

'Army looking into reports of snipers entering Valley'

NEW DELHI, OCT 30/- Army chief General Bipin Rawat on Monday said the Army was looking into reports of snipers entering the Kashmir Valley to target defence personnel. Three defence personnel were killed in



sniper attacks by Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists since mid-September, prompting the law enforcement agencies to re-calibrate their strategy to thwart such strikes by the Pakistan-based group.

Responding to the pattern of attacks, the Army chief said the security force was studying whether the attacks were carried out by snipers. "Whether these attacks have been done by snipers or not, this is something we are still studying. But to say that snipers have infiltrated and that they have sniper weapons... we have not found any sniper weapon," Rawat told reporters. He said to say snipers have come into the Valley was "premature". PTI

IN BRIEF

Justice Vijai Kumar Bist appointed Chief Justice of Sikkim

GANGTOK: Justice Vijai Kumar Bist on Tuesday took oath as the new Chief Justice of Sikkim. High Court. Governor of Sikkim Ganga Prasad administered the oath of office to Bist at Ashirwad Hall, Raj Bhawan. The office of Chief Justice fell vacant after retirement of Justice S.K. Agnihotri. On November 1, 2008, he was elevated as Judge of the Uttarakhand High Court from the Bar. EOIC (Pix on Page-3)

Doordarshan cameraman killed in Maoist attack

RAIPUR: Two policemen and a cameraman of Doordarshan were killed and two others were injured in a Maoist attack on Tuesday in poll-bound Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district. PTI

CTA report on Tibet highlights plights in the plateau

NIRMALYA BANERJEE

KOLKATA, OCT 30/- In a report on the situation in Tibet prepared by Central Tibetan Administration president Losang Sangay, the CTA has exposed in detail the severity of Chinese administration in Tibet, but has also lauded the "middle way approach" of the Dalai Lama as the only pragmatic approach to the Tibet question. The report was released in Delhi on Monday.

Sangay in his preface writes that for Tibetans in Tibet, the effects of the violation of rights and other hardships described here are direct and severe. This is evidenced most dramatically in the growing number of Tibetans who have self-immolated.

He does not claim that today life in Tibet is one of guaranteed misery, or that every word spoken or released by the PRC is a lie. "It is that whatever positive, or usually, at best, inoffensive elements of Tibetan wellbeing and face imprisonment and torture, many self-immolators drink kerosene and wrap barbed wire around their body."

Loss of land, loss of political power, loss of culture and loss of the Tibetan economy and the takeover of the job market by Chinese settlers have been the sum-total of Chinese occupation of Tibet since the first entry of Peoples Liberation Army troops to the plateau in 1950, says the report.

Describing the process as "Sinicization of Tibet," it narrates how nomads were removed forcibly from the grasslands, away from their animal herds and their source of livelihood, and resettled in permanent housing structures, which bring no income, reducing formerly self-sufficient families to impoverishment. An estimated 2.25 million nomads live on the Tibetan Plateau, says the report, but between 2006 and 2012, around two million nomads

were removed from their land, curtailing their livelihood. In a way the problem is similar to what tribal people face in some parts of mainland India, denied the right to earn their livelihood from forests. For environmental protection was the reason for the fencing off of pastureland with policies of the Chinese government such as "convert farmland to forest" and "revert pasture to grassland."

The Tibetan people see massive development activities undertaken on their land that bring little benefit to them cart away Tibetan natural resources to a resource-hungry China.

When PLA of China invaded in 1949-50, Tibet was an independent state, the report argues. "It is not disputed that at different periods throughout its long history, Tibet came under various degrees of foreign influence: the Mongols, the Gorkhas of Nepal, the Manchu emperors of China and the British rulers of India. Few states in the world today have not been subjected to foreign domination or influence at some point in their history. In Tibet's case, the degree and length of foreign influence and interference was quite limited."

Since 1911 the Chinese overthrew foreign Manchu rule and became the masters of their own country, the report says, and quotes a report of the International Commission of Jurists' Legal Enquiry Committee on Tibet on Tibet's legal status to argue: "Forty years of independence is clearly sufficient time for a country to be regarded as such by the international community." The convention between the British and Tibetan rulers after the Younghusband expedition of 1904 "constituted Britain's implicit recognition of Tibet as a state competent to conclude treaties on its own behalf without needing to consult any external power."



Within months of the escape of the Dalai Lama in 1959, around 80,000 Tibetans made arduous escapes and reached the borders of India, Nepal, and Bhutan. Besides the oft-quoted report that over 1.2 million Tibetans died between 1949 and 1979 and a Spanish court issuing an arrest warrant against a former Chinese president for committing genocide in Tibet, the report also mentions about denial of passports to Tibetans in China as an instance of human rights violation. "Many Tibetans had spent years obtaining passports to legally travel to India for the 2017 Kalachakra ceremony, a Tibetan religious ceremony led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama held from January 3-14. However, the Chinese government made sure to place severe travel restrictions in order to prevent the devotees from travelling there." Rampant mining has caused severe destruction to

Tibet's environment, it says. "The ancient Bon culture of Tibet, which believed in the presence of deities in the mountains and lakes, gave rise to belief in the sacredness of the ecosystem and the subsequent conservation of the fragile plateau for thousands of years. The rapid melting of glaciers leaves many parts of east and southern Tibet with fewer snowcapped mountains." A new trend of building mega dams poses an even more serious threat to the world's highest plateau, it says. "The PRC, determined to leave no stone unturned in its bid for control over Tibet, has continually attempted to claim the authority to recognize the reincarnation of lamas." It refers to Order No. 5 on "management measures for the reincarnation of living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism" which makes it compulsory for all reincarnate lamas to register and receive government approval.

"Under the pretext of promoting bilingual education," the Government of China has implemented Mandarin as the medium of instruction in Tibetan schools. The current language policies have not only prevented learning Tibetan language in schools but rendered it to be unmarketable and without value in personal and professional life." Arguing that the middle way approach of the Dalai Lama was "a win-win proposition and a pragmatic position that safeguards the vital interests of all concerned parties," it says: "For Tibetans, it offers the protection and preservation of their identity and dignity; for China, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the motherland." According to the report, it "seeks genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people and engagement with the Chinese leadership for the benefit of both the Chinese and Tibetan people."

SKM seeks support in North District in ensuing polls

DEEPAK SHARMA

MANGAN, OCT 30/- A two-day-level meeting of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha at Malling on Monday, October 29, 2018, in the district, Palden Lachungpa said that the Sikkim Democratic Front government had policies they had failed to implement, nor had they carried out any development activities. People should understand the ground reality and support SKM to form the government.

SKM North District president Gyalsen Lachungpa said SKM had a support base in North and would form the government with co-operation of the people. People of Malling ward talked about their problems. Their cultivable



At the SKM meeting -- EOI Photo

lands had been damaged in landslides. No initiative had been taken till now to protect their areas and the rivers that flowed from the problem of recurring landslides. Unemployed youths were frustrated. They should get employment under the SKM government. The reconstruction of houses damaged in earthquakes

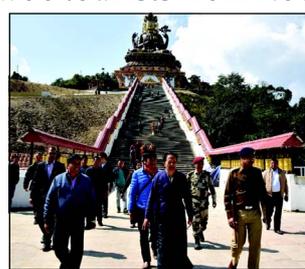
Tallest Chenrezig statue in Sikkim to woo tourists from Nov

GANGTOK, OCT 30/-

Nestled in the snow-capped mountains of Sikkim, a new Buddhist pilgrimage site, home to a 137-foot statue of Chenrezig, is set to woo tourists from November 1.

According to the Sikkim government, the project was still not completed due to shortage of materials and funds.

The project, which has been a challenging feat for the engineers because of the rough terrain, he said. The project, which started in 2009, was consecrated by the Dalai Lama in March earlier this year. It was funded and constructed under the supervision of the Department of Culture and the Department of Buildings and Housing. Another official at Chief Minister Pawan Chaming's office said the chief minister had conceptualized the idea of making Sikkim a "Shingkhim," meaning paradise, by constructing statues of Lord Buddha and Guru Padmasambhava in the



The statue of Chenrezig -- Shekhar Khawas

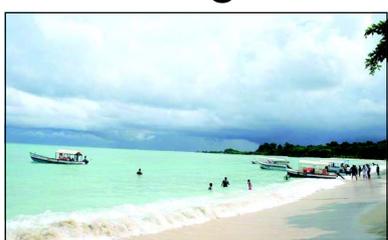
state. "The popular Buddhist belief is that any altar is incomplete without the presence of statues of Lord Buddha. Guru Padmasambhava and Chenrezig, headed, Sikkim has two more Buddhist pilgrimage circuits in south Sikkim - Namchi, home to 135-foot statue of Guru Padmasambhava and Ravangla, playing host to 130-foot statue of Lord Buddha. PTI

Organic farming in Neil Island

PORT BLAIR, OCT 30/- The Agriculture department of the Union territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is trying to popularise organic farming with the aim to convert the archipelago into organic island, a top official has said.

Organic farming is free of chemical pesticides and chemical fertilisers and it also helps in biodiversity conservation and environmental protection, Director of Agriculture, R V Singh told PTI. "We are trying to create awareness among the farmers and the consumers the benefit of organic farming," Singh has said. The aim is to convert the whole Union Territory into an organic farming island. In tune with these efforts, being made to create more awareness among farmers and consumers.

The director of Agriculture has said the department has already selected the Neil island to take up organic farming. Neil island which



is located 37 km to the south of the main group of islands of Andaman is known as the 'vegetable bowl' of the Andamans. The Neil island has immense potential and is favourably placed for organic farming due to less use of chemical fertilisers and abundant species.

Currently, organic farming is

being taken up on a small scale in about 121 hectares of the Union Territory, he said. Even the Central Island Agricultural Research Institute (CIARI) has developed model coconut organic farms to showcase to farmers, according to Singh.

Authorities have been working

to train employees and implement a partnership guarantee model and organic markets are being developed through local marketing programmes so that organic produce can be made available to household consumers.

The small and marginal farmers of Tushnabad village under South Andaman district, who can't afford costly agricultural inputs have asked the Agriculture department to help them with organic farming. The farmers want to move towards organic farming because of lower costs and higher margins under organic system. The farmers of this remote village have written letter to the Department of Agriculture, A&N Administration seeking support and assistance to take up organic farming.

This is the first time that any village panchayat has taken initiative to go for total organic rather than the department taking such initiative, according to the director of Agriculture. PTI

Awareness movement on MLA disqualification planned

SUJAL PRADHAN

GANGTOK, OCT 30/- The Joint Action Committee (JAC) for MLA Disqualification on Monday said the JAC will start a movement in Sikkim to create awareness among the people. JAC has filed a case in Sikkim Legislative Assembly pressing for the disqualification of seven Sikkim Krantikari Morcha MLAs who had

later defected to the ruling Sikkim Democratic Front. "We have decided on a Jan Andolan or people's movement which will be organized in a very non-violent way," Chief Coordinator, JAC, Nawin Kiran Pradhan said in Gangtok. On November 19, the next hearing has been scheduled by the Assembly. "We are hopeful the Sikkim Legislative Assembly will do justice on the 19th but at the same time we will start our movement," Pradhan said.

