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SummitTIMES

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

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Patients suffer as pharmacies join nationwide strike

NITESH R PRADHAN

GANGTOK, 28 SEPT:

Patients and their family members had a difficult time today with pharmacies closed across the capital. A nationwide bandh was called today by the All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD) to protest the Centre's move to regularise online pharmacies.

Many patients complained of unavailability of medicines at medical stores within hospitals at STNM and CRH Tadong.

"I do not know the reason for the strike but such emergency services like medicine should not fall prey to such measures," said a family member of a patient, Krishna Chettri.

He further stated that pharmacies have huge social responsibility and they must adhere to strict work discipline.



One such patient's family member, Sumi Rai, added that her mother's medicine is not available at both STNM and CRH Hospitals.

Expressing disappointment, she said that such strikes will not affect the government at all but the public will have to suffer.

Due to unavailability of

medicines in others areas of the capital as well, there were many who went to STNM and CRH Hospitals to buy medicines.

President, All Sikkim Chemist Association, Ramesh Periwal, while speaking to the media, stated that the association fully supports the nationwide bandh protesting against sale of medicines online.

He stated that such a move was imperative as online sale can encourage misuse of medicines without any prescription.

Further, he added that storage of medicine is a key aspect which is ignored in online medicine sale.

"If there is an emergency, we are always there for our customers and patients," he said.

However, many family members of patients have added that online medicines are much cheaper and laws should be put in place for storage and misuse of medicines rather than opting for a blanket ban on online sale.



NCST conducts first hearing on Sherpa land protection issue

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 28 SEPT:

The first hearing on the issue of Sherpa land protection was conducted today at the office of National Commission for Scheduled Tribes in Delhi in the presence of NCST Member, HK Damor. The State of Sikkim was represented by Secretary, Land Revenue & Disaster Management while Denzong Sherpa Association was represented by its president, spokesperson and legal advisor, a DSA press release informs.

After a 3-hourlong discussion, Mr Damor directed for a full house hearing in the presence of NCST Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and all its Members. The next date for the hearing will be notified after the scheduling is done by NCST, the release adds.

Parakram Parv commemorates 2nd anniv of surgical strike

GANGTOK, 28 SEPT

[IPR]:

Commemoration of two-daylong "Parakram Parv" kicked off today at West Point School in Gangtok, inaugurated by Brigadier Ajay Mishra of the Black Cat Division.

Parakram Parv is being organized by the Indian Army across the country to mark the second anniversary of the surgical strike carried out on 29 Sept, 2016 by the Indian Army on terror pads across the Line of Control (LOC).

The programme here featured display of equipment like 105 mm field guns, small arms of the infantry, engineering and mountaineering equipment, medical etc.

Apart from equipments display, screening of a movie on surgical strikes, motivational lecture, career counseling & information kiosks and band display were put up for people attending the event.



Addressing the gathering, Brigadier Mishra said, "It is a great moment to celebrate the anniversary of surgical strikes as Parakram Parv in the beautiful State of Sikkim. The army stands in their resolve to protect the nation and will dedicate with commitment to

uphold peace and integrity of the nation." He added that the main idea behind organizing the programme was to showcase their achievements and to re-

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Women can't be repressed for physiological reasons, says SC & opens Sabarimala for them

SANJEEV KUMAR & ROHIT THAYYIL

NEW DELHI, SEP 28 (PTI): The repression of women under the garb of "physiological factors" cannot be legitimised and patriarchy in religion cannot "trump over" devotion, the Supreme Court ruled Friday as it threw open the closed gates of the historic Sabarimala temple for women of all age groups.

Penning his last verdict of a five-judge constitution bench, Chief Justice Dipak Misra, who would demit office on October 2, rejected the vehement submissions of the Travancore Devaswom Board, which runs the temple, and ruled that the devotees of Lord Ayyappa are "exclusively Hindus" and do not constitute a "separate religious denomination".

The historic verdict, which would add force to clamour for equality for women of other religions, extensively dealt with Article 25 (1) which was referred to

by the Temple Board and the devotees in support of the practice of barring entry of girls and women between the menstrual age of 10 and 50 years.

Sabarimala is a prominent Hindu temple which attracts tens of millions of pilgrims every year. The hill-top shrine remains open only for a little over four months in a year and the approach is through a forested area that involves an arduous 5-km trek from the Pampa river base camp.

In a landmark verdict, the apex court Friday lifted a ban that prevented such girls and women from entering the famous Sabarimala temple in Kerala, holding this centuries-old Hindu religious practice as illegal and unconstitutional.

The CJJ, who wrote 95 page-verdict for himself and Justice A M Khanwilkar, said that on the ground of public order, morality and health, women cannot be barred from practising and pro-

fessing the faith.

Observing that historically women have been treated with inequality, the majority verdict said "in the theatre of life, it seems, man has put the autograph and there is no space for a woman even to put her signature."

"There is inequality on the path of approach to understand the divinity. The attribute of devotion to divinity cannot be subjected to the rigidity and stereotypes of gender," the CJJ said. The views of Justice Misra were shared by Justices R F Nariman and D Y Chandrachud.

The CJJ rejected the plea that the Temple Board was protected under Article 26 (freedom to manage religious affairs) as the devotees formed a separate religious denomination.

"There is no identified group called Ayyappans. Every Hindu devotee can go to the temple. We have also been apprised that

turn to pg02

Conclave of CMs of 12 Himalayan states in Shimla on Oct 5

SHIMLA, SEP 28 (PTI):

A conclave of chief ministers and parliamentarians of 12 Himalayan states will be held in Shimla on October 5, an official said on Friday.

The theme of the meet, to be held at Shoolini University in Solan, is "well-

being of the next generation of Himalayan people through agriculture", said Kunal Satyarthi, Member Secretary of HP Council for Science, Technology and Environment.

The Himachal Pradesh government is turn to pg02

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POP UP Pasal

No SDF supporter has joined SKM: Gnathang-Machong MLA

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 28 SEPT:

Gnathang-Machong MLA cum Minister, DT Lepcha, has rubbished reports of 231 Sikkim Democratic Front families joining Sikkim Krantikari Morcha from Gnathang-Machong constituency during an SKM meeting at Linkey village on 27 Sept. No supporter of SDF has joined SKM, he has said.

A press release from the Gnathang-Machong MLA states that the Thursday meeting did not even have a gathering of 231 people. He has further challenged SKM to produce a list of the 231 families.

"SDF received around 7000 votes from Gnathang-Machong in the 2014 election while SKM got 2900 votes," said Mr Lepcha further adding that almost 80% of these 2900 supporters of SKM have already joined SDF.

He also refuted reports of SDF supporters of other constituencies joining SKM as false claims.

SDF dismisses SKM as directionless and deceptive

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 28 SEPT:

Sikkim Democratic Front has stressed that SKM has compromised the standard of the politics with its continuing litany of baseless allegations and defamatory accusations.

The ruling party has stated that SKM has been indulging in deceptive politics to mislead the people.

An SDF press release issued by its general secretary, DB Katwal, states that SKM has been confused by its lack of policies, plans or programmes and has hence opted to rely on envy and revenge.

The release adds that SKM's painting of a bleak picture about the scenario in Sikkim was disrespectful of the lay people who have been participants of the development seen here.

Parakram Parv...

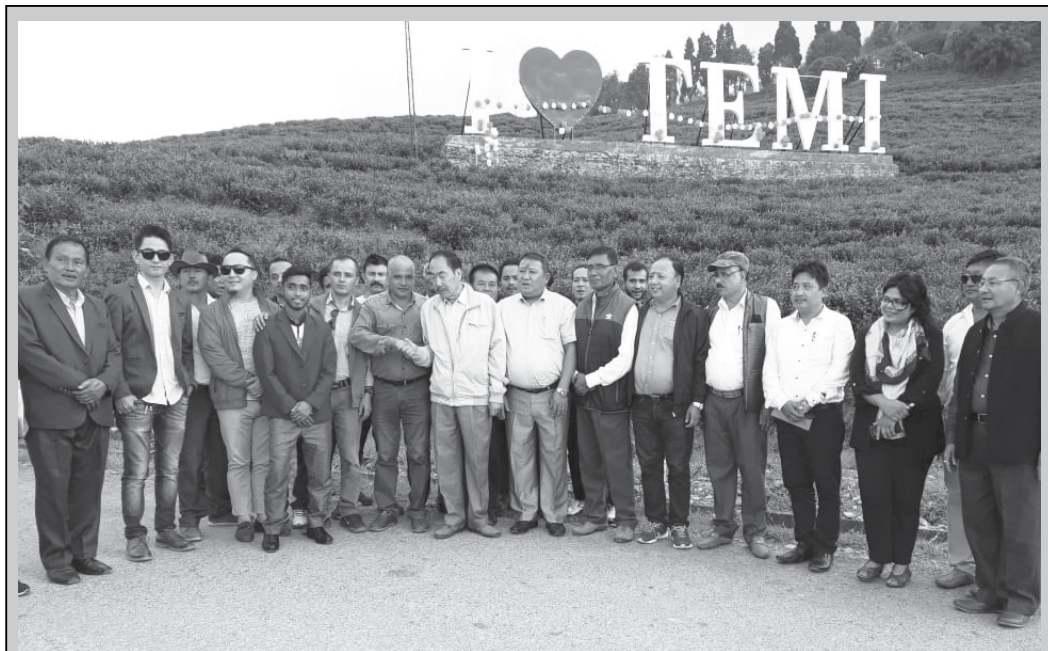
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member the troops who have sacrificed their lives for the sake of the nation.

He further expressed that there is a special corner stall set up for the Sikkimese youth to motivate them to join the defense forces.

Stalls were also set up for people to get first-hand glimpse of different type of guns, equipments and medical equipments used by the Indian Army.

Students and teachers of various schools of Gangtok along with students of Government Law College, Burtuk, army officials and invited dignitaries were present in the inaugural day of Parakram Parv.



I LOVE TEMI SIGNAGE INAUGURATED

GANGTOK, 28 SEPT: Area MLA, Roads & Bridges Minister GM Gurung, inaugurated the "I love Temi" letter box structure at Temi Tea Estate in South Sikkim today. The structure has been built as part of a holistic development plan of Temi Tea Estate and its surrounding areas. The project is part of overall visibility of Temi for setting it up as a destination for eco-tourism and sustainable homestay model for rural economic growth. The Minister also handed over formal office to the newly elected Labour Union Executive of Temi Tea Estate. [Rebyna Rana]

Blood donation camp conducted at Namthang SSS

SUMMIT REPORT

NAMCHI, 28 SEPT:

Seventy-two units of blood were collected today during a Blood Donation Camp held at Government Senior Secondary School, Namthang in South Sikkim today. The camp was organized by Red Ribbon Club, SAATHI Club and NSS Unit of Namthang SSS in collaboration with Voluntary Blood Donors Association of Sikkim, a press release informs.

The camp was attended by Panchayat president, Nagi Karek GPU, Tsheringmith Lepcha, Senior Blood Bank



Officer, Namchi District Hospital, Dr Anju Rai, RRC South West coordinator cum VBDAS coordinator, Kishore Baniya,

along with technicians from Namchi District Hospital.

During the camp, students of Namthang

SSS, teachers and youth from Nagi, Karek, Kabrey and Namthang donated blood.

District Blood Bank,

Namchi presented Letter of Appreciation to Namthang SSS for regularly organizing such camps.

KVK Mangan holds exhibition cum sale of Khadaknath breed chicken

WANGCHUK BHUTIA

MANGAN, 28 SEPT:

Krishni Vigyan Kendra [KVK], Mangan has conducted exhibition cum sale of Khadaknath breed chicken [Black Chicken] at the district administrative centre premises here today.

KVK Mangan has initiated the reintroduction of this lost breed of chicken in Sikkim which has special medicinal value in homeopathy and a particular nervous disorder.

Joint Director, KVK Mangan, TT Bhutia, informed that reintroduction of this breed has been initiated in the State for the first time. Main varieties available are Jet Black and Golden Khadaknath, he added.



The JD further informed that consumption of meat of this breed of chicken helps increase red blood cell count and haemo-

globin.

He also added that the department will start its breeding and hatching within a couple of

months as this first breed has been brought from Japua tribal district of Madhya Pradesh.

"Since Sikkim is an organic State, backyard poultry farm is largely required," he stated.

Subject Matter Specialist, Dr Hishey Ongmoo Bhutia, spoke on Khadaknath poultry farming.

One mature Khadaknath chicken was also made available for sale today at the price of Rs 1,000 per chicken.

Khadaknath is an Indian breed of chicken local to Jhabua and Dhar districts of eastern Madhya Pradesh where it is known as "Kali masi". Due to its high protein and very low fat and cholesterol levels, it is in high demand.

Open to alliance with other parties except SDF: State BJP unit



SUMMIT REPORT

GYALSHING, 28 SEPT:

In a press conference held today at the Press Club of West Sikkim, Gyalshing, State BJP president, DB Chauhan, said that Sikkim Democratic Front will not win even one Assembly seat from West Sikkim in the coming election claiming that the ruling front has failed to live up to the expectations of the people of the district in terms of development and public welfare initiatives, a press release informs.

"Janta is tired of one party being in power for so long and power shuffle is what they want," he claimed. He alleged that West Sikkim is still lagging behind in many sectors.

It may be mentioned here, the State BJP president is on a two-day tour of West Sikkim and is accompanied by his team comprising of party functionaries.

Mr Chauhan further informed that in the 2019 State Assembly poll, BJP will fight the election with agendas based on development of Sikkim. He shared that his party will field strong candidates having clean image and connection with common Sikkimese.

The gate is open if political parties of the State other than SDF opt for alliance with BJP in the Assembly poll, he added.

"We are eager if proposal for alliance with other political party is made. Allied force would definitely have the upper hand," he said.

He expressed that the State BJP unit has the backing of the central executive committee and BJP wave is expected to sweep the State Assembly poll as in other States

of India.

"People are desperate for change as they seem to be tired of the 24-year-old SDF government which has done nothing for ensuring sustainable development of the State. People have realized that piglets, chickens and pressure cookers do not signify development," Mr Chauhan stated.

Claiming that corruption under present SDF government is rampant in the State, Mr Chauhan alleged that chain of corruption from Panchayat level to the highest level takes place and the common Sikkimese suffer due to such malpractices and unchecked high handedness.

"The source of corruption is Mintokgang and the political movement has become necessary to close that source," he said.

Expressing concern over different issues pertaining to West Sikkim, Mr Chauhan blamed the state government for poor conditions of roads. He also lamented about poor health facilities at the district hospital in Gyalshing.

Mr Chauhan informed that the party has prepared detailed reports of problems, necessities and grievances related to people of West Sikkim and the same will be submitted to party's high command very soon. He expressed that the party high command in Delhi will be made aware of problems being faced by the people.

On the Limboo Tamang Assembly seat reservation issue, Mr Chauhan asserted that BJP respects the constitutional rights of the LT communities and seat reservation will happen soon.

Conclave of CMs of 12 Himalayan states in Shimla on Oct 5

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organising the conclave in partnership with Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI), a civil society organisation of 12 Himalayan states -- Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam and West Bengal.

The meet will be held in two stages -- a summit of professional experts and delegates on October 3 and 4, and a conclave of

chief ministers and parliamentarians on October 5.

The meet will also discuss the issues of hydro power and sustainable tourism in the hilly states, he added.

This will be the second such conclave in Shimla, he said.

In October 2009, the state government had organised a 'Himalayan Chief Ministers Conclave' on the theme of 'Indian Himalayas: Glaciers, Climate Change and Livelihoods'.

Women can't be repressed for physiological reasons...

contd from pg01

there are other temples for Lord Ayyappa and there is no such prohibition. Therefore, there is no identified sect.

"Accordingly, we hold, without any hesitation, that Sabarimala temple is a public religious endowment and there are no exclusive identified followers of the cult," the court said.

The CJl said that Article 25(1) would become a "dead letter" if women are excluded from practising their right to worship and set aside the Rule 3(b) of the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules, 1965.

"The right to practise religion under Article 25(1) is equally available to both men and women of all age groups professing the same religion," Justice Misra said.

"The impugned Rule 3(b) of the 1965 Rules, framed under the 1965 Act, that stipulates exclusion of entity of women of the age group of 10 to 50 years, is a clear violation of the right of Hindu women to practise their religious beliefs 93 which, in consequence, makes their fundamental right of religion under Article 25(1) a dead letter," Justice Misra added.

The CJl dealt with the aspect

of morality which can be used for putting restrictions under Article 25 (1) and said it cannot be viewed with a "narrow lens" to confine the definition of morality exclude an individual or a section from practising religion.

"The notions of public order, morality and health cannot be used as colourable device to restrict the freedom to freely practise religion and discriminate against women of the age group of 10 to 50 years by denying them their legal right to enter and offer their prayers at the Sabarimala temple," Justice Misra said.

The CJl said that the practice

of excluding women of the age group of 10 to 50 years "cannot be regarded as an essential part of religion" and hence cannot be protected. The fundamental right of Freedom to Practice Religion is a gender-neutral right and has nothing to do with the physiological factors like menstruation in the present case, the verdict said.

"Women of any age group have as much a right as men to visit and enter a temple in order to freely practise a religion as guaranteed under Article 25(1).

"The denial of this right to women significantly denudes them of their right to worship," Justice Misra said.

Gangtok on Saturday, 29 Sept

Temp: 29°C/16°C
Forecast: Mostly cloudy, not as warm; an afternoon thundershower.
Sunrise: 05:27 AM
Sunset: 5:25 PM

Programme on doubling farmers income at Khop

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 SEPT:**

Krishni Vigyan Kendra, South Sikkim organized a daylong programme at Khop village on Wednesday on doubling of farmers income by 2022, a press release informs. At the very onset, SMS (Extension), Meena Pradhan, extended a warm welcome to Zilla Panchayat, Panchayat and farmers.

SMS (Soil Science), Wilson Rai briefed the gathering about the importance of soil testing and soil health management in organic farming. SMS (Agronomy), Dr. Nation Chamling detailed the farmers about organic package and practices of pea, the release mentions.

SMS (Animal Science), Dr. Chewang N. Bhutia encouraged the farmers regarding adoption of improved breeds of pig to fetch more income. Sr. Scientist & Head, IP Shvakoti urged the farmers to adopt the technologies disseminated by KVK and work in coordination towards doubling of farmers income by 2022.

Zilla Panchayat, Hari Gurlung, urged the farmers to opt for scientific and modern farming. The farmers were benefitted with Pea seeds, Potato and Hampshire piglets. The programme also witnessed a cleanliness drive in the village with active participation of villagers as a part of Swachhata Hi Sewa.

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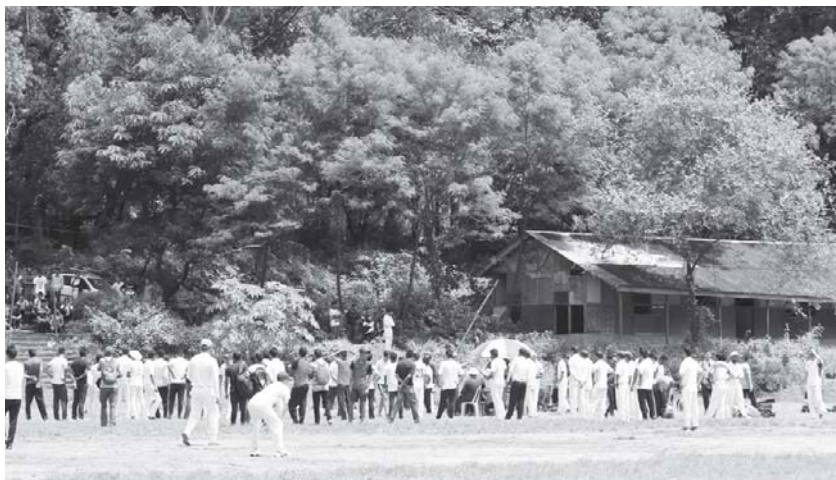
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com**

SCA announces Men's U-23 Col. CK Nayudu Trophy trials



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 SEPT:**

Sikkim Cricket Association has announced its trials for Men's U-23 Col. CK Nayudu Trophy scheduled to commence on 30 Sept at Mining Cricket Ground in East Sikkim from 9 a.m. onwards.

An SCA press release informs that only players born and brought up in Sikkim and students or employees who are studying or working in Sikkim for more than 2 years are eligible for the trial.

Interested players have been requested to bring both original and photocopy of documents namely Date of Birth Certificate, Address Proof and PAN Card [compulsory]. Player should be born on or after 01/09/1995. Further, all the aforementioned documents should have same Date of Birth.

The SCA has notified that if anyone is found with tampered documents, the player will be banned from playing any tournaments for Sikkim.

For considering a cricketer as a local player on the basis of employment, Employer Certificate along with six months' salary slip [starting from Aug 2017] is required. Likewise, on the basis of education, a bonafide certificate signed by the Principal of the School/College should be made available. Passport Copy/Aadhaar Card [with address and date of issue] will also be required for considering a cricketer as a local player on the basis of residence.



ENVIS and SU collaborate to celebrate World Tourism Day

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 SEPT:**

World Tourism Day was celebrated today by ENVIS, resource partner on Ecotourism, Sikkim State Council of Science & Technology, in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, Sikkim University, at Vigyan Bhawan here today.

The MTTM students, including some research scholars of Sikkim

University and trainees of 'Green Skill Development Programme' under Nature Conservation and Livelihood: Ecotourism initiated by ENVIS, made presentations on the theme of World Tourism Day 2018, "Tourism and the Digital Transformation".

The programme included a debate on pros and cons of digitalization, exhibition of digital

video shoots and photos of ecotourism spots of Sikkim by both GSDP and SU Students.

Dr. K Jayakumar, Additional Chief Secretary, and PK Dong, chief guest for the day, spoke on this occasion.

Besides the University students and GSDP trainees, the function was attended by senior faculty members of Sikkim University's Depart-

ment of Tourism, Ashi Pempem Wangmo, Dr. Jigme Wanchuk Bhutia and Karma Rinchen from Sikkim Government College and others.

ENVIS was represented by Niraj Sharma, IT Officer, Prabhakar Gurung, Information Officer, and Tseten CC Lachungpa, DEO. The function ended with a skit presented by trainees of GSDP.



State taekwondo team excels at National C'ship, bags 31 medals

**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 28 SEPT:**

Sikkim taekwondo team is back home after its impressive performance in the 10th Senior National Poomsae & 37th Senior National Kyorugi Taekwondo Championship 2018 which was held from 18-22 Sept at Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh. The State team has bagged 10 gold medals, 12 silver medals and 09 bronze medals along with team championship trophy in Poomsae.

Interestingly, all gold medalists have also qualified for the India camp for the upcoming World Taekwondo Championship to be held in Nov this year at China Taipei.

A 25-member Sikkim Amateur Taekwondo Association [SATA] team had represented the State in the championship. The team was led by coach, Sanjay Subba, in the championship. The championship was participated by

more than 31 teams from different States, paramilitary forces and other organisations.

In a small function here at Paljor Stadium today, SATA felicitated the State team members for their outstanding performances in the championship. The function had the Secretary, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, SD Dhakal, as chief guest.

On the occasion, the Secretary congratulated the team members for winning the championship trophy, medals and laurels for the State. He also lauded the contributions of SATA chief coach, Trilok Subba, in uplifting Sikkim taekwondo.

Likewise, Sikkim Olympic Association general secretary, Jasal Pradhan, and SYA Department Additional Director, Kamal Chettri, also congratulated all medal winners and entire team for their outstanding performance in

the championship.

In his report of the championship, SATA chief coach, Mr Subba, stated that the championship was very tough and competitive among professional and experienced martial artists from more than 31 States and different government organizations. He stated that the State team performed exceptionally well and impressed everyone in the championship to win the team championship in Poomsae.

"This was a result of the hard work and dedication and good team work of players and coaches and encouraging support from parents of players. This achievement by the senior team will definitely encourage and motivate upcoming young players of the State," he expressed.

Mr Subba mentioned that martial artists from other States also expressed their desire to train in Sikkim.



ICFAI-Sikkim VC conferred Educational Reformer & Spiritual Guru Award

**REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 28 SEPT:**

Vice Chancellor, ICFAI University, Sikkim, Dr Jagannath Patnaik, was conferred the "Educational Reformer and Spiritual Guru Award" at the Education Conclave & Nisha Foundation National Teachers & Educational Reformers felicitation ceremony held at Parliament House in Delhi on 26 Sept.

Former Union Minister of Youth Af-

fairs & Sports, Vijay Goel, handed over the award to Dr Patnaik in recognition of his efforts in ensuring innovation in higher education and spiritual enlightenment for world peace.

Dr Patnaik is known as a spiritual master and educationalist who has been promoting spirituality, meditation, love, peace, brotherhood and humanitarian values to people in India and the rest of the world.

MUMBAI, SEP 28 (PTI): Former world heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson, who in his prime was famously promoted as the baddest man on the planet, said here on Friday that all good fighters have come out of the slums, including him.

"I think the poorer you are the better boxer you are.

The most successful fighters have come from slums. All the fighters who come from the slums are successful. All the current top fighters are from the slums," said Tyson at the launch function of the Mixed Martial Arts Kumite 1 league.

From personal experience the 52-year-old Tyson, who retired in 2005 with a record of 50 wins -- including 44 by knock-outs -- and six losses, said that if one works tirelessly that person can get out of the slums.

"I am a slumdog. I grew up in a slum. I had the ambition to get out of the slums and that's why I am here. If someone works hard they can get out of the slums. I still go back to see my friends in my old neighbourhood. They still call it a slum," said "Iron Mike" at a packed media conference.

Tyson, who at the age of 20 years, four months and 22 days



became the world's youngest ever heavyweight world champion in boxing in 1988, has plans to visit one of Asia's biggest slums, at Dharavi in the central part of the city, besides the customary foreigner's visit to the Taj Mahal in Agra.

"I look forward to go into the slums and want to see the Taj Mahal as well," he declared.

"I am very excited to be here. This is my first time in India. This is something I never dreamed of before. I am here to launch the fight (Kumite 1 league -- first fight night between India and UAE to be held at the NSCI stadium tomorrow). I wish the best team wins," said Tyson.

"I am a big fan of MMA. I go to UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) in Las Vegas all the time," said Tyson who had served a prison term early in his career after being convicted of rape.

He was open in his remarks when asked whether he would have joined the MMA ranks if it was in existence during his fighting years.

"I don't know. They don't pay a lot of money in MMA...

I would not have worked without money," he replied leading to peals of laughter.

Tyson marked out Lennox Lewis, Evander Holyfield and Buster Douglas as some of his toughest opponents inside the ring.

"There were quite a few - Lennox Lewis, Evander Holyfield, Buster Douglas. They were very good fighters," said Tyson who was disqualified in his 1997 rematch against world champion Holyfield for biting his opponent's ear.

He favoured Anthony Joshua as currently the best boxer in the heavyweight category.

"I think it's Joshua right now. It's going to be an interesting fight between Joshua and (Deontay) Wilder," he remarked about a planned world title unification fight between the two boxers.

To the inevitable question on cricket he remarked, "I know cricket. I know you hit the ball with a stick. It's a bit like baseball, in a way."

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE:
A General Land (roadside) at Adampool, near Ranipool is for sale. Interested person may contact: **9083826462.**

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

From Delinquency to Antisocial Futures

Social engagement awaited to help reform juveniles in conflict with the law

News of juvenile crime is always disturbing. These are after all kids in age-groups when the most unruly of their excesses should be some experimentation that is the temptation of their age or some harmless pranks played on peers or elders.

There has to be something inherently very wrong with the priorities of a society where innocence is lost so young that under-18 year olds are found in gangs of car accessory burglars, or prescription drugs pushers or moving in bands which loot public property by pilfering fibre-optic cables (this last form of theft on the wane now, though). All of these are frequently reported instances, and then there is the ever present nuisance of clothes and branded shoes being lifted from homes and rented accommodations, not to mention the string of unsolved daytime burglaries.

While there is no condoning a society that drives people to commit crimes so young, one could still accept these as the curses of modernity if instances of juvenile crime were aberrations and not the norm. In Sikkim, however, instances of juveniles figuring in criminal misconduct are becoming disconcertingly frequent. What must also be borne in mind is that what ends up getting reported in newspapers are instances that get recorded by the cops; there are many instances where “cases” are settled before they are officially entered into the crime data and several more which either never get reported at police stations or never get solved. The police have a job to do and there are adequate laws and regulations in place to ensure that juveniles, even when picked up for cognizable offences, have a less traumatic run-in with the law. But the more important concern than how the police cracks-down on juvenile crime, is how the society at large responds to it. It is not enough to just get shocked if the shock does not lead to worry and worry does not initiate deliberations and then societal engagement to understand the reasons behind increasing juvenile crimes and then doing something about correcting the situation. What every person needs to bear in mind is that thefts and burglaries are the gateway crimes from which the delinquents could graduate to more serious felonies if not course-corrected in time. The sequence of crime and punishment does not resolve the situation and societal disinterest makes the situation worse - a society which refuses to be moved into involvement by the shock of juvenile crime ends up creating misanthropes out of delinquents.

Even though Rakesh Rai, the notorious “Spider-man” of Sikkim, is an extreme example, he illustrates this process to some extent - he started off as a small-time burglar in his early teens; before he crossed 19, he had committed a double-murder and has been behind bars ever since. Too many of our youngsters are getting caught committing small misdemeanours or with substances of abuse. If the society does not get involved now, it will soon lose all moral authority to have a say in anything in the affairs of the young in the future. It will not be pleasant to realize later that the increasing hostile resentment in the young could have been avoided and assuaged.

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

Is the clock still ticking? Time’s Up and the entertainment industry in 2018

EMILY LEDUC
theconversation.com

This year’s Emmy Awards opened with a musical number called “We Solved It.” Kristen Bell, Kate McKinnon, Kenan Thompson, Sterling Brown and a host of celebrities who check the box of “non-white male” performed the satirical song about how Hollywood has “solved” its diversity problem.

The evening’s nominees were the most inclusive in the Emmys’ 70-year run. But despite the diversity in nominees this year and big wins for Amy Sherman-Palladino’s comedy series *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, the night’s winners were mostly male and white. Only two of 12 acting awards went to people of colour.

The opening number mostly fell flat with audiences, but it introduced important concepts and a lens through which we can view the last year in entertainment.

Shortly after last year’s Emmy Awards, the #MeToo movement went viral. The movement forced into light the egregious gender and race inequality that has plagued the entertainment industry since its inception.

This was a pivotal year for women both in and on TV and movie screens. But as with any significant movement, systemic change is necessary. A year into #MeToo, what’s changed and has anything been solved?

THE MOVEMENT CIRCLES BACK?

The #MeToo movement allowed for public discussions about the inequalities women face both in their work and personal lives. Many previously voiceless women and men came forward and named their abusers for the first time with actionable consequences for the reputations of the accused.

A host of industry titans, including Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey, Matt Lauer, Louis C.K., Bill Cosby and Les Moonves, all faced a range of sanctions from public reproach to loss of employment and contracts to criminal investigations and formal charges.

And yet, what started as a deluge of stories that prompted a rallying cry for action and change has shifted somewhat. Recent headlines feature new narratives: alleged abusers are seeking to quietly resume their careers mere months after their actions were made public.

If the discussion and awareness can only take us so far before the movement begins to circle back, what are the actionable steps in Hollywood that have emerged from #MeToo?

TIME’S UP

On Jan. 1, the Time’s Up campaign was announced with a letter addressed: “Dear Sisters.” It read:



“The struggle for women to break in, to rise up the ranks and to simply be heard and acknowledged in male-dominated workplaces must end; time’s up on this impenetrable monopoly.”

Signed by more than 300 women in the entertainment industry, Time’s Up called for change through measures including legal defence funds, anti-harassment legislation and gender parity in studios, talent agencies and other executive roles within the industry.

The winter awards show circuit was dominated by Time’s Up activism on the red carpet where Hollywood attendees wore black, sported Time’s Up pins, brought activists as their guests, called out sexism in interviews and promoted the #AskHerMore campaign.

At the Golden Globes, Oprah Winfrey became the first Black woman to receive the Cecil B. DeMille Award (of the 64 honourees, only 14 are women). In her stirring speech, Winfrey remarked: “We all have lived too many years in a culture broken by brutally powerful men. For too long, women have not been heard or believed if they dare speak the truth to the power of those men.”

Actors have continued to speak out on injustices in the workplace, with some demanding inclusion and diversity riders in their contracts. Recently, Olivia Munn bravely spoke out about having to work with a registered sex offender in her film *The Predator*.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Less visible but irreplaceable in the worlds of film and television are behind-the-scenes writers, directors and producers.

One annual study about the status of women in Hollywood noted that more than 68 per cent of television programs featured casts with more male than female characters and that women only made up about 40 per cent of all speaking characters. When factoring in race and ethnicity, the statistics worsen, with only seven per cent of speaking roles for Latina women and just six per cent for Asian women.

Behind the scenes, women comprise only 27

per cent of all creators, directors, writers, producers and editors of broadcast, cable and streaming programs.

Female writers are severely underrepresented in Hollywood. In the 2017-2018 season, 74 per cent of programs in one study had no female writers on staff.

Late-night programming is one of the worst offenders where historically both TV hosts and writers’ rooms were exclusively male. In 2016, Samantha Bee became the first woman to helm a late night comedy satire show, *Full Frontal*.

Along with *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, this year’s Emmy winner, Bee has set up a blind audition process for writers whereby gender and race are not disclosed in applications. Bee and her staff boast an almost 50-50 gender parity while Oliver employs one third women.

Less than five per cent of directors in Hollywood are women. An offshoot of Time’s Up, 5050by2020 seeks to improve these numbers to half by 2020. They launched a successful campaign, prompting organizers to sign a pledge at the Cannes International Film Festival in May. In the festival’s 71-year history, only 82 of 1,727 films were directed by women, of which only two have won the Palme d’Or; the festival’s top honour.

TIFF quickly followed suit in September, signing the same pledge and hosting a Share Her Journey rally to underscore their commitment to female filmmakers.

AUDIENCES ARE RESPONSIBLE TOO

Film and television are a 20th-century innovation with a centuries-old problem, and despite knowledge of these disparities for decades, progress is slow. Women who have sought to make space for themselves in a male-dominated environment have faced barriers at every turn.

Is time actually up on gender inequality in Hollywood? Have we indeed “solved it?” If the Emmys are any indication, the answer would be a resounding “no.”

More women must be allowed to safely break through into positions of power in Hollywood and the men who surround them must do so enthusiastically and with empathy. They must honour the struggle women have endured to reach this point.

Audiences too, share in the responsibility of gender parity on screen by thinking about what they watch and seeking out programs that make the effort to be inclusive. Only then can we hope to stop the clock.

[the writer is Doctoral Candidate and Teaching Fellow, Queen’s University, Ontario]

How to make computers faster and climate friendly

SEOKBUM KO
theconversation.com

Your smartphone is far more powerful than the NASA computers that put Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on the moon in 1969, but it is also an energy hog. In computing, energy use is often considered a secondary problem to speed and storage, but with the rate and direction of technological advancement, it is becoming a growing environmental concern.

When the cryptocurrency mining company Hut 8 opened Canada’s largest bitcoin mining project outside Medicine Hat, Alta., environmentalists sounded the alarm. The plant consumes 10 times more electricity, largely produced by a natural gas-fired power plant, than any other facility in the city.

Globally, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the information, communication and technology (ICT) sectors are forecast to reach the equivalent of 1.4 gigatonnes (billion metric tonnes) of carbon dioxide annually by 2020. That’s 2.7 per cent of global GHGs and roughly double Canada’s total annual greenhouse gas output.

By designing energy-efficient computer processors we could reduce energy consumption, and we could reduce GHG emissions in places where electricity comes from fossil fuels. As a computer engineer specialized in computer architecture and arithmetic, my colleagues and I are confident these positive effects can be achieved with almost no impact on computer performance or user convenience.

POWERFUL CONNECTIONS

The Internet of Things (IoT) — made up of the connected computing devices embedded into everyday objects — is already delivering positive economic and social impacts, transforming our societies, the environment and our food supply chains for the better.

These devices are monitoring and reducing air pollution, improving water conservation and feeding a hungry world. They’re also making our homes and businesses more efficient, controlling thermostats, lighting, water heaters, refrigerators and washing machines.

With the number of connected devices set to top 11 billion — not in-

cluding computers and phones — in 2018, IoT will create big data requiring huge computations.

Making computation more energy efficient would save money and reduce energy use. It would also allow the batteries that provide power in computing systems to be smaller or run longer. In addition, calculations could run faster, so computing systems would generate less heat.

APPROXIMATE COMPUTING

Today’s computing systems are designed to deliver exact solutions at a high energy cost. But many error-resilient algorithms like image, sound and video processing, data mining, sensor data analysis and deep learning do not require exact answers.

This unnecessary accuracy and excessive energy expenditure is wasteful. There are limitations to human perception — we don’t always need 100 per cent accuracy to be satisfied with the outcome. For example, minor changes in the quality of images and videos often go unnoticed.

Computing systems can take advantage of these limitations to reduce energy use without having a negative impact on the user experience.

“Approximate computing” is a computation technique that sometimes returns inaccurate results, making it useful for applications where an approximate result is sufficient.

At the University of Saskatchewan’s computer engineering lab, we are proposing to design and

implement these approximate computing solutions, so that they can optimally trade off accuracy and efficiency across software and hardware. When we applied these solutions to a core computing component of the processor, we found that power consumption dropped by more than 50 per cent with almost no drop in performance.

FLEXIBLE PRECISION

Nowadays, most personal computers contain a 64-bit standard numerical format. This means that they use a number with 64 digits (either zero or one) to perform all the computations.

3D graphics, virtual reality and augmented reality require the 64-bit format to work. But basic audio and image processing can be done with a 32-bit format and still provide satisfying results. Moreover, deep learning applications can even use 16-bit or 8-bit formats due to their error resilience.

The shorter the numerical format, the less energy is used to perform the calculation. We can design flexible, yet precise, computing solutions that run different applications using the most appropriate numerical format so that it promotes energy efficiency.

For example, a deep learning application using this flexible computing solution could reduce energy consumption by 15 per cent, according to our preliminary experiment. In addition, the proposed solutions can be reconfigured to simultaneously perform multiple operations requiring low numerical precision and improve performance.

The IoT holds a great deal of promise, but we must also think about the costs of processing all of this data. With smarter, greener processors we could help address environmental concerns and slow or reduce their contributions to climate change.

[the writer is Professor, University of Saskatchewan]



Life term for 4 in Bengal hooch tragedy that left 172 dead

CANNING (WB), SEP 28 (PTI): A court in West Bengal on Friday sentenced four persons to life imprisonment in connection with one of the worst hooch tragedies that left 172 people dead in 2011.

Additional district and sessions judge Partha Sarathi Chakraborty of South 24 Parganas district also slapped a fine of Rs 50,000 on each of them.

If they fail to pay the fine, the convict would have to undergo an additional imprisonment for six months.

The court on Thursday had found Noor Islam Fakir alias Khora Badshah, the prime accused, and three others -- Dukhi Laskar, Khairul Laskar and Nazmul alias Kola Laskar -- guilty in the case. The court had acquitted six others for lack of evidence.

In the worst hooch tragedy in the state, 172 people died in December 2011 at Sangrampur in South 24 Parganas district after consuming toxic liquor.

After the quantum of punishment was pronounced, prime accused Khora Badshah expressed no emotion, but the other three broke down.

They later told reporters that they would move the high court.

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Bachendri Pal to lead month-long rafting expedition to clean Ganga

JAMSHEDPUR, SEP 28 (PTI): A 40-member team, including 20 women, will undertake a month-long rafting expedition "Mission Gange" in October, Bachendri Pal, chief of Tata Steel Adventure Foundation (TSAF) has said.

The team would be led by Pal, the first Indian woman to climb the Mount Everest. Twenty-six employees of Tata Steel would be part of the expedition.

The objective of the "Mission Gange" was to clean the river Ganga and spread awareness on waste management, Pal said at a press conference here Thursday.

Pal said the team would move to Haridwar after assembling at Delhi on October 3.

The expedition will start from Haridwar



on October 5 and traverse through Bijoor, Farukhabad, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Buxar and end at Patna on October 30, she said.

The team will be covering a distance of 1500 km downstream during the expedition.

The members of the

team will stay at each destination for 2/3 days, when they will organise cleaning and awareness drives with the help of local support, she said.

The garbage that will be collected from river Ganga during the expedition will be disposed properly with the help of

local municipal bodies.

The team will also visit schools and other institutions to create awareness on waste management, pollution in Ganga and climate change, Pal said.

"We have been greatly inspired by our Prime Minister Modi's 'Nama-

mi Gange' campaign for cleaning the Ganga, a truly life-sustaining source of our country," she claimed.

Union Minister of State for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Arjun Ram Meghwal will join the team at Haridwar to boost the morale of the team, she added.

The expedition was being supported by the Government of India and Tata Steel, Pal said.

The team would have eight Everesters - RS Pal, Binita Soren, Chetna Sahoo, Poonam Rana and Swarnlata Dalai, Hemant Gupta, Premalata Agartwal, Bachendri Pal - five IIT graduates and a radio jockey representing various parts of the country will be part of the team, she added.



INPT to file writ petition in SC for NRC in Tripura: Debbarma

AGARTALA, SEP 28 (PTI): Indigenous Nationalist Party of Tripura (INPT), a tribal party in Tripura, is contemplating to file a writ petition in the apex court for implementation of the NRC. We are likely to file the petition in November," Debbarma said.

The INPT general secretary said the party was facing fund crunch and was trying to raise funds for going to Delhi to organise the dharna.

Debbarma also demanded repeal of the Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2016.

He said the party would organise movement in the hilly areas for permanent solution of the drinking water crisis and improvement of health care system in the tribal council areas.

The TTAADC constitutes two third of the state's territory.

facing the problem of infiltration. So we are contemplating to file writ petition in the apex court for implementation of the NRC. We are likely to file the petition in November," Debbarma said.

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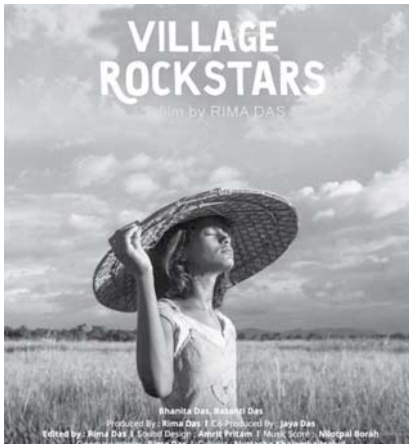
Assam govt sanctions additional Rs 50 lakh to Rima Das

GUWAHATI, SEPT 28 (PTI): Rima Das, director and producer of 'Village Rockstars' which is India's official entry for the 2019 Oscars in the Best Foreign Language film category, will receive an additional Rs 50 lakh from the Assam government as announced by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Friday, a government release said.

The state government had earlier granted Rs 50 lakh to Das.

Now a total amount of Rs one crore will be provided to the filmmaker, said a government release here.

Das had called on the



chief minister and expressed her happiness over the selection of 'Village Rockstars' as In-

dia's official entry to the Oscars and thanked the Assam government and its people for the "tremendous support" to her.

Sonowal extended his best wishes to the filmmaker for the "incredible success" of her film and hoped that it would be able to win the Oscars in Best Foreign Language film category apart from highlighting the state's quintessential splendour in front of the global audience.

Rima had on Thursday sought help from the government to promote her film for the award as at least Rs three crore is needed to campaign at the Oscars and to ensure

that it makes it to the final nomination.

Das said 'Village Rockstars' has travelled to 80 film festivals and has won 44 awards so far. It was screened in Toronto, Berlin, Cannes and Venice festivals.

The film will be released pan India through PVR today with the premiere show held here last night.

'Village Rockstars' is the story about a poor girl aspiring to be a rockstar and set in her own village at Chayagaon near here. It has won four national awards, including the 'Swarna Kamal' for the best film.

Tripura to raise two more Indian Reserve Battalions

AGARTALA, SEP 28 (PTI): The Tripura government has decided to raise two more Indian Reserve Battalions (IRB) in the state to generate employment, where 10 per cent of the posts would be reserved for women, a minister said Friday.

We have created 2,056 new posts, who would be absorbed in the two new IRBs. Ten per cent of the posts would remain reserved for women, State Education Minister Ratan Lal Nath told reporters.

He said the decision was made in the council of ministers' meeting held on Thursday.

Tripura has 12 bat-



talions of Tripura State Rifles (TSR), of which 7 are IRBs. With the raising of two more battalions, the total number of IRBs would rise to 9.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) bears the expenses of the IRBs.

Over 10,000 candidates who recently qual-

ified for Selection Test for Graduate Teachers (STGT) and Selection Test for Post Graduate Teacher (STPGT) would get postings before Durga Puja next month, Nath said adding offer letters have already been sent to the candidates.

Nath said the edu-

cation department received complaints from some quarters regarding submission of fake certificates by the candidates for the posts of teachers.

We got several complaints related to fake certificates. After verification, a few fake certificates were identified. Many of those who qualified for the STGT have surrendered their fake certificates and verification for those are on," Nath said.

He also added that three Sub-divisional Judicial Magistrate Court would be set up at Ambassa of Dhalai, Khowai and Siphajjala districts.

NPA woes: SBI to review sectors of exposure

KOLKATA, SEP 28 (PTI): State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest lender, has set up an intermediary review mechanism to review the sectors where it would go for exposure in view of the mounting bad loans plaguing the banking system, a top official said Friday.

SBI Managing director Dinesh Khara said that the review mechanism, which started functioning two months ago, would calculate the probability of default of an exposure and thereafter decide if it would be prudent to go ahead or not.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) event here, Khara said the review would be made by experts who would make

a decision after screening the proposals.

The bank's corporate exposure stood at 40 per cent, while it was 57 per cent for retail, he said.

SBI expects 10 per cent credit growth and 15-16 per cent deposit growth for the current fiscal. He said the bank witnessed good credit growth in September.

Khara said that net Non Performing Assets (NPA) of the bank was 5 per cent while gross NPA stood at 8 per cent.

"The NPA trend is declining," he said.

In the first list of 12 cases referred to National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Khara said that the bank was expecting to take a

haircut of 47 per cent without impacting the balance sheet.

"We have enough provisions and we will be able to write back," he said.

Asked about the bank's support to debt-ridden IL&FS, he said that the ailing non-banking finance company had filed a petition before the NCLT under section 230 rpt 230 of the Companies Act seeking certain reliefs.

"Unless we hear something from the NCLT and what IL&FS articulates in its proposals to SBI, we will not be able to decide on the quantum of support," he said.

SBI is a shareholder of IL&FS with a stake of more than 6 per cent.





**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT
RABDENTSE, WEST SIKKIM
NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

NIT No. 11/NIT/R&B/WD-I/GoS

Dated: 25/09/18

For and on behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, Divisional Engineer (W) I, Roads & Bridges Department invites sealed tenders under single bid system from the eligible contractors of Class III Grade enlisted with Sikkim Public Works Department vide Notification No. 515/R&B/PWD/Secy, dated 12.06.2018, through competitive bidding within the territorial jurisdiction of Gram Panchayat/ Urban Local Bodies where the work is to be executed. The works are listed as under:-

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Value put to tender (Rs)	Completion Time (in months)	Amount of Bank receipt for cost of tender documents (Rs)	Amount of Earnest Money@2.50% for issue of tender form (Rs)
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Construction of link road from Konabar to Lingkey under Sopakha GPU in West Sikkim.	Rs. 1,29,76,470.00	18 months	Rs. 30,000.00	Rs. 3,24,410.00
2	Construction of link road from Bandukey- Uttarey Raod to Dharey Gaon under Sopakha GPU in West Sikkim.	Rs. 1,42,95,687.00	18 months	Rs. 30,000.00	Rs. 3,57,390.00
3.	Construction of link road from Ferek upto Miling Bandukey under Gitang Karmatar GPU in West Sikkim.	Rs. 1,05,94,133.00	18 months	Rs. 30,000.00	Rs. 2,64,853.00

TIME SCHEDULE:-

1.	Date of submission of application with bank Receipt For issue of Tender Documents (excluding Tender Form)	:	22nd October, 2018. (From 10.00am to 4.00 pm)
2.	Date of issue of Tender Form	:	23rd October 2018. (From 10.00 am to 4.00 pm)
3.	Date and Time for submission of Tender	:	25th October, 2018 (10am to 12.00 pm)
4.	Date and Time of opening of Tender:	:	25th October, 2018 at 2 pm.

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 TENDER. The application shall be submitted initially for each work listed above with all required documents.
- The applicants should enclose attested copies of the a) Goods & Services Tax Clearance Certificate b) Validated/Updated Contractor Enlistment Certificate and Professional Tax Clearance Certificates along the application. It is mandatory to produce the Original validated/Updated Enlistment Certificate during sale/issue of the Tender Document for verification.
- The prescribed Non-Transferable Tender Documents (excluding the Tender Form) can be obtained during the period specified in (As above) from the office of the Divisional Engineer, (W) Roads & Bridges Department, Rabdentse, Gyalshing, on production of requisite Bank Receipt towards the cost of Tender Documents (Non-Refundable) under the revenue head of concern GPU/TC (cost of Tender Form). **(contact GPU/TC before depositing the cost of tender form in any banks).**
- Earnest money deposit @ 2.5% in State Bank of Sikkim shall be in the form of Deposit Receipt of Schedule Bank which includes deposits in the form of temporary deposit receipts(TDR) in favour of the Senior Accounts Officer, Roads & Bridges Department, Gyalshing. Tender form shall be issued only on production of the deposit receipts of 2.5% earnest money.
- The Tender documents, including the Tender Form with quoted offer should be placed in a sealed cover with the name of the tenderers and the name of the work superscripted on it. Supporting documents listed at Sl. No.(a) & (b) above should be enclosed with the offer.
- Sealed tenders may be deposited in the Tender box in the office of the Divisional Engineer, Roads & Bridges Department, on the date and within the time indicated above.
- Tenders shall be opened by a Tender Opening Committee as prescribed by the Government vide notification no 515/556/R&B/PWD/Secy. Dated 12.06.2018/ 28.08.2018 in the presence of the tenderness on the date and time indicated above.
- The Tenderer should sign on every page of the tender documents as Acceptance of the general Direction and Conditions of the Contract and other laid down norms. The rate quoted should be both in figures and words and should be inclusive of Value Added Tax and 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 Schedule 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 claim is made, it shall be as per the agreement rates.

- The contractors shall establish a field laboratory at the construction site. It shall be mandatory to test material by the contractor at site or any other laboratory fixed by the government for quality control purpose. The Department reserves the rights to withhold 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 contractor shall be at his own risk and cost. The Department shall not be liable for payment of such damages (if any), including accidents to labourer at site.
- In case of roads, contractor shall be required to execute the pavement works in test patches for ensuring quality of materials and for determination of correct methodology. The test patches shall be got approved from the Engineer-in Charge.
- The offer shall remain valid for a period of 90 days. The work should commence within 15 days from the issue of work order.
- All the conditions as mentioned in the NIT shall be deemed to 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 @ 5.00% or as notified from time to time and applicable on date of payment.
- The contractor shall ensure the safety of plant in the road reserve area and beyond. He shall also plant additional flora as directed by the Engineer-in Charge at his own cost in due fulfilment of the stipulation under the State Green Mission. Security deposit for the work shall be refunded only after verification of the survival of such plants in additions to the others norms laid down for the release of security deposit.
- The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
- The Contractors are required to register themselves under Rule 39 or 40 (as the case may be) of the Sikkim Value Added Tax Rules 2005 with the Income and Commercial Tax Division of Finance Revenue and Expenditure Department and obtain the TIN Number before the settlement of bill, or they must be registered Companies/Firms registered under the Companies Act, 1956 having valid Pan Card and Tan. The Contractors are also required to submit PAN No as per provision of Indian Income Tax Act, wherever applicable.
- The recoveries of Income Tax, Value Added Tax 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 on the date of tender shall be acceptable.
- In case of carriage of Non Stock Materials, if these materials are available at site or are actually transported from a lesser distance than indicated in the schedules, the department shall pay the carriage as per actual proof of carriage supported by permits issued by Forest Department indicating the quarries which is required to be submitted by contractors with bill, not exceeding the rates as incorporated in these schedules. The contractors are required to submit necessary documents to fulfil the claim of payment for carriage of Non Stock Materials.
- 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 indicated in the NIT without assigning any reason thereof.
- In case the man powers employed by the contractors are from outside the State or neighbouring countries, it shall be the responsibility of the contractors to get them registered with the labour department, Government of Sikkim as per the relevant Labour Laws.
- Use of explosives shall be regulated as under:-
 - Transportation, Handling, storage and use of Explosives (if necessary) shall be in accordance with the provisions of the India Explosive Act and General Guidelines, 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 transportation, storage; handling and use of explosives shall be maintained by the contractor.
- The contractor shall also make arrangements to have photographs of the works taken at least at three stages of the construction period. i.e. beginning, middle and completion stage.
- Quarrying of stones shall be allowed only from designated approved quarries. Where work of Water Bound Macadam is involved, binding materials shall strictly be in accordance with the specifications, both in quality and quantity. Works such as compaction, consolidation and stabilization etc, will be required to be done on trail stretches to ensure that materials, procedure and equipments are producing the desired result.
- Damage 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.
- Expenditure involved for materials testing, cube strength of concrete, crushing strength of road materials etc., at site or in laboratories shall be borne by the contractor.
- The contractor shall make necessary arrangements accordingly as and when instructed to do so.
- It is accepted to the tenderer to have inspected the site before submitting his/her bid. There may be possible site difficulties for which the tenderer should have their own correct assessment before submitting the bid.
- The contractor will have to pay all taxes and duties as applicable and notified by the State/Central Government and no claim shall be entertained in this regard whatsoever.
- The cost of stock materials supplied from the Department store will be deducted from the contractors' bills as per rules.
- The defect liability period for the pavement work (in case of pavement works) shall be for a period of five years which shall not cover the damages due to natural calamities formation sinking landslides etc.
- The work order will be issued to successful tenderer on production of Goods and Services Taxes NOC from the concern department.
- The bidders shall produce a Certificate of Residence from the concerned Gram Panchayat Unit (GPU)/TC where the work is to be executed.**

Sd/-
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Sushma Swaraj leaves SAARC foreign ministers meeting mid-way

NEW YORK, SEP 28 (PTI): In a huge snub to Pakistan, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj left a meeting of the SAARC foreign ministers early, which was attended by her Pakistani counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi amidst fresh chill in bilateral ties.

Swaraj attended the Informal Meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers held here on the margins of the 73rd UN General Assembly and chaired by Foreign Minister of Nepal Pradeep Kumar Gyawali on Thursday.

After making her statement, she left the meeting early, prompting criticism from Qureshi who later told reporters, “no I didn’t have any talk with her (Swaraj). On the positive gesture, I can say she left the meeting mid-way, may be she was not feeling well”.

Indian diplomatic sources told PTI that it was quite normal in a multilateral meeting to leave early after one has delivered the country’s statement.

The sources said that Swaraj was not the first minister to leave the meeting as her counterparts from Afghanistan and Bangladesh had also left before her.

They added that Swaraj had other engagements as well and Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale was present throughout the SAARC meeting.

Swaraj and Qureshi were slated to meet on the sidelines of the General Assembly session.

However, India called off the meeting last week, citing the brutal killings of three policemen in Jammu and Kashmir and Islamabad releasing postage stamps “glorifying” slain Kashmiri militant Burhan Wani.

Qureshi said he saw that there was this thinking in the meeting that “if we have to achieve something from this forum we have to move forward”.

“What is the way to move forward. We have to decide the next step - I have no hesitation in saying that in the way of SAARC’s progress and success and in the region’s connectivity and prosperity, there is only one obstacle and one attitude.

“The attitude of one nation is making the spirit of SAARC and the spirit of the founding fathers of SAARC unfulfilled and unsuccessful,” he said, in a veiled reference to India.



He said that he heard the Indian Minister’s remarks at the meeting “very carefully”.

“She talked about regional cooperation. My question is how will regional cooperation be possible when the region’s nations are ready to sit together and you are the obstacle in that dialogue and discussion,” he said.

Qureshi said he judged from the SAARC meeting that most of the members present there understand the significance and value of the grouping.

“They want to move on. I can’t speak for them but I can deduce from their body language disappointment because if you do not move and if you do not sit and convene meetings how do you move on. You are talking of

SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Area), you are talking of regional trade, how do you have regional trade when you are unwilling to sit and talk. When you fail to agree on a date for a summit where is regional trade going,” he said.

He cited other regional blocs like ASEAN and the EU and said “look at this (SAARC) atmosphere”.

India had boycotted the 2016 SAARC summit citing Islamabad’s unrelenting support to terrorist activities in India and after Pakistan-based terrorists attacked an Indian Army base in Uri in Jammu and Kashmir.

Bhutan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan had also joined India in boycotting the summit.

Qureshi called the Foreign Secretary’s comments, made after Swaraj had left, as a “very vague statement”.

“You say the next summit will not happen until there is conducive environment. How do you define what conducive environment is? It can vary from country to country. It can vary from person to person. On the basis of an imaginary thing, you are becoming

an obstacle in the way of the entire region and its prosperity,” he said.

Qureshi added that 1.78 billion plus people of the SAARC grouping have to ask in whose hands their fate and future are being kept as a mortgage.

On Qureshi’s remarks that India is an obstacle in SAARC’s prosperity and regional connectivity, the Indian diplomatic sources said the answer to this was in Swaraj’s statement.

In her statement, Swaraj voiced India’s commitment to regional cooperation, saying it attaches highest priority to the development and prosperity of the region, under the government’s ‘Neighbourhood First’ policy.

“Development of seamless physical connectivity is key for achieving regional growth, employment and prosperity,” she said.

SAARC summits are usually held biennially. The member-state hosting the summit assumes the Chair of the association. The last SAARC Summit in 2014 was held in Kathmandu, which was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Canada strips Aung San Suu Kyi of honorary citizenship

OTTAWA, SEP 28 (AFP): Canada’s parliament has voted unanimously to effectively strip Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi of her honorary Canadian citizenship over the Rohingya crisis.

Ottawa had given the long-detained democracy advocate and Nobel laureate the rare honour in 2007. But her international reputation has become tarnished by her refusal to call out the atrocities by her nation’s military against the Rohingya Muslims minority, which Ottawa last week declared a genocide.

“In 2007, the House of Commons granted Aung San Suu Kyi the status of honorary Canadian citizen. Today, the House unanimously passed a motion to remove this status,” said Adam Austen, spokesman for Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland, on Thursday.

A brutal military campaign that started last year drove more than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar into neighboring Bangladesh, where they now live in cramped refugee camps - fearful of returning to mainly Buddhist Myanmar despite a repatriation deal.

Many have given accounts of extrajudicial killings, sexual violence and arson.

The military has denied nearly all wrongdoing, justifying its crack-down as a legitimate means of rooting out Rohingya militants.

But after a fact-finding mission, the United Nations on Thursday set up a panel to prepare indictments against Myanmar’s army chief and five other top military commanders for crimes against humanity.

Suu Kyi’s democratically-elected government remains in a delicate power balance with the generals, whose presence in parliament gives them an effective veto on constitutional changes.

Austen cited Suu Kyi’s “persistent refusal to denounce the Rohingya genocide” for the withdrawal of the Canadian honour, which is symbolic and comes with no special privileges.

“We will continue to support the Rohingyas by providing humanitarian assistance, imposing sanctions against Myanmar’s generals and demanding that those responsible be held accountable before a competent international body,” he added.

Honorary Canadian citizenship has only been granted to five others including the Dalai Lama, girls education advocate Malala Yousafzai and Nelson Mandela.

Trump stands by embattled Kavanaugh after fiery Senate hearing

WASHINGTON, SEP 28 (PTI): US President Donald Trump came out in support of his Supreme Court nominee, Brett Kavanaugh, and asked the senators to confirm him for the apex court, after a gripping eight-hour-long Senate hearing that saw the Judge passionately fighting back allegations of sexual assault made by a clinical psychology professor.

Americans were glued to their television sets Thursday as the historic hearing opened with an emotionally choked Christine Blasey Ford, 51, recounting the 36 years old incident which “drastically altered her life”.

Asserting that she felt it was her “civic duty” to share her story, Ford said at the age of 15 she was sexually assaulted by Kavanaugh in 1982 at a party. Both of them were in high school in suburban Maryland at that time.

A furious Kavanaugh, 53, denied the allegations in a passionate defence.

“I categorically and unequivocally deny the allegation by Dr Ford. I have never sexually assaulted anyone, not in high school, not in college, not ever. I am innocent of this charge,” he blasted, repeatedly fighting back tears.

Within moments of the proceedings concluding, Trump wholeheartedly backed Kavanaugh, saying, “His testimony was powerful, honest, and riveting.”

“Judge Kavanaugh showed America exactly why I nominated him...Democrats’ search and destroy strategy is disgraceful and this process has been a total sham and effort to delay, obstruct, and resist. The Senate must vote,” Trump tweeted.

The Senate judiciary committee, which has 11 Republicans and 10 Democrats, is set to vote on Kavanaugh’s recommendation late Friday before the nomination goes to the full Senate comprising 51 Republicans and 49 Democrats.

The full Senate is expected to start the debate on the nomination on Saturday and a final vote on his confirmation is expected next week.

Ford’s allegations of sexual assault was supported by the Democrats.

In his testimony to the Senate Committee, Kavanaugh blasted the Democrats for destroying his good name.

“I have to say that I fear for the future. Last time I was here, I told



this committee that a federal judge must be independent, not swayed by public or political pressure,” he told the lawmakers.

“I will not be intimidated into withdrawing from this process. You have tried hard. You have given it your all. No one can question your effort, but your coordinated and well-funded effort to destroy my good name and to destroy my family will not drive me out. The vile threats of violence against my family will not drive me out,” Kavanaugh said addressing the Democrats.

“You may defeat me in the final vote, but you’ll never get me to quit. Never. I’m here today to tell the truth,” he said.

“After I have been in the public arena for 26 years without even a hint -- a whiff -- of an allegation like this. And when my nomination to the Supreme Court was just about to be voted on...I am called ‘evil’ by a Democratic member of this committee...This onslaught of last-minute allegations does not ring true,” Kavanaugh said.

Earlier, to a question posed by Senator Dianne Feinstein whether Kavanaugh was the boy who attacked her, Ford responded, “The same way I’m sure I’m talking to you right now.”

“Absolutely not,” Ford said when Feinstein followed up with another question: “So what you’re telling us is this could not be a case of mistaken identity?”

As Ford was giving her testimony, Kavanaugh’s protesters were standing silent outside the hearing room, clogging halls and elevators. Their mouths were taped shut with “Believe survivors” and “Believe women” inscribed on the tape. Similar messages are written on their raised palms, “I believe... We believe.”

Ford said she had kept the episode a closely-guarded secret, except for sharing it with her husband and few of her friends, till the time it started appearing in the press that Kavanaugh was going to be nominated as a Supreme Court Judge.

In early July 2018, Ford said, she saw press reports of Kavanaugh shortlisted for potential Supreme Court nominees.

“I thought it was my civic duty to relay the information I had about Mr Kavanaugh’s conduct so that those considering his potential nomination would know about the assault,” she said.

Giving details of the incident, Ford, who was seemingly on the verge of tears, said it happened one evening at a common friends place in Chevy Chase area where they had gathered.

“When I got to the small gathering, people were drinking beer in a small living room on the first floor of the house. I drank one beer that evening. Brett and Mark (Judge) were visibly drunk,” Ford, a professor at Palo Alto University in San Francisco, said.

Ford said she was accosted by Kavanaugh and his friend Mark. They thrust her into an upstairs bedroom at the house and locked the door.

“I was pushed onto the bed and Brett (Kavanaugh) got on top of me. He began running his hands over my body and grinding his hips into me...Brett groped me and tried to take off my clothes...I believed he was going to rape me,” she said.

“I tried to yell for help. When I did, Brett put his hand over my mouth to stop me from screaming...I thought that Brett was accidentally going to kill me,” Ford alleged.

Ford said she was finally able to escape and rushed out of the house with an “enormous sense of relief” that the duo did not follow her.

“For a very long time, I was too afraid and ashamed to tell anyone the details,” she said.

Indian-origin MPs in Singapore aim to expand social work via parliament

SINGAPORE, SEP 28 (PTI): Two Indian-origin Singaporeans, named among nine nominated members of parliament, aim to expand their social and labour work during their tenure in the House.

The nine were selected from 48 members nominated by the public because of their community services. They will serve half of the parliament’s five-year term.

Abbas Ali Mohamed Irshad, 29, has been involved in social activities since his student days. He hopes to encourage the youth to get involved in politics and honour the values and efforts of Singapore’s leaders.

“Our founding fathers have put in a lot of effort building what we have. We cannot take peace, prosperity and progress for granted,” Irshad was quoted by Tabla, a Friday weekly on the Indian society in Singapore.

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

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

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM



APPROPRIATE ATTIRE! Kim Kardashian flaunts her wealth as she rocks dollar bill covered jacket and matching pointy boots for billionaire pal's party.

KHLOE KARDASHIAN HITS BACK AT TROLL OVER REMARK ABOUT HER DAUGHTER'S SKIN COLOR

Khloe Kardashian has a request for the trolls: Stand by your words.

The Keeping Up with the Kardashians personality, 34, took to Twitter on Thursday to express her annoyance with social media users who pepper her with snide remarks, then delete the initial tweets when she responds to them - giving them an audience of nearly 26 million followers.

'I dislike the fact that people are allowed to comment on my [daughter's] skin color,' Khloe wrote, 'but as soon as I comment kindly back and praise her for all that she is, the comment gets erased.'

While it was not immediately clear in regards to the conduct of the comment she was talking about, the reality star had advice for those looking to tweet vitriolic remarks in her direction.

'If you have the courage to post your nasty criticism,' Khloe wrote, 'please allow one to defend or comment back.'

Responding to a sympathetic follower, Khloe - who gave birth to her first child this past April 12 - said she wasn't necessarily upset about people's opinions that might offend her, but the cowardice they display when they delete their initial posts.

'Everyone is entitled to their [opinions]



and I'm not complaining about that,' said Khloe, who shares True with with Cleveland Cavaliers center Tristan Thompson, 27. 'Please state your opinion but allow me to [state] mine.'

She added to another user: 'We will not be defined by social media. And I don't mind the critics but please just stick with what you have to say. [Don't] erase.'

Khloe admitted she's taking a different tack when dealing with trolls.

'I'm also really annoyed because I spoke so calmly and eloquently,' she said, 'when normally I am rash and f***ing aggressive lol.'

Khloe can be seen on Keeping Up With the Kardashians, which airs Sundays on E! at 9/8c.

ARIES: Too many people may be making demands on your time right now, Aries. Some may have genuine concerns and need your assistance, but others have definite agendas that they really asould deal with on their own. Use your intuition to tell the difference, because you won't be able to help them all. A female friend might have the most urgent need. If you can only help one, help her.

TAURUS: A lot of creative work may need to be finished by today, Taurus. If you're professionally involved with writing, a deadline may loom. It could be difficult to get it done because family members and guests could constantly go in and out and keep you from concentrating. The best course of action might be to go somewhere quiet, like a library, and do your work there. Think about it!

GEMINI: What's happening in your community today that attracts crowds, Gemini? A parade? A festival of some kind? Some friends may want you to go with them. You might think you're too busy, but an hour or two away from your chores certainly won't hurt. Take some time out. This is a time for having fun! Go if you want to. You could meet some interesting people.

CANCER: You may be too free with your money right now, Cancer. You're usually careful with it, but the spirit of generosity and abundance is definitely upon you. You're more inclined to be generous with those you care about. After all is said and done, you could panic, but don't. You're good at making money. A little belt tightening later is entirely possible, and it won't hurt you. Follow your heart - within

limitations.

LEO: You usually love to talk, Leo, but right now you've probably reached your limit. You've attended a number of gatherings and talked to a lot of people over the past week or so, and now you want to sit quietly at home. If friends or family members insist on your going out with them, don't be afraid to say no. Everyone knows how busy you've been. Take some time to yourself and relax.

VIRGO: Have you been indulging in too many goodies, Virgo? You might feel under the weather because of all this abundance. You probably should take it easy. Think about reorganizing your priorities. Is a second piece of chocolate cake more important than your energy and health? Indulging can be important to your psyche, but don't forget about moderation - and

don't forget that there are many other ways to indulge.

LIBRA: It has been said that you can never have too many friends, Libra, but today you might wonder if perhaps you do. Your phone could be ringing off the hook. One person after another will be soliciting you for advice and your famous shoulder to cry on. Be patient. One day you may need that person to be there for you. Try to listen and keep your sense of humor about you.

SCORPIO: public gathering of some kind could attract you and your family tonight, Scorpio. Perhaps you will arrange to meet some friends there. You may feel good just being out with those you love, but you're likely to be tired by the end of the event. Make sure you fortify yourself with nourishing food during the day. Take care

of yourself so you can have some fun. **SAGITTARUS:** Too many phone calls and visits may be on the agenda today, Sagittarius. You might also have a few last-minute errands to run in your neighborhood. It won't be easy, probably because of crowds and traffic. Nonetheless, your sense of excitement and enthusiasm will help you tolerate conditions that would normally be very frustrating. Furthermore, you're having fun!

CAPRICORN: You may have lost your usual control of the purse strings and spent too much money lately, Capricorn. Don't worry about it. It's all been for a good cause. It's nothing you can't handle, and certainly not enough to bankrupt you. The situation is only temporary anyway. The financial picture looks great for you in the months to come. Make the most of it!

AQUARIS: Generally you're a very sociable person, Aquarius, and today you aren't likely to slow down. Invitations to parties, from intimate coffee klatches to big neighborhood bashes, continue to come in. There may be too many to handle, so you might have to turn some of them down. That goes against your nature! You don't want to miss anything. Pick the most important to you and leave the rest.

PISCES: You and other members of your household might suddenly decide to do one more thorough house cleaning, Pisces. Usually this would be a good idea, but today it doesn't really need it, and you might work too hard and do too much. Do you really need to clean your closets now? Dust and vacuum, then spruce it up with some decorations, and that should be enough for now. Relax!

Lady Gaga reveals director Bradley Cooper placed a MAKE-UP BAN

She's won huge praise for her leading role as Ally in A Star Is Born. And while Lady Gaga nailed the role of the struggling and down-to-earth singer, she revealed on Friday night's episode of Graham Norton that she tried to sneak some make-up on Ally but her co-star and director Bradley Cooper banned the look.

The 32-year-old Poker Face hitmaker stripped back her famously outlandish looks to star as the fresh-faced singer/songwriter, however she regaled the cheeky tale of trying to add a dash of glamour to Ally's character. Lady in red: Lady Gaga nailed the role of the struggling and down-to-earth singer, she revealed on Friday night's episode of Graham Norton that she tried to sneak some make-up on Ally but her co-star and director Bradley Cooper banned the look. Lady in red: Lady Gaga nailed the role of the struggling and down-to-earth singer, she revealed on Friday night's episode of Graham Norton that she tried to sneak some make-up on Ally but her co-star and director Bradley Cooper banned the look.

A Star Is Born tells the tragic romance of musician Jackson Maine (Bradley Cooper)



who discovers and falls head-over-heels for struggling singer Ally (Lady Gaga).

It seems Gaga, born Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta, struggled with the concept of a pared-back

character as she revealed the strict rules.

Talking about being unrecognisable in the film, she said: 'I tried to sneak some make-up in, but Bradley wouldn't go for it, before he

explained his point, stating: 'It's how the character is and Lady Gaga is incredible.'

On-screen: The 32-year-old Poker Face hitmaker stripped back her famously outlandish looks to star as the fresh-faced singer/songwriter, however she regaled the cheeky tale of trying to add a dash of glamour to Ally's character. On-screen: The 32-year-old Poker Face hitmaker stripped back her famously outlandish looks to star as the fresh-faced singer/songwriter, however she regaled the cheeky tale of trying to add a dash of glamour to Ally's character.

It seems it was Bradley's voice that swung it, as she said: 'Once I heard Bradley sing I was blown away by him, I was moved by his passion. He may have had to convince other people to have me in the movie but, he didn't have to convince me.' 'Bradley is a friend for life. Incredible human being. Not only did I make a great friend from this film, but I got to witness such a masterful artist,' she said. 'He is so incredible. He's a renaissance man. He directs, writes. He wrote songs for this film, sang live, directed, starred.'

Exclusive!

Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt's moms Neetu and Soni discussed wedding dates at Ranbir's birthday dinner

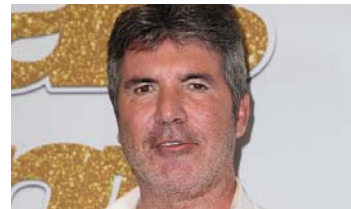


Bollywood has witnessed many on-screen romances turn into off-screen chemistry but the one that caught all of us in a gush storm is the newly-minted couple Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt. Honestly, shippers (including us) haven't taken a break since the news of them dating each-other surfaced. In fact, it only helped when their PDA came to the fore and when Ranbir openly confessed that he has been smitten by the love-bug while Alia left it at "I'm not single."

Cut to today, when Neetu Kapoor surprised us all in her birthday wish for her son, 'friend and philosopher' Ranbir. If you haven't seen it already, it involved a lovely family picture with Alia and her mom Soni Razdan from RK's birthday dinner. But that's not even the best part. An insider

tells wedding dates were discussed over dessert and they are looking at 2020. Another source had told, 'Alia is in a great phase of her life right now. She is in love and they both are sure of each other. Marriage is certainly on the cards but it won't happen before 2020.'

Earlier, Alia had taken to Instagram to wish her 'sunshine' and it was adorable. Earlier, Rishi Kapoor, in an interview to Mumbai Mirror, had said, "Neetu likes her, I like her, Ranbir likes her. Get it? I can't be judgmental. After all, my uncles Shammiji and Shashiji and I chose our life partners. Ranbir is entitled to choose his." And anyway he has made it clear that it's time Ranbir gets married so he can play with his grand-kids.



Simon Cowell donates £25,000 to battle dog meat farming in South Korea

Simon Cowell has donated £25,000 in a bid to help a British charity rescue dogs from a brutal dog meat farm in South Korea.

The X Factor judge, 58, handed over the princely sum to Humane Society International, whose goal is to rescue more than 200 dogs from being eaten, with some of the pooches finding new families in Britain.

Father-of-one Simon's generous gesture comes months after he spoke out in support of the charity, which has already permanently closed down 12 dog meat farms and saved nearly 1,400 dogs.

HSI UK executive director Claire Bass said in a statement: 'Simon's generous donation means the world to us, and provides a huge boost to our appeal to close this horrendous dog meat farm.'

'More than 200 dogs are languishing in the most appalling conditions, but we have a real chance to save them.'

'With every dog farm we close and every farmer we help switch to a more profitable, humane business, we're showing the South Korean government that it's possible to end this cruel trade.'

'These poor dogs have had the worst lives so far, so we're desperate to get them out of those dreadful cages and show them love, soft beds and loving arms for the first time in their lives.'

In December, he made an appearance on Good Morning Britain in a bid to raise awareness of the brutal conditions and killing of the 'kind, helpless and sweet' dogs.