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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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Wall collapses at NIT even as students demand permanent campus

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 30 AUG:**

Hours after the State Cabinet Ministers met the Union Minister for Human Resource Development over the issue of permanent campus for National Institute of Technology at Rabongla, South Sikkim, a retaining wall near the second year students' hostel of the Institute collapsed this afternoon.

More than 800 students are enrolled in NIT which is running out of a temporary campus at Rabongla. Students of the institute have been sitting on a dharna protesting against the lack of proper infrastructure and facilities. They are also demanding a permanent campus.

When contacted District Collector, South, Prabhakar Verma informed that the incident has not been reported to the District Administration as of now but they are trying to find out what the situation is at present in the NIT hostel campus.



The DC further informed that senior officials from Rabongla Sub-Division have been deployed to monitor the

situation.

The agitated students told SummitTimes that infrastructural development of the Institute is very challenging due to heavy and continuous

rain; the roofs and walls of many hostels, classrooms and laboratory building have mold and mildew problems.

NIT students have been raising their voice

against the lack of infrastructure since 2012. A High Level Technical committee was also formed by MHRD to inspect the proposed land at Rabongla. In their



State Govt delegation calls on Union Minister on NIT Issue

**JAVADEKAR ASSURE
TO DEPUTE EMPOWER
COMMITTEE TO RESOLVE
NIT LAND ISSUE**

DELHI, 29 AUG (IPR): A high level delegation from the Sikkim led by Power Minister DD Bhutia and accompanied by HRDD Minister RB Subba called on the Union Minister for Ministry of Human Resource Development, Prakash Javadekar, in New Delhi today and took up the NIT-campus issue with the Minister.

The Sikkim delegation also included Additional Chief Secretary GP Upadhyaya and NIT Sikkim Director Prof Mahesh Govil who met Mr Javadekar and

Sukhbir Sandhu, Additional Secretary MHRD at Shashtri Bhawan.

The meeting was convened in the hope of finding a suitable and permanent solution to the NIT-Sikkim land issue.

During the meeting, a DO letter from Chief Minister Pawan Chamling to the Union HRD Minister was also handed over to him by the Power Minister.

Mr Javadekar assured the delegation that he would himself visit Sikkim shortly since this has been a long overdue issue and will also depute an MHRD empowered committee to finalise the site for NIT before he visits Sikkim.

The Union Minister also assured that funds for construction of the Institute shall also be expeditiously released.

PM owes people answer on why he inflicted demonetisation wound: Rahul

NEW DELHI, AUG 30 (PTI): Congress president Rahul Gandhi today launched a major offensive against Prime Minister Narendra Modi alleging that demonetisation was a "huge scam" deliberately inflicted by him on common people to snatch their money and give it to his "crony capitalist friends" and said he owes an answer to the country on why he did so.

Addressing a press conference a day after the Reserve Bank of India in its final report said almost all the money demonetised currency has returned to the banking system, he said the note ban decision was not a mistake but an assault on the common man.

"Noteban is nothing less than a huge scam and evidence is slowly coming out... You apologise when you make a mistake. Demonetisation was not a mistake, but done deliberately by the prime minister as a well thought-out attack on you (the people of India) with the intention of helping his 15-20 crony capitalist friends. His aim was to help big crony capitalists who have marketed him, by handing over the money snatched from the pockets of common people," Gandhi told reporters.

He was asked if the Prime Minister should apologise for the note ban decision.

"The Prime Minister Modi should answer why he inflicted the deep wound like demonetisation when issues like unemployment and low GDP rate remained," the Congress president said while referring to the RBI's report on the outcome of the demonetisation exercise.

The Congress chief said noteban had no positive results and the prime minister has "to answer the country and to the youth who are suffering from unemployment, as to why you inflicted such a wound on the country. What was the reason and logic behind it."

He alleged the prime minister took the decision to help his big industrialists friends convert their black money and those who had a lot of NPAs on them.

"His (PMs) 15-20 big crony capital-



ist friends who had taken loans from banks, had a lot of non performing assets (NPAs) and Narendra Modi took away the money from your pockets and put it into their pockets," he alleged.

Gandhi also alleged that at the time of noteban, "many of Modi's friends converted their black money into white". Citing the example of Gujarat, he claimed Rs 700 crore was converted in the cooperative bank in which BJP chief Amit Shah is a director.

"Was there a probe as to whose money was converted," he asked.

Taking a swipe at Modi, Gandhi said he rightly claims that what he achieved was never done in the last 70 years. Demonetisation is proof of that as it was aimed at helping only the rich, he added.

To a question on the intention behind noteban, Gandhi said "You will find out soon enough what the intention was. Their intention was very clear and let every Indian person understand this. The intention was to help the richest people, the most corrupt people in this land to change their money from black to white."

"We have heard of 20-point programme in the past, this is a one point programme on how to help crony capitalists," Gandhi said.

In response to another question on huge sums of money allegedly being deposited in banks ahead of demonetisation, he said, "The evidence is coming out. You will see that noteban is nothing less than a huge scam and slowly the evidence you are talking about is coming out and more and more will come out."

**Unfortunate
that SDF
Govt cannot
understand
NIT's value:
SKM**

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 30 AUG:**
Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has said that it is most unfortunate that the Sikkim Democratic Front government cannot understand the value of a National Institute of Technology. In a press release issued today, the party has further
turn to pg02

Teen killed in fire mishap at Jalipool building

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 30 AUG: A fire broke out in a rented room of a five storied building at Jalipool at around 11 a.m this morning. One differently abled 16-year-old boy succumbed to his burn injuries while being transported to CRH Tadong. The deceased was reportedly alone in the room when the incident occurred.

The fire was doused with the help of Police personnel, locals and personnel from Fire & Emergency Service. A case of arson has been registered at Ranipool Police Station and is under investigation.



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Final screening for differently-abled held at Khesey

WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 30 AUG:

The fourth round of screening of differently-abled people was held by Kalpataru Pratisthan at the residence of Khesey ward panchayat CK Koirala today.

A team of experts led by Dr.

MB Chettri, and including Dr CS Sharma, Dr Pramod, resource teachers and panchayats from different gram panchayat units, ex-servicemen, social workers, and local gentries were present.

More than 76 persons were screened. The three doctors extended voluntary service in their

respective areas of specialisation.

After this last screening process, Kalpataru will start assessment of the differently abled people in the near future.

The first round of screening was held at Rakdong-Tintek BAC, second round at PWD guest house Kambal, third round at

Tumin Barang.

Kalpataru Pratisthan is established to work towards identification, screening and assessment of the differently abled and providing relief and rehabilitation.

The Pratisthan has area MLA Ugen T Gyatso Bhutia and MP Lok Sabha, PD Rai, as patrons.

China issues flood alert in Brahmaputra

ITANAGAR/NEW DELHI, AUG 30 (PTI): China has alerted India about the rising water in river Tsangpo, called Siang in Arunachal Pradesh and Brahmaputra in Assam, leading to possibility of floods in downstream areas, Arunachal Pradesh MP Ninong Ering said today.

A senior official of the Union Water Resources Ministry said it was an unprecedented situation on the Chinese side where Tsangpo broke a 150-year record with swollen waters and hence China has shared the information with India.

Ering said the communication from China came following heavy rains in that country after which Tsangpo was in spate.

"The local authorities told me that the Chinese government has conveyed to Indian government that there is a possibility of floods in parts of Arunachal Pradesh. We have taken the alert seriously and cautioned people," he told PTI.

Wall collapses at NIT even as students...

contd from pg01

report the committee made it clear that Rabongla is not at all fit for establishing a technical Institute like NIT. Land for the purpose of establishment of NIT College had then been allocated in Khamdong, East Sikkim, which was approved by the MHRD high level technical committee. However, the State Government declared the establishment of other state owned colleges at the location pro-

posed for NIT.

Meanwhile the temporary campus at Rabongla is facing problems accommodating the rising number of students. The small town of Rabongla does not have enough private buildings to accommodate students while faculty members also find the location unsuitable. The latter has led to faculty members quitting their job adversely affecting the academics of students, it is informed.

Unfortunate that SDF Govt cannot understand NIT's value: SKM

contd from pg01

said that it is very easy and convenient for the for the SDF led government to provide land to pharma companies but when it comes to providing land for educational institutions then all sorts of problems arise.

SKM has said that the ongoing protest by students demanding permanent campus for the Institute is grabbing the attention of wider audience and the crisis is getting picked up by mainstream media which in turn is bring bad repute to the State.

The party has also

mentioned that the State Government could not provide land for establishing a permanent campus for Central Agricultural University and furthermore the land acquisition and rehabilitation process was delayed for almost 10 years for the premier Sikkim University campus at Yanggang. This lackadaisical approach has had a major effect on the students of the State, it has said.

SKM has further alleged that the state authorities' attitude reveals that they are in no mood to consider what is best for the well-being of Sikkim.



SDF outreach in Zoom-Salghari

SUMMIT REPORT
JORETHANG, 30 AUG:

A door-to-door campaign of the Sikkim Democratic Front is underway at Naya Bazaar Sisney ward and Jorethang Majhi Gaon ward under Zoom-Salghari

constituency.

The campaign of Ward no 7 was headed by the concerned panchayat Pabitra Rai and was accompanied by SDF's CLC president Bhuwan Tiwari, block level and ward level youth.

Likewise, the campaign at Ward no. 5 was headed by ward councillor Pinkey Shilal. During the outreach programme, the grievances of the public were addressed and SDF flags distributed, a press communiqué informs.

District level workshop on Childs Rights held in North

MANGAN, 30 AUG (IPR): A one-day district level workshop on Childs Rights cum coordination meeting was conducted with several stakeholders by the District Child Protection Unit of the Social Justice Empowerment and Welfare Department.

The programme was chaired by Zilla Adhakshaya North, Nemdey Lepcha, and attended by Sr. SP, K Shangderpa, Jt. Director SJEDW, Bandana Rai, Jt. Dir HRDD, members of the Juvenile Justice Board, CMO North, SDMs, BDOs, CD-POs, members of NGOs, Zilla Panchayats and Gram Panchayats of North Sikkim.

The workshop was conducted to create awareness on the various Child Protection laws and welfare provisions for rehabilitation of OAS (Orphaned, Abandoned and Surrendered) children and children in conflict with law.

The District Child Protection Officer, Wendy Mair made a presentation on the child protection mechanism in Sikkim as per the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act 2015. The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) which was launched in 2009 in partnership with the State Governments/UT



Administrations has strengthened the prevention of child rights violation. Under the ICPS scheme various infrastructures for protection services and financial support for implementation of the JJ Act 2015 is provided by the Central Government. The ICPS has thus enabled better quality of services and increased investment in child protection.

For implementation of the ICPS at the district level, a District Child Protection Unit under the District Collector has been set up. A Children's home for rehabilitation of children in need of care and protection unit is being set up in

the District. The District Child Protection Officer also made a presentation on the model guidelines under Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses (POCSO) Act. She explained the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders to assist the victims in getting justice and for rehabilitation.

The Project Officer, State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA), Peter Rai gave a presentation on the adoption procedures as per the JJ Act 2015. The resource person explained the online procedures for adoption of children and stated that procedures as per JJ Act should be followed. The Child

Welfare Committee (CWC) which has been set up in all the districts have to play a major role in the proper adoption of children.

The Joint Director, SJEDW, Bandana Rai while speaking on the occasion said that awareness on child related laws and schemes are being conducted in all the districts. She stated child abuse is a major social problem and must be tackled with the collaborative efforts of the community. She also informed that trainings would also be conducted for members of CWC (Child Welfare Committee)

The Adhakshaya North Sik-

kim stated that the Panchayats should play a major role in the dissemination of various acts and protection measures related to children. The learning from the workshop should be used in enlightening the public and make the people aware of the rules.

During the open house discussion, various suggestions regarding awareness generation in schools and villages were received from the Panchayats.

A play on child abuse was also performed by the students of North Sikkim Academy to generate awareness on child abuse and trafficking.

SDF advices SKM to try speaking the truth for once

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 30 AUG:

Sikkim Democratic Front today contended that that Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has been doing a disservice to the people of Sikkim by bombarding them with false, baseless and imagined statements and claims. The ruling party has suggested that SKM try speaking the truth for once if it was really interested in positive politics.

An SDF press release issued by its publicity secretary, Krishna Khar-el, claims that a year spent in prison on being convicted in a corrup-

tion case has left the SKM president, PS Tamang [Golay], frustrated and resentful.

This is why he is only lashing out against the SDF and the State Government and not approaching the people with any new programmes or plans.

The ruling party has stressed upon the need of positive politics for the welfare of the people of Sikkim and further expressed hope of seeing some responsible politics from opposition parties.

SDF has asserted that the politics of deception,

misinformation, lying, cheating and conspiracy were not in the interest of the people.

It adds that a party with a corruption convict as president has no locus-standi to claim being able to run a corruption-free government.

The release adds that SKM speeches are being modulated on communal lines depending on the composition of the gathering and stresses that this was not healthy for Sikkim. SKM, the release contends, stood only for opportunism, communalism, violence and anarchy.

BJP-Sikkim organizes memorial service to remember Vajpayee

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 30 AUG:

Bharatiya Janata Party Sikkim Pradesh paid rich tribute to former Prime Minister, the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, at a Shradhanjali programme held here on today.

Representatives from different political parties and organisations of Sikkim joined the memorial service and remembered the life and times of the late PM. BJP Sikkim president, DB Chauhan, remembered his contributions as a poet, writer and journalist and as a successful and visionary political leader.



He mentioned that the late PM led the country towards development and progress and took it to new heights during his tenure in office. He also mentioned about the contributions and sacrifices made by late

Vajpayee to bring BJP to its present state stage.

The programme was also addressed by representatives from different political parties and organisations, who spoke about the life and contributions of late Vajpayee.

SC/ST members from one state cannot claim quota benefit in another unless caste notified there: SC

NEW DELHI, AUG 30 (PTI):

The Supreme Court today held that a member of a Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe community cannot claim the benefit of reservation in government employment in other states if his or her caste is not notified there.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice Ranjan Gogoi unanimously held that a person belonging to Scheduled

Caste in one state cannot be deemed to be a Scheduled Caste in other states where he migrated for the purpose of employment or education.

The bench, which also comprised Justices N V Ramana, R Banumathi, M Shantanagoudar and Justice S A Nazeer, held "A person notified as Scheduled Caste in state A cannot claim the same status in another state on the basis that he is declared

as Scheduled Caste in state A."

Justice Banumathi, however, disagreed with the majority view on the aspect of applicability of central reservation policy on SC/ST in national capital territory, Delhi.

The bench with a majority of 4:1 held that so far as Delhi is concerned, the central reservation policy regarding SC/ST would be applicable here.

Gangtok on
Friday,
31 Aug

Temp: 26°C/18°C
Forecast: Cloudy,
a thundershower.
Sunrise: 05:10 AM
Sunset: 5:58 PM

Activists, civil
rights groups
demand end
to ‘political
acts of
vendetta’

NEW DELHI, AUG 30 (PTI): Author Arundhati Roy and Dalit leader Jignesh Mevani along with several other civil society members today demanded action against the Maharashtra police for launching a “vicious and malafide attack” against human rights activists across the country and called for an immediate end to “such political acts of vendetta”.

The arrests of the five activists, in a nationwide crackdown on Tuesday, highlights the violation of all due procedures and is a mockery of the legal system, said a joint statement signed by over 30 civil society groups.

The signatories to the statement include Roy, lawyer Prashant Bhushan, activists Aruna Roy, Bezwada Wilson and Mevani among scores of others.

“It is a coup against the Constitution. It is a very dire situation, potentially more dangerous than the Emergency,” Roy said at a press conference organised by The Peoples Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR), the People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and the Women Against Sexual Violence and State Repression (WSSS).

She said there is an attempt to “overturn the Constitution, to declare that this is an upper caste Hindu Rashtra in which all minorities and everyone else who does not agree with the majoritarian point of view is criminalised.”

The activists also demanded an unconditional repeal of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The Maharashtra police arrested Varavara Rao, Vernon Gonsalves, Arun Ferreira, Sudha Bharadwaj and Gautam Navlakha, and raided the homes of several others as part of its probe into the ‘Elgar Parishad’ conclave in Koregaon-Bhima village near Pune on December 31 last year.

Others whose premises were reportedly searched this week were Father Stan Swamy, Susan Abraham, Kranthi Tekula and Anand Teltumbde.

The statement by the civil society groups comes a day after the Supreme Court directed that the five activists be kept under house arrest.

They also demanded that the police return the laptops and mobile phones seized during the “illegal arrest” of the activists, and make an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the “FIR No.4/2018 at Vishrambagh PS, Pune, Maharashtra and all held under it”.

A special Teej celebration which
even men can join!

NITESH PRADHAN

GANGTOK, 30 AUG:

The festival of Teej, linked with the mythological legends of Lord Shiva, where women pray and fast for the long life and wellbeing of their spouses is approaching.

The festival falls in the month of Bhadaun and is celebrated throughout the month with different programs.

Traditionally celebrated only by women, this year, a group of young men and women have come up to dispel this stereotype by inviting all men and women interested to take part in the event to be held at Hotel Sidlon in 09 September.

The theme for the event is “empowering each other”.

Sushmita Pakhrin, an organiser and a photo journalist by profession, explains that such platforms can be used to send out a positive message of oneness and equality as she feels that no festival should be exclu-



sive to a particular gender, caste or religion.

Further, she states that such platforms can start a dialogue on how people, particularly the women, can help each other and sustain the community as a whole.

Another organiser, entrepreneur Sumitra Limbu Rai, adds that in order to break the traditional mindset, there is a need

to involve and reach out beyond the scope of what has been in the past. “We welcome all to join the event and exchange views,” she adds.

The daylong event will not just have speeches from concerned stakeholders but also include an interaction program.

Further, the organisers add that a ramp walk will also be organised to adjudge Miss/Mrs

Teej along with two subtitle winners of Best Make up and best dress.

This will be followed by performances by local artists.

It is further informed that the function is being held in aid of Leelyal Old Age Home, Tintek, East Sikkim.

“Let’s come together for a cause and learn from each other,” adds Sumitra Limbu Rai.



State Geological Programming
Board meets

GANGTOK, 30 AUG (IPR):

Chief Secretary AK Shrivastava chaired the 11th State Geological Programming Board Meeting (SGPB) here at the conference hall of Mannan Kendra today.

The meeting was also attended by Commissioner/ Secretary Land Revenue & Disaster Management Department Tseg-yal Tashi, Secretary RM&D DR Nepal, Secretary Mines, Minerals & Geology Ambika Pradhan, senior officers of the concerned departments, District Collectors, officers from the Army, BRO Swastik, Director Geological Survey of India, and officers of the Mines, Minerals & Geology

Department.

The Chief Secretary made a detailed review of the action-taken report on the 10th State Geological Programming Board Meeting and deliberated on the agenda points received from various departments of the State Government and central agencies for the 11th SGPB Meeting.

In his remarks, the CS called for the need to sensitize each member of the society and the implementing departments and agencies on safety norms and stability parameters while constructing government and private infrastructure, considering

the geological sensitivity of the region.

Earlier, Secretary Mines Minerals & Geology Department and Member Secretary, SGPB, Ambika Pradhan, in her opening remarks, gave a brief background of the action taken on the agenda points from the previous Board Meeting and the proposals for the 11th Board Meeting.

She stated that the agenda points deliberated in the SGPB would be placed before the Central Geological Programming Board.

Director, Technical Coordination and Head of Office, Gangtok,

Geological Survey of India, Vijay V. Mugal, made a power-point presentation on the activities carried out by the ASI and also the projects proposed for future.

Likewise, Senior Geologist, Mines Minerals & Geology Department, Keshav Luitel, made a presentation on the recent activities, past achievements and proposed activities of the Department.

Officers of Forest Department, LR&DMD, RM&DD, Energy and Power Department, Science & Technology Department, Central Government agencies and district administration participated in the deliberations.

SIKKIM STATE LOTTERIES

DERBY MEET THURSDAY

Draw No:32 DrawDate on:30/08/18

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2nd Prize Rs.9,000/- 3763 4255 6100
3rd Prize Rs.3,000/- 0827 3367 8611
4th Prize Rs.2,000/- 2779 2828 3426
5th Prize Rs.1,000/- 0054 1319 9419
6th Prize Rs.500/-
2447 2472 4334 4693 5367 5697 6015 6524 9478 9676
7th Prize Rs.100/-
0017 0059 0093 0117 0146 0164 0181 0207 0262 0306
0307 0320 0353 0367 0403 0422 0436 0469 0477 0522
0539 0561 0633 0643 0650 0663 0675 0713 0773 0781
0787 0813 0818 0833 0838 0851 0864 0874 0914 0924
0942 0990 1000 1003 1057 1062 1080 1111 1128 1236
1276 1304 1312 1317 1324 1325 1374 1383 1404 1420
1434 1473 1496 1511 1528 1615 1617 1680 1696 1714
1764 1769 1814 1867 1883 1888 1955 1960 1997 2005
2027 2044 2047 2108 2127 2128 2129 2160 2195 2207
2208 2214 2230 2238 2283 2303 2304 2338 2348 2387
2392 2397 2402 2423 2425 2434 2436 2451 2457 2481
2512 2531 2537 2545 2551 2570 2577 2583 2649 2652
2653 2655 2666 2675 2685 2727 2738 2741 2742 2754
2816 2835 2929 2936 3017 3039 3057 3097 3116 3162
3204 3245 3273 3292 3330 3345 3378 3407 3442 3446
3470 3535 3540 3570 3626 3628 3686 3781 3816 3827
3830 3847 3851 3902 3908 4010 4011 4023 4101 4123
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4714 4729 4739 4773 4805 4827 4889 4919 4921 4939
4940 4985 5047 5055 5174 5175 5205 5207 5245 5246
5254 5261 5321 5386 5398 5402 5404 5419 5451 5465
5472 5508 5596 5597 5625 5642 5674 5688 5693 5750
5751 5759 5764 5797 5828 5833 5835 5851 5897 5916
5935 5940 6004 6010 6018 6052 6081 6089 6121 6231
6292 6345 6430 6442 6477 6512 6570 6578 6589 6609
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6837 6840 6856 6862 6887 6892 6929 6938 6940 6941
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7653 7734 7749 7798 7800 7813 7820 7848 7866 7881
7903 7917 7931 7940 7990 8012 8045 8054 8084 8091
8097 8120 8150 8157 8174 8179 8182 8183 8275 8323
8345 8445 8457 8458 8503 8567 8650 8651 8666 8712
8731 8776 8802 8866 8888 8906 8929 8943 8956 8965
8990 9006 9038 9055 9072 9147 9172 9226 9238 9253
9280 9288 9346 9359 9404 9406 9465 9496 9497 9537
9542 9575 9584 9624 9667 9680 9686 9697 9700 9720
9797 9827 9841 9881 9889 9914 9921 9939 9975 9988

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ANTHYESTI KRIYA



The 13 days Anthyesti Kriya of **Late Raju Kumar Pradhan** who left for his heavenly abode falls on **1st September 2018**. All relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to join us is offering prayers for departed soul at **Lower Arithang, near Snowlion Security Office, Gangtok, East Sikkim**. We also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all those who stood by us during our time of bereavement.

Family members:

Mrs Phur Diki Sherpa (wife), Manzil Pradhan (son), Merina Pradhan, Deepa Pradhan, Deepika Pradhan (daughters) Contact: 9647875404, 8016053652.

Marriage certificate mandatory
in Meghalaya: Official

SHILLONG, AUG 30 (PTI): The Meghalaya government has made it mandatory to furnish marriage certificates by married couples for all official purposes, an official said today.

The government has issued instructions to all government departments to ensure that individuals submit the certificates for all official purposes, registration department under secretary B Syiemlieh said in a letter to social activist Michael N Syiem.

“The government has made it mandatory for married men and women to furnish marriage certificates for all official purposes as notified under the Meghalaya Compulsory Registration of Marriage Act, 2012,” the official said.

The social activist, who



spear-headed a movement for compulsory registration of marriages in the state, had written to the chief minister earlier this year seeking immediate implementation of the said Act in view of the fact that cabinet approval of the rules had been accorded in 2015.

He argued that compulsory registration of marriages would

solve the issues of increasing number of broken families and various other social problems.

Besides empowering women, he said women here were often unceremoniously left by their husbands and there was no law to compel the latter to provide maintenance to the wives and children.

SIKKIM STATE LOTTERIES

DEAR ENERGY EVENING

Draw No:3 DrawDate on:30/08/18

1st Prize Rs.26.03 Lakhs/- 91B 77611
Cons. Prize Rs.9500/- 77611 (REMAINING ALL SERIALS)
2nd Prize Rs.9000/-
02095 09488 32803 43645 51208
52073 57261 66939 75635 80240
3rd Prize Rs.500/- 0188 2176 2341 3994 5119 6628 7120 8025 8445 9538
4th Prize Rs.250/- 2219 2588 2699 3700 4275 4431 5998 7461 8952 9349
5th Prize Rs.120/-
0057 0061 0109 0248 0474 0616 0701 0785 0805 0933
0960 1006 1054 1106 1490 1511 1773 1799 1848 1879
1899 1921 2011 2025 2096 2107 2493 2517 2553 2827
2959 2989 3296 3311 3582 3617 3656 3670 3685 3832
3952 4039 4343 4358 4400 4404 4444 4644 4700 5040
5197 5205 5254 5292 5304 5396 5476 5527 5779 5781
5828 5829 6509 6705 6901 6911 6930 7084 7102 7304
7335 7436 7470 7579 7600 7648 7660 7778 7826 7890
7926 8054 8086 8127 8163 8472 8505 8772 8827 8907
9087 9089 9118 9443 9449 9632 9754 9825 9943 9987

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*Instead of cursing traffic jams,
collaborate to find a solution*

There is a footpath lining the highway in Gangtok, and yet parents are not comfortable sending children out on their own. Two decades back, children would rarely stay at home, gathering in groups and heading outdoors. That is a luxury which is denied the generation now in school because outdoors in the capital is a now a jumble of parking lots and dangerous traffic. People have been noticing the increase in traffic on Gangtok roads, many have even ventured explanations and some have stuck their necks out with criticism, and all have come to the same conclusion – Gangtok has been taken over by cars. Cars have captured public spaces and pushed everything else away. The neighbourhood streets, even those which lead to dead-ends, have been consumed, and the town still needs to come up with more and more ingenious ways to park its cars.

Despite the obvious glut on the roads, the rush is showing no signs of abating. Some years ago, a study by the Central Road Research Institute [yes, there is such an institute] revealed that vehicles were occupying almost as much space [10.8%] as the forest cover [11.5%] in the National Capital Region of Delhi. Anyone who has watched the explosion of vehicles in Gangtok will agree that Sikkim's capital too is trying hard to bring vehicular occupation at par with its green cover. Here, the plant life might not be getting hacked away to make space for more parking lots, yet, but it is being choked to death by the swarm of idling engines stuck in impossibly long traffic jams which grip the roads during peak office hours nowadays. There might not be too many people who remember how long a pony ride from Ranipool to Gangtok took in earlier times, but it could not have been much longer than what it takes to make it from Tadong to MG Marg in a vehicle nowadays.

Admittedly, all this description is not required because it is obvious to every Gangtokian that traffic and cars have become a problem and a nuisance. What has still not been accepted is that this problem needs to be addressed. The only initiative taken to address the problem of too many cars has been the commissioning of more parking lots some of which are built and ready but await an inauguration. While more parking is definitely required, this is not enough of a solution primarily because the parking space being created will already be too cramped by the time the structure is completed. For another, more parking space does not address the problem of vehicular movement. In this regard, Gangtok's topography and building practices play spoilsport, making the creation of alternate roads impossible.

The only real option then is to reduce the number of vehicles on the roads. This cannot be achieved by stronger legislations [in case someone is floating that idea], but can be pulled off with an approach which combines structured parking fees, safe and spacious parking in the outskirts [of the congested areas, say beyond Deorali or Tadong at one end or Burtuk at the other end or even along the bypass] and fast, frequent and reliable public transport. Bigger cities around the world have worked this combo quite well and there is no need why Gangtok should not try out the model as well. This is but one option that can be mulled and what would be even better for Gangtok to attempt will be a series of brainstorming meetings aimed specifically at addressing its traffic and parking challenges. Experts from diverse fields can be invited to study the problem and offer solutions. Think about it the next time you stare aimlessly out of the car window at another one Gangtok's traffic jams.

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Mail us at: letters@summittimes.com

What we can learn from John McCain's civic vulnerability

ALAN SEARS
theconversation.com

In the countless reflections on the life of U.S. Sen. John McCain, his interventions to shut down ignorant and racist comments about his adversary Barack Obama during the 2008 presidential election campaign have featured prominently.

McCain didn't just stop the interventions. He forcefully challenged them and spoke up for the character and integrity of Obama. My opponent is "a decent person, and a person that you do not have to be scared of as President of the United States," McCain told his own supporters who expressed concerns about the man who would eventually become America's first Black president.

In that moment, McCain exercised civic vulnerability — potentially weakening his own strategic position in the service of the common good.

McCain's actions are getting so much attention because they are not very common. Civic rage, rather than civic vulnerability, seems to be the order of the day.

VITRIOLIC RHETORIC NOW THE NORM

Virtually everyone involved in public life is subjected to vitriolic rhetoric — with particularly heinous, sexually laden comments reserved for women who dare venture into the public square.

As the British newspaper The Telegraph put it following the murder of politician Jo Cox, killed as she campaigned for the U.K. to remain in the European Union, "death threats and sexual torment have become part of the job for our MPs."

U.S. President Donald Trump actively feeds this civic rage with his Twitter feed and speeches at campaign rallies, which regularly feature degrading comments about not only opponents' policy positions but also their looks and intelligence. He ferociously eschews any semblance of vulnerability, proclaiming on Twitter it's his "way of life."

And Trump's style seems to be winning the day. A recent CNN headline lamented the fact that "Trump's brand of politics has eclipsed McCain's."

But it need not be so. John McCain was not the first person to use civic vulnerability in the public square and he won't be the last.

THE COMMON GOOD

All human beings experience what's known as contextual vulnerability. We find ourselves in positions when circumstances make us relatively weak and we feel, or are, threatened. The large bully with an aggressive entourage who pushed us around in elementary school; shifting economic conditions that threaten our job or retirement savings; systemic power imbalances that subject large groups of people to persecution and discrimination: these are all examples of contextual vulnerability.

Civic vulnerability, on the other hand, is something we choose to take up in the service of the common good.

We can do this from either a position of strength — intentionally divesting ourselves of power in the service of others — or from a position of contextual vulnerability and weakness, intentionally making

ourselves even more vulnerable in order to make our point and win over others.

It is hard to imagine anyone operating from a more secure position of strength than a contender for president of the United States.

In the fall of 2008, John McCain was at the top of his game. He had a long and storied career both as a military officer and senator. He had been chosen by his party to lead them into the election and he was supported by a loving family and a talented and committed team of advisers and campaign workers.

'A DECENT FAMILY MAN'

McCain had a reputation as an experienced and tough political fighter. Yet, in the moment — at least two moments, in fact — he stepped back from aggressive campaigning to assure supporters and all Americans listening that his opponent was "a decent family man (and) citizen that I just happen to have disagreements with on fundamental issues, and that's what the campaign's all about."

McCain did it to counter a racist narrative and subtext that was dogging the campaign. He did it because he thought the country would be better off if that narrative and subtext were countered and put to rest. He did it at some risk to his own position.

Another example of civic vulnerability from a position of strength is when a powerful majority voluntarily cedes aspects of its power and control in order to build trust with, and promote justice for, a vulnerable minority.

In 1969, for example, my home province of New Brunswick passed its first Official Languages Act, making it the only officially bilingual province in Canada. That status was later solidified when New Brunswick's bilingual status was entrenched in the Canadian Constitution Act of 1982.

CEDING POWER AND INFLUENCE

In making that move, the province's substantial Anglophone majority (two thirds of the population) ceded some power and influence to the Francophone minority. Historically schools and other public institutions in New Brunswick were aggressively English. It wasn't until after the Second World War that French became an official language for the purpose of schooling.

This highlights the civic value of the move to constitutionally protect the French language: it both fostered trust between linguistic communities and brought a measure of justice for a belea-

guered minority.

Virtually all efforts to enshrine minority rights in law or constitutions are exercises in civic vulnerability where those in power surrender some of their control in the service of others.

It is also possible to exercise civic vulnerability from a position of relative weakness. This was the approach of both Mahatma Gandhi in India and much of the civil rights movement in the U.S., including Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

To march on the heavily guarded Dharasana Salt Works with no weapons or shields, to sit at "whites only" lunch counters in Nashville and endure verbal and physical abuse, or to march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., into the waiting phalanx of state troopers were moments when people experiencing contextual vulnerability and subjugation took on even more vulnerability.

GALVANIZING SUPPORT

These acts of vulnerability were meant to galvanize support from others by demonstrating the unfairness of certain laws and the institutions and individuals who supported them. More importantly, they were designed to win over the very individuals and institutions that perpetrated the oppression.

Gandhi and King believed that the oppressor and the oppressed were both trapped by policies of subjugation and that a commitment to justice would liberate both sides. Victory for them was peace and justice for all, not simply to switch the equation of domination.

As Naim Stifan Ateek, a Palestinian and contemporary practitioner of non-violent resistance in the tradition of Gandhi and King, puts it: "It is of paramount importance that we maintain the principles of human morality and decency in relating to our adversaries."

In defending Barack Obama's right and fitness to be president, John McCain maintained the principle of human morality and decency in relating to his adversary. In doing so he set an example of another way to do politics.

It is an approach with a long and important pedigree, a pedigree that deserves much more attention in history and civics classes and contemporary civic engagement.

[The writer is Professor of Education, University of New Brunswick]



The surprising role cheese played in human evolution

PENNY BICKLE
theconversation.com

A solid white mass found in a broken jar in an Ancient Egyptian tomb has turned out to be the world's oldest example of solid cheese.

Probably made mostly from sheep or goats milk, the cheese was found several years ago by archaeologists in the ancient tomb of Ptahmes, who was a high-ranking Egyptian official. The substance was identified after the archaeology team carried out biomolecular identification of its proteins.

This 3,200-year-old find is exciting because it shows that the Ancient Egyptian's shared our love of cheese — to the extent it was given as a funerary offering. But not only that, it also fits into archaeology's growing understanding of the importance of dairy to the development of the human diet in Europe.

DAIRY IN DIETS

About two-thirds of the world's population is lactose intolerant. So although dairy products are a daily part of the diet for many living in Europe, Northern India and North America, drinking milk in adulthood was only possible from the Bronze Age, over

the last 4,500 years.

For most of human history, adults lost the ability to consume milk after infancy — and the same is true of people who are lactose intolerant today. After weaning, people with lactose intolerance can no longer produce the enzyme lactase. This is necessary to break down the lactose sugars in fresh milk into compounds that can be easily digested. People with lactose intolerance experience unpleasant symptoms if they consume dairy products such as bloating, flatulence and diarrhoea.

Ancient DNA analysis on human skeletons from prehistoric Europe places the earliest appearance of

the gene lactase gene (LCT) — which keeps adults producing lactase — to 2,500BC. But there is plenty of evidence from the Neolithic period (around 6,000-2,500BC in Europe) that milk was being consumed.

This is not totally surprising though, as the Neolithic marks the start of farming in most regions of Europe — and the first time humans lived closely alongside animals. And although they were unable to digest milk, we know that Neolithic populations were processing milk into substances they could consume.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Using a technique called "lipid analysis", sherds of ancient pottery can

be analysed and fats absorbed into the clay identified. This then allows archaeologists to find out what was cooked or processed inside them.

Although it is not yet possible to identify the species of animal, dairy fats can be distinguished. It is also challenging to determine what techniques were being used to make dairy products safe to consume, with many potential options. Fermenting milk, for example, breaks down the lactose sugar into lactic acid. Cheese is low in lactose because it involves separating curd (from which cheese is made) from whey, in which the majority of the lactose sugars remain.

Clay sieves from Poland, similar to modern cheese sieves, have been found to have dairy lipids preserved in the pores of clay, suggesting that they were being used to separate curds from the whey. Whether the curds were then consumed or attempts made to preserve them by pressing into a harder cheese is unknown. Fermentation of milk was also possible to our ancestors, but harder to explore with the techniques currently available to archaeology.

EARLY CHEESE MAKING

turn to 05



Modi meets Sri Lankan president in Nepal, discusses bilateral cooperation

KATHMANDU, AUG 30 (PTI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi today held a bilateral meeting with Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Summit here to discuss ways to boost cooperation.

Modi arrived here this morning to attend the 4th Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit.

"Cementing cooperation with a valued neighbour and close friend. President @MaithripalaS and PM @narendramodi meet on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Summit in Kathmandu," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted.

India, China in talks to establish hotline between defence ministries: Beijing

BEIJING, AUG 30 (PTI): India and China are holding talks to update a 12-year-old defence agreement and establish a hotline between the two defence ministries as part of the confidence building measures, a top Chinese defence ministry official said today.

During Chinese Defence Minister General Wei Fenghe's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Indian counterpart Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi last week, the two sides had in-depth discussions on how to further implement the important consensus reached between Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Wu Qian said.

Modi and Xi, during their first-ever informal summit in Wuhan in April, reached a consensus on managing various aspects of India-China relations including the two militaries, especially in the backdrop of the Doklam standoff.

The hotline between the two militaries was regarded as a major Confidence Building Measure as it would enable both the headquarters to intensify communication to avert tensions between border patrols and to



avoid standoffs like Doklam.

Tensions between India and China reached their peak during a 73-day standoff in Doklam near Bhutan over Beijing's construction of a road in the area. The standoff ended after both sides agreed to disengage.

Wu said both the countries are also in consultations to work on a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the defence ministries.

"In 2006, India and China signed an MoU on defence exchanges and cooperation. The Indian side conveyed its willingness to sign a new

version of the MoU. China holds a positive attitude towards it and the two sides are in communication with each other," Wu said.

The 2006 MoU focussed on maintaining frequent exchanges between the leaders and high-level functionaries of the defence ministries, annual defence dialogue and holding joint military exchanges among others.

"If the dragon and elephant dance together, they will both gain and it will help Asia continue to be prosperous. If they compete and fight with each other, it will benefit neither but others," Wu said.

"We hope and willing to work together with India to actively implement the consensus reached by the two heads of the state to enhance communication and coordination, to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, to appropriately manage our differences and to facilitate our military relationship in a healthy steady manner," Wu said, adding that Wei had extended an official invitation to Sitharaman to visit China.

Wei's talks with the Indian leaders focussed on "how to deepen security and military exchanges and cooperation and how to strengthen defence confidence building measures," Wu said, highlighting the salient aspects of Wei's visit to India.

"They specifically talked about setting up an exchange mechanism for visits between the two defence ministries, set up a direct confidential phone line between the two defence ministries, strengthening exchanges at all levels including defence authorities, theatre commands and different services.

"They also talked about setting up a hotline on border issues between adjacent military commands. They also talked about how to better

play the role of defence and security consultations mechanism and the meeting mechanism between the working delegations of the defence ministries," Wu said replying to a question on how China views the outcome of Wei's visit to India.

The discussions between the two sides include a direct phone line between the two defence ministries and regional military units, Wu said.

On the delay over the establishments of a direct hotline between the two military headquarters, he said that the two sides are in talks about the specifics.

"In the next phase the two sides will keep contacting and coordinating with each other regarding the specifics," Wu said.

So far both the militaries have not been able to operationalise efforts to establish a hotline facility between their military headquarters due to procedural issues, officials said.

Stressing on the importance of good relations between the two countries, Wu said China and India are very important countries in Asia and have important responsibilities in maintaining regional peace and stability.

Odisha flood: Govt monitoring situation in Mahanadi river basin

BHUBANESWAR, AUG 30 (PTI): With the water level in Mahanadi river rising after release of flood water from Hirakud Dam, Odisha government today geared up and closely monitored the situation to deal with any possible flood in 11 districts in the river basin, officials said.

The present level in Hirakud dam is 622.71 feet against the full reservoir level of 630 feet. While the flow of water into the reservoir is 4.21.431 cusec, the outflow is 4,10,388 cusec, a dam official said.

Around 6.5 lakh cusec of water is now flowing through Mundali gauge station in Mahanadi near Cuttack after release of flood waters through 25 gates of Hirakud dam, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Bishnupada Sethi said.

This has led to steady rise in the water level of Mahanadi as well as its tributaries in several areas, he said.

The dam authorities had on Tuesday opened 25 sluice gates following release of huge volumes of water in the river from neighbouring Chhat-tishgarh.

There is, however, no threat of any major flood despite the release of water from Hirakud and the situation is being monitored constantly, Sethi said.

We are maintaining a close watch on the situation. It is being monitored round-the-clock," he



said adding that the collectors of the 11 districts located in the Mahanadi river basin and other officials are keeping watch.

All preparations have been made. The state government has deployed rescue teams in the vulnerable areas and has already deployed the ODRF, NDRF and

fire service personnel for immediate rescue operation in Puri, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack and Bhadrak districts, Sethi said.

Meanwhile, the flood water of Mahanadi and Tel rivers have inundated several areas in Boudh district where a number of villages in Harabhang block have been marooned and vast agricultural lands submerged, said an official.

The water level in Mahanadi river at Naraj near Cuttack has risen to 25.87 metre but it is much below the danger level of 26.41 metre, he said.

With the flood waters submerging several areas, road connectivity is affected in some places like Birmaharajpur in Sonapur and Purunamantri under Athamalik tehsil, officials said.

Several villages in Athagarh and Banki areas of Cuttack district have also been inundated after flood water of Mahanadi gushed into low-lying areas, they said.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, who took stock of the situation yesterday, has asked the administration to remain alert to deal with the situation.

The district collectors have been asked to ensure that there is enough stock of food materials, besides water, medicines and other essential items.

Instruction was also issued to evacuate people from the low-lying areas as flood water could enter into villages tonight or tomorrow morning, an official said.

The average rainfall in the state recorded during the past 24 hours

was 2.7 mm. In all 28 districts have received sporadic rainfall, the highest being 18.8 mm in Kalahandi district. There was no rainfall during the past 24 hours in the Bhadrak and Deogarh districts, the IMD said.

Two blocks in Kalahandi district have recorded rainfall of more than 50 mm. The highest rainfall of 59.4 mm has been received in Kalampur block and 55.0 mm in Dharmagarh block.

The Met centre here said rain and thundershower is likely to occur at many places over the state till tomorrow, while heavy rainfall may lash one or two places in Bargarh, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Deogarh, Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts.

Assam govt likely to allow police action against 15 officials

GUWAHATI, AUG 30 (PTI): Assam government is likely to allow the police for filing chargesheet against 15 public servants, including state civil service officers, in corruption cases, a source in the Home Department told PTI.

Of the 15, four had been in the rank of additional deputy commissioner between 2003 and 2017 - the period when the cases were filed.

As per rule, the police have sought sanction from the government to go ahead with filing of chargesheets against the officials in as many as 11 corruption cases across the state.

"The government has received requests for prosecution sanctions against some officials. It is under consideration.

As the thrust of the government is zero tolerance for any kind of corruption, the necessary sanc-

tions will be issued in the coming days," the Home Department source told PTI.

Some of the cases were related to land, including frauds in providing compensation to people during expansion of national highway in a few districts of Upper Assam, he added.

"These cases were registered between 2003 and 2017 by various government agencies, including the CID and local police stations. Most of the proposals for prosecution sanction were sought during June-July this year," the source said.

The Assam Police has sought permission to take action against five Assam Civil Services (ACS) officials, one Assam Police Services (APS) official and three senior tax officials.

The ACS officers had been additional deputy commissioners of

Jorhat, Kamrup Metropolitan, Dhemaji and Sivasagar districts during the period under investigation.

The list also includes another ACS officer, who had been the circle officer of the Sivasagar revenue circle, while the lone APS officer had been the additional superintendent of police in Karbi Anglong district.

Without sharing the details of the cases, the source said one additional commissioner of taxes, one superintendent of taxes and an inspector of taxes have also been named in corruption charges in the list to government.

"Besides, there are officials such as gram sevaks, accountant and engineers. The alleged corruption charges were reported from Barpeeta, Sivasagar, Kamrup Metropolitan, Jorhat, Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao and Tinsukia," he added.

The surprising role cheese played...

contd from pg04

While the techniques from bio-archaeology have provided this fantastic detail on Neolithic diets, where the science stops, experimental archaeology can explore what was possible.

We have been making cheese using the utensils, plants and techniques available to Neolithic farmers. The aim of the experiments is not to faithfully recreate early cheeses, but to begin to capture some of the decisions available to early cheese makers - and the experiments have thrown up some interesting results.

By using these ancient techniques, we have discovered that a wealth of different means of cur-

dling the milk would have been possible, each producing different forms, tastes and amounts of cheese.

And such specialist knowledge may have been akin to the spread of bronze smelting at the end of the Neolithic. Dairy may have had a special status among foodstuffs. For example, at the major late Neolithic feasting site of Durrington Walls, not far from and contemporary with Stonehenge, dairy residues were found in a particular kind of pottery vessel and concentrated in the area around a timber circle - a form of Late Neolithic monument.

From the Bronze Age, however, lactase persistence offered an

advantage to some people who were able to pass this on to their offspring. It also seems that this advantage was not solely because of increased calorie and nutrient intake alone - but because of the special status dairy foods may have had. The development of this biological adaption to fresh milk took place after humans had already found ways to safely include dairy products in the diet.

This shows that humans are not only able to manipulate their food to make it edible, but that what we consume can also lead to new adaptations in our biology.

[the writer is Lecturer in Archaeology, University of York]

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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India confident of ending 36-year Asiad gold wait in women’s hockey

JAKARTA, AUG 30 (PTI): Having broken a 20-year-old jinx, a confident Indian women's hockey team will be desperate to end a long 36-year wait when it takes on Japan in the gold medal clash of the Asian Games here tomorrow.

Last edition's bronze medallist India yesterday registered a hard-fought 1-0 win over China to enter the final of the Asian Games after 20 years.

The Indian women last made it to the summit clash of the Asian Games in Bangkok in 1998 and ended runners-up after losing to Korea.

Having already achieved that goal, India's next target will be to reclaim the gold medal after 36 long years.

The Indians won their only Asiad gold in the women's hockey way back in 1982 in New Delhi. Come tomorrow, they would be desperate to break that jinx and add to their one gold, one silver and three bronze medals tally from nine previous appearances.



Going by world ranking and performance in the tournament so far, world No 9 India will start as favourites against 14th ranked Japan. Like their male counter-

parts, the Indian women too have been impressive in the Games so far with an unbeaten record, having registered huge victories against Indonesia (8-0), Kazakhstan (21-

0), Korea (4-1) and Thailand (5-0) in the pool stages before the close win over resilient Chinese yesterday.

The Indians have been brilliant in defence so far and

conceding just one goal in 300 minutes is a testimony to the fact.

Deep Grace Ekka, Deepika, Gurjit Kaur, Sunita Lakra and youngster Reena

Khokhar have all played a major role in backline.

But chief coach Sjoerd Marijne doesn't believe in crediting an individual, instead he feels the credit for the strong display in defence is a result of collective effort.

"We have been good in defence throughout the tournament. We have been excellent with tackling. The only goal we conceded was against a strong team like Korea, and that gives me and the girls huge confidence going into the final," Marijne said on the eve of the all-important summit clash.

"We have defended well as a unit with everyone executing their duties."

The coach is aware of the threat Japan can pose, but said his players are confident about their abilities.

"We have played Japan in the past and we know that they are a strong side. They have played well in this tournament and deserve to be in the final. But I believe we have the quality and confi-

dence to beat any team in the world," Marijne said.

"It is important for us to stick to our game-plan."

At 9, the Indians are currently the highest ranked side in women's hockey in Asia, but captain Rani Rampal wants more as a gold here will ensure a direct berth in 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

"The final against Japan will be exciting for sure but we are determined to give everything on the pitch to win the match. The team knows that they came here to only achieve one thing, and that is qualification for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics," she said.

"We will make sure that we play like the best team in Asia and work hard to achieve our goal," Rani added.

India's forwardline, led by experienced Vandana Katariya and skipper Rani herself, has been in prime form throughout the tournament, scoring a total of 39 goals in the five matches that they have played here so far.

Wawrinka survives, Murray sent packing from US Open 2nd round

NEW YORK, AUG 30 (AFP): Stan Wawrinka survived searing heat and a spirited Ugo Humbert to reach the third round of the US Open as fellow former champion Andy Murray's return ended in the second round.

Wawrinka, unable to defend his 2016 Flushing Meadows title after undergoing two knee surgeries last year, said yesterday that he wasn't surprised at the challenge produced by 139th-ranked Humbert, a left-hander who is playing his first tour-level event this week after a dominant summer on the developmental Challenger circuit.

"I knew it would be a difficult

match," said Wawrinka, who was pleased to find himself feeling fit after prevailing 7-6 (7/5) 4-6 6-3 7-5 in three hours and 21 minutes.

"My level is there. I'm playing really good tennis," he said.

"I'm 33 years old, first time after big surgery that I'm pushing myself that much, but I think I did enough hard work to know and have confidence in my fitness."

"I think there is a good chance that I'm playing better the next round," added Wawrinka who faces Canadian Milos Raonic for a place in the last 16.

Meanwhile Murray, the 2012 US Open winner, who was playing his

first Grand Slam since Wimbledon of last year, is still fighting to find full fitness after hip surgery in January.

The Scot's limp was noticeable at times as he fell 7-5 2-6 6-4 6-4 to Spain's Fernando Verdasco, whose only win over Murray in 14 prior meetings was at the 2009 Australian Open.

Murray, who had a chance to take the first set, also had enough in the tank to force five break points in the final game of the fourth.

But he was unable to convert any of them before Verdasco closed out the win on Arthur Ashe Stadium on his third match point.

Serena, Venus to clash for 30th time as Cornet shrugs off US Open sexism storm

NEW YORK, AUG 30 (AFP): Serena and Venus Williams set up a 30th career meeting yesterday as the US Open reeled from a sexism row sparked when a player changed her shirt on court.

Six-time champion Serena eased into Friday's third round encounter against her sister with a 6-2 6-2 win over German world number 101 Carina Witthoeft on the back of 30 winners and 13 aces.

Venus, the 2000 and 2001 champion, made

the third round for the 17th time with a 6-4 7-5 victory over Camila Giorgi of Italy.

Tomorrow's match will be the earliest the sisters have met at a Slam since the 1998 Australian Open in what was also their first ever clash. It will be their sixth face-off in New York.

"Friday will be incredibly hard," said Serena before jokingly hitting back at

Venus's claim that when they last met at a Slam in the final of the 2017 Australian Open

her sister had an advantage as it was "two against one."

That was a reference to Serena being in the early stages of pregnancy with her daughter Olympia.

"I guess I had a little advantage but it's going to be hard for me on Friday," said 36-year-old Serena.

Since Venus won their first ever clash in Australia, Serena, bidding for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title, has built up an advantage over the last two decades, enjoying a 17-12 head-to-head

superiority.

"It's a tough match to have so early in the tournament. We would have liked to have played later but it is what it is. It's not the end of the world," added Serena.

Venus, 38, and playing her 80th Slam, notched up her 775th career win by seeing off Giorgi.

However, she was reluctant to discuss Serena when asked to describe the specific challenges.

"You're beating it up now. Any other questions about anything else?" she barked.

Asian Games boxing: India, Kazakhstan sailing in same boat

POONAM MEHRA

NEW DELHI, AUG 30 (PTI): It's not everyday that Indian boxing finds itself bracketed with a powerhouse like Kazakhstan but that's exactly what has happened at the ongoing Asian Games.

What is not particularly pleasing is the stat which binds the two countries in Jakarta. Both India and Kazakhstan have just two semifinalists in the men's draw and no challenge left in the women's competition at the end of the quarterfinal stage.

"Obviously we wanted more, two medals is less than what we had targetted. But I would like to believe it is just one blip. We have equalled the last time's performance in terms of number of medals and hopefully a better colour would be coming along to make the overall show better," Indian boxing's High Performance Director Santiago Nieva told PTI from Jakarta.

Kazakhstan topped the boxing medals tally at the 2014 Games with six gold, two silver and two bronze medals, making the ongoing edition nothing short of a disaster for them.

It's a dip that India can proba-



bly relate to given that the country went from two gold, three silver and four bronze in Guangzhou 2010 to a mere two bronze at Incheon 2014.

India has managed to match the 2014 haul with two semifinalists. And it might get better if the seasoned Vikas Krishan (75kg) and in-form debutant Amit Panghal (49kg) make the finals tomorrow.

Despite the slight disappoint-

ment, Nieva ruled out any drastic repercussions for how things have gone in Jakarta.

"We must always look for things to improve and we will sit down and analyse the performance but I don't believe there will be too many radical changes as of now," he said.

"Have a look at how the Kazakhs have done, just two semi-finalists, which I am sure is not

what they might have hoped for. Likewise, Korea have got just one semifinalist, in the women's draw, none of their male boxers are in the semis," he pointed out.

"It is sport, these things happen to everybody. On the other hand, Thailand and Uzbekistan are having a great tournament," he added.

Thailand has four men and two women in the semifinals, while the Uzbeks have all seven of their male

boxers in the medal rounds.

It is a massive recovery for the Uzbeks from two silver and two bronze in the last edition. Ditto for the Thais, who had one gold and a bronze to show for in 2014.

In contrast, South Korea, which was placed second the last time around with two gold, three silver and a bronze, has just one competitor left in Jakarta -- in women's lightweight 60kg category.

"Boxing is not maths, it is more like chemistry where a combination of factors go into making a medal. Sometimes it is a matter of just one punch like it happened in case of Gaurav (Solanki) and Shiva (Thapa). They were struck by that one perfect blow which changed everything in a matter of seconds," he explained.

"The Chinese guy Shiva lost to, ousted a Kazakh in the next round. Similar was the case of Gaurav, he was shaken by a big one in his second round bout and couldn't recover. (Mohammed) Husamuddin, on the other hand, fought exceptionally well but didn't have the luck, same for Dheeraj (Rangji)," he added.

"When you lose to someone, you always feel better if the guy

goes on to win the gold, because then you have lost to the eventual champion, in a way, that's a solace," he reasoned.

Speaking of India's two semifinalists, Nieva said, "Amit has of course been outstanding so far and Vikas can still take it a notch higher. He is capable of more."

While Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Amit seems to be in the form of his life, Vikas has been hampered by a cut on his left eyelid, sustained in his opening bout.

The 26-year-old Vikas has, however, managed to script history by assuring himself a third successive Asiad medal, the first Indian boxer to do that.

Reflecting on the women boxers' performance, Nieva said a medal-less campaign always counts for disappointment.

The Argentine-born Swede was seen seconding during women's bouts too along with their chief coach Raffaele Bergamasco.

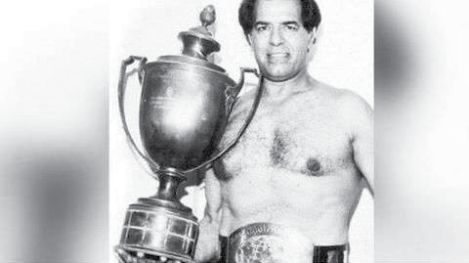
"...it is definitely disappointing to not win a medal but I am sure they will bounce back in the world championships in two months' time. Bad results should be taken in stride and we should look to rebuild things after that," he stressed.

Comic book series on 'Superhero' Dara Singh to motivate youth in Punjab

AMRITSAR, AUG 30 (PTI): The heroic exploits of legendary Dara Singh, in the ring and outside it, would soon come in a graphic avatar as a comic book series is set to be launched on the wrestling icon's life.

Graphic artist George Emmanuel, speaking to PTI over the phone from Mumbai, said Dara Singh was as 'institution' known across the globe for his achievements in wrestling as well as the film industry.

"The motive behind the launch of the comic book



series, particularly in Punjab, is related to the rising drug menace among youth. The comic books would motivate youth and children on

how to exercise, proper diet, and valuable tips to keep the body fit and fine," Emmanuel said.

The son of the wrestler,

Vindoo Dara Singh, may introduce the comic series first in Punjab in November close to his father's birth anniversary, he said. Dara Singh was born on November 19, 1928.

Tips for achieving a fit and muscular physique would also there in these comics, he said. Eye-catching sketches of the sturdy Dara Singh in the comic series will motivate children to work-out, Emmanuel said.

"The dialogues will be by Mumbai-based Maruk, who is a renowned dialogue writ-

er," he said.

Dara Singh defeated renowned and powerful competitors in the field of wrestling which put him in lime-light worldwide, Emmanuel said adding all this would be a part of the narrative in these comics.

Dara Singh's childhood in the village where he a considerable time will feature in the stories which will show how friendly and generous he was with his childhood friends.

Emmanuel was asked about the idea behind the comic book series.

"I had an idea which was discussed with Vindoo Dara Singh who was happy to know that a comic series book could be introduced about the life of his late father," Emmanuel said.

Indian youth need role models like Dara Singh, a pure Punjabi at heart, and it would help in keeping them away from drug addiction, he added. Dara Singh would be depicted as a superhero in the comics, Emmanuel said.

The legendary wrestler had earned the title 'Rustom-e-Hind' in his life time, he

added.

"The work on illustration was on at war-footing for the last nine months with high-end computer techniques. Free on-line access would also be provided," Emmanuel said.

Telling about his past experience, Emmanuel said earlier he had developed a graphic novel based on the life of Sikh warrior Hari Singh Nalwa, which he claimed was a unique do graphic documentation on the Sikh general and how he used weaponry in battles.

Pompeo to raise issue of terrorism with new Pakistani leadership: Report

ISLAMABAD/WASHINGTON, AUG 30 (PTI): The issue of combatting terrorism will be raised by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during his talks here with Pakistan's new leadership next week, according to a media report.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Tuesday had confirmed that Pompeo will be in Islamabad on September 5 but now it has emerged that he would not be alone on the important trip. He will be accompanied by Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Joseph F Dunford.

"The secretary of state and the chairman are going to fly in to Islamabad to meet with the new government that's in place there now," Defence Secretary James Mattis said during a news briefing at



the Pentagon on Tuesday.

The need to fight terrorists would be "the primary

part" of their discussions with Pakistani leaders, he was quoting by Dawn news-

paper as saying.

Dunford, who also attended the briefing, said the

US had "permanent interests in South Asia" and wanted to "maintain a presence (there) to have influence in that region".

Pompeo and General Dunford are expected to meet Prime Minister Imran Khan.

In their talks with Pakistani officials, the delegation will "make very clear what we have to do, all of our nations, in meeting our common foe, the terrorists," Mattis said.

"And make that a primary part of the discussion."

General Dunford said that the US would maintain both diplomatic and security presence in South Asia and the form of that presence was going to change over time.

General Dunford's inclusion in the delegation dispels

the impression that this was not a proper visit but just a stopover, as US state and defence secretaries were both going to be in New Delhi next week for the first two-plus-two talks between the US and India, the report said.

But Secretary Mattis' emphasis on the need to fight terrorists reignites the controversy stirred last week after Secretary Pompeo's first call to Khan, it said.

The US Department of State issued a statement after the call, saying that "Secretary Pompeo raised the importance of Pakistan taking decisive action against all terrorists operating in Pakistan".

Pakistan rejected the US statement as incorrect, saying that the issue of terrorism was not discussed.

At the Pentagon briefing,

Secretary Mattis avoided whipping up the controversy and did not comment when a journalist asked if he trusted the new Pakistani leadership's commitment to fight terrorism.

Mattis, however, said that Secretary Pompeo and he were going to New Delhi for talks aimed at further strengthening a growing partnership with India.

"We see the strengthening of India's democracy, its military, its economy as a stabilising element in the world, he said.

"And we want to make certain that where we have common interests, we are working together."

He said that a number of agreements would be finalised at this two-plus-two meeting in New Delhi.

Germany to provide euro 120 mn soft loan for Clean Ganga Mission: Envoy

NEW DELHI, AUG 30

(PTI): In an effort to

clean the Ganges, Germany is providing a soft loan of euro 120 million to India to strengthen sewage water treatment infrastructure in Uttarakhand, Charge d'Affaires Jasper Wieck said today.

Elaborating on the work done by the German Embassy, Wieck said the project would focus on extension and replacement of sewerage system (around 360 kilometres) including complete house connection, construction of sewage treatment plants of around 15 million litres per day (mld). The initiative also includes construction of 13 sewage pumping stations.

"The purpose of the project is to reduce the inflow of untreated waste water in River Ganga and, thus, to improve the wa-



ter quality of the river," Wieck said.

In 2015, the German government to India committed an interest

subsidised loan of up to euro 120 million through German Development Bank KfW for financing investments such as

construction of sewerage network and sewage treatment plants.

He added that the German development

agency GIZ has prepared a 'Ganga Box', aimed to target schools-going children and inform them about the river.

Vikarant Tyagi, a project coordinator with GIZ, said the concept 'Ganga book' was planned on the lines of 'Danube Book' when the cleaning of the European river was undertaken.

The Ganga book would have information mythological, socio-cultural, economic importance about the river and suggestions to avoid pollution, like not dumping plastic in the water body.

"The aim is to bring change in the behaviour of people towards the river. We have piloted this projected in a government school in Uttarakhand and plan to do replicate it across the state," Tyagi said.

Discussions are on to give the Ganga Box prototype to the National Clean Ganga Mission so that it could replicate it in other states.

No guarantee for waivers to India from US sanctions over Russian arms purchase: US official

WASHINGTON, AUG 30

(PTI): There is no guar-

antee for a special waiver for India from the punitive US sanctions over its weapons purchase from Russia as Washington has concerns over the nearly five billion deal, a top Pentagon official has warned ahead of the first 2+2 dialogue in New Delhi next week.

The Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) waiver is intended at preventing US sanctions on countries like India. New Delhi is planning to buy five S-400 Triumf missile air defence systems from Russia for around USD 4.5 billion.

US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis has publicly been a strong proponent of granting India waivers from sanctions.

"We understand historical India-Russia relationship. We want to have a conversation with India not on legacy, but on future. On CAATSA, Mattis did plea for an exception for India, but I can't guarantee a waiver will be used for future purchases," Randall Schriver, the Pentagon's assistant secretary of defence for

Asian and Pacific Security Affairs, said.

"Russia is not a country you want to have a strategic partnership," he told an audience at the Carnegie Endowment For International Peace in Washington yesterday.

He said that the CAATSA was the result of Russian behaviour, not Indian.

"I can't sit here and tell you that they would be exempt, that we would use that waiver," Schriver said as he discussed Defence Secretary James Mattis' priorities for the upcoming 2+2 India meeting in New Delhi.

There was an "impression that we are going to completely protect the India relationship, insulate India from any fallout from this legislation no matter what they do. I would say that is a bit misleading. We would still have very significant concerns if India pursued major new platforms and systems (from Russia)," he said.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is travelling to New Delhi with Defence Secretary Mattis for the inaugural 2+2 ministerial dialogue on September 6.

Trump warns of "violence" if Democrats win midterm elections

WASHINGTON, AUG 30 (AP): President Donald Trump urged evangelical leaders this week to get out the vote ahead of the upcoming midterm elections and warned of "violence" by opponents if they fail.

Trump made the dire warning at a White House dinner Monday evening attended by dozens of conservative Christian pastors, ministers and supporters of his administration.

Trump was stressing the stakes in November when he warned that, if Democrats win, they "will overturn everything that we've done and they'll do it quickly and violently," according to attendees and audio of his closed-door remarks obtained by media outlets, including The New York Times.

He specifically mentioned self-described antifa, or anti-fascist groups, describing them as "violent people."

Asked yesterday what he meant, Trump told reporters, "I just hope there won't be violence."

"If you look at what happens ... there's a lot of unnecessary violence all over the world, but also in this country. And I don't want to see it," Trump said.

At the dinner, Trump talked up his administration's efforts to bolster conservative Christian causes and urged those gathered to get their "people" to vote, warning the efforts could quickly be undone.



"I just ask you to go out and make sure all of your people vote," Trump said, according to The Times.

"Because if they don't it's Nov 6 if they don't vote we're going to have a miserable two years and we're going to have, frankly, a very hard period of time because then it just gets to be one election you're one election away from losing everything you've got."

Ohio Pastor Darrell Scott, an early Trump supporter who attended the dinner, said he interpreted the comments differently than the media has portrayed them.

"It wasn't any kind of dire warning," Scott said, "... except the things that we've been working on as a body of voters will be reversed and overturned."

"What he was saying," Scott continued, is that "there are some violent people ... but it wasn't that we've got to worry about murder on the streets and chaos and anarchy ... just that the things we've worked for will be overturned."

Tony Perkins, the president of the Family Research Council and another attendee, said he, too, interpreted Trump's message as a warning not to be complacent.

While Trump did make a reference to antifa, Perkins told CNN, "I don't think anybody in the room suggested that there was going to be violence across the nation."

"I did not interpret him to say that the outcome of the election is going to lead (to) violence in the streets, and violence in the churches," he told CNN.



Trump unblocks more critics on Twitter as ordered by court

SAN FRANCISCO, AUG 30

(AFP): More critics of

US Donald Trump found themselves unblocked from his Twitter account, in keeping with a court ruling that he can't shut out opposing viewpoints.

A federal district court judge in May ruled that blocking people from the president's @realDonaldTrump account violated First Amendment free speech rights in a case brought by The Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University.

The seven people named in the suit were unblocked as the decision was appealed.

The institute tweeted yesterday that it had gotten word that many people on a list of 41 more Twitter users it had

given to the Department of Justice had also been unblocked by @realDonaldTrump.

"We're pleased to see the White House take steps to comply with the district court's ruling that the First Amendment prohibits the president from blocking Twitter users simply because they have criticized him," the institute said.

"However, we continue to receive reports that individuals beyond those we identified remain blocked from the @realDonaldTrump account." The institute argued that it was incumbent on the White House to immediately unblock any Twitter users shut off from the president's account because of political viewpoints.

Rupee slides further by 15p to end at fresh lifetime low of 70.74 to dollar

MUMBAI, AUG 30 (PTI):

The rupee today slid further by 15 paise to close at a fresh lifetime low of 70.74 to the dollar due to month-end demand for the US currency from importers and rising crude oil prices.

In the day trade, the rupee plunged to a record low of 70.90 to the dollar as firming oil prices fanned fears of widening current account deficit.

A stronger dollar in overseas markets and losses in local stocks markets also impacted the rupee sentiment.

The dollar index, which shows the dollar strength against a basket of currencies, was trading up 0.11 per cent at 94.56.

Earlier the rupee resumed lower at 70.64 against the previous closing level of 70.59 a dollar at the interbank foreign exchange market here. Later it fell to a record

low of 70.90 in volatile trade in morning deals.

The rupee pared some of the losses to trade near 70.69 in afternoon deals but slid in the last hour of trade to close at 70.74, a fall of 15 paise or 0.21 per cent against the US currency.

The domestic unit came under pressure on surging crude oil which held on its highest level in over a month, a dealer said.

The benchmark Brent crude firmed up 31 cents to USD 77.45 per barrel.

The British pound held firm after making its biggest gains in seven months the previous day, following comments from the European Union's chief negotiator offering Britain closing ties after Brexit.

Meanwhile, BSE Sensex slipped 33 points, or 0.08 per cent, to close at 38,690. The NSE Nifty declined 15 points, or 0.13 per cent, to 11,677 at close.

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RIVERDALE SEASON 3 FIRST LOOK: Just how many OMG moments can *Riverdale* fit into the first season three promo? To quote Mean Girls, "the limit does not exist." New footage from season three that will leave you gasping, like Archie (KJ Apa) in prison, Alice (Mädchen Amick) and FP (Skeet Ulrich) in bed together, Kevin (Casey Cott) getting some action in school and Jughead (Cole Sprouse) discovering something truly sinister.

Alec Baldwin exits 'Joker' film

LOS ANGELES, AUG 30 (PTI): Actor Alec Baldwin has dropped out of "Joker" with Joaquin Phoenix in the lead.

Two days ago, the 60-year-old actor had joined the film's cast and was supposed to play the role of Bruce Wayne/ Batman's father, Thomas Wayne in the origin story of one of DC's most iconic antagonists.

In an interview with USA TODAY, Baldwin said the he is no longer attached to project and cited "scheduling" issues as the reason for his departure.

"I'm no longer doing that movie. I'm sure there are 25 guys who can play that part," he said.

The actor also took to Twitter to share the news,



saying "Let me state, for the record, that I have NOT been hired to play a role in Todd Phillips' 'JOKER' as some Donald Trump manqué. That is not happening."

To be directed by Phillips, who also co-wrote the script

with Scott Silver, the film is scheduled to begin shooting in a fortnight.

Also starring Robert De Niro, Zazie Beetz and Frances Conroy, Warner Bros has set October 4, 2019 as release date.

'GHOUL' NOT HOLDING A FINGER SPECIFICALLY AT ONE GOVERNMENT: DIRECTOR PATRICK GRAHAM

NEW DELHI, AUG 30 (PTI): There is a fascist government in place. Check. Instances of majoritarianism. Check. Clampdown on civil liberties. Check. This is what an dystopian society looks like.

Patrick Graham's Netflix Original, "Ghoul", ticks all the above checkboxes as a dystopian show and the director says the setting provided "vitality" to the series, which is essentially a horror thriller.

"First thing we wanted to do was to tell a good story. Basically, a compelling, exciting, edge-of-the-seat story. I think that is the primary objective of filmmakers.

"But add to the atmosphere and give an interesting context and that extra vitality and relevance, we kind of create an alternative reality. We thought having this kind of fascist dictatorship and this totalitarian society would provide nice atmospheric backdrop to the action," Graham told PTI in an interview.

When asked whether "Ghoul" is a commentary on the present situation in India and other parts of the world where sectarian divide is at its zenith, Patrick said they were not pointing finger at any particular group.

"Inherently, it does (hold a mirror to the society) because we have seen in the history the instances of fascist governments and tropes of



those governments. Clampdown on civil liberties, victimisation of ethnic minorities and use of torture and propaganda, these are some recognisable generic traits of fascist governments.

"Also in this day and age, we see the rise of populism and fear of immigrants and extreme right-wing governments that are almost becoming a norm. It does hold a mirror to life but its not holding a finger specifically at one government or one group of people," Graham said.

George Orwell's "1984", British graphic novel "V for Vendetta" and most recently "The Handmaids Tale" are some of the adaptations that

have used dystopia as a narrative devise and Graham said these books worked as an inspiration for him.

"We all love famous dystopian works of fiction. 'V for Vendetta' is one of my favourite graphic novels. '1984' left a huge impact. It is a fun genre to explore and I find it particularly interesting. Also, I don't think we have seen much of it in India," Graham said.

"Ghoul" is Netflix's first foray into the horror-genre in India and Graham believes there is a huge but untapped audience that yearns for scares of international standards.

"In India, there is a good, solid audience for adult-hor-

ror. We see that because films like 'Annabelle' and 'Conjuring' have been some of the most successful foreign films to come to Indian cinemas, so there is this hunger for horror in India.

"The horror films that were being made in India were probably catering to just one group of people, while ignoring the other sections, the one which is more familiar with American horror. There was ample opportunity and real niche to create homegrown, serious, adult-horror which is what we have tried to do," he said.

Starring Radhika Apte and Manav Kaul, "Ghoul" is currently available on Netflix.

Felt my personal approach needed to change: Abhishek Bachchan on two-year film break

MUMBAI, AUG 30 (PTI): Abhishek Bachchan says he had reached a "complacency point in his career" and that made him realise that he need to take a break professionally.

The actor, who is back with 'Manmarziyaan' after two years, said taking a back step was scary and he did fear he would be forgotten as there is this widely held notion of being out of sight is out of mind in the industry.

"It is not just about this industry, life in general, it is about out of sight, out of mind. Initially it was a thought that I had. But I was very confident that it would not become an issue," Abhishek told

PTI in an interview.

The actor, best known for his roles in "Guru", "Yuva" and "Dhoom" franchise, said feeling stuck was a bigger fear than being forgotten for him.

"...I just wanted to re-evaluate where I was in life, wanted to re-energise myself. There was a definite complacency that had come into my work and I wanted to change that," he said.

For Abhishek, 42, "it was not the films that he was doing but how he was doing it that was bothering him."



"I have worked very hard on all the films I have done. I have loved all the films that I have done and I have enjoyed every one of them. (But) I felt my personal approach needed to change."

As a leading man his 2015 film "All is Well" did not do well at the box office. He was then seen in "Housefull 3" with Akshay Kumar.

Asked if he ever felt that his viability as a hero was questioned, Abhishek said, "The films like 'Happy New Year' and 'Housefull 3' were doing well, they were enormous hits. But you have to go beyond that. It was a more personal decision than a commercial one."

In his break, Abhishek focused on supporting his football and kabbadi teams.

"...Sports is very inspirational, you learn about team spirit, fighting spir-

it, how to push against all odds and still try and come out victorious. I have been a sports man all my life. Having my football and kabbadi team has helped me so much. The two years when I was not making films, I was concentrating on my supporting teams and setting them up. It is very rewarding."

Today, the actor said, he is a "lot of more focused".

"In all these films, when you feel the onus of the film is not on you, you feel liberated and it becomes very easy. But your job is not meant to be easy, it is meant to be tough and you are meant to feel and take the pressure. That is more important."

The actor does not look back at his past career "fondly".

"When you see what you have done in the past, you figure out a better way and that is good as it means you are evolving as an actor," he said.

"Each individual has to learn to grapple with success and failure themselves. It has different definitions for everybody. With success, you learn humility and from failure you need to learn strength," he added. "Manmarziyaan" is directed by Anurag Kashyap.



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