

Editorial

Thursday, November 15, 2018

Sangai of the Sangai festival

The state government, in its efforts to showcase and promote the multifarious potentials of the state has been organizing the Manipur Tourism Mega-Fest which is arguably the biggest and most extravagant affair in the state every year from 21st to 30th November and has been renamed 'Sangai Festival' since 2010 as a way to highlight the uniqueness of the Brow-Antlered Deer of Manipur. The state government, as has witnessed in the past, will spare no efforts or resources to make this year's much anticipated event beginning today an astounding success. Tourists, dignitaries, cultural troupes, artisans and participants from abroad will also be witnessing the event which will undoubtedly provide an international feel to the whole affair. In all, the whole exercise can only be described as an attempt to showcase and promote the best of what the state has to offer to the world in terms of art and culture, handloom, handicrafts & fine arts, indigenous sports, cuisines & music, eco & adventure sports as well as the scenic natural beauty of the land and ethnic diversity of Manipur Society. The intention of the state government cannot be doubted. What remains unclear is the impact of this annual tryst on the state in terms of improvements or achievements of its intended objectives- and more importantly, what should have been inferred from this recurring disappointments in terms of the results rather than the actual hosting of the event which has been successful for the most part albeit with a few unfortunate and violent incidents which have failed to mar the spirits of the public.

And while the euphoric public is anticipating the extravaganza like every year, the overall atmosphere in the state is muted and even cautious. It would be interesting to see what the combined impact of demonetization and the ongoing economic blockade will have on the turnout and spending habits of the visiting public.

Admittedly, the limelight for the next many days will be on the Festival. And as with every past years, very few, if ever will even wonder about the plight of the shy and gentle endangered creatures whose namesake festival draws thousands of crowds from far and near to witness and experience the best the state has to offer. The total population of Sangai is at best contentious, for according to the 2013 census report, there are 160 Sangais (after allowing for standard error) in its natural habitat at Keibul Lamjao which jumped to 260 according to the latest census carried out by the Forest Department this year. What is certain though is that the Ithai Barrage has started to wreak havoc with the natural habitat of floating biomass or Phumdis on which the endangered and delicate species have thrived as the natural process of soaking up of vital nutrients by the biomass from the ground during the dry season has been prevented by the perennial waterlogging of the lake due to the barrage. While many schemes and plans are in the offing to address the problem, going by experience, there still remains the very real and imminent danger of the natural habitat of the endangered Sangai thinning down and disappearing, and along with it the prized state animal for good if action is not taken in time and in right earnest. There still is a very distinct possibility of the state holding a toast to a mirage.

Mary Kom has a tough opponent in Kim in AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships

New Delhi, Nov. 15

Five-time world champion M. C. Mary Kom is among seven other boxers who have been accorded first-round byes, but she is the only Indian to get one of the top-seeding slots for the 10th AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships which begin at the KD Jhadav Hall here today.

The No. 2 seed Indian in 48 Kg Category will not have to enter the ring until Sunday when she takes on the winner of the preliminary round bout between Kazakhstan's Algerim Kassenayeva and American Jazzell Bobadilla. The pugilist from Mongolia, Jargalan Ochirbat in light fly (48kg) has been given the top seed position. Mary Kom, who is chasing her sixth world crown and considered the hosts' best bet to win gold, is placed in the second half of the draw. She faces two main hurdles in Uzbekistan's Julusa Sultonaliyeva and North Korean Kim Hyang Hyang Mi, too have received first-round byes. However, the Indian's main opponent in the semifinals could be the North Korean and also the winner of a silver medal at the ABC Confederation.

The other Indians who have received first-round byes include Rani Pinki (51), Sonia (57), Sarita Devi (60), Lovlina Borgohain (69), Saweety (75) and Seena Punia (81+) But Manisha (54), Smranjit Kaur (64) and Bhagyabati Kachari (81) will jump into fray straightaway as their weight categories have more entries and they will have to fight at least a



couple of rounds to qualify for the quarterfinals, which are slated for Tuesday next.

India will also hope a medal from former world champion and five-time Asian gold winner, Sarita Devi in lightweight category (60 kg), the second best boxer after Mary Kom. However, the fourth-seed woman, is likely to take on Chinese Yang Wenlu, the defending world champion, and Russian Anastasia Beliakova, the Rio Olympics bronze medal winner earlier than she would want to. However, Seema Punia in heavy weight class (+81) is the only Indian who can get into the medal round with least efforts as she will play her quarterfinals, after having been given the first-round bye. In the quarters, she will be running into Chinese Xiaoli Yang. This is the only category which has 10 boxers in fray

and six of them have been accorded the byes. But she will have to be wary of Yang Xiaoli of China, the back-to-back gold winner from Jeju and Astana.

Glasgow CWG bronze winner, Pinki Rani, in 51 kg will have a tough time as the Indian, drawn in the second half, has two likely contenders for medals in Chinese Chang Yuan, the Asian Games gold medalist, and England's Ebonie Jones, a highly talented boxer.

Sonia in featherweight class, making her debut in the Worlds and placed in the second half, will have some torrid moments facing the likes Chinese Yin Junhua, the Rio Games silver medalist, German Ornella Gabriel Wahnner and CWG silver medal winner, Michaela Walsh from Ireland in early rounds.

It will not be easy for Lovlina, Saweety and Seema as their

opponents come with greater reputation. Saweety, the silver medal winner from Jeju worlds in 2014, has the top-seeded Mireille Nouchka Fontijn from the Netherlands who is a silver medal winner from Rio Games, and other Europeans and Asians in her half of the draw.

The 21-year-old Lovlina has to contend with Finland's Elina Gustafsson, a silver medal from the last edition in Astana and Taipei's Chen Nien-Chin, a world championships bronze medalist in the first half of the draw.

OPENING CEREMONY

The ceremony opened with performers projecting India's rich culture in various dance forms— Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Odissi and folk—getting a big applause. The martial arts exponents also brought out their expertise during the ceremony which kept the spectators mesmerized.

The Shillong Chamber Choir, comprising 25 members, including 15 singers, soloists and musicians, made the audience and foreign participants regale with their foot-tapping music. The choir members rocked the stage, making the occasion a memorable one with melodious performances as the pianist, Neil Nongkynrih, conducting the orchestra to finesse. Their western classical music, Khasi folk songs and opera singing made the group endearing to the audience.

The Light & Sound show, including LED drummers and fusion music, also captivated the participants and the audience alike as they enjoyed the show.

Yellow alert and orange alert in 6 Kerala districts ahead of Cyclone Gaja

Agency
Kerala, Nov. 15

With Cyclone Gaja expected to hit Tamil Nadu on November 15 and 16, six districts in Kerala have been issued yellow and orange alerts on both days.

According to tweets by the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), a yellow alert has been issued in three districts on November 15, namely Kollam, Pathanamthitta and Idukki. On November 16, four districts, Kottayam, Pathanamthitta, Ernakulam and Alappuzha, have

yellow alerts, while Idukki is on orange alert.

The SDMA tweeted that Kerala could be expected to get heavy rainfall due to the cyclone, according to the IMD, due to which the alerts have been issued. "Because of the Cyclonic Storm 'GAJA' over West central and adjoining East central & South Bay of Bengal, IMD has forecasted heavy to very heavy rainfall in isolated places of Kerala, 15th November onwards," the tweet read.

The SDMA has issued public alerts warning people not to go to

hilly areas between 7 am and 7 pm on both days. Tweets put out have also warned the public to not stop by small rapids and water channels in hilly areas.

Instructions to pack all certificates and valuable jewellery in water proof containers or bags have also been given.

Ensure that all certificates and valuable jewellery are packed in water proof containers or bags and stored at a height. An emergency list which includes 100 grams of dried grapes or dates, biscuits or rusk, a knife, 10 chlorine tablets for purifying water, one battery

bank or necessary batteries to power the torch, fully charged phones with call balance, matchbox or lighter and necessary money have been asked to be kept ready.

Those in the vulnerable districts have been asked to follow a few radio stations closely for timely updates on the weather. Emergency helpline number has been given as 1077 along with the STD code of the district the call is being made from. Further, people have also been instructed to keep numbers of districts panchayat officials at hand, in case of an emergency.

Assam govt to produce film on Srimanta Sankardev

Agency
Guwahati, Nov 15

The Assam government will produce a film on the life and works of the 15th century saint-scholar Srimanta Sankardev. Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal directed the cultural affairs department to initiate steps for the purpose, an official release said on Wednesday.

While reviewing the structural design of the proposed 'Srimanta Sankardev International Museum' here, Sonowal said that the social and religious reformer laid the foundation of a pluralistic Assamese society by bringing people of different ethnic groups together, it said.

The chief minister said that the museum would spread the message on universal values.

Name changed

I, the undersigned Hemant Kumar Jain, do hereby declare that I have relinquished and abandoned the use of my old name Hemant Kumar Sethi, as I have assume my new name Hemant Kumar Jain. Hence I shall be called and known as Hemant Kumar Jain from today.

Sd/
Hemant Kumar Jain
Paona Bazar Imphal

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PM Modi felicitates winners of first India-Singapore Hackathon

Agency
Singapore, Nov 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday felicitated the winners of the first India-Singapore Hackathon, a platform for the youth of the two countries to harness and showcase their innovations. The Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) conducted the hackathon that included solving eight problem statements.

"PM Narendra Modi met and felicitated the winning teams of India Singapore Hackathon, agreed to during the visit of PM to Singapore in June 2018," Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Raveesh Kumar tweeted. "Happy to have met innovators who won prizes in the first ever Singapore-India Hackathon. They talked about their extensive work. I was impressed by their passion and commitment towards solving problems our world faces," Modi said.

Twenty teams, each from both the countries comprising university and college students selected on nationwide basis, participated in the

event to harness and showcase the innovation potential of the youth. Each of these teams had three students and one mentor.

From India, an 83-member delegation comprising 60 students, 20 mentors and three officials of the AICTE visited Singapore for the event which Modi said is a "boost to technology, innovation and youth power".

"Platforms like the Singapore-India Hackathon serve as excellent opportunities for our youngsters to showcase their work. They also serve as forums to learn about pioneering innovations by youngsters from other nations and institutes. A win-win for our students!" Modi said in a tweet.

First prize of SGD 10,000, second prize of SGD 6,000 and third prize of SGD 4,000 were announced for each of the three winners from India and Singapore, the Indian High Commission in Singapore has said. The eight "Problems Statements" presented to the participants were in the areas of mapping, synchronised output of diverse social media, shared digital identity verification, effective number estimate, space management and allotment, effective learning and

personal security.

Prime Minister Modi also met the National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets Thursday who were in Singapore as a part of a cadet exchange programme. "Spent time with NCC cadets, who got the opportunity to come to Singapore as a part of a cadet exchange programme. They shared their memorable learnings and experiences with me," he said.

Fashion designer, help killed in south Delhi farmhouse; her tailor among 3 suspects

Agency
New Delhi, Nov. 15

A fashion designer and her domestic help were found murdered at her farmhouse in south Delhi's Vasant Kunj on Thursday morning. Three people, one of them her employee, have been arrested, police said.

"The woman has been identified as Mala Lakhani, 53, and the help as 50-year-old Bahadur and the three accused as Rahul (her employee), Rehmat and Bashir," police said. Mala used to run a boutique in Green Park and Rahul worked as a tailor at her workshop, which she

ran from the ground floor of her farmhouse. Rehmat and Bashir, also tailors by profession, were visiting

Rahul at the workshop when he allegedly got into an argument with Lakhani over some 'unpaid dues' at around 10pm, police said.

The three then attacked her with knives and stabbed Bahadur too when he tried to raise an alarm, police said adding the accused then drove off in Lakhani's Honda City car. Later around 1.30 am, the three surrendered at the Vasant Kunj police station and confessed to their crime, police said.

The bodies have been sent for postmortem.