said. Many people had queued up at the hospital to donate blood to victims, he added.

Vaidya said it was a noisy scene at their next stop, the Oberoi Hotel at the Nariman Point which was also a scene of the terror attack. The hotel premises were cordoned off for security purposes, he said.

The journalist, who also recalled the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts, said 26/11 helped change the public perception about Mumbai police. "People started looking at cops as heroes for the way they battled the trained terrorists," he said.

Gangtok on Monday, 26 Nov

Temp: 19°C/05°C
Forecast: Sunny to partly cloudy with a little rain in the evening, then a shower in spots

Sunrise: 06:05 AM
Sunset: 04:42 PM

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Intl Day for Prevention of Violence Against Women observed in Rhenock

RHENOCK, 24 NOV (IPR): An awareness programme as part of the International Day for Prevention of Violence Against Women was organised by the Sikkim State Commission for Women in collaboration with One Stop Centre [under Social Justice Empowerment and Welfare Department] at Rhenock Block Administrative Centre here in East Sikkim on Saturday.

The programme was attended by the BDO, BL Adhikari, officials and staff of the BAC, Panchayat President, Aaganwadi Workers, ASHA members, representatives from SHGs and the staff of the Women's Commission and the One Stop Centre. Chimmie D. Bhutia



spoke on various safety measures in terms of government delivery structures functioning in the State and also highlighted the importance of networking with the other stakeholders like Police,

Health and voluntary organisations in working towards creating a safe environment for women.

Information on the one-stop centre and women's helpline under Social Justice Empowerment

and Welfare Department was also shared.

Chong Chyoki spoke on various forms of violence against women and highlighted various provisions of Protection of Women from Domes-

tic Violence Act, Sexual Harassment of women at workplace Act, Human Trafficking and POCSO Act. The programme ended with a group discussion on existing social issues.

SKM coordination meet at Lower Bhasmey



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 25 NOV: Sikkim Krantikari Morcha convened a co-ordination meeting at Lower Bhasmey Ward, East Pandam GPU under Rhenock constituency, a press release informs.

Former Panchayat President, East Pandam GPU, Robin Lohar, was appointed CLC Coordinator Incharge (SC Wing) today and several issues and agendas were dis-

cussed regarding mass participation from Rhenock constituency in the forthcoming State Level Mega Event of Youth and Nari Convention of the party.

A Ward Level Committee of Ward No. 6 Lower Bhasmey, East Pandam GPU, was formed with Sanjeet Bishwakarma as WLC President and 17 members inducted into the WLC body, the release informs.

UNNATI Training begins with launch at Modern School



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 25 NOV:

UNNATI Training programme initiated by SIBIN Group began at Modern Senior Secondary School in presence of Additional Director Sonam Doma Topden, School Principal, teachers and students under Samagra Shiksha, Human Resource Development Department. The idea

behind the training is to enhance the employability of students.

The UNNATI training will cover Class X students at 121 schools across the State.

The training program, a press release informs, includes a functional English-speaking course, soft-skill development, basic computer skills and presentation skills.

12 goals in three matches at Inter-Departmental tourney

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 25 NOV:

Forest Department outplayed Human Resource Development Department 3-0 at the ongoing 6th Inter-Departmental Football Tournament 2018 here at Paljor Stadium on Sunday.

In the second match of the day, the team of Buildings and PHE Departments registered an easy 4-0 victory over the team of Home Department and DoP to earn three points.

In the last match of the day, Urban Development & Housing Department went down to the team of Sikkim BAR Association and Law Department 02-03.

On Monday, Land Revenue Department will take on Ecclesiastical Department in the first match, which will be followed by Information & Public Relations Department taking on Rural Management & Development Department.

One-day special session...

Delhi Cabinet decided to convene a one-day Assembly session on Monday to discuss the attack on the chief minister and the alleged "mass deletion" of names in voters list in the city.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia had recently said the decision to convene the special session had been taken in view of the "attitude" of the Centre and the Delhi Police over the incident involving the chief minister.

On the other hand, the Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Vijender Gupta, hit out at the AAP dispensation for convening the session over the issue.

"Politically motivated issues such as throwing chilly powder at the chief minister and the so-called deletion of lakhs of names from the voters list hardly deserve public time, attention and money. But the Kejriwal government is bent upon raising dust and storm on these non-existent issues," Gupta said in a statement.

He also said, "The government has never deemed it fit to deliberate on serious issues such as control over pollution, providing civic amenities in unauthorised colonies, slum areas, upgrading medical facilities and increasing number of beds in hospitals, opening new schools in hitherto uncovered areas."

Bharat-Nepal Sahitya...

members of the Lok Adhuni Band presented musical and traditional cultural performances.

The literati from Nepal is here on a three-day Literary Study Tour and will be attending different interactive literary programmes to be held in Namchi and Gangtok.

Addressing the event, Kedar Gurung said that such programmes will contribute in making the Sikkim and Indo-Nepal bonding stronger.

Ninu Chapagai, in turn, remarked that such literary programmes benefit the society and create an opportunity to understand each other better.

The function was also addressed by Joseph Lepcha, president, Press Club of Sikkim, and Puran Tamang, general secretary, PCS.

Labrang Monastery...

75 lakh for the development and management of the monastery as demanded by Duchi and announced that the provision for the same will be made in the next financial year.

Similarly, he also announced to provide all the required financial assistance for the construction of Lower Tumlong Manilakhang and made an immediate financial sanction of Rs 10 Lakh.

The Chief Minister also attended the annual Mahakala Gurdak Mask Dance at the monastery complex.

Area MLA, Ugen Nedup Bhutia, while addressing the function, gave a brief historical background of the Labrang Monastery.

Labrang Palden Phuntshol Gunpa at Upper Tumlong, North Sikkim was established in 1844-45 by the then Eighth Chogyal of Sikkim who had shifted Sikkim's capital from Yukuom in West Sikkim to Tumlong.

HC-appointed team...

at Chorten village owing to the diversion of the river there.

The issue of a protective wall required for Moonlight School was also highlighted.

The also informed that 47 project-affected households have applied for employment in the project, but only 27 have so far been inducted, and even these only after the filing of a PIL. Until then, there was only one person from among the affected people employed with the project, it is learnt.

After the interaction, a joint inspection was conducted in presence of officials from Teesta Urja, Jigme Tashi Bhutia, expert deputed by the High Court, Panchayat members, affected people and the officials.

It was also decided that the project developer will construct a concrete boundary wall 1.5 metres tall around the Moonlight School for the safety of the children.

The area below Chorten village where a landslide occurred was also inspected.

The project developer has assured to construct a protective wall there.

The people have also demanded a protective wall towards Lachung river because its current state is posing a threat to Chungthang town.

Advocate Narendra Rai, while speaking to this correspondent, informed that the team will submit a report to the High Court, after which the Court will decide the next course of action.

Sherab Od Sal Raldeling Academy celebrates annual day



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 25 NOV:

Sherab Od Sal Raldeling Academy, Sudung, West Sikkim, celebrated its annual day today with Kalpana Gurung, Principal of KB Limboo Senior Sec School, Sri-

badam, as chief guest and the felicitation of state-level painting competition winners from the school, Mayelmit Lepcha [VII] and Itiyash Gurung [VI] adding to the pomp and color of this special day.

ITBP Pegong celebrates Guru Nanak Jayanti

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 24 NOV:

11th Bn ITBP, Pegong, North Sikkim, under the leadership of Commandant, Rajesh Kumar Tomar, celebrated Guru Nanak Jayanti on Friday. All members of the 11th Bn ITBP

offered prayers and raised flags at Unit Gurudwaras, a press release informs.

Mr Tomar extended warm wishes to all members of the unit and spoke about Guru Nanak and his teachings on the day.

Oil PSUs to allot 65,000 petrol pumps ahead of general elections

NEW DELHI, NOV 25 (PTI): Ahead of general elections, public sector oil companies plan to allot about 65,000 petrol pumps across the country to nearly double the existing retail network, officials said Sunday.

Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) Sunday issued advertisements for setting up 55,649 petrol pumps across the country.

"This does not include any sites in poll-bound states," HPCL's state-level coordinator Vishal Bajpai told reporters here. Assembly elections are on in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram and advertisement for these would be issued after polling is completed.

IOC, which already has 27,377 petrol pumps across the country, has advertised for setting up 26,982 more in states

that are not going to polls. BPCL will add 15,802 outlets to its existing strength of 14,592 and HPCL would add 12,865 petrol pumps to its existing tally of 15,287.

Delhi has 390 petrol pumps and 170 more are to be set up, Bajpai said.

The poll-bound states may have some 9,000-10,000 sites, another official said.

The allotments will be done on relaxed guidelines which has lowered the educational qualification to 10th pass from 12th pass and graduate currently and the only essential requirement is ownership of the land where the pump is to be set up, Bajpai said.

This is the first time in almost four years that allotment of petrol pump sites is being advertised.

India currently has 63,674 petrol pumps, most of them with public sector firms. Nayara Energy Ltd, formerly Essar Oil Ltd, has the highest number of outlets in the

BAJ brings auction of badminton players in a first for Sikkim



JORETHANG, 25 NOV (IPR): In a first of its kind event in the state, the Badminton Association of Jorethang presented a unique Auction of Stars and Heroes of Sikkim at a special function organised in the Indoor Badminton Hall here today.

A total of 60 professional players were "purchased" during the exciting auction process by six franchisees.

Among the six franchisees, Speaker of Sikkim Legislative Assembly, KN Rai, took ownership of Unique Shuttlers, Minister GM Gurung the Red Panda GMTS, Minister Arjun Kumar Ghatani took Jorethang Rising Star, MD Nayuma Roshan Rai purchased Players for Racketers.

Nayuma was represented by Programme Manager Neelam Neopaney, Anjana Bhatrai represented her

husband, Olympian Tarundeep Rai along with co-owner of Team Namchi Smasher and Satyam Rai paid for the players of team Southern Phoenix.

Each Franchisee was allowed to invest a specified amount of Rs 45,000 for all ten players in their respective teams from the kitty.

President of Badminton Association of Sikkim, C Zangpo, was the observer to oversee the auction process while Jigme Namgyal, President of Jorethang Badminton Association, was the Organizing Chief behind the tournament and informed that the tournament was a prelude to Jorethang Maghey Sakranti Mela 2019.

Amon Rai became the most expensive player who was sold for Rs 14,600. The bidding started from a base price of Rs. 3000 for each player.

products, predominantly diesel, ensuring quality and correct price to meet the rural agricultural demand and cater to people in remote areas, he said.

He said the process of dealer selection has been simplified by introducing online applications and doing away with the requirement of submitting voluminous documents in support of eligibility.

"Only the selected candidate would be required to produce the documents. Similarly, the eligibility norms have also been relaxed," he said. "Availability of suitable land at the advertised location/stretch is the most important requirement. Applicants without land can also apply, however, they are expected to offer land when called for," he added.

For the first time, the computerised draw of lots or bid opening would be held under the aegis of an independent agency to bring in more transparency.



CAREER COUNSELLING and STUDY ABROAD
with Mindscan Education, Noida

04-06 Dec, 2018
Hotel Rendezvous, Gangtok

Mindscan specialises in Career Counselling and offering Overseas Education guidance to students – and has helped more than 15,000 students in the past 10 years. In addition, there is a range of online programmes, which can help college students develop skills which are required by industry.

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Asim Sharma wins Sikkim Mountain Biking Comptt



SAGAR CHHETRI GANGTOK, 25 NOV:

Asim Sharma of Sombaria, West Sikkim, emerged champion of the Sikkim Mountain Biking Competition 2018 held here on Sunday.

He finished the 65 KM race with a timing of 2:40:06 and 13 mirco seconds.

Urgen Sherpa of Darjeeling stood on the second position [timing 3:00:12:14] and Ching Hang Rai of Gangtok finished on the third position [3:17:25:24].

The event was organised by the Department of Sports & Youth Affairs to pay tribute to the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

It is informed that the Government of India will commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi from 02 October 2019 to 02 October 2020 with events at both national and inter-

national levels to propagate the message of Mahatma Gandhi.

39 cyclists from Sikkim, Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Siliguri participated in the competition today.

The competition was flagged off by Gangtok MLA, Pintso Chopel Lepcha, from MG Marg this morning and followed the route from MG Marg, Tashi View Point, Pangthang, Samdong, Upper Tumin, Khamdong and Sang and finally ended at Rumtek.

The top-three winners were presented with cash prizes, medals and certificates.

The organisers also presented consolation prizes to young participants, 11-year-old Tsewang Gyatso Bhutia, 14-year-old Bishnu Gurung, 13-year-old Bhardwaj Subba, 14-year-old Kenza Pakhrin and 14-year-old Shashank Pradhan.

Addressing the participants, the Gangtok MLA expressed his happiness on the good number of cyclists in the competition, especially young children.

He congratulated the Department of Sports & Youth Affairs for organising the event to encourage youngsters towards sports and to promote mountain biking in the State. He expressed hope that such events would also help to promote Sikkim as a destination for adventure activities.

Secretary, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, SD Dhakal, in turn stated that the department was celebrating the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi through sports throughout the State. He said that mountain biking was an international event so the Department will work to further promote this sport in the state.

Dr Nagendra Singh Intl Peace Award for Chinmaya Mission



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 25 NOV:

Chinmaya Mission was conferred the Dr Nagendra Singh International Peace Award at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, by Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu, today. The award was received by Swami Prakarsananda, Acharya, New

Delhi Centre, on behalf of the Chinmaya Mission-Worldwide.

The Vice President, while presenting the award, applauded the Mission's humanitarian service.

He said: "I once again congratulate the Chinmaya Mission for being awarded the Dr Nagendra Singh International

Peace Award. I hope it will continue to propagate the best thoughts from the ancient Indian texts that can pave the way for world peace."

The Mission aims to bring about inner transformation of individuals through knowledge of Vedanta, spiritual practices and service to the society.

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT DIRECTORATE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Ref No: GOS/HRDD/2018/297/376 Date: 23.11.2018

TENDER INVITING NOTICE

Online tenders are invited from qualified bidders for supply of laptops to be distributed to the students of Government Institutions. For details and subsequent communication please visit website: <http://www.sikkimtender.gov.in>.

Sd/-

Director

Director of Technical Education, Human Resource Development Department Government of Sikkim.

R.O. No. 498/IPR/PUB/Classi./18-19 Date: 23/11/2018

ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM SINGTAM SUB DIVISON

Memo No:189/AES/R&B

Date: 16/11/2018

RE-TENDER NOTICE

For and on behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, Assistant Engineer, Roads & Bridges Department, Singtam, invites sealed tenders under single bid system from the eligible contractors of **Class IV Grade** enlisted with Sikkim Public Works Department vide Notification No. 515/R&B/Secy, dated 12.06.2018 and notification no. 556/R&B PWD/Secy dated : 28.08.2018 and 584/R&B/PWD/Secy dated: 08.10.2018, for the construction of **fair weather roads**, through competitive bidding within the territorial jurisdiction of **Gram Panchayat unit of Namcheybong Constituency** where the work is to be executed.

The details of works and time schedule are as under:

SL. No.	Name of Work	Cost of Work put to tender (in Rs)	Earnest Money @ 2.50% (in Rs.)	Cost of Tender documents (in Rs.)	Comple-tion Time.
1.	Construction of Road from Mangthang to Loopsup via Namcheybong Rai Gaon.	SUMIN-LINZEY GPU			
	Km 1 st	Rs. 42,38,496.00	Rs. 1,05,962.00	Rs.1,500.00	12 months
	Km 2 nd	Rs. 42,38,496.00	Rs. 1,05,962.00	Rs. 500.00	12 months
	Km 3 rd	Rs. 42,38,496.00	Rs. 1,05,962.00	Rs.1,500.00	12 months
	Km 4 th	Rs. 42,38,496.00	Rs. 1,05,962.00	Rs.1,500.00	12 months
	Km 5 th	Rs. 42,38,496.00	Rs. 1,05,962.00	Rs.1,500.00	12 months
	Km 6 th	Rs. 42,38,496.00	Rs. 1,05,962.00	Rs.1,500.00	12 months
2.	Construction of raod from Middle Sumin to Sumin Sec School.	SUMIN-LINZEY GPU			
	Km 1 st	Rs. 42,38,496.00	Rs. 1,05,962.00	Rs.1,500.00	12 months
3.	Construction of road from Kumapani to Yangthang gaon.	SUMIN-LINZEY GPU			
	Km 1 st	Rs. 42,38,496.00	Rs. 1,05,962.00	Rs.1,500.00	12 months

TIME SCHEDULE:-

1.	Date of submission of application with Bank receipt and TDR (as Earnest Money) for issue of Tender Documents.	3 rd December 2018 (10.00 am to 4.00 pm) at respective Gram Prashashan Kendra where work is to be executed.
2.	Last Date and Time for submission of Tender	4 th December 2018 (10.00 am to 1.00 pm) at respective Gram Prashashan Kendra where work is to be executed.
3.	Date and Time for Opening of Tender	4 th December 2018 (2.00 pm) at respective Gram Prashashan Kendra where work is to be executed.

CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT

- Tender is open only to the eligible Contractors / Firms of appropriate Class/ Area.
- The intending tenders/ contractors should apply in writing for issue of Tender documents. The application would invariably be signed by the contractor himself/ herself. The tender document will not be issued to any person other than the INTENDING TENDERER. The application shall be submitted initially for each work listed above with all required documents.
- The applications should enclose attested copies of the (a) Validated / Updated Contractor Enlistment Certificate along with application. It is mandatory to produce the Original validated/ updated Enlistment Certificate during sale/ issue of the Tender Document for verification.
- The prescribed Non- Transferable Tender Documents (including Tender Form) can be obtained during the period specified in (AS above from the respective Gram Prashashan Kendra where the work is to be executed on production of requisite Bank receipt of the State of Sikkim towards the cost of Tender Document (non-refundable) in the Head of GPU where the work is to be executed.
- Earnest money deposit @ 2.5% in State Bank of Sikkim shall be in the form of Deposit Receipt of Schedules Bank which includes deposit in the form of temporary deposit receipts in favour of the Sr. Accounts Officer, Roads & Bridges Department, Nirman Bhawan, Gangtok. Tender Form shall be issued only on production of the deposit receipts to that contractors/ firm who has obtained the tender Documents, on production of towards deposit receipt of 2.5% earnest money.
- The Tender Documents, including the Tender Form with quoted offer should be placed in a sealed cover with the name of the Tenderers and the name of the work superscripted on it. Supporting documents listed at SL.No. 3 (a) above should be enclosed with the offer.
- Sealed tenders may be deposited in the Tender Box in the respective Gram Prashashan Kemdra/Nagar Panchayat Office, where the work is to be executed on the date and within the time indicated above.
- Tenders will be opened by a Tender Opening Committee as prescribed by the Government in the presence of the tenderness on the date and time indicated above.
- The Tenderer should sign on every page of the tenders documents as Acceptance of the General Direction and Conditions of Contract and other laid down norms. The rate quoted should be both in figures and words and should be inclusive of GST all other Taxes and Levies. Over writing and correction should be avoided and if made should be authenticated. Incomplete/ Conditional tenders shall be rejected forthwith.
- In case of any discrepancy in rate (s) printed in the Schedule of Rates and Quantities issued with the tender documents rates as per approved Scheduled of Rates will be taken as correct. For items outside the SOR, the rates shall be as per the technically checked estimate/analysis. Decision of the Principal Chief Engineer cum Secretary/ Head of the Department will be final in this regard.
- The work value, scope and quantum of work are subject to change, the contractor shall execute the work as per the directives of the Department. No claim on this account shall be entertained whatsoever. If any extra claim is made, it shall be as per the agreements rates.
- The Department reserves the rights to hold payments to the contractor unless test certificates are not produced by the contractor when called upon to do so.
- Avoidable damages due to negligence of the contractors shall be at his/her own risk and cost. The department shall not be liable for payment of such damages (if any), including accidents to labourer at site.
- The offer shall remain valid for a period of 90 days. The work should commence within 15 days from the date of issue of work Order.
- All the conditions as mentioned in the NIT shall be deemed to be a part of the agreement to be entered with the contractor. Security deposit shall be collected by deductions from the running bills of the contractor @ 5% of the value of work done.
- The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
- The recoveries of Taxes and Royalties on Forest produces shall be as per rates notified by the Government from time to time and applicable on the date of payment. In no case, claim of any contractor for deduction as per rates incorporated in Analysis of Rates or Schedule of Rates or Rates on the date of tender shall be acceptable.
- Subletting of contract work is against the norms and if it comes to the notice, the original contract shall be cancelled and appropriate action shall be initiated as per the rules.
- The Department also reserves the right to increase, decrease, alter or modify the item of works as indicted in the NIT without assigning any reason thereof.
- In case the man powers employed by the contractor are from outside the State or neighbouring countries, it shall be the responsibility of the contractor to get them registered with the Labour Department, Government of Sikkim as per the relevant Labour Laws.
- Use of explosive shall be regulated as under.
 - Transportation, handling, storage and use of explosive (if necessary) shall be in accordance with the provision of the India Explosive Act and General Guideline, Circulars issued by the department and other competent authorities on the subject from time to time.
 - The rules and regulations issued by the Sikkim Public Works Department or any other competent authority shall strictly be adhered to with regard to transportations, storages, handling, and use of explosive at all times. Proper daily record of receipt and issue of explosives shall be maintained by the contractor.
- The contractor shall also make arrangement to have photographs of the works taken at least at three stages of the construction period i.e. beginning, middle and completion stage.
- Damages to properties in and around the work site must be avoided at all cost. The contractor shall be held responsible for any acts of negligence and shall be made to make good the damages.
- It is accepted to the tenderer to have inspected the site before submitting his bid. There may be possible site difficulties for which the tenderer should have their own correct assessment before submitting the bid.
- The cost of stock materials supplied from the departmental store will be deducted from the contractor's bills us per rules.
- The bidders shall produce a Certificate of Residence from the CONCERED WARD Panchayat unit where the work is to be executed.**

Sd/-

Assistant Engineer

Roads & Bridges Department. Singtam Sub Division

R.O. No. 503/ipr/pub/classi./18-19 Date 24.11.2018.

SummitTIMES

Collaborating Towards a Better Town

Gangtok might be clean by national standards, but it could be so much better

When they experimented with MG Marg, the policy-makers had hoped that the litter & spit free zone would eventually encompass all of Gangtok, and if that happened, dream even bigger and extend it to all of Sikkim. The mission has succeeded to the extent that Sikkim went on to become the first Nirmal Rajya (open defecation free state) and has also bagged a Safaigiri award for its obviously better garbage management credentials than the other states of the country. But that is hardly a comparison to boast about or be satisfied with since Sikkim has the benefit of its small size and abundant finances to devote to waste management, a luxury, which say a Bihar does not enjoy. So, while the State, its government and its people deserve credit for being better, they should now aim to become really good as well.

What better place to begin than the capital itself. Gangtok remains a town of contradictions where the residents continue to live comfortably in the company of stinking jhoras which they themselves have clogged with all types of household refuse and even the occasional sewage release. Instinctive cleanliness around public spaces is thus perhaps too much to expect. Gangtokians might live in pine-wood paneled houses that they themselves rub with mansion polish every day, but are oblivious to their civic duties as they prove with clockwork regularity as the corners and roadsides continue to mimic public dustbins and the jhoras have become a study of consumption patterns. This, despite a functional garbage collection service being in place. This is unfortunate because with even a few collaborative efforts, this town could be much better. A keener sense of responsibility towards public spaces would help and the right awareness at the school level could easily address the problem of irresponsible littering. It is after all not enough to reach a garbage bag to the UD&HD trucks in the morning and then spend the rest of the day littering the town with wrappers and other refuse or surreptitiously empty septic tanks into neighbourhood jhoras.

What is required is an attitudinal shift which displays more collective consideration. Gangtok is not really a city yet, but it is already overflowing with brash disregard; house-owners are lavish with their own accommodations but cramp the floors below with pigeonholes and common toilets and bathrooms; Gangtok drivers are among the most impatient and insensitive, as are their VIP vehicles. Such mindsets, which disregard common intent or pursuits, continue to rear up in all engagements and personal aggrandisement thus becomes a driving force. An immediate fall out of this has been the noticeable rollback in aesthetic nuances. Aesthetic appeal is after all for public consumption and extravagance for personal indulgence. No prizes here for guessing which option Gangtok takes on a daily basis. Bigger cars, higher buildings and increased consumption have left Gangtok an ugly town. Take any back-lane and one will be confronted with innumerable case-studies of how private greed has encroached upon public space and convenience. The capital is exploding with private decisions thumbing their collective noses at public courtesies.

With too much ugliness already permanent in the form of concrete, the least that can be done is to leave the open spaces [which are mostly the roads and shortcuts now in Gangtok] free of litter. Maybe starting with this conscious effort, Gangtok could begin the process of becoming and town more becoming of its hill station status and more true to its cleanliness credentials.

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

We have weaker bones than our hunter-gatherer ancestors – this is what you can do about it

KAREN HIND & CHARLOTTE ROBERTS
theconversation.com

Technology is continuously advancing to make our lives “easier”, more efficient and often more sedentary. All of this has an impact on our body and, specifically, our bones.

Loss of bone strength is one of the least talked about risks of sedentary lifestyles, but is arguably one of the most important, with osteoporosis related fractures occurring in one in three women and one in five men. There is a direct relationship between the lack of oestrogen after menopause and the development of osteoporosis.

As a society, we are more sedentary than ever before. The use of transport, electric rather than manual bikes, and having our weekly grocery shopping ordered online and delivered to the comfort of our homes are all at odds with keeping active. Children in particular are less active – with computer games replacing “playing out” during a crucial time of development when exercise (especially jumping) can optimise bone strength gains by up to 5.5% over six months.

Research is also demonstrating that what’s known as “epigenetic memories” may also be passed down several generations, which means that our lifestyle today could influence gene expression in future generations. If sedentary trends continue, humans are at risk of becoming frailer and more dependent – needing increased support from already stretched health services.

THE SCIENCE

Our skeleton has many roles: it supports our body, provides attachment points for muscles, tendons and ligaments that enable our bodies to move, and stores minerals like calcium and phosphorus. However, when external forces and demands are removed, our muscles can waste, and our bones become lighter, less dense

and less “useful” – this increases the risk of osteoporosis and fracture.

A loss of around 3% of cortical bone in the leg, for example, can occur during one month of bed rest, and in space, astronauts can lose over 10% of their bone strength on a typical 120-180 day mission. This is

dreds and thousands of years ago suggests that our skeleton today is more fragile than that of our ancestors, and the differences became more pronounced when humans started to farm their food (domesticating animals and plants).

Before this time, humans foraged



because of the absence of loading to the skeleton in the microgravity environment.

Our current ongoing research shows that sedentary time is a risk factor for reduced bone strength in middle age. Reduced activity after retirement and sitting for prolonged periods of time, are shown to be the main factors as this removes functional stimuli to bone – as does letting robotics and machines take over tasks we used to do for ourselves.

On the other hand, when bone is “loaded” through various forces, it responds by becoming stronger. This is evidenced by numerous exercise intervention studies, and previous research shows around 20-30% greater bone strength in athletes from “impact” sports – such as football, hockey and running – compared to non-athletes.

LESSONS THROUGH TIME

Analysis of bones from over hun-

wild plants and hunted animals. They were much more active than their descendant farmers, ate leaner meat, and were more often than not, “on the move”. Research has found that their bone mass was around 20% greater. A decrease in leg bone size and changes in its cross-sectional shape are also evident at the advent of farming. This reflects changes in loading on the skeleton due to the different activities people did.

Research also suggests that prehistoric women in the Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages had around 5-10% more arm bone strength than modern female athletes, indicating heavy use of their arms for specific activities. This suggests modern humans are falling short of their bone strength potential.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Simple exercises and lifestyle changes that are similar to activities

Inspired by sci-fi, an airplane with no moving parts and a blue ionic glow

STEVEN BARRETT
theconversation.com

Since their invention more than 100 years ago, airplanes have been moved through the air by the spinning surfaces of propellers or turbines. But watching science fiction movies like the “Star Wars,” “Star Trek” and “Back to the Future” series, I imagined that the propulsion systems of the future would be silent and still – maybe with some kind of blue glow and “whoosh” noise, but no moving parts, and no stream of pollution pouring out the back.

That doesn’t exist yet, but there is at least one physical principle that could be promising. About nine years ago, I started investigating using ionic winds – flows of charged particles through the air – as a means of powering flight. Building on decades of research and experimentation by academics and hobbyists, professionals and high school science students, my research group recently flew a nearly silent airplane without any moving parts.

The plane weighed about five pounds (2.45 kilograms) and had a wingspan of 15 feet (5 meters), and traveled about 180 feet (60 meters), so it’s a long way from efficiently carrying cargo or people long distances. But we have proved that it is possible to fly a heavier-than-air vehicle using ionic winds. It even has a glow you can see in the dark.

REVISITING DISCARDED RESEARCH

The process our plane uses, formally called elec-

troaerodynamic propulsion, was investigated as far back as the 1920s by an eccentric scientist who thought he had discovered anti-gravity – which was of course not the

sion is relatively straightforward to explain and implement, although some of the underlying physics is complex.

We use a thin filament

molecules, causing what is termed an ionic wind that flows between the emitters and collectors, propelling the plane forward.

This ionic wind replaces

working on making this type of propulsion more efficient and capable of carrying larger loads. The first commercial applications, assuming it gets that far, could be in mak-



case. In the 1960s, aerospace engineers explored using it to power flight, but they concluded that wouldn’t be possible with the understanding of ionic winds and the technology available at the time.

More recently, however, a huge number of hobbyists – and high school students doing science fair projects – have built small electroaerodynamic propulsion devices that suggested it could work after all. Their work was pivotal to the early days of my group’s work. We sought to improve on their work, most notably by conducting a large series of experiments to learn how to optimize the design of electroaerodynamic thrusters.

MOVING THE AIR, NOT THE PLANE PARTS

The underlying physics of electroaerodynamic propul-

or wire that is charged to +20,000 volts using a lightweight power converter, which in turn gets its power from a lithium-polymer battery. The thin filaments are called emitters, and are nearer the front of the plane. Around these emitters the electric field is so strong that the air gets ionized – neutral nitrogen molecules lose an electron and become positively charged nitrogen ions.

Farther back on the plane we place an airfoil – like a small wing – whose leading edge is electrically conductive and charged to -20,000 volts by the same power converter. This is called the collector. The collector attracts the positive ions toward it. As the ions stream from the emitter to the collector, they collide with uncharged air

the flow of air that a jet engine or propeller would create.

STARTING SMALL

I have led research that has explored how this type of propulsion actually works, developing detailed knowledge of how efficient and powerful it can be.

My team and I have also worked with electrical engineers to develop the electronics necessary to convert batteries’ output to the tens of thousands of volts needed to create an ionic wind. The team was able to produce a power converter far lighter than any previously available. That device was small enough to be practical in an aircraft design, which we were ultimately able to build and fly.

Our first flight is, of course, a very long way from flying people. We’re already

ing silent fixed-wing drones, including for environmental monitoring and communication platforms.

Looking farther into the future, we hope that it could be used in larger aircraft to reduce noise and even allow an aircraft’s exterior skin to help produce thrust, either in place of engines or to augment their power. It’s also possible that electroaerodynamic equipment could be miniaturized, enabling a new variety of nano-drones. Many might believe these possibilities are unlikely or even impossible. But that’s what the engineers of the 1960s thought about what we’re already doing today.

[the writer is Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology]

Schoolchildren torch-bearers of sanitation drive in Assam

DURBA GHOSH
GUWAHATI, Nov 25 (PTI): School begins early for Pompy Biswas, Nitraban Hazarika and Krittika Das as they don the hats of 'swachh sevaks' to check whether the water tank has been filled, hand washing area cleaned and soaps put in place.

The three students of Azara Keotpara Lower Primary School, nearby, children keep a check on their parents and relatives too. They take time out to impart lessons on cleanliness to their neighbours and other members of the community. The Assam chapter of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, along with UNICEF, has piloted the cleanliness drive to ensure less absenteeism in schools, said Rajib Dutta, the project's engineer for Kamrup (Metro) district.

"It is the schoolchildren who have become role models for the community at large by moving beyond the confines of the campus to take their cleanliness initiatives to their family and the extended community," he said.



A UNICEF report had pointed out that there was consistent evidence that hand washing with soap at critical times - before eating, while preparing food and after using the toilet - can reduce diarrhoea risk by about 45 per cent, Dutta added.

Likumoni Das, a Class III student of Azatpara school, said they were keen on passing the knowledge they have acquired to their parents and relatives.

"After learning the

basic rules of hand washing, we found out that our parents did not follow the methods. We have now taught them how to maintain hygiene," she said. The headmaster of her school, Kamal Chandra Goswami, said he has built separate toilets and hand-washing facilities for boys and girls.

"I am happy to see that students have become torch-bearers of the cleanliness drive here," he stated.

The parents, too, have joined the initiative by donating soap cakes to the school.

"We are learning something new every day from our children.

These hygiene practices have become a part of our daily routine," Amila Das, a mother and member of School Management Committee, said.

Echoing similar sentiments, Subhan Chandra Bodo, the headmaster of Sajjanpara LP School, said it was the children who convinced their parents to install water filters at home.

"As part of the government and the UNICEF initiative, children have not just learnt about keeping themselves clean, they have also inspired parents and relative to build toilets and install water filters at home," he added. Sweta Patnaik, the

water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) specialist of UNICEF, said philanthropists, corporate houses, civic and faith organizations in Assam have been requested to join the drive to extend its reach to every nook and corner of the state.

"We have taken initiatives to mainstream 'WASH in School' programme through trainings of teachers and headmasters and orientation of School Management Committees members," she said, adding that a "lot more" had to be done to ensure that maximum number of people benefit from the drive.

Cruise to Bangladesh, northeast likely from March '19

KOLKATA, Nov 25 (PTI): Buoyed by successful trial of cargo movement to Bangladesh via the inland waterways protocol route, India is now preparing to exploit the path for the purpose of tourism, an official said.

A transboundary river cruise operation is expected to commence from Kolkata in March next year through Sunderbans to Bangladesh and then to connect the northeastern destinations by private operators, a senior official said.

"Bilateral secretary-level meetings between India and Bangladesh were held in October. It has been decided

that one of the river cruise operators would be starting operations from March, 2019 from Kolkata through Sunderbans via the protocol route to Bangladesh and then to northeast," Member, Inland Waterways Authority of India, SVK Reddy said.

Reddy was in the city to participate in a transport seminar organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) recently. Bangladesh shipping secretary Abdus Samsah had earlier said that private players will be allowed to operate river cruise between the two countries, which will cover about 1,539 km.

Both sides also agreed to allow private operators to run cruise to Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. Reddy said night navigation facility has been installed up to the Indian border while Bangladesh is expected to do the same.

He said India has agreed to fund up to 80 per cent of the dredging cost in some identified stretches within Bangladesh in the Indo-Bangla protocol route to make it navigable.

Regularly, 15-20 barges carrying fly ash are now heading to Bangladesh and navigation up to the Indian border is smooth, he said.

Why Nagal could not build on Bengaluru Open success



AMANPREET SINGH
PUNE, Nov 25 (PTI): This week, last year Sumit Nagal savoured the week of his tennis life by winning his maiden Challenger singles title in Bengaluru and his ranking zoomed up from 321 to 225.

The Jhajjar-born player, handpicked by Mahesh Bhupathi for support, hoped to build on the success but an experiment with his support staff, coupled with injuries, proved costly and the same week this season, his ranking is set to plummet to close to 500. Between November to November he played 24 tournaments and was knocked out in the first round in 16 of them, the most recent being the Pune Challenger, where he lost to top seed Radu Albot.

When new rankings are issued on Monday, he is likely to be placed 485 after losing 100 points from his kitty.

However, his Haryana blood -- which makes him aggressive and at times temperamental -- and hiring of the desired coaching staff means that Nagal is not losing sleep.

"In tennis it is normal to have a year when you do not perform as you are expected to. It will just take a month or two to get back. I think I am good enough to not be there at 400s for a long time," Nagal told PTI.

After the high of Bengaluru Open, Nagal changed his base to Javea (close to Valencia) in Spain, where he worked with David Ferrer's brother Javier.

This was because his favourite people at Waske Academy Mariano and Yakub were not

there anymore.

The shift, Nagal said, upset his training style and he lost crucial five months from February to June.

"Javier had different vision. It took us time to start trusting each other on tennis courts but that trust never came, maybe because I was not performing well. It could have been my fault, or his fault. It just did not click," he explained.

"There were some patterns where he wanted me to hit, say C before a ball, but I wanted to hit B. Then there were shoulder and hip injuries. I don't know why. So if I am injured, what will he do?"

Nagal said he was keen to train with Milos Galecic from last year but due to the Serbian's prior commitments, it could not happen. But since September, he is with him in Paine, Germany.

"I have been playing well since then. Tennis is not a problem," he said, adding that his immediate goal is to make French Open Qualifiers this year.

That he is confident and aggressive is often seen on courts, where he fights for every ball, and can be seen arguing with umpires over disputed calls. "It comes from where I belong to. It is in blood. That is how my family is. My mother is calmer but my father, sister and I are aggressive. We snap in a second. Haryana is like that."

His aggressive attitude is reflected in the kind of tattoos he sports -- a growling lion pierced on the midriff and a warrior holding a Samurai on his left arm.

"I like tattoos," he

said, slightly reluctant to talk about it.

Asked if he needs to change his approach and be more calm, pat came the reply.

"Right now it has not caused me any problems. I have a team and I don't think I need to change and have someone else around me."

When countered that he did make a bad choice by refusing to play the Davis Cup tie against Serbia in September this year, Nagal clarified that he had never committed to play, due to injuries.

"I never refused to play the tie. When I got the first e-mail in June, I was still injured. I did not know how my shoulder is going to be. I told them (AITA) that I am not available for the tie.

"My shoulder got better end of August. Then Yuki pulled out and I get an email that I was in (team). If I was playing for myself, it was different but I was playing for the team. Playing individually, I can stop any time but in Davis Cup I can't do that. That's a bad choice if I do that."

Asked if he did want to play a tournament at the same time, he said, "It was supposed to be my first tournament. I had not played for seven weeks." He insisted that he did not put conditions for playing but sought AITA's help to get a wild card for Romania Challenger.

Nagal said this was the only truth behind him missing the Serbia tie. Interestingly, one of the tattoos on his chest says "Satyamev Prakashyate, Gupt Vaarta na Bhashyate (truth can't be hidden and secrets can not be spoken)".

Muslim body writes to President, seeks intervention in Ayodhya situation

ALIGARH (UP), Nov 25 (PTI): The All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM) on Sunday wrote to President Ram Nath Kovind, seeking his urgent intervention into the developments in Ayodhya, where the VHP has organised a public meeting to press for construction of a Ram temple.

An umbrella body of more than a dozen Muslim religious and social organisations, the AIMMM said in its letter that the presence of "unruly mobs" in Ayodhya is a clear pointer to the way things are moving in an unchecked manner in Uttar Pradesh.

The Vishva Hindu Group (VHP), a right-wing group, has called for the public meeting, 'Dharam Sabha', which is being touted as the largest congregation of 'Ram bhakts' in Ayodhya since the 1992 'kar seva'. The organisers have claimed that more than 3 lakh devotees, including seers, will attend the meeting to be held at Bade Bhakt Mal Ki Baghia, not far from the controversial Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas-run workshop, where work for building a temple has been underway since 1990.

"If any attempt is made to forcibly change the status quo at the disputed site at Ayodhya, it would tantamount to a gross violation of the orders of the Supreme Court," AIMMM chief Navid Hamid said in the letter. It said the lives and safety of thousands of innocent people were at stake and alleged that the Uttar Pradesh government was displaying "total negligence of its responsibility" to maintain peace in the state.

Won't allow migrants into US until court approves claims individually: Trump

WASHINGTON, Nov 25 (PTI): US President Donald Trump has said migrants at the southern border will not be allowed into America until a court approves their claims individually.

Trump's comments came in the wake of a caravan of people -- mostly from three Latin American countries El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras -- inching closer to the US-Mexico border with the intention of illegally entering America, a trend that has been going on for the past several decades.

In the last two weeks, approximately 5,000 Central American migrants have arrived in the Mexican border city of Tijuana, just south of California.

"Migrants at the Southern Border will not be allowed into the United States until their claims are individually approved in court," Trump tweeted Saturday.

He said illegal immigrants would be caught and detained and not released inside the country, as was the practice earlier. "We only will allow those who come into



our country legally. Other than that our very strong policy is 'Catch and Detain'. No 'Releasing' into the US... All will stay in Mexico," Trump tweeted.

He said all these years illegal immigrants have been taking advantage of the earlier US' policy of 'catch and release', under which they were released inside the country and asked to come back to report to a court at the next hearing on their asylum application.

Trump, who has announced to end the 'catch and release' policy, argues that those immigrants who were let

off never come back to the court hearings and it becomes very difficult to identify them once they mix up with the locals.

"If for any reason it becomes necessary, we will CLOSE our Southern Border. There is no way that the United States will, after decades of abuse, put up with this costly and dangerous situation anymore!" he asserted.

Meanwhile, US media on Saturday reported that the Trump administration has reached an understanding with the leaders of the incoming Mexican government that would allow migrants applying

for asylum in the US to remain in Mexico while they await a court's decision. This would be a sharp reversal of the current policy, which allows asylum seekers to remain in the US until their petition is resolved, The New York Times reported.

A policy in this regard could be rolled out by the US this coming week, officials from the Department of Homeland Security said, it said.

This is "a short-term solution", Olga Sanchez Cordero, Mexico's incoming interior minister, was quoted as saying by The Washington Post.

Around 100 Syrians struggle to breathe after 'toxic' attack

DAMASCUS, Nov 25 (AFP): Around 100 Syrians have been hospitalised with breathing difficulties in Aleppo, state media and a monitor said Sunday, after allegations rebels fired "toxic gas" into the regime-held city the previous day.

State news agency SANA reported "107 cases of breathing difficulties" in an updated toll on Sunday.



The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitor,

said a total of 94 people were hospitalised, but most had been dis-

charged and the 31 cases that remained were not critical.

UK-based author creates Indian recipes for busy modern-day life

LONDON, NOV 25 (PTI): An Indian-origin author of a new cookbook, which is targeted at busy people who want to recreate a true taste of India in their kitchens, believes there is no reason to shy away from shortcuts.

Mallika Basu's 'Masala: Indian Cooking for Modern Living', which was launched in the UK a few months ago and in India this month, takes a fresh look at family favourite recipes, simplifying and updating them for busy home cooks.

"I openly recommend ready shortcuts like packs of roti, jars of pickle. When you're rushing around you need to pick your battles. There is no shame in that," the London-based communications professional-cum-food writer says.

"I have divided the chapters by moments like quick fixes, slow feasts, big platters and, of course, brunch, in a nod to our nation's love of breakfast. You don't have to be an expert at all in fact I am quite honest about my failings in the kitchen. I am a home cook who is trying to get wholesome recipes, simply and as often as possible on the table," she says.

Basu, the granddaughter of former West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu, has been writing about Indian food for over a decade and found herself simplifying recipes to fit with her busy life and modern kitchen.

"So many Indian cookbooks are based on nostalgia and what our grandmothers and mothers did, and yet our lives have changed so much. I wanted to create a cookbook that reflects the way we live, cook, eat and entertain today, and a very contemporary Indian design aesthetic," she explains.

The dishes chosen for her new book are favourites from her family home in Kolkata, and her mother's Delhi and Afghani heritage, as well as some newer ones she fell in love with on her recent travels to India. The dishes are from all over India, with simplicity being the key factor that binds them together.

Dipa needs to win gold in upcoming World Cups to qualify for 2020 Olympics: Nandi

AMIT KUMAR DAS
NEW DELHI, NOV 25 (PTI): Dipa Karmakar needs to win nothing less than a gold in the upcoming World Cups to qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, says coach Bisweswar Nandi, who is targeting a podium finish for the ace gymnast at the 2019 World Championships in Stuttgart.

Dipa made a strong start to her qualifying bid for the Tokyo Olympics by winning a bronze at the Artistic Gymnastics World Cup in Cottbus, Germany on Saturday.

"I didn't hope that she would do so well given the strong field, which had lot of medalists. But I'm satisfied with the way she performed. She had very less time to prepare for the event and she did very well. I made her cry a lot during the last few months. So very satisfied," Nandi told PTI from Cottbus.

"It is a good start but to qualify for the Olympics, she will have to win gold in the next 3-4 events of the world cup she participates in. Second or third position won't matter," he added.



The Cottbus meet is part of an eight-event qualifying system for the 2020 Games, under which a gymnast will make the cut based on their best three scores.

The three events where Dipa might participate next are World Cups in Baku, Melbourne and Doha.

Nandi said: "We haven't decided yet which would be those events. I

alone can't take that decision. We will discuss with SAI, Sports Ministry and Gymnastic Federation of India (GFI) to take a call about the future events.

"But the main target for us is to do well at the World Championship in Germany next year. That is an event where even a 3rd or 4th place finish can earn you a berth at the Olympics. So that would be the main target

for her," Nandi said.

On Saturday, Dipa scored an average of 14.316 on her two vaults. She was 0.412 adrift off the gold-medallist Rebecca Andrade, who finished with 14.728.

"Bronze medal in vault event to finish my campaign at 2018 Cottbus World Cup. It was overwhelming to compete against some of the best athletes in the

world!! Aaj ye bronze bhi gold lag raha hai! (Today even the bronze feels like gold)," Dipa tweeted after her win.

After recovering from a knee surgery, Dipa had won her first medal at the World Cup at Turkey in July but her Asian Games was marred by injury when she had strained her knee again and missed the vault final and was forced to pull out of the team event.

It led to doubts in the mind and Nandi soon sent her to SAI psychologist Bhavna Chouhan. It helped as the sessions along with the 18 days of intense training during the camp here helped her to get her confidence back. "It has been a difficult phase for her the last couple of months. After the Asian Games, we both were heart broken, there were doubts in our mind but we didn't give up. I asked her if she is ready to do the hard work and she responded phenomenally.

"We just had 18-20 days of hard training at Delhi. Thanks to SAI for arranging the camp. They helped us a lot.

From a bull fighter, I am now a smarter boxer: Mary Kom



PHILEM DIPAK SINGH
NEW DELHI, NOV 24 (PTI): MC Mary Kom said Saturday she has transformed from being a "bullfighter to a smarter pugilist" and that the ability to out-think her opponents helped her in becoming one of the world's best amateur boxers of all time.

Mary Kom, who claimed an unprecedented sixth gold by winning the 48kg summit bout in the Women's World Championships here, said she became a smarter fighter in the later part of her career.

"If you see my bouts in the initial seven years of my career and now, you will see a lot of difference. Earlier, I was like a bull fighter: I was always charging and I would be totally tired and could not even raise my hand after the fight," she said after winning a record sixth gold in the showpiece.

"Now, I am smarter and try to find out the game of my opponent and then think out mine in the ring itself. Nowadays, it is not that tiring also unlike when I was younger.

"It is all about experience and one learns from experience. These younger girls will also learn from experience," she said, referring to the other three Indian medal winners Lovlina Borgohain, Sonia Chahal and Simranjit Kaur, who were sitting by her side.

Mary Kom said there is a lot of work to be done as she has to jump to the higher 51kg category to qualify for the 2020 Olympics. The 48kg is not in the Olympics. Her bronze in the Olympics also came in 51kg in the 2012 Games.

"I have fought in 48kg for many years but this is not in Olympics. I had to jump weight to 51kg three years back. I have

to go back to 51kg to be able to compete in 2020 Olympics. Getting a gold in Tokyo will not be easy but I will try my best," said Mary Kom who was adjudged the best boxer of the championships.

"In 51kg, the boxers are taller and stronger and I have to beat them. That gives advantage in 48kg," the feisty Manipuri, who turned 36 on Saturday, said.

Mary Kom is expected to compete in the 51kg in the next World Championships in Russia in 2019 as well as the continental championships which India is bidding to host. Both the events will be 2020 Olympics qualifiers.

'Magnificent Mary' did not know which among the six gold medals was tougher to get but said this one was really difficult as she was carrying the pressure of expectations.

She won her first World Championships medal -- a silver -- in the inaugural edition in 2001. She then went on to win five gold in the next five editions -- 2002, 2005, 2006, 2008 and 2010.

"It is difficult to remember the earlier gold medals but this one is very tough because of the pressure and change of weight also. I won my last World Championships gold in 2010 and then there is this change of weight category for Olympics. There was pressure on me and I don't know how to put this gold alongside the earlier five," she added.

"I won five gold on the trot. Katie Taylor (of Ireland) had not done like that," she said.

Taylor won five gold and a bronze between 2006 and 2016 in 60kg. She now plies her trade in the professional circuit.

Talking about the earlier World Championships held here in 2006, Mary Kom said, "That time there were few boxers and countries competing. We won eight medals with four gold but now competition is stronger. Winning four medals with one gold this time is a very good result.

"Organisation wise, this one is better than the 2006 one."

Boxing Federation of India President Ajay Singh, who was sitting beside Mary Kom, said that world body AIBA has described this championships as the best ever.

Asked about the need for more transparency in judging, Singh said, "I believe there were more consistency of the results at the later stages of the tournament. There are areas where there can be improvement. The AIBA is seized with the matter. Here, we feel we can take help of technology.

Kohli, Krunal fire India to series levelling win

CHETAN NARULA
SYDNEY, NOV 25 (PTI): Virat Kohli fired the opening salvo on the Australia tour with a match-winning 61, helping India win the third T20 International by six wickets and draw the three-match series 1-1 here Sunday.

Kohli's sublime 41-ball knock and his 60-run unbeaten stand with Dinesh Karthik (22 not out off 18) gave India the much needed series levelling win ahead of the all important Test series beginning December 6 at Adelaide.

The captain's perfectly executed chase in 19.4 overs came after Shikhar Dhawan (41 off 22 balls) and Rohit Sharma (23 off 16 balls) provided a flying start to the innings.

Earlier, Krunal Pandya took career-best figures of 4-36 as Australia were restricted to 164-6 in 20 overs.

Australia won the opening T20 by four runs while the second game

was a washout, putting additional pressure on India who came here at the back of winning six T20 series in a row.

Chasing 165, Dhawan and Sharma put on 50 runs off just 28 balls.

Both batsmen took the aerial route with aplomb and hit seven fours and four sixes between them to leave the Australian bowlers clueless. Overall, India scored 67-1 in the powerplay overs.

Mitchell Starc (1-26) had got the breakthrough in the sixth over, trapping Dhawan lbw via DRS referral. It put a momentary break on scoring as no runs were scored off the next eight balls, resulting in Sharma's dismissal, who played on off Adam Zampa (1-22).

KL Rahul (14) started off by scoring a monster six, and added 41 runs for the third wicket with Kohli. India crossed 100 in the 12th over, but the former started struggling for timing and holed out

shortly afterwards.

It became a double blow as Rishabh Pant was out for a first-ball duck, gloving behind off a slower short ball from Andrew Tye (1-32).

India were in bit of a bother at that stage, but Kohli and Dinesh Karthik (22 not out off 18 balls) brought out their shots. The latter played a perfect foil to Kohli as he struck a four and a six to bring down the asking rate.

Kohli meanwhile reached his 19th T20I half-century off 34 balls and took India home with two balls to spare.

This was after Pandya's orthodox left-arm spin came in handy during the middle overs after the hosts had sped to 68-0 after winning the toss and opting to bat.

Australia made one change to their line-up, with Mitchell Starc coming in for Jason Behrendorf. India picked an unchanged eleven.

Aaron Finch (28) and

D'Arcy Short (33) then provided a cautious start to the innings, albeit they picked up momentum quickly as the Indian pacers struggled in conditions vastly different from Brisbane and Melbourne.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar (0-33) and Khaleel Ahmed (0-35) both proved expensive, while first-change Jasprit Bumrah (0-38) too didn't stem the flow of runs, as Australia raced to 49-0 at the end of powerplay overs.

The Finch-Short partnership put pressure on the Indian fielding, shoddy again, and Rohit Sharma put down a sitter off Finch (on 22) at the start of the eight over off Pandya.

Kuldeep Yadav (1-19) then provided the much-awaited breakthrough as Finch was out caught sweeping at short fine leg.

It opened the doors to the Australian middle order: Glenn Maxwell (13)

survived an lbw shout via DRS off Yadav, but Short and Ben McDermott (0) were dismissed lbw off successive balls in the tenth over as Pandya pegged Australia back.

The quick wickets disturbed Australia's momentum and they never really recovered, losing wickets at regular intervals in the second half of their innings. They had held back Chris Lynn (13) but he couldn't provide the requisite impetus, run-out in the 18th over.

In between Pandya also accounted for Maxwell, caught by Sharma in the end, as also the vital wicket of Alex Carey (27) who held the Australian middle order together after the initial setbacks.

Marcus Stoinis (25 not out off 15 balls) played an attacking cameo at the end, and put on 33 runs with Nathan Coulter-Nile (13 not out) as Australia finished with a score just above average (151) at this ground.

From beauty to wellness, salons and spas get a 'healthy' makeover

TRISHA MUKHERJEE

NEW DELHI, NOV 25 (PTI): Once simple grooming destinations to keep your nails in perfect shape, hair shining and skin glowing, salons and spas are getting a makeover in these days of increasingly stressful urban lives.

In towns big and small and targeting those with varying degrees of disposable incomes, beauty junctions are evolving to become health and wellness centres for people to also relax and rejuvenate.

From simple massages and back rubs at home to luxurious "me time" hours spent at high-end spas, the market caters to clients with pockets shallow and deep, going from several hundred rupees to many thousands.

According to Dr Madhurima Gupta of the centre for wellness at Delhi's Sarodaya Hospital and Research Centre here, visits to spas and salons help one reconnect mind, body and spirit.

She recommends such sessions weekly, as well as on vacations.

"Today's lifestyle is such that people have money but no time for themselves. In such situations, spas and salons are becoming extremely popular because these are places where people can get away from their phones and work, de-stress and relax," Gupta told PTI.

A 2018 global survey by Cigna TTK Health Insurance conducted across 23 markets not

ed that nine out of 10 Indians are stressed, with 95 per cent of them being millennials.

The study also cited work as one of the major triggers for shooting stress levels.

A nice back rub or a foot massage does the trick for city-based Sharad Agarwal, leaving him refreshed for an all-consuming month at work.

Every month, he spends about five per cent of his earnings at spas and salons, getting head and neck massages, pedicures and sometimes even full body spas if he is in a mood to splurge.

"The massages facilitate better blood circulation, relieving me of body aches due to the long hours of sitting at work," the 27-year-old said.

The range of services offered at the spas and salons are varied and often are a combination of beauty and health.

Hair spas are combined with head, neck, shoulder and back massages, pedicures and manicures come with complimentary arm and leg massages, and body spas usually involve the use of ayurvedic and essential oils and scrubs that give the skin a renewed glow.

Full body spas like Thai massage, hot stone massage, deep tissue therapy, aromatherapy, ayurvedic massage among others can be enjoyed by spending anything between Rs 2,000 and Rs 4,000.

A combination of massages can cost up to Rs 7,000.

Vibha Rastogi, director of the Sawad-keep Traditional Thai Spa in Vasant Kunj, said spas provide the "me time" most of her clients are looking for.

"Our guests are usually looking for relaxation and to de-stress from their everyday life. Seeking a kind of 'me time' or 'time to pamper oneself' is gaining great importance," she said.

The wellness programmes at the spa are aimed at balancing as well as rejuvenating the mind, body and spirit, with their treatments being a blend of traditional spa rituals and modern therapies.

"We put great emphasis on the overall wellness of an individual. The therapies focus on relaxation and de-stressing, general well-being, fitness and anti-aging," Rastogi said.

She added that many visitors also look to relieve aches and pains after the gym.

Other benefits of such spas include improved circulation and firming of the skin.

"Me time" is sought also by the visitors of NEU Salonz, which has multiple outlets across NCR.

"A salon visit is an emotional experience and they go to salons for their 'me' time which is rare nowadays. After a good salon visit, they walk out not only looking beautiful but also rejuvenated and relaxed," said Vibhoar, CEO of the salon franchise.

Doorstep delivery of this much sought after

'me time' is being made possible with apps like UrbanClap. At the touch of a button one can schedule an appointment with a trained therapist, who will bring the spa home.

From a spa bed, essential oils, disposable bedsheets and towels, to scented diffuser, oil warmer, candles and speaker for music, the therapist will have everything to relieve you of all stress.

Massages on UrbanClap start at Rs 1,199 and go up to Rs 1,799.

A popular package is the 100-minute long 'Top to Toe Relaxation' that includes 60 minutes of Swedish massage, 20 minutes of head and shoulder massage and 20 minutes of foot reflexology.

They also have a dedicated 80-minute 'de-stress treatment', including a 60-minute Swedish Massage and 20-minute head and shoulder massage.

In Gupta's view, regulated spa and salon sessions are necessary in addition to the daily health routine that one might follow to maintain "functional efficiency."

"Good health is achieved not only through your daily habits including a healthy diet, moderate exercise, quality sleep and preventive care, but also by giving your mind and body a chance to reconnect, which is why I would recommend visiting spas and salons," she said.

EU leaders approve “tragic” Brexit deal



BRUSSELS, Nov 25 (AFP): European Union leaders on Sunday approved a historic Brexit deal, holding out hopes of close future ties even as one declared Britain's withdrawal after four decades a “tragedy”.

The 27 leaders of the bloc met without Prime Minister Theresa May to endorse the agreement, which sets the stage for Britain exit from the bloc on March 29.

“EU27 has endorsed the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration on the future EU-UK relations,” European Council President Donald Tusk tweeted, as the leaders waited for May to join them.

Arriving for a special summit in Brussels, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, head of the bloc's executive arm, said it was a “sad day”.

“To see a country like Great Britain...leave the EU is not a moment of joy nor of celebration, it's a sad moment and it's a tragedy,” he said.

Michel Barnier, the former French foreign minister who negotiated the deal on behalf of the bloc, added: “We will remain allies, partners and friends.”

May, who arrived in Brussels on Saturday evening for final talks with Tusk and Juncker, was due to join the other leaders later in a highly symbolic moment.

Forged during 17 months of tough negotiations, the withdrawal agreement covers financial matters, citizens' rights, Northern Ireland and arrangements for a 21-month post-Brexit transition phase.

A short political declaration that accompanies the text sets out

hopes for future security and trade ties.

But it is not the final stage, as the House of Commons in London must still approve the deal -- and many MPs have warned they will not back it.

Until the agreement is approved, all sides are still planning for the potentially disastrous possibility that Britain leaves the EU with no new arrangements in place. Media reports in London on Sunday suggested some of May's own ministers were secretly working with EU diplomats on a “Plan B” in case parliament rejected the agreement next month.

But Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency, said: “It is important that everyone in the UK is aware that the result

that is now available is the result.

“It will certainly not be renegotiated and there will be no further room for manoeuvre,” Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte added: “Overall, I think this is the max that we can all do, both Theresa May and her government as well as the European Union.”

“No victors here today, nobody winning, we're all losing -- but given that context, this (agreement) is acceptable,” Tusk said on the eve of the summit that “no-one will have reasons to be happy” when Brexit happens, but he said the terms agreed would “reduce the risks and losses”. In London, eurosceptics in May's Conservative party and their Northern Irish allies warn they will not support the agreement, which they argue

keeps Britain too close to the EU.

But in an open “letter to the nation” on Sunday, May said it delivered on the 2016 referendum vote to leave, and was a “deal for a brighter future”. Britain remains deeply divided over the decision, but the prime minister said that finally leaving could be “a moment of renewal and reconciliation”.

“To do that we need to get on with Brexit now by getting behind this deal,” she said.

The summit risked being derailed by a late objection to the deal by Spain over the British territory of Gibraltar.

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez threatened to reject it unless his country kept a veto over future changes to EU ties with “The Rock”, which borders Spain and which it has long claimed.

The impasse was resolved when Britain promised to continue bilateral talks with Madrid after Brexit -- although that itself caused further tensions. Sanchez claimed that discussions would cover the “co-sovereignty” of Gibraltar, but May rejected this. There are concerns in EU capitals about fishing rights and commercial rules Britain must follow to maintain access to the bloc's markets.

A diplomatic source said the minutes of Sunday's summit meeting of the 27 leaders would record those concerns.

Thousands protest in ‘feminist tidal wave’ against sexist violence



PARIS, Nov 25 (AFP): Tens of thousands of people rallied across Europe on Saturday against sexist violence, with more than 30,000 turning out in Paris. Demonstrations across France drew around 50,000 people in all, according to organiser Caroline de Haas, to answer a citizen collective's call for a “feminist tidal wave” of outrage against gender violence brought into sharp focus by the #MeToo movement.

Elsewhere, a thousand people braved driving rain in Rome while similar protests drew several hundred demonstrators in Geneva and Athens on the eve of the UN's International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on Sunday.

In Spain's capital Madrid, several hundred people took to the streets to march to loud drumming as some shouted, “We are all here, the murderers are missing.”

Authorities put the Paris turnout at 12,000 and similar marches in Lyon, Marseille and Rennes at between 1,000 and 2,400, but De Haas felt moved to salute “the largest (feminist) mobilisation France has known”, far bigger than a rally that drew some 2,000 last year.

French President Em-

manuel Macron offered his support, tweeting: “The fight against violence against women is progressing daily but our society has a long way to go -- everyone must act and fight as this is everybody's business.”

Participants clad in purple, the colour of the #NousToutes women's activist protest movement, shouted slogans including “sick of rape”, “end impunity for aggressors” and “a woman is never responsible for the violence she suffers”, while also demanding sufficient government resources to tackle the issue. “I am here to support all the victims and continue this struggle which started long before I came along,” said French actress Muriel Robin, who had organised a similar rally last month in the capital.

The rallies drew a number of men, including Tanguy, a 19-year-old student who turned out in the western city of Rennes to declare backing for “a movement which is not based on sex -- it's not a fight pitting men against women but a fight by men and women, together, against inequality”.

The #NousToutes movement started out in France in September, inspired by the #MeToo

campaign that began last year since when the number of cases of sexual violence reported to police in France has risen 23 per cent.

Latest French government figures say 2017 saw 225,000 cases of domestic violence against women by their partners while 2016 saw 123 deaths. Further marches are planned for Sunday in a number of cities across Europe to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Macron last year made sexual equality a priority of his presidency. But “if the money is not forthcoming public policy won't follow on”, warned De Haas, speaking two days after several civil organisations called for a huge increase in public resources dedicated to the problem.

French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced on Saturday that an online platform for reporting sexual violence and sexism will be launched on Tuesday.

“This is the first milestone, technical and political, to eradicate” violence, said he said in a Facebook post. “From now, a few clicks can help everyone make a new start: for themselves, for their family. And perhaps avoid the worst.”

Death toll in California fire rises to 87

LOS ANGELES, Nov 25 (AFP): The death toll in northern California's so-called “Camp Fire” rose to 87, officials said late Saturday, adding that the blaze was almost fully under control.

Cal Fire, the state fire authority, said in its latest bulletin that the fire - which broke out on November 8 - was 98 per cent contained.

The office of the Butte County Sheriff said that 249 people remained unaccounted for - a steep drop from 474 missing reported earlier in the day.

It added that only 54 of the fatalities have been identified.

More than 153,000 acres have been torched, with nearly 14,000 homes and hundreds of other structures destroyed by the powerful blaze, California's deadliest and most destructive fire ever.

Previously the death toll had been put at 84.

Rain that soaked the Butte County fire area in the past days helped douse the remaining flames, but also made it more difficult for crews searching for bodies.

“Areas experiencing significant rainfall following a wildfire are at risk for debris flow and flash flooding,” the Sheriff's office warned.

Cal Fire said that the remaining uncontained fire “is isolated in steep and rugged terrain where it is unsafe for firefighters to access due to the heavy rains.”

Another terror attack in India similar to 26/11 with footprints in Pak will lead to war: Experts

LALIT KJHA WASHINGTON, Nov 25 (PTI): Another major terrorist attack in India of the magnitude similar to the 26/11 strike originating from Pakistan could easily escalate into a regional war, scholars, former diplomats and US officials have warned ahead of the 10th anniversary of the deadly Mumbai terror attack. Some 166 people, including Americans, were killed in the attack carried out by Pakistan-based 10 Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists. Nine of the attackers were killed by police while lone survivor Ajmal Kasab was captured and hanged after handed down death sentence by an Indian court.

Perpetrators of the 26/11 attack, including its mastermind and banned Jamat-ud Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed, continue to roam freely in Pakistan, indicating that Islamabad is not serious in bringing them to justice. The JuD is believed to be the front group for the LeT. The US has offered a USD 10 million bounty for Saeed.

The 26/11 attack case has entered into the 10th year but none of its seven suspects in Pakistan has been punished yet, showing that the case had never been in its priority list.

“The victims of 26/11 have yet to see the masterminds of the attack in the LeT and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) face justice; unfortunately, that is virtually impossible in Pakistan,” former Central Intelligence Agency official Bruce Riedel told PTI.

Riedel, senior fellow and director of Brookings Intelligence Project, believes that another terror attack in India of similar magnitude would result in a war between the two countries.

“If another attack of this magnitude occurs, there will be war,” he said.

Pakistan's former envoy to the US Husain Haqqani said: “With US-Pakistan relations in a tail-spin and hawkish attitudes dominating the subcontinent, one cannot predict if and how the situation would be controlled in the

event of another major terrorist attack in India, with clear linkages to groups in Pakistan”.

Currently a senior fellow and Director for South and Central Asia at the Hudson Institute, Haqqani said Pakistan “must fulfil its promise of acting” against the masterminds of the 26/11 attack.

“That it has chosen to let them operate freely raises the justifiable concern that Pakistan's deep state does not want to deter or punish terrorists responsible for attacks in India.

“In 2008, Pakistan's promise of acting against the LeT and those involved in the Mumbai attack prevented escalation of India-Pakistan hostilities. The US also helped calm things down by sharing intelligence with both Pakistan and India,” he said.

Agreed a senior Bush administration official, who was inside the White House at the time of the attack. “That (India-Pakistan war) was a primary concern and a primary scenario that we wanted to avoid,” Anish Goel, who was director of South Asia in the National Security Council of the White House at the time of the 26/11 attack, told PTI.

Noting that there was a lot of pressure on then prime minister Manmohan Singh “to react kinetically”, Goel said then president George Bush and secretary of state Condoleezza Rice had to make a lot of efforts including several phone calls to New Delhi, Islamabad and leaders of several US allies to prevent such a scenario.

Bush was very concerned, and got on phone with Singh immediately, offering condolences and urging restraint, he said. Rice travelled to the region trying to cool things.

“There's a lot of public pressure. I think prime minister Singh himself was showing a lot of restraint and was not inclined to do a counter attack right away, but there was a lot of political pressure on him to do so,” said Goel.

“The US, I believe -- I don't know for sure, you have to ask

the Indian government to know -- having counseling or urging him to show restraint, gave him some sort of political leeway and maneuverability to resist the domestic political pressures from those calling for a quick counterstrike on Pakistan,” he said, adding that at no point there was any evidence of military mobilisation.

“There was a sense of nervousness in the then Bush administration about a possible nuclear war in South Asia. The Mumbai terror attack started a day before Thanksgiving a national holiday in the US and did not end till Sunday, the last day of the long weekend. Bush not only held situation room meeting on Saturday, but also mobilised his entire administration to try and prevent escalation of the tension,” Goel added.

A senior former Obama administration official said if another attack would have happened like that, it would “quickly escalates into a regional war”.

The current government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already “taken a tough line” against Islamabad including a surgical strike, the official said on anonymity. “I could certainly foresee a situation where he (prime minister Modi) escalates those quite a bit in response to the terrorist attack. Then for the US government, I just don't know if the Trump administration would counsel restraint the way the Bush administration did,” he said.

The Trump administration might say they (Indians) are justified, he said. “Not only are we not going to stop you, but we're going to help you. I don't know that they would do, but I don't know if they would carry the same message of constraints.

“So, when you're talking about what could happen in the region, if there was another Mumbai attack after the Pakistanis have promised there's no terrorists operating in our country and we're going after all of them, I could see a scenario which quickly escalates into a regional war,” he added.

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

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

THE BIRDS HAVE LOST THEIR WAY

Edited by TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

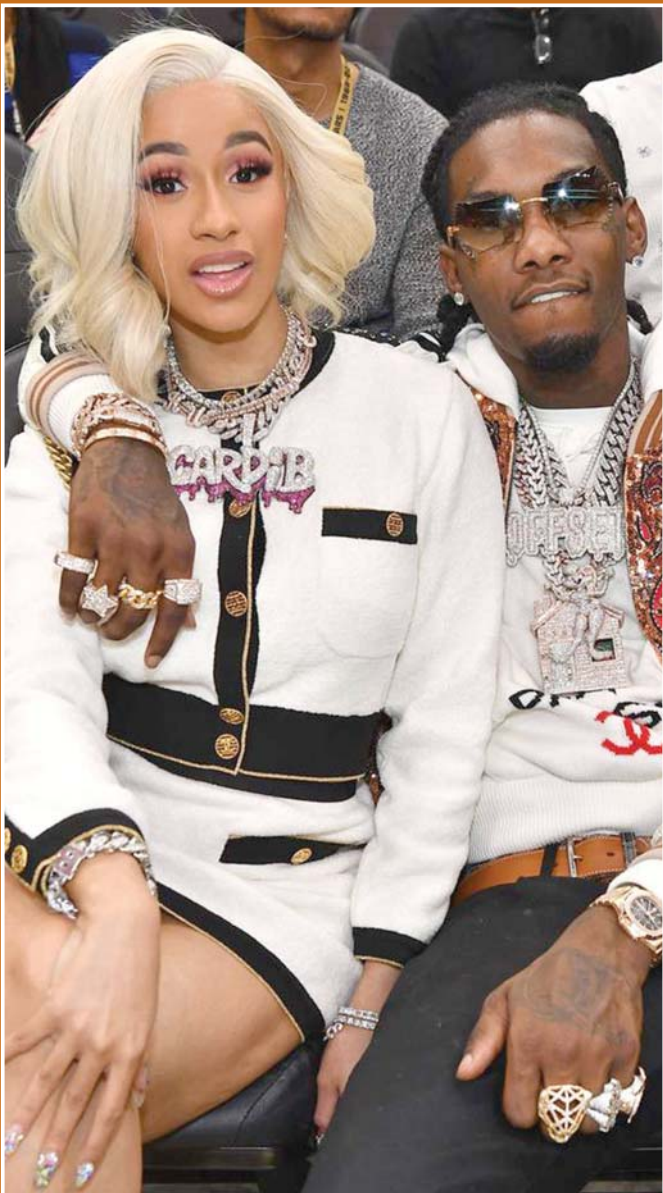
ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

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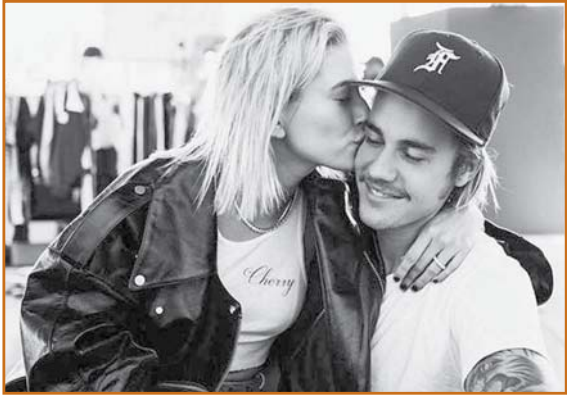


COURTSIDE COUTURE! Power couple Cardi B & Offset rock their finest Chanel gear at the Atlanta Hawks vs. Boston Celtics game in Atlanta.

Justin Bieber and Hailey Baldwin Just Gave the "Kiss Cam" a Whole New Meaning

There's PDA, and then there's its older sibling "kiss cam" PDA. But there's a third category, too: Justin Bieber and Hailey Baldwin.

The newlyweds, who are in Canada for Thanksgiving and Hailey's birthday, spent their Saturday night at a Toronto Maple Leafs hockey game. At one point in the competition, the camera panned on Hailey and Justin sitting in their box. The "Sorry" singer immediately reached for his wife's face, who was caught by surprise and smiling at the events that were happening at that moment. The two of them proceeded to have a steamy make



out session for a few seconds, and most likely went on longer than was recorded. Twitter user David Nestico captured the

moment in a gif and wrote, "Calm down there, @justinbieber..."

However, it's not like their penchant for PDA should come as any surprise.

ARIES :We need to have more people like you in places of power, Aries. And don't feel like it's out of the question. Today's astrological weather is helping you find the confidence and physical strength you need to boost your leadership abilities. This is the time to take control of the situation. You can do it! **TAURUS**: Sticks and stones may break your bones, but names will never hurt you, Taurus. The problem with the energy today is that there may be some sticks and stones tossed in your direction. Be on the lookout for such objects. There are powerful forces operating that are charged with emotional aggression. War may break out if you aren't careful. Try to maintain the peace.

GEMINI: Emotionally, things might get rather tense for you

as others tend to demonstrate a selfish attitude, Gemini. Selfishness doesn't always have to be considered a negative. Sometimes it's healthy and necessary to take a more self-centered stance. You need to take care of yourself at all times. So don't try to pick a fight when other people also demonstrate this behavior.

CANCER : You might be stirred by the energy present in the air today, Cancer. Put on your armor and get ready to do battle. Others may cower when they look out their window and see what's going on outside, but you want to jump into the fray. Strong, aggressive emotions are the weapons of the day, and everybody knows that you have quite an arsenal in this department.

LEO: YMove in for the touch-down today, Leo, and don't stop until you succeed. Don't let oth-

er people's insecurities become yours. Have confidence in yourself and the way you behave around others. Just because someone else feels sad doesn't mean you have to, just to make them feel better. The best thing you can do in this situation is turn it around by exhibiting sheer happiness!

VIRGO: Now is the perfect time to say something to someone that you've been meaning to say for quite some time, Virgo. Get it out in the open. Keeping it inside will only eat away at you. Stop worrying about the consequences and make the move. Today is the time to be bold and aggressive. Other people might respond in a similar fashion, so if you dish it out, be prepared to take it.

LIBRA: Your opinions might be the topic of conversation all day, Libra. You have a very strong will

and you aren't afraid to express it. Today you will get that chance. Feel free to enlighten others with your tremendous wealth of knowledge. Take control of the conversation and accept the mental challenge of trying to win other people over to your side. Whether you're successful or not, you will have fun trying.

SCORPION : Your sensitive heart may be sparked by anger today, Scorpio. Don't be afraid of hurting other people's feelings. You'd be doing yourself and others a disservice by not revealing the true scope of your emotions. The other parties involved may not have all the facts necessary to make the most educated decision. Aid in this process by revealing your perspective!

SAGITTARIUS: You might feel a great deal of physical power on a day like today, Sagittarius.

Would have given my right hand to be launched by Anurag Kashyap: Varun

RADHIKA SHARMA

PANAJI, NOV 25 (PTI): Actor Varun Dhawan on Sunday said that there was a time when he was leaning towards gritty cinema and would have done anything in his power to be launched by Anurag Kashyap.

The actor was speaking at an in-conversation session "Dha-One", moderated by writer Rumi Jaffery, with his father, filmmaker David Dhawan, at the ongoing International Film Festival of India (IFFI) here.

His "Badlapur" director Sriram Raghavan and IFFI Indian Panorama chairperson Rahul Rawail were part of the audience.

"Initially my leaning was always towards the left side. I had loved 'Black Friday', Sriram's films... I was leaning over there. I would have probably given my right hand at that time to be launched by Anurag Kashyap. Honestly," Varun said.

To this David said, "Thank God".

Varun said when he told his father that he was doing "Badlapur", the veteran filmmaker received the news negatively.

David added, "I saw he had grown a beard for the character, he didn't used to laugh, he didn't use to talk for 20 days. So I asked my wife 'when will he cut his beard?' I didn't know what he was doing. But thought, 'chalo, achhi hee banegi'.

"I saw the film. Sriram showed me twice and I loved the film. I said 'it's a revenge story, it's a Hindustani (Indian) film'."

Varun also revealed he had visited a psychiatrist for a couple of sessions after working on the emotionally disturbing "Badlapur".

When the revelation was met by both horror and laughs from the audience, the actor gave a nod to mental health awareness.

He said, "There's nothing wrong in that, to speak your



mind. Whatever that's inside you, it just gets balanced. They didn't say that 'there's something'... don't get scared. Nothing went wrong with me. But the doctor said, 'If you'll stay in an intense environment for a long time, so it will happen.'

Crossover phenomenon needs to be encouraged, leveraged: Karan Johar

MUMBAI, NOV 25 (PTI): Filmmaker Karan Johar, who will be presenting the upcoming "2.0" for the Hindi speaking audience, said the crossover in Indian cinema should happen internally.

During a press conference on Saturday, Karan said he is happy to have collaborated on "2.0" and "Baahubali", which he had also presented, but he cannot claim the credit for vision, creativity and execution of these two movies.

When asked if the success of "Baahubali" and 2.0 will pave way for more pan-India films, the filmmaker said, "Crossover in cinema should happen internally in India. We keep talking about crossover and that our films going out of the country but the true crossover is like 'Baahubali'. It's a film made in Telugu which worked very well in North, West and East, everywhere."

"2.0" has that vision of working within the country. We have to encourage those crossover movements. Films in all languages, whether it's Marathi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu or Malayalam, has to work all across (the country). That is the true vision. This is quintessential crossover movement phenomenon that needs to be encouraged and leveraged," he added.

The Ae Dil Hai Mushkil filmmaker does agree that south cinema is ahead of Bollywood in terms of budget and technology.

Karan credits filmmakers in south for encouraging the crossover movement and believes it should happen in Hindi cinema as well.

"South industry has been a pioneer of this movement of meeting narrative and technology for like decades. They get their stories, emotions, scale and technology bang on. Some of us get stuck in a rut and we don't get out of that rut. We believe that we are in a safe spot, we are not. They have taught us, and in many ways made us feel inferior in a good way. I say that with positivity as it encourages us to do much

better," he said.

"We have had very few big eventful films, mainly by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, who have given us beautiful cinema spectacles. Now you will see a plethora of them, thanks to South industry.



"2.0" director S Shankar said for him script comes first and then technology. "Whatever technology a script demands I am using that. I go by script. For 2.0, new technology is used. In the film, we have cell man, the huge bird, and to set that up it took a lot of time," he added.

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