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Results to weather EVM storm today

EC rejects demand of 22 parties to check VVPAT slips before counting

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The counting of votes for the Lok Sabha polls would be held on Thursday in the shadow of a raging controversy over security of the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and charges that they were being rigged. The Election Commission has rejected the demand by 22 political parties that voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) slips be matched with EVM data before counting of votes.

The grueling and bitterly fought seven-phase polls that began on April 11 concluded on May 19. Barring Jammu & Kashmir and West Bengal, voting has been largely peaceful.

Security has been tightened across all the polling stations in the country with the Home Ministry directing extra-security around sensitive constituencies.

Most of the exit polls have predicted that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is on course to retain power for a second term, riding on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's charisma like the way he did in 2014.

However, the Opposition parties have trashed results of the exit polls, claiming that the BJP will suffer severe drubbing due to rising unemployment, farm distress and slowdown in the economy.

Around 67 per cent of the nearly 90 crore voters exercised

2019 Elections Battleground LOK SABHA

their franchise to elect 542 members of the Lok Sabha from 8,049 contestants.

Election Commission officials said the counting of votes will begin at 8 am on Thursday and results are expected only by late evening.

For the first time in Lok Sabha polls, the EC will tally vote count on EVMs with voter verified paper audit trail slips in five polling stations in each Assembly segment of a parliamentary constituency.

It will effectively mean that out of nearly 10.3 lakh polling stations, the EVM-VVPAT matching will take place in 20,600 such stations. In case of a mismatch, the results based on paper slip count will be considered as final.

Meanwhile, a day after 22 Opposition parties claimed they don't trust EVMs and demanded VVPAT slips be matched with EVM data before counting, the three-member EC on Wednesday rejected their demands saying there will not be any change in counting procedures.

The EC had made it clear to the parties on Tuesday that the old protocol would continue. The top officials of EC also met on Wednesday and decided to continue with

counting the slips at the end. The poll body is also learnt to have decided to count postal ballots simultaneously with electronic voting machine count due to the "sheer size" of the ballots received this time from service voters. The counting will involve the matching of VVPAT slips in five polling booths picked at random for each Assembly segment at the end of counting. As per procedure, postal ballots so far were the first to be counted.

As per EC, the exercise of counting postal ballots manually will itself take a couple of hours at least as the number of service voters stands at 18 lakh and these include personnel of the armed forces, Central police force personnel and State police personnel who are posted outside their constituencies. Diplomats and support staff posted in Indian embassies abroad are also counted as service voters. Out of the 18 lakh registered voters, 16.49 lakh have sent their postal ballots to their respective returning officers as on May 17.

Earlier, the Supreme Court had rejected Opposition's demand for at least 50 per cent VVPAT verification saying it is "not inclined to interfere".



Security personnel guard an EVM strongroom at Gole Market in New Delhi on Wednesday

Ranjani Dimri | Pioneer

Loser Opp raising EVM bogey: Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP president Amit Shah on Thursday accused the Opposition parties of "disrespecting" people's mandate by questioning the credibility of EVMs and "tarnishing" Indian democracy in the face of its "likely defeat" in the Lok Sabha elections.

Suspecting Opposition's motives in raising doubts about EVMs, Shah said they started protesting against EVMs only after the sixth phase of polling and intensified it after exit

polls, which have predicted a comfortable victory for the BJP-led NDA. "How can you question EVMs credibility on the basis of exit polls," he asked in his tweet.

He also termed as unconstitutional the demand of 22 Opposition parties that the Election Commission change its counting protocol and count VVPAT slips first, saying any decision in this regard is not possible without an all-party consensus.

Referring to the statements of some Opposition leaders like

Uppendra Kushwaha that people can take up arms and resort to violence, he said such comments have no place in democracy and questioned them for challenging democracy.

The Opposition in Bihar on Tuesday had alleged that attempts were being made to manipulate the Lok Sabha poll results in favour of the NDA, and warned that "blood may spill on the streets".

Opposition to EVMs amounts to disrespecting people's mandate, Shah said.

Opp raps EC, calls EVMs 'Electronic Victory Machines'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hours after the Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday rejected demand of 22 Opposition parties for VVPAT slips' check before the counting, the Opposition parties hit back saying the poll panel has lost its credibility and dubbed the electronic voting machines (EVMs) as "Electronic Victory Machines".

Congress spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi said the EC has rejected their request to check the VVPAT slips, "which we came to know through the media" reports. "The interesting thing is we have not received any formal orders yet," he said, adding earlier the poll panel had declined 15-20 requests of the party without giving any reason. He said the EC means "Eradicated Credibility" and EVMs have become "Electronic Victory Machines" for BJP.

The Congress Rajya Sabha MP said the EC, for "confidence building", should have accepted the request of 22 Opposition parties that "represent 75 per cent of the population". "During our talks

with the EC, they cited rule 56(B). But the rule 56(D) says for mandatory sample check of the VVPAT slips. Rule 56(B) and 56(D) are complete different things," he said.

Reacting to the EC decision, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury tweeted, "This goes against the spirit of the Supreme Court Order on VVPATs delivered before polling began. If the process has been so long drawn for the sake of integrity of the electoral process, why is (the) EC not adhering to the basic principle of testing the sample first?"

TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh tweeted, "A genuine and fair demand for transparency is chucked out the window without a reason. A dark day for Indian democracy!... By ignoring the genuine demand of the majority of partiesto, the EC has shown once again whose side it wants to take."

AAP leader and Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia tweeted if all the arguments of EC were accepted in past also, then no reform in election process was needed.

Opp ups Govt bid if NDA fails even by a whisker

Pawar contacts YSR chief, KCR, Naveen Patnaik

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Unfazed by the findings of the exit polls, the Opposition is continuing with its efforts to form a non-BJP front so as to form a Government in case the NDA falls short of the halfway mark even marginally.

While Congress chief Rahul Gandhi and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi have asked party workers and its Lok Sabha candidates not to believe the "fake and manipulated" exit polls, NCP supremo Sharad Pawar has established contact with YSR Congress leader Jagan Mohan Reddy, TRS leader K Chandrasekhara Rao and BJD chief Naveen Patnaik in the last 24 hours.

Sources said Pawar is believed to have convinced Jagan, KCR and Patnaik to join the Opposition rank to prevent Prime Minister Narendra Modi from staging a comeback.



Congress sources said Naveen Patnaik also received a call from Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath. Both Patnaik and Nath are Doon School pals. Patnaik so far has maintained equidistance from the NDA and Congress-led alliances, but recently he announced to support whoever "offers the best package" for Odisha.

Sources said Pawar's mission has been successful since all the three leaders are believed to have assured him of their

support by if the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) has the numbers to form a stable Government.

Pawar has already been in touch with TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Uttar Pradesh Mahatgathbandhan leaders Mayawati and Akhilesh Yadav, besides Congress leaders, including UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi.

While Pawar was tasked by Sonia to be the "catalyst"

between secular and non-BJP parties, Naidu has already held several rounds of meetings criss-crossing the country. On Tuesday late night, the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister called on his Karnataka counterpart, HD Kumaraswamy, and his father former PM HD Deve Gowda. Karnataka has a Congress-JD(S) alliance Government.

"Pawar's role will be crucial in bridging the possible differences between YSR and TDP or TRS. Jagan is also being pur-

sued by the BJP, which is trying to consolidate its numbers, just in case they require," said political sources.

A confident Rahul on his part urged party leaders to be "alert in the next 24 hours" and "be fearless as exit polls are fake". "The next 24 hours are important. Be alert and vigilant. Don't be afraid. You are fighting for the truth. Don't be disheartened by what the fake exit polls are propagating. Have faith in yourselves and the Congress. Your hard work will not go in vain, Jai Hindii," Rahul tweeted.

Priyanka too said in a message to party workers that they should not fall for "rumours" intended to make them drop their guard ahead of the counting of votes.

"My dear Congress workers, sisters and brothers... Don't let rumours and exit polls discourage you. This is being done just to break your determination. It is very important that you remain alert amid all this. Please continue to keep vigil outside strongrooms and counting centres. We are confident that our combined efforts will bear fruit," Priyanka said in the audio message.



A mountaineer girl Bhavana Dehariya from Tania Chhindwara district scaled world's highest peak Mount Everest on Wednesday

Tight security put in place in Bhopal for counting of LS polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Old Central Jail of the State capital would witness massive gathering from early morning hours of Congress and BJP candidates, polling agents and supporters of both parties and heavy security force for counting of votes of Lok Sabha election 2019.

All eyes would be glued to the LED installed to display counting of votes inside by the employees from the morning and which is likely to continue till late in the evening as informed by senior administration and police officials.

Elaborate arrangements have been made for the counting of votes for Lok Sabha 2019 and along with 5000 district police personnel 1500 security personnel have been

The SAF, CRPF, SST are deployed to maintain security

deployed to maintain law and order said IG Bhopal Jaideep Prasad.

The sensitive areas are monitored closely by the security personnel which would be deployed at these areas in the Bhopal constituency area during the counting process is conducted.

The SAF, CRPF, SST are deployed to maintain security. Three layered security, deployment of police personnel at sensitive and shift wise

assignment of security personnel is made for making the arrangements better and not burdening the security personnel with additional working hours.

The three shifts would start from 8 am and first would be from 8 am to 4 pm, second shift would be from 4 pm to 12 pm and third and last shift would be from 12 in the night to 8 am.

After proper checking only voting agents, polling agents and candidates would be allowed. The movement of EVM and counting of votes would be done under the strict vigil of police and monitored by CCTV cameras.

The counting would be showcased through 29 CCTV cameras which are installed to monitor the counting inside.

IAF accomplishes BrahMos feat

New Delhi: The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Wednesday successfully test fired the aerial version of the supersonic BrahMos cruise missile from a Su-30 MKI fighter aircraft at the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, marking a major milestone to enhance its precision strike capability.

The 2.5 tonne air-to-surface missile has a range of around 300 km, and it will significantly enhance the IAF's combat capability, military officials said.

The BrahMos cruise missile travels at a speed of Mach 2.8, nearly three times that of sound.



Govt OK's elevation of 4 judges to SC as court sticks to names

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is learnt to have cleared the names of four judges for their elevation to the Supreme Court, sources said Wednesday.

Once the appointments formally come through, the top court will have its full sanctioned strength of 31 judges (including the chief justice). As of now, the apex court is functioning with 27 judges.

The four names cleared by the Government are justices Aniruddha Bose, A S Bopanna, B R Gavai and Surya Kant.

The names of justices Bose and Bopanna were earlier returned by the Government to the SC collegium citing seniority and representation of regions as the reasons. But in its resolution passed earlier this month, the collegium had reiterated its recommendation



Justice Ranjan Gogoi.

Sources aware of the development said the notification is expected by Thursday morning once the President signs their warrant of appointment.

Justice Bose, whose parent high court is Calcutta, is the Chief Justice of Jharkhand High Court and is at number 12 in all-India seniority of judges.

Justice Bopanna, whose parent high court is Karnataka, is the Gauhati High Court Chief Justice and stands at number 36.

Justice Gavai is a judge of the Bombay High Court and Justice Kant is the incumbent Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court.

CAPSULE

SON CHOPS FATHER'S BODY INTO 25 PIECES

New Delhi: Following heated argument over property dispute, a 22-year-old boy allegedly killed his father in Delhi's Shahdara district. After killing his father, accused Aman had kept his father's body at home for two days, before chopping his father's body into 25 pieces. Aman, along with his friend, was arrested from outside his home in the early hours of Wednesday in Shahdara's Bada Bazaar area when he was about to leave to dispose off the body parts kept in a bag in a car.

KILL NON-MUSLIMS IN INDIA: MASOOD AZHAR

New Delhi: Rattled by the projected outcome of the exit polls in India, Maulana Masood Azhar, Jaish-e-Mohammad chief, has directed his followers to attack non-Muslims in India. The audio message was issued a day after the exit polls during Ramzan khutbah wherein he prayed for success of jihadis. P5

IGRMS' Swachhata Ki Ore hit with people

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya started the Ek Kadam Swachhata Ki Ore campaign on October 02, 2014; this programme has been popular among the visitors towards cleanliness.

P Sankar Rao (Program Coordinator, SBA) said that IGRMS has provided a creative and collaborative platform for cleaning from this programme, we provide information about the cleanliness efforts to the visitors and citizens who coming to the museum. For achievement of the 100 hours per year we motivate the audience and museum personnel every Wednesday, two hours (from 4 pm to 6 pm) for Shramdaan.

Thus comes 52 Wednesdays throughout the year and a 104 hours leave easily for Shramdaan. The aim of this campaign is to encourage people to take some hours out of their daily activities and undertake cleanliness work in India. Rao further said that regarding the cleanliness, connecting the members of local communities for the greater publicity and Ensure successful implementation of the campaign in nearby places, clean and neat also public places can also attract more visitors to visit regularly particularly place like museum.

The purpose of these entire programs is to create awareness by more



Participants at an artificial flower making workshop under 'Do and Learn' programme at Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) in Bhopal on Wednesday

and more people to connecting these campaigns, so that the dream of Gandhi's clean India can come true.

UCO Bank top official on two-day visit to City

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Executive Director of UCO Bank, Ajay Vyas is on a two day visit to the City of Lakes-Bhopal. On May 23, Vyas would hold a Review Meet at the Zonal Office of the Bank located at Arera Hills and along with the Review Meet Branch Managers' meet will also be held.

He will also visit the local branches of the bank to interact with the esteemed customers of bank. In the evening he will address the officers and staff of Zonal Office and the city branches.

On the second day, of the visit Ajay Vyas would, in addition to meeting with the NPA borrowers of the bank would also interact with the trainee participants at the Regional Training Centre of bank located at Jail road, Arera Hills.

As a part of the bank's corporate social responsibility activities, he will also visit "SOS Balgram"-a home for destitute children and distribute sweets and gifts items. In

On the second day, of the visit Ajay Vyas would, in addition to meeting with the NPA borrowers of the bank, also interact with the trainee participants at the Regional Training Centre of bank located at Jail road, Arera Hills



the evening the bank would host a 'Customers' Meet' where the Executive Director Ajay Vyas would interact with the bank's high net worth clientele in the presence of Zonal Head S.S.Rattan and other Executives of the Bank.

The visit of the Executive Director's visit assumes significance of the bank's vision for the upcoming financial year, aptly christened as "Sankalp 2020", where the focus is on growing CASA deposits, accelerating recovery measures and boosting growth in retail, agriculture and MSME advances.

3-day painting exhibition 'Nanhi Kuchi' organised

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The eye catching and beautiful designs over canvas by the little artists of the city enthralled the art lovers of the city. A three day painting exhibition 'Nanhi Kuchi' was inaugurated at Swaraj Art Gallery, Swaraj Bhavan here on Wednesday.

The children of the city have painted their perceptions in a very wondrous manner over the canvas. The exhibition of their creative works was put up by Kamli Art and Welfare Organisation, Bhopal. The exhibition that began here from Monday will be on view till Friday.

More than 50 children of 5 to 16 years of age created paintings with crayons, pencil colours, oil paints and acrylic and made their works look adorable with the use of vibrant colours.

These paintings gave an impression of their broad imagery and how they see

things in their surroundings. It is a mesmerising experience for the spectators to watch the colorful world created by the students as they walked through the gallery.

The children painted the different expressions and emotions are so real and won huge round of applications from visitors. Each painting depicted a different message. Every stroke by the little artists communicates beautifully with the art lovers. The students presented the paintings of various textures creating totally a different ambience.

The expressions of the artists were different but they shared the same intuition behind their art works i.e. creativity. This feature made the spectators at the gallery spell-bound as they watched the blend of colours over the canvas displayed at one place. The purity of style, uniqueness of imagination with brilliant technique made the creations more enchanting.

These paintings gave an impression of their broad imagery and how they see things in their surroundings. It is a mesmerising experience for the spectators to watch the colorful world created by the students as they walked through the gallery

Oriya film 'Lavanya Preeti' screened at Bharat Bhavan

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

An Oriya film Lavanya Preeti was screened at Bharat Bhavan here on Wednesday. The film was screened under children film festival which marked its last day.

The 1993 was directed by A K Bir. The film stars Aditi Bir, Saumysri Misra, Tara Shankar Misra in lead roles. It is a traditional tale and follows the pattern of 'film within a film'.

The film illustrates the tale of adolescent love between Gauri and Kedar that is misunderstood by the elders and leads to tragedy. The film won the Best Asian Film award at the Osaka International Film Festival and the Best Children's Film award at the 41st National Film Awards in 1994. Besides,

The film won the Best Asian Film award at the Osaka International Film Festival and the Best Children's Film award at the 41st National Film Awards in 1994

the film also won The Silver Plaque for Best Film at 8th International Film Festival for Children and Young People 1993, Best Child Artist award

at 8th International Film Festival for Children and Young People 1993.

Apurba Kishore Bir, studied cinematography in FTII and began his career making ads, documentaries and short film. He was a key member of Richard Attenborough's camera team for the multiple Oscar winning 'Gandhi'. Bir has made many films for CFSI including 'Lavanya Preeti' that won the Best Asian Film at the Osaka International Film Festival and 'Baaja' that won the National Award for Best Children's film in 2003.

He is a sensitive filmmaker who has often depicted children trapped in a world of adults obsessed with materialism and lack of harmony. Bir has won multiple national awards both for cinematography and direction.

MP RERA suspends Bhopal Shrishti CBD project

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA), has taken the decision to suspend Bhopal's CBD project Shrishti CBD of promoter Deepmala Infrastructure Private Limited Gammon House, Mumbai with immediate effect. The promoter can only undertake construction and development work.

The Authority took this decision as even after giving information to the promoter several times the project has not

been present for regular review and due to non-submission of quarterly report.

During the suspension period of the project, acquiring money for new bookings in the project and issuing new advertisement will be prohibited. As the project is incomplete, the execution of sale of property without prior permission from RERA has also been banned. The promoter may undertake construction and development work as this is also essential.

RERA had issued notices several times to the promoter to be present with a representative for regular review of the project, but no responsible person was present on behalf of the promoter. In a review of the quarterly report available on-line in the project by the Authority, it was found that previous quarterly reports had not been submitted. This rigorous action has been taken due to the promoter's disregard for notices and directives of RERA. SR

Regional Museum holds nature painting programme



Participants at a nature painting workshop under Summer Nature Study Programme (SNSP) at Regional Museum of Natural History (RMNH) in Bhopal on Wednesday

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Regional Museum of Natural History, Bhopal organised Nature Painting programme on Wednesday under Summer Nature Study Programme - Green Cubs.

During the programme, participants created painting based on plants, wildlife, ponds, waterfalls, mountains etc. in the guidance of Navin Kumar, Artist and Shivaji Rao, Preparatory Assistant. Participants showed the importance of environment and its conservation through the painting.

Beenish Rafat, Scientist-B

was the Coordinator of the programme RMNH also inaugurated Summer Nature Study Programme- Green Teens (May 22 to June 05, 2019) for the students of class 8 to 10. During the inauguration programme, Scientist-B and Coordinator of the programme Manik Lal Gupta, Scientist-B detailed about the activities to be held during the SNSP-Green Teens.

During the programme, Scientist-B & In-charge of the museum Manoj Kumar Sharma told to participants about the conservation of environment and importance of wildlife. Beenish Rafat,

Scientist-B appealed to the participants to contribute for environment conservation through activities.

On the first day of the programme, Cont. Museum Interpreter detailed about the biodiversity available at museum. Participants also visited the permanent gallery, temporary galleries, discovery centre, traditional conservation and wetland conservation mini-court yards, etc. during the museum visit.

Films "Kanha" on wildlife conservation and "Fridge" on global warming were screened by Anil K. Sonparote, Projectionist during Film Show.



Security personnel checking visitors as security beefed up at old central jail on the eve of counting of votes for Lok Sabha elections in Bhopal on Wednesday

ICAI organises CA CPT exams mock test

Bhopal: The students of Chartered Accountancy will learn about the exam pattern of CA. The Institute of chartered Accountants of India will organise CA CPT Exams in June 2019.

Board of Studies decided to arrange MOCK Tests Series I and II for the preparation of exams in June 2019.

The Mock Tests are conducted by the Bhopal Branch of CIRC of ICAI. Mock Tests Series I and II would be conducted on ICAI Bhawan Bagsewaniya, Bhopal.

For registration, students can contact Bhopal Branch of ICAI. The Last date of registration for Series I will be June 1, for Series-II students can register till 8 June November 2019.

Those students registered for Mock test only can take part in Mock Test Series II.

Chairman of ICAI Bhopal branch said that it is an art to pass CA Exam.

Elaborating more, he said that as knowledge is must for clearing the exam, along with that a student should be confident, stress-free and relaxed during the examination hall.

The Mock Test is scheduled in two series, he added. Informing about it he said that the Series 1 will be held on June 2 from 10 PM to 12 PM and 2 PM to 4 PM. He further said that the Series 2 will be held on June 9 from 10 PM to 12 PM and from 2 PM to 4 PM. SR



Children at a cooking workshop during summer camp at Jawahar Bal Bhawan in Bhopal on Wednesday

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Govt will honour loan waiver promise: Nath

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Kamal Nath has said that the government will honour its promise of loan waiver at all cost as it was not an electoral promise or announcement. It was a promise made to the farmers.

The Chief Minister has written a letter to the former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan that he was misleading the farmers owing to electoral compulsions. Now, elections are over and he must accept the fact that 21 lakh farmers have been benefited by the loan waiver scheme. Now desist from speaking lies.

The Chief Minister in the letter said that Congress government on assuming the office on December 17 and issued its first order about loan waiver. After this, the process of loan waiving started. Lakhs of applications were received seeking the benefits. The amount of

loan waive started reaching the the accounts of the eligible farmers.

The Chief Minister further said that about 21 lakh farmers got benefit. During the code of conduct. A permission was sought from the Election Commission to deposit the amount of loan waiver into the accounts of 4.83 lakh farmers in the areas where elections had been completed. Immediately after the permission, the process of loan waiving continued.

Nath said that a promise has been fulfilled. The process is on. This is a promise to the farmers and the government will honour it.

The Chief Minister asked Shivraj Singh Chouhan to accept the truth. He reminded Chouhan as how he was misleading farmers during election and not a single farmer got benefit. Despite the fact that you emptied the exchequer,

loan waiver scheme was launched benefiting a number of farmers. About 21 lakh farmers got the benefits and rest will soon be covered. He asked Shivraj Singh Chouhan to accept the truth as elections are over now.

The Chief Minister informed Chouhan that BJP could not do it in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh even in three years.

He said that a delegation reached your residence with enough evidence but you ignored them due to election but you continued to mislead the farmers. The Chief Minister asked Chouhan to accept the truth. Election is over. Now you are expected to accept the truth. The Chief Minister said that the Congress government is a farmer friendly government. The process will speed up. Your cooperation and good wishes are desirous in the interest of farmers.

Cong MLA supports jailed terrorist's cause: Chouhan

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In a fresh attack against the Congress government, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday alleged that a ruling party MLA was openly advocating cause of the terrorists lodged in Bhopal central jail.

Chouhan's allegation came a day after Congress MLA Arif Masood's statement in which the lawmaker urged the Chief Minister Kamal Nath to remove DG Jail Sanjay Chaudhary. The MLA, an old aide of Digvijaya Singh, is upset with the DG (prisons) after the officer declined his demand of allowing food items from outside to the inmates of central jail. Masood had demanded that outside food items should be allowed inside the jail as per the jail manual.

The MLA wanted outside food items to be allowed inside the jail for Roza Iftar (customary breaking of daylong fast in evening) during the holy month of Ramadan, a proposal vehemently opposed by the jail senior officer.

Masood had even claimed



BJP National Vice President Shivraj Singh Chouhan talking to media persons at BJP State headquarters in Bhopal on Wednesday. Pioneer photo

he would personally look into the matter if the DG wasn't removed. Things took an ugly turn with the presence of SIMI operatives in the Bhopal central jail. Chouhan taking a pot shot on Congress over

Masood's statement, on Wednesday told the media that he was concerned as a Congress MLA was openly batting for terrorists. Earlier also the Congress was seen standing with the terrorists,

claimed the Chouhan. Chouhan claimed that he had seen a video in which a Congress MLA is threatening Chief Minister to remove DG (Prisons). Asking why he wanted to get the officer removed,

Chouhan himself replied claiming so that the outside material could be sent to the terrorists in the jail. Congress media coordinator Narendra Saluja supported the MLA saying Arif Masood had backed allowing eatables from outside the jail for all prisoners (from all religions).

He did not use terrorists word but the BJP was an expert in spreading lies. Sources claimed Masood an MLA from Bhopal Central assembly seat with sizable Muslim population had made his resentment known to the party as well on Tuesday when CM Kamal Nath had summoned MLAs for a lunch.

Neither ministers nor officer listen to me, so what should I do, should I resign, Masood had reportedly told the party on Tuesday reportedly over the jail officers' denial to allow outside food inside central jail for Roza Iftar.

Masood had also alleged that the previous BJP government had not banned outside eatables inside the central jail and it was a circular from DG (Prisons) which bars outside food in the jail.

Workshop on cyber laws, security held



STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A workshop on 'Cyber laws and security' held at premises of district court Bhopal on Wednesday.

It was organised by district legal services authority Bhopal in association with Amtag global (Bhopal based cyber security firm).

On the occasion, the workshop was addressed by Advocate Akshay Bajpai (cyber security expert, district legal services authority) and Atul Pathak (cyber security expert, Amtag global).

Experts told participants about various tactics of cyber crime along with cyber laws with recent cases, laws and scenarios. In this techno legal workshop many things got discussed by experts like cybercrimes, digital signature, IP address and MAC address, financial frauds, cyber stalking, cyber laws etc.

Akshay told participants about recent scenario of job frauds and financial frauds that how accused gather per-

The workshop was addressed by Advocate Akshay Bajpai, cyber security expert, district legal services authority, and Atul Pathak, cyber security expert, Amtag global

sonal information about someone which is basically done by social engineering to gain personal information. He also told participants that according to supreme court judgement of 2015 under case law of Anvar Vs Basheer it has been told that electronic evidences must have certificate under section 65B of Indian Evidence Act, 1872 which was duly authenticated and validated by experts.

Besides, Atul Pathak told participants about the use and importance of digital signature at present scenario also he focused on the concepts of IP address and MAC address too. Additional district and session judge Ashutosh Mishra and District Legal aid officer BM Singh along with para-legal volunteers, advocates and interns were present during the workshop.

Motorcycle, valuables worth ₹80K burgled from Indrapuri

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Miscreants decamped with a motorbike and valuables worth ₹80000 from Indrapuri under Piplani police station area on Tuesday.

Police said that the victim Deepak Kumar along with his family had gone to attend a function at his relatives house on May 5 and when he returned, he found his motorbike and valuables have been burgled.

A complaint was lodged by the victim with the Piplani police and in his complaint, he stated that he along with his family had gone to have attend a function and when he returned on May 21 valuables from his house were found burgled.

In the burglary his motorbike bearing registration number MP04MN1964 and household goods and jewelry

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were burgled. The victim has claimed that the total loss in the burglary is around ₹80000.

The police have registered a case under section 457 and 380 of the IPC and have start-

ed further investigation. Police said that the CCTV footage of the nearby installed cameras would be searched in the further investigation. The neighbours were not aware of the burglary.

Based on the details in the complaint and information provided by the victim, the police have started investigation.

Meanwhile Koh-e-Fiza police have nabbed a miscreant from Barela village and recovered a stolen bike from his possession; miscreant was serving externment and was found violating.

Acting on a tip off Amir Khan was nabbed from Barela village and recovered a stolen bike which was used by installing fake registration number over the earlier one.

The accused was serving externment and action of NSA would be taken against him.

2 die in road accident in Balrampur Ghati

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Two youths died while a couple and their daughter were injured after a car went berserk and hit two motorbikes at Balrampur ghati under Sukhisewania police station area in the evening on Tuesday.

Injured were rushed to nearby hospital where two of the youths died while couple and their daughter survived with injuries.

SHO Sukhisewania JS Paraste said that the Chandresh Raikwar (26) died after the accident on Tuesday, Devendra Raikwar (25) died while undergoing treatment at Hamidia hospital today and a couple and their daughter have escaped with injuries who are undergoing treatment.

The deceased were on the same bike while the couple along with their daughter was moving towards Vidisha.

SHO Paraste said that the car was not bearing registration number and it hit the bikes in a bid to overtake but failed to control the vehicle.

The car rammied near the road and was seized by the police in the investigation.

After the preliminary investigation police have sent the bodies have been sent for post mortem and a case under section 304 A of the IPC was registered against the errant driver. The locals claimed that there were found passengers in the car and after the accident they escaped the spot leaving the car.

Police are yet to ascertain details and have claimed to start search for the absconding accused who still remains missing and unidentified.

The deceased were residents of Vidisha and used to work in Bhopal. They were on their way to Vidisha.

City witnesses hot weather conditions

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

For the second consecutive day extreme hot weather conditions were witnessed in the state capital with little dip in the day temperature at 43.5 degree Celsius on Wednesday while night temperature was recorded at 28.6 degree Celsius.

Significant rise in the night temperatures have been recorded at several places in the state.

Regions which recorded high night temperatures were Raisen at 30 degree Celsius, Hoshangabad recorded night temperature at 30 degree Celsius. Among other regions Rajgarh recorded night temperature at 29.4 degree Celsius, Bhopal 28.6 degree Celsius, Damoh 29 degree Celsius, Seoni 29 degree Celsius.

In the past 24 hours Chambal and Gwalior divisions witnessed light rainfall while remaining divisions witnessed dry conditions.

Warning of thundery activities and speedy winds of speed 30-40 km/hr light rainfall has been issued for



Chambal division and Gwalior, Datai, Shivpuri, Chattarpur

and Tikamgarh districts. Apart from thundery activ-

ities and speedy winds warning of hot waves have been

College students cover themselves from harsh weather as temperature of city records 43.5 degree Celsius, in Bhopal on Wednesday. Pioneer photo

issued for Hoshangabad, Khargone, Rajgarh, Raisen, Chattarpur, Satna, Damoh, Khandwa, Shivpuri, Chhindwara and Mandla districts in the next 24 hours.

Bhopal is likely to witness increased temperature on Thursday and day temperatures would be recorded around 44 degree Celsius and night temperatures would be recorded around 28 degree Celsius.

Rewa, Sagar, Hoshangabad, Bhopal, Shahdol and Ujjain recorded significant rise in the temperatures.

According to the forecast Chambal and Gwalior divisions, Datai, Shivpuri, Chattarpur and Tikamgarh districts are likely to witness thundery activities and light rainfall.

Weather conditions in the state capital is likely to witness clear sky weather conditions on Thursday.

Wipro visits SiSTec for campus placements

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Sagar Institute of Science and Technology (SiSTec) witnessed presence of Wipro Limited during closed campus placement drive for its engineering and management students.

SiSTec belongs to Sagar Group and having a strong manufacturing and industrial background in Central India and has emerged as gateway to placements with over 73 core companies visiting SiSTec Gandhi Nagar and Ratibad campuses for placement this year with Adani, Infosys, TCS, Cognizant, TCS, Samsung, Zensar, Nokia, New Sigma, Amazon, Big Basket, Vistara, Nestle, NIIT, Hexaware, Core Card, Tata Motors, BYJU's etc amongst to name a few. So far,

Over 500 major internships have also been offered by companies during campus visit this year to its students in streams of engineering, pharmacy and management. SiSTec School of Management Studies has already placed all second year students through campus selections and has recorded the highest success rate of selections and offers. SiSTec has signed 15 MoUs in collaboration with industry and academia to bridge the gap of skilled man power and employability

over 120 companies have visited SiSTec campuses to offer

more than 769 job offers with highest package offering of 21 lacs per annum.

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With the help of this collaboration SiSTec students have a live exposure of the industry environment through the 100+ expert talks of Industry Personnel's, Industrial Visits

and work on Live Projects in the industry. This Year, SiSTec has been rated with AAA ratings by Career 360 and has bagged the prestigious ASSOCHAM Award for the "Emerging Engineering Institute of the Year - Central India". It has also been acknowledged with 'The Most Innovative College 2018 in North Zone' by internshala.com presented by AICTE.

Shri Siddharth Sudhir Agrawal, Managing Director, Sagar Group has congratulated the selected students.

Prof Prachi Shrivastava, CRM, SiSTec, guided the students during the placements and expressed gratitude to the companies for their participation in campus placement drive.

Unhappy with result, girl ends life

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Depressed of poor results in class 11 an 18-year-old girl committed suicide at Kararia farms under Bazaria police station on Tuesday.

Police said that the deceased was found hanging with the ceiling and rushed to nearby hospital where she was declared dead.

Investigating Officer ASI RB Patwar said that deceased girl appeared in class 11 exam from a private school but failed to perform well and was depressed over her results and took extreme results but suicide note related to reason of poor performance was found and to ascertain the reason is not possible. The statements of the family members and friends are yet to be recorded and reason could be revealed in the further

The deceased used to remain depressed for the past 4-5 days and her behavior changed after her results were out few days ago in which her performance was not good, told her father of deceased to police

investigation. The deceased used to remain depressed for the past 4-5 days and her behavior changed after her results were

out few days ago in which her performance was not good, told her father of deceased to police.

After the preliminary investigation the body was sent for the post mortem and a case under section 174 of the CrPC was registered by the police.

Meanwhile a 6-year-old boy died after he was hit by a speeding water tanker truck at Parevakhedra under Eitkhedhi police station area in the evening on Wednesday.

Police said that Kalyan Singh was playing outside his house when he was hit by speeding water tanker truck and was rushed to nearby hospital where he was declared dead.

The police have registered a case under section 174 of the CrPC and started further investigation.

BATTLEGROUND HARYANA

Lok Sabha result will act as catalyst for Assembly polls in Haryana

NISHU MAHAJAN ■ CHANDIGARH

The outcome of general elections on 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana is expected to have a telling effect on the politics of the state, where the Assembly polls are due to be held later this year.

While most of the exit polls by various agencies have predicted 8 to all 10 seats in Haryana in Bharatiya Janata Party's kitty, the actual poll results will only be known on Thursday May 23, when the votes would be counted.

Various exit polls, while giving an inkling about the mood of the electorate in Haryana has predicted at least eight seats for the saffron party while two seats may go to Congress.

This time, the ballot battle in Jatland-Haryana was multicornered with the BJP, the Congress, the Indian National Lok Dal, Jannayak Janta Party-Aam Aadmi Party alliance and Bahujan Samaj Party-Loktantra Suraksha Party combine in the fray.

Majority of the exit polls have predicted zero seat in Haryana for the INLD and the alliance partners including JJP-

AAP and BSP-LSP. The fate of as many as 223 candidates including political bigwigs contesting on 10 Lok Sabha seats in the state were sealed on May 12.

In the high-stakes parliamentary polls, political bigwigs including former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, two Union Ministers Rao Inderjit Singh and Krishan Pal Gurjar, Rajya Sabha MP Kumari Selja, Haryana Congress chief Ashok Tanwar, three-time MP Deepender Singh Hooda, Jannayak Janta Party leader Dushyant Chautala, face an acid test in Haryana.

The fate of two political greenhorns -- Union Minister Birender Singh's son Brijendra Singh (BJP) and former Chief Minister Bhajan Lal's grandson Bhavya Bishnoi (Congress) -- both contesting from Hisar, will also be known on Thursday.

Among the total 223 candidates, only 11 women candidates including four from national and state level recognized parties and seven independents are in the fray.

The state had witnessed about 70 percent voter turnout on May 12 with Sirsa parliamentary constituency

(reserved) recording the maximum voting with 73.48 per centage and Karnal recording the lowest with 64.68 per centage.

In Faridabad Lok Sabha constituency, re-polling was held at Asaoti polling station of Prithla Assembly segment on May 19. The re-polling at the polling station was ordered after a BJP polling agent was arrested on charges of influencing the voters at the polling station on May 12. Union Minister Krishan Pal Gurjar is pitted against Congress' Avtar Singh Bhadana and AAP state chief Naveen Jaihind in Faridabad.

Notably, top guns from all political parties including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP chief Amit Shah, Congress president Rahul Gandhi, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi, AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, BSP supreme Mayawati among others had held rallies in Haryana to boost party's poll prospects.

During the hustings, the Congress targeted the BJP government at the Centre over non-fulfilled poll promises and alleged corruption in the Rafale fighter jet deal while the BJP's

campaign was focused on the issue of national security and nationalism. During campaigning, both the national parties also engaged in a blame game over the 2016 violent Jat quota agitation in the state.

The stakes are high for both the BJP and its main challenger Congress in Haryana, where the electorate will elect 90 legislators in Haryana Assembly polls due to be held in October.

For the Congress, the poll outcome on May 23 will be significant for many reasons. The result will show whether the party is on the comeback trail ahead of assembly polls in the state.

Also, with political bigwigs like two-time former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and state party chief Ashok Tanwar in the fray, the counting of votes on Thursday will decide who among the two will lead the party in State Assembly polls.

Hooda, who is contesting from Sonapat Lok Sabha seat, is facing a must-win situation to prove his popularity as his election as MP will pave the way to Chief Ministership in Chandigarh via Delhi. His detractor, Ashok Tanwar is

also locked in a tough triangular contest in Sirsa Lok Sabha seat against BJP's Sunita Duggal and INLD's Charanjit Singh Rori.

In the last general elections, the Congress could retain only one seat i.e. Rohtak, from where Bhupinder Singh Hooda's son Deepender was elected to the Lok Sabha. In Assembly polls 2014, the party was reduced to 15 MLAs in the 90-member House although the number later increased to 17 MLAs after HJC's merger with the Congress.

After its 2014 poll debacle, the Congress had this time fielded its tried and trusted heavyweights which included former Chief Minister, former MPs, Rajya Sabha MP and a sitting MLA.

The BJP, on the other hand, had retained its five MPs, fielded four new faces and one prominent turncoat candidate. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, the overall poll percentage stood at 71.86 in Haryana. Riding high on Modi wave and with the help of several political turncoats, the BJP had won seven of eight Lok Sabha seats the party contested in the state. However, its ally Haryana Janhit Congress (BL)

will certainly set the tone for Assembly elections in Haryana, the political experts say.

The INLD has contested on all 10 Lok Sabha seats while the JJP fielded candidates on seven leaving the rest three seats for the AAP.

The BSP contested the Lok Sabha polls in alliance with the LSP floated by rebel BJP MP Raj Kumar Saini.

Boosted by the exit poll for the Lok Sabha elections which has predicted sweep by BJP in Haryana and another term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the saffron party has already begun preparations for the Assembly polls.

The Chief Minister Manohar Lal had a day before held a meeting with BJP MLAs and sought their suggestions for "Sankalp Patra" (election manifesto) of the party for assembly elections. He had also directed the MLAs to expedite the development works in their constituencies.

In the 90-member Haryana Assembly, the BJP has 48 MLAs. The BJP had created a history by attaining absolute majority on its own in the 2014 State Assembly polls. Exuding confidence in BJP's poll prospects, Chief

Minister Manohar Lal said that we are confident of winning all 10 parliamentary seats in Haryana. The NDA under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi will once again form the next government at the Centre with a comfortable majority, he added.

Interestingly, the BJP party workers in the state have already booked huge quantity of laddoos and crackers to celebrate the victory.

Haryana Congress chief Ashok Tanwar, who is also party's candidate from Sirsa Lok Sabha seat, said that the party state unit has contested the general polls unitedly. We are confident of positive results and do not believe in the predictions of exit polls, Tanwar said.

Even though most of the exit polls have not predicted any seat for JJP-AAP alliance in Haryana, JJP leader and outgoing Hisar MP Dushyant Chautala said, "I am confident of winning Hisar seat again. The JJP-AAP alliance will perform well in the general elections and emerge as an alternative for the people of Haryana in State Assembly polls, due to be held in October, he added.

EC says all arrangement in place in Haryana

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana chief electoral officer, Rajeev Ranjan on Wednesday said that all arrangements, including those pertaining to security have been put in place for the smooth and peaceful process of counting of votes on May 23 in Haryana.

Ranjan inspected various counting centres on Wednesday and issued necessary directions.

The fate of 223 candidates would be known on Thursday when counting of votes gets underway at 90 centres spread over 39 locations in the state. The counting of votes will begin at 8 am and 14 tables have been installed at each counting centre.

Polling in the 10 parliamentary constituencies in Haryana was held in the sixth phase on May 12 in which over 70 per cent of the 1.80 crore people cast their votes.

90 strong rooms were established at 39 locations with 24x7 tight security and CCTV surveillance to ensure the safety of EVMs and VVPAT machines in the state. In the three-tier security arrangements, Central Armed Police Forces is deployed in the first layer near the strong rooms, Haryana Armed Police personnel posted in second layer and district police personnel are manning the outer layer.

With the voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPATs) to be counted in five polling booths



picked at random from each of the 90 assembly segments of Haryana, the announcement of results for the 10 Lok Sabha seats is likely to be delayed.

Besides the counting of votes cast on EVMs, the votes of defence personnel cast through the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) are also likely to consume time. There are about 1,05,859 service voters in the state.

The postal ballot received from the service voters by 7:59 am, on May 23 would be included in the counting process. A large number of ETPBS have been received in Bhiwani-Mahendragarh, Rohtak Lok Sabha constituencies in the state.

Chief electoral officer, Rajeev Ranjan said that the counting of votes of defence personnel cast through Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) would be carried out for the first time in the state.

He said that 90 Assembly Constituencies are falling under the ten Lok Sabha seats in Haryana, 450 voter slips of

VVPAT machines would be matched. The counting of VVPAT machines would be carried out manually, in the presence of observer and returning officer, he said.

For the facility of general public, the results of counting of votes would first be uploaded on Voter Helpline Mobile Application, which would be accurate, he added.

The chief electoral officer further said that during the counting of votes, there would be tight security arrangements outside all counting centres. No other person apart from employees posted on duty, counting agents and authorized media persons by Election Commission of India (ECI) would be allowed within in the premises of counting Centre.

The counting of votes would be carried out in a fair and transparent manner while complying with the guidelines of ECI. After counting, all EVM and VVPAT machines would be kept in strong room for 45 days, which would have full security, he said.

3-day selection process held for NSD aspiring artists

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The aspiring theatre artists have raced to get admitted in country's best drama school National School of Drama (NSD). The participants gave their best to prove their worth before the judges.

Here on Wednesday, it was the last day of the selection process. The three day selection process was held at Hotel Ashoka Lake View and for three days the participants have been presenting their best. In the workshop, NSD director Suresh Sharma, faculty Dinesh Khanna, faculty Achilash Pillai, Dean Shantanu Das, expert Jaitley, Yogendra Choubey and MPSD director Alok Chatterjee were present as the judges.

The judges watched minutely each and every detail of the participants. Notably, an audition is being organised for the aspiring students who showcased their acting skills before the faculty members of NSD. Notably, more than 65 students from Bhopal were present to give the auditions. Notably, the auditions are being held for the selection of appropriate candidate for the session 2019-20. The selection committee watched their performance with rapt attention and marked them according-



A theatre artist at an ongoing selection workshop conducted by National School of Drama (NSD) in Bhopal on Wednesday

Pioneer photo

ly. In the first round of the audition the participants were given a written test.

In the next round the participants

performed individually over the scripts they prepared themselves.

It is to be noted that the selections

are held for 26 seats at NSD and the selections are being held

across the country.

Odisha: Fate of many leaders hang in balance

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Even as election results of 21 Lok Sabha and 146 Assembly seats will be announced on Thursday, fates of many senior leaders of all the three major parties, the BJD, the BJP and the Congress, seem to be at stake.

Among Lok Sabha candidates, the fates of the heavyweights being watched eagerly include those of Basant Panda, Baijayant Panda, Balabhadra Majhi, Suresh Purjari and Kharabela Swain of the BJP, Bhartruhari Mahtab, Arup Patnaik and Mahes Sahu of the BJD and Bhakta Charan Das and Pradeep Majhi of the Congress

BJP Kalahandi candidate Basant Panda is pitted against BJD's Pushpendra Singh Deo and Congress' Bhakta Das. BJP Kendrapada nominee Baijayant Panda fought against incumbent Rajya Sabha member and cine star Anubhav Mohanty. BJD supreme Naveen Patnaik, during his campaigning, assured people to personally take care of development of Kendrapada.

Incumbent MP Balabhadra Majhi, who quit the BJD for being denied party ticket, is fielded by the BJP from Nabarangpur against the BJD's Ramesh Chandra Majhi and

BJP Kalahandi candidate Basant Panda is pitted against BJD's Pushpendra Singh Deo and Congress' Bhakta Das. BJP Kendrapada nominee Baijayant Panda fought against incumbent Rajya Sabha member and cine star Anubhav Mohanty. BJD supreme Naveen Patnaik, during his campaigning, assured people to personally take care of development of Kendrapada

the Congress' Pradeep Majhi.

The BJP's Bargarh candidate Suresh Purjari was not at all prepared to fight polls from the seat. He might get a poll-jolt as Subash Chouhan, who was interested to fight the seat on a BJP ticket and was all prepared, quit the saffron party and joined the BJD. Chouhan's shift is likely to help BJD candidate Prasanna Acharya grab the seat.

Kharabela Swain, who was fielded by the BJP from the Kandhamal seat, had a tough fight against his BJD rival Achyuta Samanta, whose contribution to the tribal community through his KISS along with his party's support base are major factors in his favour.

Anti-incumbency factor might work against Bhartruhari Mahtab, who is pitted against BJP candidate and former DGP Prakash Mishra. Arup Patnaik, BJD candidate for prestigious

Bhubaneswar seat, had a tough encounter with his BJP rival Aparajita Sarangi, who conducted a marathon campaigning.

Mahes Sahu of the BJD for Dhenkanal faced a strong fight from the BJP's Rudra Narayan Pany.

In the Assembly polls, the fates of Finance Minister and BJD Kendrapada candidate Shashi Bhushan Behera, Barabati-Cuttack BJD nominee Debashish Samantray seem to be at risk. Congress heavy-weight Ganeshwar Behera's chances in the Kendrapada seat look brighter. Samantray may find it difficult to retain his seat as Mahammad Moquim of the Congress has given him a tough fight.

The fate of PCC president Niranjan Patnaik, who is in the fray from two seats, Ghashipur and Bhandaripokhari, is also awaited with great interest.

BJP in celebration mode, Cong to focus at counting centre

PNS ■ RANCHI

Excited over the exit poll results which have predicted a thumping victory for BJP in Lok Sabha elections, the Saffron party is in celebration mode. The State BJP unit in this connection has plan a victory procession and even ordered for sweets. The BJP Yuva Morcha has ordered for 1001 Kg of laddoos from Maner. Around 30 workers from BJP Yuva Morcha have been assigned the task for preparing sweets.

State BJP secretary, Subodh Singh Guddu said, "The people of the country have given the mandate in support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's work and this time again Modi will be elected as PM." Guddu further said that BJP is confident of winning more than 350 seats across the country and in this connection the BJP Yuva Morcha will take out a procession in State Capital.

BJP Yuva Morcha State president Amit Kumar said, "The BJP will win more than 350 seats across the country and in state the party is confident of making a clean sweep. The BJP under the leadership of Chief Minister Raghubar Das is to win all 14 seats."

The party has planned to celebrate Vijay Diwas across the State. A meeting in this connection was held at BJP office



Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) workers busy in preparing sweets (Laddoos) on the eve of polls counting for the expected celebrations of Lok Sabha elections results at a sweet shop in Ranchi on Wednesday

Vinay Murrmu

which was attended by Hemant Das, Sanjay Jaiswal, Prem Mittal, Abhishek Singh, Rakesh Choudhary among others.

The State unit of BJP has also decided to install two huge screens LED TV at party office. One screen will be installed at ground floor, while the other will be installed in the conference hall of the BJP office through which BJP workers and leaders can view the election trends of the nation.

Meanwhile, the BJP candidates, who are optimistic of party landslide victory in election have started visiting respective areas expressing thanks and gratitude people have reposed faith on

Narendra Modi government.

State BJP spokesperson, Pratul Shahdeo, said, "The dusk of May 23 will start the fall of Congress and Mahagathbandhan in country. The people of the country have once again reposed faith of developmental plank and national security on Modi."

Shahdeo said that this time BJP is going to perform better than last Lok Sabha election as the party is going to win all 14 seats. The BJP leader claimed that leaving aside two three states in country, this time there is direct contest between NDA and UPA which has given an advantage to BJP. The BJP spokesperson also attacked

Congress and Mahagathbandhan leaders on EVM issue. He said, "For opposition parties when they win election EVM is good, but when suffer defeat or feels that their defeat is imitable they start blaming EVM."

Meanwhile, Congress too has started preparations for May 23 results. The Congress party today gave training to its counting agents. State Congress spokesperson, Lal Kishore Nath Shahdeo said, "On Wednesday training were given to counting agents.

All counting agents have been asked to report to counting centre before 7 am and remain in the centre still declaration of results."

Awareness must on biodiversity crisis: Guv

ROSHAN KUMAR ■ RANCHI

Expressing concern over extinction of some plants and animal species, Governor Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday said that due to dwindling biodiversity in last 100 years more than 90 per cent of local and indigenous farming has disappeared. Several traditional pet animals are getting extinct.

Similarly, different food production systems are in the list of getting endangered.

Murrmu made this observation at a workshop held at city-based hotel on the occasion of International Day for Biological Diversity. The theme of this year Biological Diversity is "Our Biodiversity, Our Food, Our Health".

The Governor said, "Due to defi-

ciency of different nutritious vitamin and minerals in our food habit, people are getting ill and diseases such as diabetes, obesity and malnutrition have become common diseases." She further said that today people are getting over dependent to allopathic medicines and at the same time they are getting away from traditional or indigenous means of treatment.

The Governor also expressed caution over unscientific and half-hazard use of natural resources and biodiversity which has led to untimely rainfall, increase in temperature, land sliding and other natural disasters.

Murrmu said, "Today several animals and bird species are in the list of endangered, the local flora and fauna are getting extinct."

TARGET NON-BELIEVERS

Rattled by exit polls, JeM calls for attacks

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Rattled by the projected outcome of the exit polls in India, Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar has directed his followers to attack non-Muslims and provoke others too to hit non-believers in the country.

The audio message was issued on Monday, a day after the exit polls, and during Ramzan khutba wherein Azhar claimed prayers of jihadis who target the non-Muslims alone will be accepted by God.

The exit polls that projected a clear cut win for the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, comes close on the heels of United Nations' sanctions against the JeM boss under the Al-Qaeda Sanctions List ban-

ning him as a global terrorist.

Earlier, the Modi-led Government had carried out an aerial attack on a major JeM training facility at Balakot in Pakistan and estimated to have killed hundreds of potential suicide bombers. The attack by the Indian Air Force was carried on the 13th day of the Pulwama terror attack on a CRPF convoy by JeM that led to the deaths of 40 CRPF men on February 14 this year.

In the Holy month of Ramzan, Azhar is issuing sermons either himself or through his audio messages are played at various mosques in the areas of JeM influence.

Sources said the idea behind such sermons by Azhar is aimed at uplifting the morale of the cadres who are yet emerge from the setback of the Balakot strikes by India and to

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- Sources said the idea behind such sermons by Azhar is aimed at uplifting the morale of the cadres who are yet emerge from the setback of the Balakot strikes by India and to seek donations from millionaires in the Middle East countries during the month of Ramzan
- Earlier this week, the Pakistani agencies arrested one of the 26/11 terror masterminds Abdul Rehman Makki under pressure from the United States
- The US had asked Pakistan to check free access to Makki across universities in Pakistan as his sermons were specifically directed against US besides India and Israel

seek donations from millionaires in the Middle East countries during the month of Ramzan. They said the UN ban

against JeM has also squeezed the finances of the outfit for the time being till it devises ways and means in collusion with the



Pakistan Army-Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) to effectively hoodwink the international community from terror fund-

ing perspective. Post the ban on Jaish chief by the UN and the ongoing actions by the Financial Action

Task Force (FATF) against Pakistan for failing to check terror funding, Islamabad is under considerable pressure to act

against the terror groups used by the neighbouring country as state proxies to target India.

Earlier this week, the Pakistani agencies arrested one of the 26/11 terror masterminds Abdul Rehman Makki under pressure from the United States. Makki was being given free access to the universities in Pakistan to deliver radical speeches intended to radicalise and recruit young and educated students to the terror fold of another UN-banned terror group Lashkar-e-Tayyiba. The US had asked Pakistan to check free access to Makki across universities in Pakistan as his sermons were specifically directed against US besides India and Israel. Ironically, the servers of the social media sites of the Pakistan-based groups are based in the US, sources added.

There will be tit-for-tat: Paswan replies to Kushwaha's 'bloodshed' warning

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With Rashtriya Lok Samta Party (RLSP) chief Upendra Kushwaha warning of "bloodshed" if the ruling BJP and its allies tried to manipulate results, NDA ally and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) chief Ram Vilas Paswan on Wednesday hit back cautioning a "tit for tat" response in case of any such act. The LJP chief made the statement in front of Home Minister Rajnath Singh during a dinner meeting of NDA allies hosted by BJP president Amit Shah.

"Dekhiye, PM ne kuch nahi kiya hai. Prastav me bhi kuch nahi hai. Lekin humlog...ye (Rajnath) bhi kuch nahi kahenge...Lekin hum kahna chahte hain tit for tat hoga...samajh gaye na...see, PM has not done anything. There is nothing in the resolution. But we...he (Rajnath) will not even say...but I want to say...there will be a tit for tat...understand," Paswan said.

Taking a dig at the opposition parties, Paswan said they are seeking excuses for their imminent defeat and raising doubts over EVMs only to hide their failure. "When they see their defeat is imminent, they raise doubts about EVMs, but when they won in three states, then they didn't say anything on EVMs. Why did they not raise doubts after they won in Punjab?" he said, adding that the LJP will win more seats than predicted by exit polls.

On Tuesday, Kushwaha had threatened his political opponents of bloodshed, if they attempted to tamper with



Union Minister and LJP chief Ram Vilas Paswan addresses the media, in New Delhi on Wednesday. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

the results of Lok Sabha elections. Addressing a Press conference in Patna, Kushwaha, a former NDA ally and now part of the opposition Mahagathbandhan in Bihar said, "If anyone tried to tamper with the results, then there will be bloodshed."

Kushwaha, said that there was tremendous public anger after alleged exit polls' prediction of NDA winning 30 or more seats in Bihar out of 40. "The exit poll surveys were aimed at causing demoralisation among our cadres, with a mala fide intent," he alleged.

The RLSP chief stressed that attempts were being made

to manipulate Lok Sabha poll results in favour of the ruling NDA, which will have serious consequences.

"Earlier, we used to hear about booth loot. This time, it is suspected that attempts may be made to loot the results. These could be through manipulation of the EVMs or any other measures at the counting centres.

The leaders of the NDA are hereby warned not to indulge in such a misadventure. There is tremendous public anger and blood may spill on the streets, for which we shall not be held responsible," Kushwaha had said.

Govt issues advisory to pvt TV channels

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the counting of votes for the Lok Sabha polls, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Wednesday issued an advisory to all private satellite TV channels, asking them to strictly comply with their respective undertakings of carrying news or non-news content.

In accordance with the 2011 policy guidelines for uplinking of television channels from India, the ministry gives permission for uplinking under two categories — non-news and current affairs, and news and current affairs.

The 'non-news and current affairs' channel means a channel which does not have any element of news and current affairs in its programme con-

tent. A 'news and current affairs TV channel' means a channel which has elements of news and current affairs in its programme content.

News channels are mandated to carry news and current affairs content, while non-news and current affairs channels are not mandated to carry any news and current affairs content. At the time of applying for a non-news TV channel, the applicant company gives an undertaking that the proposed channel is purely an entertainment channel and does not have any news or current affairs-based programme.

"All TV channels may strictly ensure that there is no violation of the conditions of the guidelines," the I&B Ministry order said.

SC grants protection from arrest till May 28 to BJP candidate from Barrackpore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday granted protection from arrest till May 28 to Arjun Singh, a BJP candidate from Barrackpore constituency in West Bengal, in various criminal cases lodged against him by the State police.

The top court said that no coercive action will be taken against Singh, a four-time MLA, as it took note of widespread violence in the politically sensitive West Bengal during the Lok Sabha polls.

A vacation Bench comprising Justices Arun Mishra and MR Shah made it clear that Singh will not be arrested by the state police till May 28 from today and granted him liberty to approach the appropriate forum for bail after the apex court's protection ceases to exist.

While granting protection to Singh, who has left the ruling Trinamool Congress party to contest Lok Sabha polls on BJP ticket, the Bench took note of ongoing indefinite lawyers' strike in the state since April 25 which has paralysed the judicial work.

"No coercive action be

taken against the petitioner (Arjun Singh) for a period commencing from today till May 28 with regard to all the cases registered against him," the Bench said.

After having dictated the order, Justice Mishra remarked: "People who indulge in arson and rioting do not belong to a party. They join the party in power to commit violence."

Senior advocate Ranjit Kumar, appearing for Singh, alleged political vindictiveness on the part of the State Government and said that 21 cases have been registered against him from April 4 to May 20. He said that in five of the cases he has been granted bail but more cases have been registered against Singh after he joined BJP.

Counsel for the West Bengal government said that cases for rioting and arson were lodged against him.

The Bench told the counsel for State Government that it was inclined to grant protection from arrest to the petitioner (Singh) to enable him to be present for counting of votes tomorrow as he was a candidate for the Lok Sabha polls.

Bhawana 1st woman pilot to qualify as full-fledged fighter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth has become the first woman pilot to qualify as full-fledged fighter pilot. She can now take part in operations along with her male counterparts. She and two other woman pilots namely Avani Chaturvedi and Mohana Singh were selected in 2016 to undergo training as fighter pilots. All of them underwent the demanding training for nearly two and half years but Kanth became the first to be selected to become operational.

All the three pilots were the first batch of woman officers to be selected for flying fighter jets. Prior to that, woman pilots only flew transport planes and helicopters. Kanth flew solo a MIG-21



Ft Lt Bhawana Kanth enters her aircraft as she completes day operational syllabus on MIG-21 Bison aircraft. She is the first woman fighter pilot to be qualified to undertake missions by day on a fighter aircraft. PTI

Bison for the first time from Ambala air base last year, thereby, becoming the second woman pilot besides Chaturvedi to do so. Solo flying a fighter jet is rated as a

major step for becoming a fighter pilot. Only selected countries including Britain, the United States, Israel, and Pakistan have allowed women in the role of fighter pilots.

AFT directs Govt to submit all records related to selection of chief by May 29

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major development in the issue of Vice Admiral Bimal Verma challenging the appointment of his junior Vice Admiral Karambir Singh as the next Navy chief, the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) on Wednesday directed the Government to submit all the records related to the selection of the next chief by May 29. Singh would take charge on May 31 after incumbent Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba retires the same day.

While directing the government to submit the related documents as sought by Verma, the AFT also said if found merit, then new appointment of Singh can be put on hold. The AFT has issued

notice to the ministry of defence to furnish all the documents based on which the selection of next navy chief is done, Verma's lawyer Ankur Chibber said.

The Defence Ministry last week rejected Verma's petition in which he had challenged Singh's appointment as the next Navy Chief. Verma, at present, is the commander-in-chief of the Andaman and Nicobar Command and also the senior-most naval commander while Singh is heading the Eastern naval command. He was selected as the next chief on March 23.

Last month, Verma had moved the tribunal questioning the government's decision by overlooking his seniority. The tribunal on April 25 directed the defence ministry to decide

on Verma's petition to the government within three weeks.

While rejecting Verma's plea, the ministry said during selection process, it was found that Verma, though being the senior most eligible officer, was unsuitable to hold the post of the Chief of the Naval Staff. Ministry also said a thorough selection process was conducted under which overall service profile of all the contenders for the top post was examined.

The Government listed reasons for overlooking Verma for the top job. They included a severe letter of displeasure during Navy War Room Leak case when he was posted in Naval Ops Directorate and the fact that he never commanded any operational command.

No transit accommodation in hotels for newly-elected MPs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Newly elected members of 17th Lok Sabha will not get accommodation in five star hotels this year. Instead, they will be put up in the Western Court premises, bhavans of various states and its annexe building.

With the counting of votes for the Lok Sabha polls scheduled for Thursday, the newly-elected members are expected to start arriving in the national capital from Friday. MPs were often lodged in hotels earlier, which at times invited criticism for the money it cost the exchequer.

Lok Sabha Secretary General Snehlata Shrivastava on Wednesday said the newly-elected members of the Lower House of Parliament will no longer be lodged in hotels but in state bhavans, Western Court, a transit hostel for parliamentarians, and its annexe building. "As many as 300 rooms have been arranged along with other extensive facilities to render all possible assistance to the MPs.

Thus, the Lok Sabha secretary has done away with the system of transit accommoda-

tion in hotels," Shrivastava told reporters. Medical posts will also function on round the clock basis in Parliament House and Western Court, she added.

The Secretariat has also set up guide posts at the Indira Gandhi International Airport's (IGIA) terminals one, two and three to receive the newly-elected members, she said, adding similar posts have also set up at New Delhi, Old Delhi, Hazrat Nizamuddin and Anand Vihar railway stations.

The guide posts will function on May 23 from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. and thereafter on May 24 from 5 am to 11 pm.

These guide posts are basically reception centres where members will be received on their arrival in Delhi, she said. As in the past, Shrivastava said, Room No 62 of the Parliament House will function as the facilitation centre for these MPs, and it will be functional from May 23 to May 28.

According to Shrivastava, returning officers in all parliamentary constituencies had already been informed about the arrangements being made by the Lok Sabha Secretariat for the newly-elected members in respect of transit accommoda-

tion, telephone facilities, and their other preliminary requirements. The new members, she said, have been requested to bring with them the certificate of election, in original, issued to them by the returning officer concerned when they visit the Parliament House.

For the first time, the advance copy of the documentation, containing various forms, has been forwarded to the returning officers for the use of the members, she said.

The members can register online with regard to forms in part one such as oath or affirmation, specimen signature, transit accommodation and declarations under different rules.

As part of the outreach plan, 56 nodal officers have been assigned around eight to 10 constituencies each to get in touch with the newly-elected members, and to guide them about the various formalities.

The Secretary General said that the members, for the first time, will be immediately issued permanent identity cards on their arrival in Parliament House. Earlier, the members and their spouses were issued temporary passes.

Govt deliberately misled court in Rafale case, say petitioners

New Delhi: Former Union Ministers Yashwant Sinha, Arun Shourie and activist advocate Prashant Bhushan alleged in the Supreme Court on Wednesday that the Centre "wilfully and deliberately" misled the court in the Rafale fighter jet case and this amounted to "wholesale fraud".

They claimed that the Centre suppressed relevant facts from the court during the hearing in the case.

The trio is seeking review of the apex court's December 14 verdict which gave a clean chit to the Rafale deal to procure fighter jets from Dassault.

In their written submission, brought by them into public domain a day before the counting of votes for the Lok Sabha polls, they said that officers who have misled the apex court should be held accountable for perjury as the government, through the notes

and arguments, had "stated a series of untruths".

"It (Centre) suppressed the truth and thereby insinuated utter falsehoods: facts and documents of the greatest significance, which have direct and overarching bearing on the matter that the court was considering, and which were available with the Government were suppressed from the court," they said in the 41-page submission. PTI

Govt shortlists 5 cities for yoga day

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shimla, Ahmedabad, Mysuru, Ranchi and Delhi—these five cities have been shortlisted by the Government for holding the main function of International Yoga Day this year on June 21st.

According to a senior Union AYUSH Ministry official, the shortlisted five cities have good potential to hold the yoga event on mass scale. "These names will now be sent to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) which will select one city and then finalise the venue of the main function of IDY to be held on June 21," he said. This time the theme of the yoga day will be the 'Festival of Well-Being' while an year-long yoga programmes will be held across the country. Also, it



will be ensured that the programme is eco-friendly ie focus will be on promoting eco-friendly yoga related access-

sories. In the lead-up to the main event, an international yoga festival would be held on June 1-

2 at the Indira Gandhi Stadium in the national Capital. "The aim is to build an atmosphere of Yoga in the lead-up to the

main event and sensitise the masses about the grand function on June 21," the official said. "Like every-year, Yoga will be promoted in a big way," he said.

The United Nations General Assembly, heading to a call by Prime Minister Modi, had made a declaration in December 2014 to observe June 21 every year as IDY. Last year, the main event of the IDY was held in Dehradun in Uttar Pradesh in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated.

The first IDY celebration was organised at Rajpath in New Delhi on June 21, 2015, in which representatives of 191 countries took part. In 2016, the main function was held in Chandigarh while in 2017 it was in Lucknow.

Time for cricket

The great Indian political *tamasha* that we see every five years is over, now the quadrennial cricket World Cup is here



India has fond memories of the Cricket World Cup. After all, as Kapil Dev sprinted back to catch an over-the-head mishit pull off Vivian Richards back in 1983, he lifted the sterling silver Prudential Cup above his head soon after, announcing Indian cricket to the world. This victory also announced India to the world. We can debate endlessly whether we made a hash of things over the following decades, but one thing is certain, Indian cricket's dominance over the world was born that day. Today's Indian Premier League (IPL) has just cemented that status. Look at it this way, performances during the IPL have forced traditional cricket pow-

erhouses like Australia and England to make changes to their squads. But can India expect the summer of 2019 to replicate the summer of 1983?

Frankly, that appears a bit tough. Even with a tremendously talented squad led by Virat Kohli, by far and away the greatest batsman of his generation, and with elder statesman Mahendra Singh Dhoni, a man considered by all his coaches to be one of the greatest tactical minds in the game, India is not entering the World Cup as the favourite. That, not just of the bookies but also several neutral observers, is the English team. Its recent performances against Pakistan are establishing that 400-run One-Day Internationals have become the new normal after the advent of T20 cricket and a decade of the IPL. Although our batting order has historically been strong, we seem to be tapering downwards. But the boys at the top have the ability to take on any bowling attack and our middle order is in form. The pressure of a run chase will hopefully be relieved by our aggressive bowling line-up that can hold the rivals' runs pile-up and remain unpredictable till the slog overs. The bigger question is, however, if this tournament is going to be the last hurrah of One-Day International cricket? In an era of 200-plus run T20 games, which offer instant gratification for those who want constant excitement and get over quickly, can an all-day game survive? Sure, the India-Pakistan match with simmering subcontinental tensions will hopefully be a potboiler watched by over a billion people, possibly having the highest viewership of any single game in the world outside the Football World Cup. This would prove beyond an iota of doubt that despite what other sports claim, the Cricket World Cup is the world's second-most popular international tournament. But cricket must continue to spread its wings in newer territories and while the advent of Afghanistan and the resurgence of the West Indies are positive signs, having fewer non-Test playing nations participating in this World Cup is a bit of a downer, not just for the countries involved but also fans who loved seeing teams like Ireland stun England in Bengaluru a few years ago. It exposes these players to IPL teams looking to make a catch, Mohammad Nabi of Afghanistan being a great example. As the Football World Cup wants to expand to an even wider reach, the International Cricket Council must also start doing the same. Cricket is unique among global sports in its ability to adapt. We went from Test-match cricket to T20 cricket via One-Day Internationals in less than a lifetime. That said, one cannot wait for the excitement of this summer's signature global sporting tournament and even if India is not the favourite, expectations are high for Virat Kohli and his men.

EC must win our trust

While EVMs are convenient, there are too many reports of tampering. A workable solution is needed in future



Granted there is a general air of mistrust over the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) ever since it was introduced, and depending on whichever party has had the unexpectedly winnable verdict, its opponents have cried foul and lodged allegations of tampering. But in one of the world's biggest democracies, there has to be mass confidence in the integrity of EVMs so that voters can trust the outcome of elections. Although the Election Commission (EC) has been stoutly claiming their tamper-proof nature, all political parties, including the BJP and Congress, have at various points in time expressed reservations and in the current election season, there have been genuine concerns about their safety being compromised during transit, storage and handling. Although there is an insurance in the form of voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPATs), the fact is its cumbersome logistics isn't a practical model of resolution. At best, the intent behind it is entirely perfunctory. This is one of the reasons why the EC has rejected the 100 per cent cross-checks of VVPATs as a workable option. But then with so many complaints and anxieties piling up, the EC cannot appear to be so intransigent about concerns and seem to be at war with voters. It must remember that it is not a comment on the adequacy of its security protocol, expert certification and administrative safeguards but about prevention of the hazardous misuse of technology that is the real devil. So as parties across India guard strongrooms and monitor the journey of EVMs to counting centres, the EC cannot discount the shadow of reasonable doubt.

The scientific fact is since EVMs aren't connected to the internet, mass manipulation is impossible because the software is "burnt" into the CPU. Of course thefts, faulty chips and breakdowns are possible. And all of it can be a result of human intervention. Many experts have claimed how a dishonest insider can get physical access to EVMs, tweak the control unit that can be programmed to count votes in a certain pattern wirelessly though that charge is a bit of an elephant passing through a hole. A simpler way would be to have an insider cast residual area votes. Fraud can also happen during the long non-election period in far-flung areas, where the EVMs are stored in basic facilities and at the stage of 'first level checks' before the machines are serviced by authorised technicians from manufacturers. It is in these outlier segments and districts, where swinging the vote stretched across narrow margins would require manipulating a minuscule number, that results could be altered. And in the Indian context, EVMs, though definitely convenient than paper ballots, cannot combat what is encoded in our DNA — human intent and ingenuity. The West is not immune to EVM malpractices either. Which is why Germany and the Netherlands, which used the machine type that is being used by us, re-introduced paper ballots. Of course, they are far less populated than India, which can consider machine-readable paper ballots going forward to cut down delays. Here, the primary ballots are in paper and the secondary ballots in electronic form unlike the current model. Agreed, technology is not our enemy but had it been perfect, original inventions would not have undergone innovations to be relevant to current time and practices. Like it or not, the onus of restoring the credibility of the democratic exercise is upon the EC and the next five years give it ample time to relook at flaws seriously than dismiss complaints as perennially motivated. It owes it to us.

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China-Nepal love affair

The deepening of ties between Kathmandu and Beijing is a serious setback for New Delhi. China scored one more goal but it's difficult to say how far this story will continue



CLAUDE ARPI

In politics, there is little difference between love and sycophancy — the case of Nepal is particularly telling. The social media was recently buzzing with news that some Tibetans had protested "against an utterly ridiculous demand from Nepal's China sycophant politicians to ban the use of the *khata*, the traditional Tibetan white scarf, because it was hurting the feelings of the Chinese people." Whether true or not, the sensitivity of "hurting the feelings of the Chinese people" is nowadays prevalent all over the world with Nepali politicians at the vanguard of the movement.

The "love" has increased further after Nepal President Bidhya Devi Bhandari spent nine days in China on a State visit. The invitation had come from Chinese President Xi Jinping himself. The first part of the visit coincided with the Second Belt and Road Forum in Beijing on April 27. President Bhandari held high-level meetings with the top Chinese leadership; they "exchanged substantive views on further strengthening and consolidating the ties of co-operative friendship and mutually beneficial partnership subsisting between the two countries," according to an official communiqué.

More importantly, the Himalayan nation signed seven agreements with its giant northern neighbour; it included a protocol for an Agreement on Transit Transport; an accord on Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters and one on strengthening assistance and cooperation in the field of livelihood in the Northern Region of Nepal (ie the border with Tibet).

The ruling Nepal Communist Party chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, *alias* Prachanda, was quick to assert that a railway line will connect Kathmandu to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) "within his lifetime." Prachanda also affirmed that the railway will be later extended to Lumbini and Pokhara. It will be "a milestone in Nepal's economic development and growth of the tourism sector", he said.

The Government of Nepal had announced earlier that technical studies for the construction of railway lines linking Nepal with India and China have been completed. Bhandari specifically told the Parliament: "The Rasuwagadhi-Kathmandu railways will be started within two years." Rasuwa is the border post town with Tibet (Kyrirong). The line between Shigatse and Kyrirong was much delayed due to the 2015 earthquake but now it is expected to be completed by 2023.

In May 2017, Beijing had already signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Kathmandu for roads, railways, ports and aviation as well as hydropower and energy projects, finance and tourism as part of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Xi assured Bhandari of China's support



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to make a "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali." Before returning to Kathmandu, the Nepali President spent a day in Lhasa; the main purpose of the visit was re-emphasising Nepal's commitment to the "One China" policy.

As the Japanese newspaper *The Nikkei* wrote, "The price is paid in diplomatic support for Beijing: The Nepalese consulate in Lhasa, the only foreign diplomatic mission in the Tibetan capital, recently reiterated unwavering support for Beijing's claims to both Tibet and Taiwan."

Incidentally, India had a full-fledged mission in Lhasa till 1952 and a Consulate-General till 1962. Today, Beijing adamantly refuses to reopen it, wanting India to go through Nepal authorities for trans-border trade. Examples abound to show the ongoing love story. Nepal has chosen a railway track gauge used by China as standard for its network; Kathmandu justifies the choice by the lower Chinese costs. The move is a serious setback for Delhi, which has failed to limit Beijing's control over Nepal.

Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport Raghuraj Mahaseth told

Reuters that his Government will ask India to use the Chinese gauge: "Standard gauge is less expensive," was the rationale.

Even Nepal's borders with Tibet are looked after by Beijing. According to *The Kathmandu Post*, Kathmandu has permitted the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) to provide development assistance in 15 northern districts of Nepal "to meet their developmental needs"; these districts share a common border with Tibet. The agency was set up in August 2018 in order to strengthen "the strategic planning and overall coordination of the Chinese aid to Nepal."

One unsaid objective is to stop Tibetans fleeing their native land and taking refuge in India. It has been remarkably efficient. On May 12, the Nepal Intermodal Transport Development Board signed with Tibet Fuli Construction Group, a Chinese company, an agreement to construct the inland container depot in Timure in Rasuwa district. Built with Chinese aid, the project is expected to cost \$20 million and is expected to be completed in 30 months. The

Chinese Government will construct the dry port on five hectares of land provided by Nepal; a parking yard with a capacity to park 350 trucks and containers will be built.

In another news, more on the ridiculous side, according to *The Kathmandu Post*, Nepal's leading English language newspaper, three journalists working for the *Rastriya Samachar Samiti* (RSS), Nepal's national news agency, are being probed for disseminating a news item regarding the Dalai Lama.

What is their crime? The journalists "translated and disseminated" a wire report about the Lama's return to Dharamsala on April 27, after he was discharged from a hospital in New Delhi. Minister for Communications and Information Technology Gokul Baskota confirmed to *The Post* that an investigation was on; Baskota said that the Tibet issue was sensitive for China and dissemination of a report regarding the Dalai Lama's health by a state-run news agency was against Nepal's commitment to "One-China policy." Sycophancy of the first order!

Also in the tragic-comedy category, Pradip Yadav of the

Samajbadi Party and Iqbal Miya of the *Rastriya Janata Party*, two Members of the Nepali Parliament, recently participated in an event organised by the Latvian Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet and the International Network of Parliamentarians for Tibet.

The convention in Riga was attended by Lobsang Sangay, president of the Central Tibetan Administration, along with other members of the Tibetan Parliament. Soon after, an official at the Parliament Secretariat pretended that "the two leaders said they were visiting Latvia for personal reasons and they did not disclose the details and purpose of their visit." But finally, the Nepali parliamentarian "regretted" their participation and declared that they inadvertently attended the conference because of misinformation and it was a "mistake."

China scored one more goal; but for how long the love story can continue is difficult to say. Buddha had said "everything is impermanent"...even China's great "loan" friendship?

(The writer is an expert on India-China relations)

SOUNDBITE

You (BSF) should work to enhance professionalism, capability and strength as challenges could be grave.



National Security Advisor —Ajit Doval

I want children. But with children comes the mother. I don't want the mother, but they need one. Maybe I can work out a win-win situation for everyone.



Actor —Salman Khan

It is imperative to have comprehensive reforms of the United Nations and its Security Council to make it more representative and effective.



Union Minister —Sushma Swaraj

The voters have expressed their wishes, which we will know today. Rearranging the deck chairs of a sinking ship is not the most productive activity.



Congress leader —Shashi Tharoor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opp playing by rules

Sir — This refers to the article, "United colours of Opposition a pipedream?" (May 22) by Kalyani Shankar. The entire nation and the media have been waiting with bated breath for May 23. Ahead of the exit polls and opinion surveys, many non-NDA allies teamed up to form strategies for a post-poll alliance. The move by Opposition parties seems to have been inspired by the exit poll results. The scenario has led to intense speculation but this is yet another learning curve for the media.

It should be noted that in a democracy, any party can form a Government either through a majority or coalition. There is no harm in some Opposition party leaders calling for a meeting to form a possible post-poll alliance. The moves of various Opposition parties should be accepted as fair, especially by the media since the results are yet to be declared. For a voter, however, it will be interesting to see how various Opposition parties scramble to find a quick solution post the announcement of results with regard to both forming a post-poll

alliance and projecting a leader as a prime ministerial candidate.

Varun SD
Bengaluru

The great reformer

Sir — This refers to the report, "Seshan, the ultimate Chief Election Commissioner" (May 21). Former Election

EC must clear the air on EVMs

Reports about surreptitious shifting of EVMs without any security in some constituencies have once again given rise to the suspicion of them being tampered with. It is now for the Election Commission (EC) to explain why the EVMs were carried away under the cover of darkness. Democracy itself is subverted when EVMs used for polling are replaced with new EVMs with the bulk of votes 'fed' in favour of a particular party. This is not to conclusively say or affirm that it is being done but to point out that a doubt to this effect has arisen in the minds of people. The charge of possible "manipulation" cannot be dismissed lightly or ignored as "frivolous" or "wild" since the sanctity of the election process is of paramount importance. Opposition parties are within their rights to flag up the issue of likely misuse of EVMs. The poll panel has to address the feared EVM tampering raised by the Opposition as a genuine concern and as an essential part of its constitutional duty "to ensure free and fair elections."



Another issue which the EC needs to act on positively is counting of VVPAT slips, especially in view of the fact that many EVMs were "faulty" and "malfunctioned." Admittedly, 100 per cent cross-checking with VVPAT paper trail is cumbersome and time-consuming. Still, convincing voters that malpractice is not involved to alter the electoral outcome must take precedence over everything else.

G David Milton
Maruthancode

Commissioner TN Seshan was revered by almost everyone for his efforts to level the playing field for the conduct of free and fair polls. His reforms in election norms made him a legend. He was popular because of his unprecedented efficiency in protecting the electoral process. In times when the political discourse has plunged to such a low, it was expected of the Election Commission to

Akhil Pradhan
Dhenkanal

Declining standards

Sir — The exit poll results have deterred the Opposition so much that all 'chair' greedy politicians are running from pillar-to-post to ensure 'defeat' of the Modi Government. Truly speaking, none of the leaders or political party is interested in serving the nation. The 'unquenchable' thirst for power and money rules their minds. In fact, politics has almost become synonymous to corruption. God save the country.

Hansraj Bhat
Mumbai

Take lessons

Sir — Post the exit-poll predictions, Opposition parties have once again started to put the blame on electronic voting machines (EVMs). This only proves the fact that they have not come to terms with reality. The Opposition needs to analyse the scenario and rework strategies.

Rati Seghal
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Iranian war is unwinnable

A confrontation between Iran and the US will be a high-speed replay of the Vietnam war and the latter will lose again. It really is the stupidest idea



GWYNNE DYER

After a long debate, the highest levels of the military could not forecast a way in which things would end favourably for the United States," said Richard Clarke, counter-terrorism adviser in the White House under three administrations. That was back in 2007 and he was talking about the Pentagon's attempts to come up with a winning strategy for a US war with Iran. No matter how they gamed it, the US lost.

Two years later, in 2009, US Marine General Tony Zinni warned that any attack on Iran would lead inexorably to "boots on the ground". "If you liked Iraq and Afghanistan," he added drily, "you'll love Iran." And in 2011, Meir Dagan, former head of Mossad, Israel's national intelligence agency, said that an attack on Iran was "the stupidest idea" he had ever heard. This was all back in the days when various people in the West were talking far too loosely about war with Iran because the Iranian President at the time was a loud-mouthed extremist named Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Then he lost the 2013 election and was replaced by a moderate reformer, Hassan Rouhani.

Rouhani stopped all the aggressive talk and in 2015, he cut a deal with most of the world's major powers to put Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions, if any, on ice for at least 15 years. Everything then went quiet until another loud-mouthed extremist, Donald Trump, tore up the 2015 agreement and began talking about war with Iran again. He doesn't necessarily mean it. What Trump says on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays he often recants on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. (To make matters even more inscrutable, his threat to bring about "the end of Iran" was made last Sunday, and there are no rules for Sundays.) But he is surrounded by people who sound like they really are looking for a fight with Iran.

To be fair, Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo are probably telling themselves that plausibly terrifying US threats will suffice to crumble Iran. Only National Security Adviser John Bolton understands that the threats will cause Iranian reactions that can then be used as an excuse for an actual attack (and he's just fine with that). So is the scenario of a US attack on Iran, with or without Saudi Arabian and Israeli help, still as hopeless a project as it was 10 years ago? It's not hopeless at all if you just drop nuclear weapons on the 20 biggest Iranian cities. That's not enough to cause a nuclear winter but quite enough to kill between a quarter and a half of Iran's 80 million people. If you do that (and either the US or Israel could do it single-handedly), the Iranians will never come back for a rematch.

But neither the US or Israel is going to do that. It would make them literally the enemies of all mankind. And short of doing that, there are no good options for winning a war against Iran because (as in all 'asymmetric' conflicts) the Iranians don't need a winning strategy. All they have to do is not lose. The US and its friends could certainly destroy all of Iran's military and industrial facilities by 'conventional' bombing, including most of the underground facilities. (The Iranians, having lived with threats like this for a long time, have done a good deal of digging.)

The attackers could also destroy all the utilities like water, sewage and electrical power that make urban life possible, forcing millions of Iranian city-dwellers into refugee camps in rural areas. The Iranians might be able to shoot a few of the attacking planes and missiles down, but not many. But none of this would force the Iranians to surrender, nor would it prevent Iran from stopping all the tankers going into and out of the Persian Gulf (which transport most of the oil burned in India, China and Japan). Iran's sea-skimming missiles can be fired from mobile launchers anywhere along 3,000 km of coastline and have the range to reach the other side at any point. So in the end, if you're serious, it would have to be "boots on the ground", just as Zinni said. But the ground war is unwinnable, too. Iran's Army is about the same size as that of the US but it could quickly expand to 10 times that size with volunteers as it did during the US-backed Iraqi invasion of Iran in 1980-88. And Iran is as large as France.

Would the Iranians volunteer in such numbers? Of course, they would. Many Iranians don't like the current regime but they are patriots. They are as unlikely to welcome a US invasion as American liberals would be to welcome a foreign invasion promising to liberate them from Trump. The Iranian volunteers would be poorly armed and they would die in droves but if only one American soldier died for every 10 Iranians, the US public would quickly reach its maximum tolerance level for American casualties. It would be a high-speed replay of the Vietnam war, and the US would lose again. So don't do it. Don't even think about it. It really is the stupidest idea.

ELECTION COMMISSION MEANS 'ERADICATED CREDIBILITY' AND EVMS HAVE BECOME 'ELECTRONIC VICTORY MACHINES' FOR THE BJP.
 —CONGRESS LEADER
 ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI

POINT COUNTERPOINT



DOUBTING EVMS MEANS THAT OPPOSITION PARTIES DOUBT THE PEOPLE AND SHOWS THAT THEY ARE AFRAID OF LOSING.
 —UNION MINISTER
 PRAKASH JAVADEKAR

Port of opportunities missed

The re-imposition of US sanctions on Iran is the biggest threat to the Chabahar port. Both India and Iran must muster enough political will and economic rationale to justify its worth



AVEEK SEN

Amid escalating tensions between the US and Iran, Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran's Foreign Minister, made a brief visit to New Delhi on May 14 to hold talks with his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj on the impact of US sanctions on his country's oil industry. His trip came soon after he visited the United Nations. Post his visit, Zarif gave an interview to *Fox News Sunday*, which is being seen as an attempt to reach out to US President Donald Trump, whose disdain for the media as peddlers of "fake news" is not hidden. Zarif then headed to Qatar to attend a ministerial meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue and then to Russia and Turkmenistan. While Zarif was in Russia, President Hassan Rouhani announced that Iran would cease to abide by certain nuclear limitations but stopped short of violating its 2015 nuclear deal. In this context, it is important that the fourth trip of Zarif in this leg is to India and the third after the US cancelled our sanctions waivers for import of Iranian oil.

During his visit, Zarif held discussions with Swaraj on issues of mutual interest, including the situation in Afghanistan, the development of Chabahar port, cooperation in various fields and regional and international issues. Regarding the ongoing US-Iran tensions, India made its stand clear that any decision on oil purchase from Iran will have to wait for the new Government in Delhi. But here, we will focus on issues concerning the implementation of the Chabahar port project — those as a result of the latest round of sanctions, though the port is out of the immediate purview of bans, and in general.

To clear the air, the purpose of the Chabahar port to be developed by India is entirely different from the Gwadar port in Pakistan being developed by China. The Chabahar is strictly an economic project and not a strategic-military one. On the other hand, China does not need Gwadar to trade with Central Asia or Russia — it has shorter land routes to conduct business. Moreover, the "String of Pearls" theory on potential Chinese intentions in the Indian Ocean Region isn't taken seriously by either the bureaucracy or in think-tank circles. It is seen as an American attempt to sow India-China tensions and the term itself is coined in a US Army War College paper.

Though the Chabahar project is a potential game-changer as it offers a gateway to Central Asia and Europe but as of now, its potential remains largely untapped. Additionally, the US sanctions regime has not just delayed the project since the early 2000s but has also been stifling its growth. It is going to take a few years for Chabahar to register success and it is, perhaps, too early to sing paeans about it. To cite an example, the ambitious plan suffered a blow with manufacturers shying away from supplying essential equipment like cranes and forklifts for the construction of the Iranian port even when US sanctions had not kicked in late last year. Indian promises to delivery ratio, too, have been dismal during this Government's tenure. Further, while greater funds were promised, much smaller amounts have been released.

This writer spoke to Mohsen Shariatnia, an assistant professor of regional studies at Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran, when he said that

“THE RUSSIAN MARKET HAS A HUGE POTENTIAL FOR INDIAN BUSINESSES AND IF INDIA CAN CONNECT ITS RISING ECONOMY WITH ANOTHER BIG ECONOMY LIKE RUSSIA, IT WILL BE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE COOPERATION BETWEEN IRAN AND INDIA ALONG THE CHABAHAR, CONNECTING JUST INDIAN AND RUSSIAN ECONOMIES WILL CREATE ENOUGH ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION FOR INSTC AND THE CHABAHAR PROJECT



the "Chabahar is a mega project but it's too early to judge the success or failure of this project." Speaking about the Mumbai-Mundra-Kandla-Chabahar-Bandar Abbas shipping line, that connects the Indian city of Mumbai to Iranian southern port cities of Chabahar and Bandar Abbas and which was inaugurated only recently, he said that the main problem with this project was about financial resources. The Rouhani administration does not have enough money and the private sector has no economic motivation to invest in this line. If the two countries can reach an agreement on financial resources, a major issue would be resolved.

Shariatnia added that beyond the Indian Government, creating the economic justification of Chabahar for Indian companies is also very important. If they can access Central Asian and Russia markets via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), they can motivate investment and participation for this project. The future of Chabahar will depend on the political will of the Iranian and Indian Government on the one hand and economic justification of Chabahar for Indian and Iranian companies on the other.

Shariatnia added that in his assessment, the importance of the Russian economy is much more than Central Asian economies. If one takes a look at recent developments in Central Asia, one will notice that China is the biggest player and that there is no crucial capability or opportunity within the central Asian economy to be filled by India, Iran or other countries because China is

already a dominant country in this geo-economic scene. The Russian market, on the other hand, has a huge potential for Indian businesses and if India can connect its rising economy with another big economy like Russia, it will be a great opportunity to enhance cooperation between Iran and India along the Chabahar. In my assessment, connecting just Indian and Russian economies will create enough economic justification for INSTC and Chabahar project.

This writer spoke to Behrooz Aghaei, ports and maritime director general of Sistan and Baluchistan province. Chabahar port comes under his jurisdiction. He said that despite what appears at first glance, the "Chabahar port's exemption from sanctions" granted by the US is not going to help the people of Afghanistan. In fact, it increases transit expenses of its commodities by imposing sanctions on ports (which could have been better alternatives economically) and puts further restrictions on Afghan merchants. Analysis reveals that imposing sanctions on Iran's ports as the most secure and less expensive routes for Afghanistan implies imposing sanctions on Afghanistan itself.

Aghaei says that as far as India is concerned, the significant point is that Indian commodities that transit to Afghanistan don't have enough trade volumes to rationalise marine and road transportation expenses. Bearing in mind the trade volume of Afghanistan, Russia and CIS countries, which altogether is more than 16 million tonnes, and the insignificant share of Afghanistan, it can be said that without

making possible the transportation of all India's merchandise to the above-mentioned countries through Chabahar port, the so-called exemption of this port does not make any noticeable change in India's trade. Therefore, Chabahar port's exemption will only be a competitive advantage for India if all our merchandise for Afghanistan, Russia and CIS countries could be transported through the port without any restriction on banking transactions and insurance.

Aghaei adds that the noteworthy point about Afghanistan is that the exemption of Chabahar port will only be useful if there is no prohibition on vessels carrying merchandise entering and leaving it as well as on commercial transactions of cargo owners, merchants and shipping lines. Particularly banking transactions should be done without limitation.

The US may not agree to it. Its aim to provide a sanctions waiver to Afghanistan is to allow imports into that country. It is not concerned with the profits made by the Chabahar port. But it definitely will have an impact on the growth of the port. While Iran is under sanctions, Chabahar can never realise its full potential of being a route for Indo-Russia trade and trade to Europe via INSTC. Gwadar got a headstart over Chabahar, which was planned earlier, due to the US-Iran tensions and sanctions. Will we see Chabahar lag behind in trade due to it?

(The writer is an independent journalist working on cyber security and the geopolitics of India's neighbourhood, focussing on Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Bangladesh)

How to end the plastic kingdom

The dismal global recycling statistics do make us wonder whether we will ever efficiently adopt 100 per cent recycling of plastics. A more fundamental solution is to switch to variants from biodegradable sources like wood, corn starch and sugarcane



KOTA SRIRAJ

Plastics have for long been associated as an environmental contaminant. Slowly but irretrievably, rampant use of this material is adversely impacting the climate system. This is apparent from the fact that our once pristine habitat and fragile ecology, the flora and fauna, are getting increasingly eroded. The damaging impact is clear not only on land but also on the oceans. Newly published research calculates that across their life cycle, plastics account for 3.8 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. That's almost double the emissions of the aviation sector. If it were a country, the "Plastic Kingdom" would be the fifth-high-

est emitter in the world.

Insatiable demand for plastic is fuelling the almost endless pursuit to procure all things made out of it and the bad news is that this burgeoning demand is all set to grow. At 380 metric tonnes a year, we produce 190 times more plastic than we did in 1950. If the demand for plastic continues to grow at its current rate of four per cent a year, emissions from plastic production will reach 15 per cent of global emissions by 2050. This toxic increase in the use of plastic will surely send the environment and climate into a shock unless measures are taken to bring down the plastic exposure.

More than 99 per cent of plastics are manufactured from petrochemicals, most commonly from petroleum and natural gas. These raw materials are refined to form ethylene, propylene, butene and other basic plastic building blocks, before being transported to manufacturers. The production and transport of these resins require an awful lot of energy — and, therefore, fuel. Greenhouse gas emissions

also occur during the refining process itself — the "cracking" of larger hydrocarbons from petrochemicals into smaller ones suitable for making plastic releases carbon dioxide and methane. According to the study, about 61 per cent of total plastic greenhouse gas emissions comes from the resin production and transport stage.

A further 30 per cent is emitted at the product manufacturing stage. The vast majority of these emissions come from the energy required to power the plants that turn raw plastic materials into the bottles, bin bags and bicycle helmets we use today. The remainder occurs as a result of chemical and manufacturing processes — for example, the production of plastic foams uses HFCs, particularly potent greenhouse gases. The remaining carbon footprint occurs when plastics are thrown away. Incineration releases all of the stored carbon in the plastic into the atmosphere, as well as air pollutants such as dioxins, furans, mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls, which are toxic and

damaging to human health.

As plastics take centuries to degrade, disposal in landfill makes only a small contribution to emissions in theory. However, as much as 40 per cent of landfill waste is burnt in open skies, dramatically speeding up the release of otherwise locked-up carbon.

If we are to combat climate breakdown, reductions in plastic emissions are clearly needed. Thankfully, the solution with the biggest potential is already in motion, albeit slow. In showing that transitioning to a zero carbon energy system has the potential to reduce emissions from plastic by 51 per cent, the study provides yet another reason to rapidly phase out fossil fuels. However, beyond urgently required global decarbonisation, we need to reduce our seemingly insatiable demand for carbon-based plastic. Increasing recycling rates is one simple way of doing this.

The highest-quality plastics can be recycled many times, and nearly all plastic can be recycled to some extent — but only 18 per cent was

actually recycled worldwide in 2015. Although each recycle process requires a small amount of new plastic, we can greatly increase the life cycle of the material by efficiently reusing what we make. But the dismal global recycling statistics do make us wonder whether we will ever efficiently adopt 100 per cent recycling of plastics. To counter this, a more fundamental solution is to switch to making plastics from biodegradable sources such as wood, corn starch and sugarcane.

The materials themselves are carbon neutral, although renewable power is essential to eliminate the climate impact of energy costs during production, transport and waste processing. However, a massive ramping up in the production of bioplastics — which currently make up less than one per cent of total plastic production — would require vast swathes of agricultural land. With the population set to rise dramatically, increasingly coveted arable space may not be able to satisfy demand. The bottom line, therefore, is that we will need to

reduce our demand for plastic. According to the study, simply reducing the annual growth in plastics demand from four per cent to two per cent could result in 60 per cent lower emissions from the sector in 2050.

While a life without plastics may seem unimaginable, it's worth remembering that their prevalence is a relatively recent phenomenon. The first artificial plastic, Bakelite, was developed in 1907, but it wasn't until the 1950s that the age of plastic began. If we show a genuine appetite to address plastic pollution, the world could change again just as quickly and so will the environment — for the better.

Governments, corporations, and individuals must make research into alternatives a priority and support their use to needless plastic waste. Of course, any of these solutions alone will not be enough but if we manage to do all of this, then we can cut plastics emissions to just seven per cent of current levels.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)



FOREIGN EYE



MYSTERIOUS FINANCES

It's difficult to see how the Brexit party's statements about funding will meet the requirements of the act governing the polls. It is essential to establish that donations have come only from permissible donors, and are reported publicly if above a certain size. This information ought to be revealed within seven business days as in some Australian states. Democracy costs money. But money must not cost Britain its democracy. (The Guardian Editorial)

Kerala may see Lotus bloom

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The 2019 General Election is likely to open a new battle front in Kerala's bi-polar politics, hitherto monopolised by the CPI(M) and the Congress-led Left Democratic Front and the United Democratic Front respectively. If the mood of the electorate is any indication, Kerala may see the BJP winning one or two seats in the State for the first time in the history of the Lok Sabha election.

"I am sure the BJP will win at least one seat in the State and that is going to be precursor of many political possibilities in Kerala. The State would not be the same afterwards," said P Rajan, seasoned political commentator and former editor of Mathrubhumi. The septuagenarian author is a close associate of Congress leaders like Panampalli Govinda Menon and KC Abraham, the regional satraps of Kerala.

What has happened in the State is the consolidation of Hindu votes, at least in some constituencies where the Hindus are in a majority. The

intransigent attitude of the CPI(M)-led LDF government in admitting women of all ages to Sabarimala, the Holy Shrine atop the Western Ghats where Lord Ayyappa is the presiding deity, led to the consolidation of Hindu votes. The devotees stood united against the Government move to facilitate the entry of women in the age group of 10-50 and they were beaten up and incarcerated slapping charges under the non-bailable sections of the IPC.

The appeasement police of the CPI(M) and the Congress towards the minorities too came handy for the BJP which had some pockets of strength in the State. The first time the BJP could enter the Kerala Legislative Assembly was in 2016 when O Rajagopal, the party veteran won from a suburb in Thiruvananthapuram.

"The adamant stance of chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan that women devotees should be allowed to worship at Sabarimala under police protection has caused heartburning among ardent believers in traditions and customs. K

Surendran, the BJP candidate at Pathanamthitta was in the forefront of the agitation against the entry of women in Sabarimala. The Supreme Court agreed to hear the review petitions filed by the devotees against the Constitution Bench verdict is proof of the seriousness of the situation," said K Ramkumar, senior lawyer, Kerala High Court.

There has been an increase of eight percent polling at Pathanamthitta this year as 74 per cent of the voters cast their polls this time compared to 66 per cent in 2014. Besides Pathanamthitta, the BJP leadership is hopeful of bagging two more seats from the State and this include Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur. But in a politically and communally divided State like Kerala, everything would become clear only after the EVMs are opened. The feeling is that the Lotus would bloom this time in the State. "If we fail to win at least one seat this time, it is the end of the road for the BJP in Kerala," said Sudhakaran, a party activist at Perumbavoor.

Poll results: WB on high alert

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal police administration went on a high alert in anticipation of "untoward incidents", following reports that there could be an escalation in political violence post declaration of election results on Thursday.

While the Election Commission took extra precaution by requisitioning 200 companies of central forces in addition to the 82 companies deployed at 58 counting centres for 42 Lok Sabha seats spread across 22 districts, including Kolkata.

Much to the chagrin of the ruling Trinamool Congress, the stay of the central forces had been extended by 4 days till May 27 following concerns, expressed by Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman about the ongoing violence in the State.

One example of an increased police pro-activeness was a heated exchange between North Bengal Development Minister RN Ghosh and the Coochbehar SP who directed both the TMC and the BJP to remove their respective party camps beyond 100 metre radius of the counting centre, sources said adding the Minister was heard reminding the SP that the

EC would be at the helm of affairs till May 27 — following which the State Government would get back the command — getting a prompt reply that he was prepared for all the eventualities.

Even as the police went on a maximum alert apprehending escalation in political street fights violence continued in areas like Bhatpara in Barrackpore Lok Sabha constituency where a person died while the crude bomb he was making exploded leaving three others grievously injured.

Following continuing violence in the area the ECI took extra precaution by deploying additional central forces outside the house of BJP candidate Arjun Singh who had just before the elections quit Trinamool Congress to join the saffron outfit. A bunker was erected for the CAPF jawans outside his house.

Earlier senior BJP leader Kailash Vijabargiya apprehended threat to Singh's life saying Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee could even get him killed in an encounter. Singh a former TMC MLA on Tuesday secured a Supreme Court order preventing the State from arresting him for five days within which he could approach a lower court for anticipatory bail.

HDK will be CM till Friday morning: Sadananda Gowda

Bengaluru: Union Minister D V Sadananda Gowda claimed on Wednesday that the Congress-JD(S) coalition Government in Karnataka would collapse after the Lok Sabha poll results and HD Kumaraswamy would be the Chief Minister only till May 24 morning.

Gowda, a former Karnataka Chief Minister, also said the stage would be ready for the formation of a new Government in the state after that.

"Kumaraswamy will be the Chief Minister of Karnataka till tomorrow evening only. Tomorrow evening or by day-after-tomorrow morning, because if he does not get to sleep in the night...So day-after-tomorrow morning, hundred per cent Kumaraswamy will step down," he said.

Speaking to reporters here, the BJP leader said, "The stage will be set for the formation of a new Government."

Speculation is rife that an adverse outcome in the Lok Sabha polls would impact the stability of the coalition Government in Karnataka.

Exit polls have forecast that the Congress-JD(S) alliance is likely to perform badly in the parliamentary polls. **PTI**

Tamil Nadu: All eyes on poll results

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI



Entire Tamil Nadu is waiting with bated breath as the counting officials are all set to open the Electronic Voting Machines at 08.00 am on Thursday to count the votes cast in election to the 38 Lok Sabha seats as well as the 22 Assembly constituencies.

This is the first time in the recent history that a general election has generated this kind of anxiety and expectation in the State. What has made this election crucial in Tamil Nadu is the by-elections which were held in 22 Assembly constituencies in the State. The bypolls were necessitated because 18 MLAs, belonging to the AIADMK, were disqualified by Speaker P Dhanapal under the provisions of the anti-defection law when they wrote to the Governor declaring their Opposition to Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy. Three legislators including former Chief Minister M Karunanidhi died while Balakrishna Reddy, a Minister

in the State council of Ministers was sentenced by a court for his alleged role in riots which automatically disqualified him from being a member of the House.

Tamil Nadu Assembly has a total strength of 234 members. The ruling party should have a minimum of 118 seats to claim absolute majority. The AIADMK had won 136 seats in the 2016 Assembly election while the Opposition DMK and its allies have 98 members. TTV Dhinakaran, the lone member of the AMMK, a breakaway faction of the AIADMK, would extend support to the DMK to pull down the Palaniswamy Government. If the DMK manages to win 20 seats out of the 22 seats where polling was held, it would be certain for the AIADMK regime under the leadership of Palaniswamy.

BJP questioned EVMs first: Siddaramiah

Bengaluru: As the debate over EVMs heated up, former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramiah on Wednesday said it was BJP spokesperson G VL Narasimha Rao who has authored a book questioning about electronic voting machines 10 years ago and party veteran LK Advani had written the preface of it.

In a tweet in Kannada, Siddaramiah wrote, "BJP was the first to raise doubts about the EVMs. The spokesperson of that party had even written a book. Supporting the doubt, L K Advani had written the preface of the book. What's the reason behind BJP's change in stand in the last 10 years?" The book 'Democracy at risk due to EVMs' was written by Rao, a psephologist-turned politician, after 2009 elections. A poster Siddaramiah tweeted says, "Concerns about EVMs are legitimate when raised by BJP!" **PTI**

J&K Guv says his admin wants President's Rule to end in State as soon as possible

Srinagar: Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik on Wednesday said his administration wants the President's Rule to end in the state at the earliest but the final call on the timing of assembly elections will be taken by the Election Commission.

Asked if some officials within his administration were not keen on transfer of power to an elected Government in the State, the Governor said there was nothing like that in his notice.

"We want this (President's Rule) to end as soon as possible. The final call on holding assembly elections in the state will be taken by the Election Commission," Malik told reporters after inaugurating the second phase of the Jehangir Chowk-Rambagh flyover.

Recently, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh also said a decision on holding



Assembly elections in the State was the prerogative of the Election Commission but indicated a decision could be announced after the completion of the Lok Sabha polls.

Jammu & Kashmir will be placed under Governor's Rule on June 19, 2018 after the PDP-BJP coalition Government fell as the BJP decided to pull out of the alliance.

The State Assembly was kept in suspended animation to allow for the possibility of any new combination of parties to form a Government in the State.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti supported by the National Conference and the Congress staked claim for government formation on 21 November, 2018.

Within minutes, People's Conference chairman Sajad Lone, who had just two MLAs, also staked claim for government formation.

The governor decided to dissolve the assembly on the grounds that he wanted to prevent horse-trading.

The state was brought under President's Rule on December 19, 2018 for a period of six months as elections could not be held within six months of imposition of Governor's Rule in the State. The President's Rule will have to be extended again on June 19, 2019 as assembly elections have not been held so far. The order for extending President's rule will have to be ratified by Parliament. **PTI**



An election officer monitors a CCTV camera feed of a vote counting center in Ahmedabad on Wednesday **PTI**

Guj: Results may be delayed by 3-4 hrs due to VVPAT counting

Ahmedabad: Election authorities said on Wednesday that declaration of results of 26 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat may get delayed by around 3 to 4 hours due to counting of voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) slips.

VVPAT slips of five randomly selected Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) will be counted in every Assembly segment after EVM votes are counted, said the state's Chief Electoral Officer S Murali Krishna.

Each of the 26 Lok Sabha seats has six to seven assembly segments.

If the slips and EVM data do not match, count of VVPAT slips will be taken into consideration, said Krishna.

"Due to this exercise, declaration of final results may get delayed by around 3 to 4

hours...Trends will be out by afternoon. Only formal declaration would get delayed. Final results may come late in the evening," Krishna told **PTI**.

Counting of votes for 26 Lok Sabha seats and four Assembly seats (where by-polls were held) in the state will start across 28 centers from 8 am, involving over 8,000 counting staff.

Polling was held in a single phase on April 23, recording a turnout of 64.11 per cent, the highest in the state since 1976 when there was around 63.77 voting.

Chief Minister Vijay Rupani expressed confidence that the BJP will retain all the 26 seats in the state.

"There is a Modi 'wave', people of the state are enthusiastic to make Modi prime minister again. The results are cer-

tain," Rupani told reporters in Gandhinagar.

Gujarat Congress chief Amit Chavda claimed his party will win at least 10 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

"The results of Gujarat will surprise all," he said.

In the 2017 state Assembly polls to 182 seats, the Congress won 77 seats while the BJP bagged 99 and retained power with a slender majority.

The main contenders from the BJP in Lok Sabha polls this time are party chief Amit Shah (from Gandhinagar seat) and Union minister Jaswantsinh Bhabhor (Dahod).

The Congress has fielded former Union minister Bharatsinh Solanki from Anand and its leader of opposition in the Assembly Paresh Dhanani from Amreli Lok Sabha seats. **PTI**

Opp sore losers, desperation over VVPAT issue indication of their defeat: Ram Vilas Paswan

New Delhi: Union Minister and BJP ally Ram Vilas Paswan on Wednesday dubbed the Opposition "sore losers" and claimed that their "desperation" over the VVPAT issue was an indication of their defeat in the Lok Sabha polls.

Leaders of 22 opposition parties met the Election Commission on Tuesday ahead of the Lok Sabha election results and demanded verification of VVPAT slips of randomly-selected polling stations before the counting of votes begins Thursday. The EC on Wednesday rejected the demand.

"I have been saying for many months now that when the opposition heads towards defeat it starts complaining about EVM. Those opposing

EVMs want to drag India back to the time when money and muscle power decided elections. The Supreme Court has heard the issue four times already. They are now concocting stories in the face of impending defeat. They are just sore losers," he said.

"When you win, EVMs are alright. But when you lose, allegations about EVM manipulation arise. This kind of pessimistic attitude of the Opposition will hurt the Constitution and also the Indian democracy," Paswan said.

To a question on the future of his son in an NDA Government, the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) chief said that Chirag Paswan had all the capabilities to be a Union Minister. **PTI**

DMK hits out at poll body for sticking to VVPAT last norm

Chennai: The DMK on Wednesday wondered if the Election Commission's move to stick to counting VVPAT slips at the end of the counting process was a democratic act, ignoring demands by 22 Opposition parties against it.

The main opposition party in Tamil Nadu hit out at the poll body, saying its decision has blurred the distinction between an independent institution and the Central government.

"Is this democracy...? Will the Election Commission listen only to Prime Minister Narendra Modi...? senior DMK leader Duraimurugan asked.

He pointed out that the EC's reported move to count

VVPAT slips at the end comes despite as many as 22 Opposition parties urging the slip count in the beginning.

"The distinction between the Election Commission and the Central government has gone," he told **PTI** when contacted for his party's stand on the EC's decision.

The top party leader alleged that the incumbent election commissioners have forgotten that the EC is an independent body. The Opposition parties had approached the EC on Tuesday demanding VVPATs be counted first — prior to counting EVM votes — and in case of problems or mismatch, all VVPAT slips be counted. **PTI**

5 RSS workers get life for murder of CPM activist, 11 acquitted

Thalassery (Ker): Five RSS workers were sentenced to life imprisonment by a local court Wednesday in a case related to the murder of a CPI(M) activist here in 2006.

Additional Sessions Judge R L Byju convicted Shankaran Master (48), his brother Manoharan (42), Vijesh (38), Prakashan (48) and Kavayesh (40) of murder, rioting and other offences under the Indian Penal Code. Awarding rigorous life imprisonment to the five accused, the judge also imposed a fine of ₹50,000 each on them.

The court acquitted 11 other accused, including RSS worker Valsan Thillenger. According to the prosecution, a group of men fatally attacked CPI(M) activist K K Yakub with bombs on June 13, 2006, due to political rivalry. **PTI**

Mah: Ex-NCP Min quits party, joins Sena

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A head of Lok Sabha poll outcome, the NCP suffered a setback on Wednesday, as its former Minister and senior leader from Beed district in Marathwada region, Jaydutta Kshirsagar, joined the ruling Shiv Sena, after saying that he was feeling "suffocated" in the Sharad Pawar-led party.

After days of intense speculation about his possible entry to the Shiv Sena, Kshirsagar formally resigned from the primary membership of the NCP and also quit as an MLA from Beed, before joining the Sena in the presence of its president Uddhav Thackeray, at the latter's

Bandra residence "Matoshri" in north-west Mumbai.

Welcoming Kshirsagar into his party fold, Uddhav tied a red thread on the former's hand symbolising 'Shiv Bandhan' and handing him a miniature party flag.

Uddhav said that with the entry of an experienced leader like Kshirsagar to his party, the Sena's organisational base would be strengthened further in Marathwada in general and Beed in particular.

Kshirsagar's exit from the NCP should be seen in the context of the fact that he had been associated with the Sharad Pawar-led party, ever since it was founded 20 years ago on May 25, 1999. It was Pawar who had gone to the

Beed residence of Kshirsagar to personally invite the latter from the Congress to his party.

Talking to media persons after joining the Shiv Sena, Kshirsagar said: "My decision to join the Shiv Sena has nothing to do with the exit poll projections. I had taken the decision to join the Shiv Sena a long ago. I had also announced my open support to the Sena-BJP alliance candidates in the Lok Sabha polls. Having been associated with the NCP since the formation of the party, I contributed to its growth in my district"

"Beed district has given six MLAs to the NCP. Still, my supporters and I were feeling suffocated in the NCP. That's why I have chosen to quit the

NCP," Kshirsagar said.

Kshirsagar was an influential minister in the previous Congress-NCP government. He was the PWD minister and chairman of the State-run the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) in the Ashok Chavan cabinet. In fact, he had courted a controversy by inviting Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachhan for the inauguration of the second carriage-way of Bandra-Worli Sea Link (BWSL) — known officially as the Rajiv Gandhi Sea Link on March 24, 2010.

Kshirsagar's decision to invite Big-B without consulting the chief minister had not gone well with the Congress, which was the principal ruling

party in the coalition government.

Kshirsagar's influence within the NCP eroded markedly, after the entry of late BJP leader's estranged nephew Dhananjay Munde, also from Beed district, joined the NCP.

Dhananjay, who formally joined the NCP after resigning as the BJP MLC on July 2, 2013, was re-elected to the Maharashtra Legislative Council on September 2, 2013.

It may be recalled that Ajit Pawar had encouraged Dhananjay, a BJP MLC then, to rebel against his uncle Gopinath Munde in the run up to the December 2011 presidential poll in the Parli Municipal Council.

Kerala CM writes to EC, CRPF over lack of facilities for police on poll duty

Thiruvananthapuram: Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday demanded that the Election Commission and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) ensure that necessary facilities were provided to Kerala police officials being deputed to other states for poll duties.

Vijayan shot off letters to the Commission and CRPF following reports that police personnel from the state had faced hardships during their return journey after participating in Lok Sabha polls in Bihar.

"The Commission and CRPF should give necessary

directions to ensure that police personnel deputed for poll duties are provided all necessary facilities, including for their return journey," Vijayan said.

Those deploying police personnel for official duties have the responsibility of ensuring the pride of the service personnel is upheld.

It is unfortunate that some times it was not being implemented, he said.

The police personnel, who were deputed for election duty, did not have railway berths or seats reserved for them and were forced to travel in a crowded general compart-

ment.

This ordeal was just after they had completed their official work without any rest. After being stationed in Lakshadweep, many of the police personnel were sent to Bihar for poll-related work, the release said.

During the deputation of such personnel, either a special bogey should be attached or some sleeper berths set apart, which unfortunately did not happen.

Vijayan urged the Election Commission and CRPF to conduct a probe into such incidents and take steps to ensure they do not recur. **PTI**

2 terrorists killed in encounter in J&K's Kulgam

Rajouri: 4 AK rifles, 9 pistols and 2 modified guns recovered

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A joint team of security forces on Wednesday eliminated two more terrorists in South Kashmir district of Kulgam.

In another incident, one army jawan, injured during a training activity at one of the forward posts in Mendhar, succumbed to his fatal injuries while two others were rushed to a nearby military hospital for advanced treatment. In addition, security forces in Rajouri also recovered huge quantity of arms and ammunition including 4 AK Rifles, 9 pistols, 2 modified guns and 900 rounds of AK rifle.

Defence Spokesman in Jammu, Lt-Col Devender Anand said, "around 9.15 a.m when soldiers were carrying out a training drill with live ammunition at a forward post in Mendhar sector, a live grenade got actuated accidentally and it went off causing grievous injuries to instructor and others. Out of these injured soldiers, 34 year old Naik Shreshalappa Balabatti, hailing from Karnataka, succumbed to his

injuries. He is survived by his wife.

Defence spokesman said, "the army authorities are carrying out detailed investigation of the incident to take corrective measures".

Meanwhile, sharing details of kulgam encounter police spokesman said, "a cordon and search operation was launched by police and security forces at Gopalpora of DH Pora area in district Kulgam on the basis of credible intelligence input".

"During the search operation, the hiding terrorists fired on the search party. The fire was retaliated leading to an encounter. In the ensuing encounter, two terrorists were killed and the bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter", police spokesman said.

The killed terrorists have been identified as Irfan Manzoor Bhat of Poniwah Kulgam and Zahid Ahmad Mantoo of Ferripora Shopian.

According to the police records, the killed terrorists were affiliated with proscribed terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen. They were wanted by law for their complicity in terror crimes including attack on security establishments and civilian atrocities.

Lalu's absence was big challenge while fighting polls: Tej Pratap

Patna: The absence of RJD chief Lalu Prasad during campaigning in Bihar for the seven-phase Lok Sabha polls was a "very big challenge", but the party has put up a "good fight" nonetheless, his son Tej Pratap Yadav said.

Known for his signature one-liners and trenchant wit, this was for the first time, Prasad was not present in the elections as he is serving sentences in connection with fodder scam cases.

The former Bihar chief minister is currently admitted at a hospital in Jharkhand capital Ranchi on account of his poor health.

The "lantern (RJD poll symbol) will be lit" at many places in the state on May 23, Tej Pratap said, though he felt

that the result would be "surprising".

"My father has always been the voice of the poor and the downtrodden and that is the legacy he handed over to me and my brother (Tejashwi Yadav), to fight for them and to bring equality and justice in society," the RJD leader and former Bihar health minister said, ahead of counting of votes on Thursday.

"His (Lalu's) physical absence in this election was, indeed, a very big challenge for us," Tej Pratap told PTI in an interview.

Asked, what is the number of seats the 'mahagathbandhan (grand alliance)' in Bihar is eyeing in the just-concluded polls, Prasad's elder son said that 'the numbers could swing as voters'

mood is also not quite clear at the moment".

"We (the RJD) have done our work and reached out to the people and made them aware of the economic and political situation in Bihar and in the country. If fortune is in our favour, we should get 20-23 seats as per our preparations," Tej Pratap said.

The Mahua MLA, however, said he himself was on the "horns of a dilemma" as far as the number of seats the party could win was concerned, adding that it will have a "element of surprise" this time.

Tej Pratap also said he was hopeful that his sister Misa Bharti would be able to pull off a win from the Pataliputra constituency and claimed that

the people are "unhappy" with sitting BJP MP Ram Kripal Yadav.

Elections were held in Bihar in all seven phases, from Gaya on April 11 to Patna Sahib on May 19 spanning 40 Lok Sabha seats.

As per seat sharing in the 'mahagathbandhan' in the state, the RJD fought on 19 seats, Congress on nine, RLP on five, VIP and HAM three each. One seat was left by RJD for the CPI (ML).

RJD banks hugely on Prasad's legacy as his riveting speeches during poll campaigns are known to energise voters and attract mediapersons in big number.

"Laluji would talk to people of all strata and sit and eat with people of all caste. He took

all communities along. In fact, he would make us brothers sit and teach the way to reach out to the masses.

"He would ask us to fold hands in front of people as 'janta is our malik', tell us to wear kurta-pyjama, mostly khadi, and talk in local parlance as much as possible to better connect with the masses," Tej Pratap said.

The RJD leader said he and Tejashwi have to merely keep the field "irrigated" that was "tilled by my father".

Notwithstanding exit polls forecasts, Tej Pratap hit out at the BJP, saying it is a "party of businessmen (vyaparivon ki party)" who have "done nothing" for farmers or youths in the five years of its Government. **PTI**

All arrangements in place for counting in UP, says CEO

Lucknow: With Opposition parties expressing doubts over the security of EVMs, the Election Commission officials said all arrangements have been made for smooth counting of votes on Thursday for 80 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh.

Security personnel have been deployed in large numbers across the state for the counting process, which will start at 8 am, with entry of authorised people inside the counting centres being allowed only on valid passes, said election officials. **PTI**

Combing op launched to trace militants involved in killing of MLA and 10 others

Itanagar: A massive combing operation has been launched by security forces to trace the suspected NSCN militants who gunned down MLA Tirong Aboh and 10 others near Khonsa in Arunachal Pradesh on Tuesday, an official said on Wednesday.

The Army, the Assam Rifles and the state police have launched the operation to nab the perpetrators involved in the crime, Tirap Deputy Commissioner P N Thungon said.

The Army deployed helicopters on Tuesday night to search the area, which is covered by dense jungle.

The suspected NSCN rebels gunned down Aboh, his son and nine others in the 12 Mile area, 20 km from Khonsa, the district headquarters town of Tirap, on Tuesday, when the lawmaker was on his way to Khonsa from Dibrugarh in Assam.

Aboh (41) had won the Khonsa West Assembly seat in 2014 and was seeking re-election

as a National People's Party (NPP) candidate from the constituency.

"So far, no arrests have been made, but the operation has been intensified by the security agencies by cordoning the area," the DC said.

The bodies of the victims have been handed over to their relatives after conducting post-mortem.

Defence sources at Dinjan in Dibrugarh confirmed the involvement of NSCN(IM) in the killings, stating that a group of about 10 to 15 rebels were involved in the shootout.

The militants had also set ablaze one of the vehicles in Aboh's convoy, the sources said.

While a police personnel and a civilian had sustained bullet injuries in the attack, a woman and another police personnel had escaped unhurt.

The civilian and Aboh's PSO were shifted to a Dibrugarh hospital, Director General of Police (DGP) S B K Singh had said.

The DIG (East), the IGP (Law & Order) and the SP from neighbouring Changlang district moved to Khonsa on Tuesday to supervise the operations and coordinate with various security agencies.

This is the second such incident in Tirap district in recent times, after two supporters of Aboh were killed by NSCN(IM) militants in March. Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, his deputy Kiren Rijiju and Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu have condemned the attack. **PTI**



Indian Army troops conducts a search operation in the jungles of Tirap on Wednesday

PTI

SBSP dismisses reports of MLAs switching sides

Ballaia (UP): The Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP) dismissed all speculations on Wednesday that its legislators might desert the party after the dismissal of its president, Om Prakash Rajbhar, from the Uttar Pradesh cabinet.

"There are reports in the media about our three SBSP MLAs. All the three — Triveni Ram, Ramanand Baudh and Kailash Nath Sonkar — are solidly with the SBSP," Rajbhar said. "All have struggled together (for the party) and no amount of effort will help the

BJP in succeeding in its designs."

SBSP general secretary Arvind Rajbhar pointed out that even though Sonkar was allegedly harassed by state Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Mahendra Nath Pandey during the Rajya Sabha election, the legislator did not support the saffron party and, instead, cross-voted.

"Even if the BJP offers allurements and also cabinet berths, our MLAs will not come under pressure," Arvind Rajbhar said.

On Monday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath recommended the sacking of Om Prakash Rajbhar from the cabinet for his outbursts against the BJP.

Governor Ram Naik accepted the recommendation and relieved the SBSP chief from his post of the backward class welfare minister.

Adityanath had also recommended that all SBSP members holding the rank of a minister of state be removed immediately. **PTI**

18, including 13 women dancers, held from bar in Maha

Palghar: Eighteen people, including 13 women dancers, were arrested from a bar in Palghar district of Maharashtra for allegedly indulging in obscenity, police said on Wednesday.

Acting on a complaint, sleuths of the local crime branch raided the bar located in Vasai area on Tuesday and arrested its manager, two wait-

ers and as many customers, a police spokesman said.

Besides, 13 women were also nabbed for allegedly performing obscene acts, he said.

Those arrested were booked under various Indian Penal Code sections, including 294 (indulging in obscene acts and songs), and provisions of the Maharashtra Police Act, he added. **PTI**

Kerala: Boy goes for nasal surgery, doctor performs hernia operation instead

Manjeri (Kerala): A doctor in Kerala's Malappuram district performed a hernia surgery on a seven-year-old boy instead of removing a growth in his nasal passage after an apparent mix-up of the names of two patients.

The boy, Mohammed Danish, was operated for hernia on Tuesday at a medical college in Manjeri town, 175 km north of Kochi, sources said.

The incident came to light when Danish's parents, who are from Karuvarakundu town in the district, saw their son operated in the stomach, instead of removing his nasal polyps.

Hospital sources told PTI that there was another patient, named Dhanush, who was supposed to undergo surgery for hernia, and the mistake

occurred due to the similarity in their names.

State Health Minister K K Shylaja ordered a probe and suspended the doctor, A Suresh Kumar. "Patients must not suffer due to the negligence of the hospital staff," the minister said, adding that the boy would be given free treatment.

The state human rights commission has registered a case in connection with the incident.

"There is serious negligence on behalf of the staff including the doctor," rights panel member K Mohan Kumar said in his interim order. Kumar asked the medical college superintendent to submit a report with the statements of all the staff present inside the operation theatre. **PTI**

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Audited Annual Financial Results for the Year Ended 31st March, 2019

(INR in Lakhs)

S. No.	Particulars	Current year ended March 31, 2019	Previous year ended March 31, 2018
		Audited	Audited
1	Total Income from Operations	74871	52155
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	1314	120
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	1314	120
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	824	79
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	854	59
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital	2766	2766
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	6136	5282
8	Net Worth	8902	8048
9	Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt	36674	25100
10	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares	-	-
11	Debt Equity Ratio*	2.75	3.02
12	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)		
	1. Basic:	2.98	0.29
	2. Diluted:	2.98	0.29
13	Capital Redemption Reserve	-	-
14	Debt Redemption Reserve	1250	1250
15	Debt Service Coverage Ratio (DSCR)*	1.75	1.81
16	Interest Service Coverage Ratio (ISCR)*	1.75	1.81

Additional Information as per Regulation 52(4) of SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015

- During the year ended March 31, 2019, no interest and principal payment was outstanding on Non Convertible Debentures. The interest which was due on April 30, 2019, has been paid on due date. Further, the Company has repaid the entire outstanding amount of Rs. 4,000 Lakhs on May 10, 2019.
- The rating for the Non Convertible Debentures of the Company as assigned by the Credit Analysis and Research Limited is "CARE BBB+ (SO)".
- Debentures are secured by way of first pari passu charge by hypothecation of entire current assets, movable fixed assets of the Company (both present and future), Corporate Guarantee of Feedback Infra Private Limited and pledge of shares of the Company. These are to be secured against first pari passu charge over movable assets and current assets to the extent of Asset Cover of atleast 1.75 times. The Asset Coverage Ratio is 2.70 times as on March 31, 2019.

***Note 1: Adopted definitions for Ratios:**

- Debt Equity Ratio = Total Debt / Net Worth
- Interest Service Coverage Ratio (ISCR) = (EBDIT - Current Tax) / Gross Interest
- Debt Service Coverage Ratio (DSCR) = (EBDIT - Current Tax) / (Gross Interest + Principal Repayment of long term debts excluding repayment from refinancing of debt)
- Net Worth = Equity Share Capital + Other Equity
- Total Debt = Non Current Borrowings + Current Maturities of Non Current Borrowings
- Asset Coverage Ratio = Total Assets / (Total Borrowings - Unsecured Borrowings)

Note 2:

- The above is an extract of the Annual Financial Results required to be filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 (as amended). The full format of the Annual Financial Results is available on the Stock Exchange website www.bseindia.com and on the Company website www.fedco.co.in
- For the items referred in sub-clauses (a), (b), (d) and (e) of the Regulation 52(4) of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the pertinent disclosures have been made to the Bombay Stock Exchange website www.bseindia.com and on the Company website www.fedco.co.in
- The above results have been reviewed and recommended by the Audit Committee at its meeting held on May 14, 2019 and approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on May 22, 2019. The audit has been carried out by Statutory Auditors. The Report does not contain observations impacting the results for the year ended March 31, 2019.
- Figures of the previous year have been regrouped and reclassified to conform to the classification of current period, wherever considered necessary.
- The Statement has been prepared in accordance with the Indian Accounting Standards ("Ind AS") as prescribed under Section 133 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with relevant rules issued thereunder and in terms of Regulation 52 of SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 and SEBI's circular no. CIR/IMD/DFI/69/2016 dated August 10, 2016.

For and on behalf of Board of Directors
 Sd/-
Devlosh Chaturvedi
 Managing Director
 (DIN- 06427761)

Date: May 22, 2019

NORTHERN RAILWAY

(OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE)

For and on behalf of The President of India, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/ Coaching, Northern Railway, Delhi Division, New Delhi invites Parking e-tender for 3 years contract at the following Railway station:
Tender No.: Parking 82-2019

1. Name of work with its location/ Railway Stations	Parking contract of cycle-scooter at Samalkha Railway Station (GZN) 'D' c'tg. for an area of 409 MT*
2. Approx. Cost of work	As per NIT
3. Date & Time of submission of e-tender bid and opening of tender	11:00 hrs. of 14.06.2019
4. Cost of Tender document including (18% GST)	Rs. 2,360
5. Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 13,700
6. Website particulars where complete details of tender document can be seen.	https://www.ireps.gov.in

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 Director, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Raipur
 Chhattisgarh, GO, invites e-tender for following:

E-TENDER CALL NOTICE

Tender Title	EMD Cost	Published on CPPP/Website	Pre-bid Meeting Date	Closing Date
Supply of Mobile C-arm Image Intensifier System for Urology and Orthopaedics Department	Rs. 3,67,000/-	17.05.2019	24.05.2019 at 03:30 PM	10.06.2019 at 06:00 PM
Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Running, Maintenance and Operation of Pneumatic Air Tube System on Turnkey basis*	Rs. 15,000/-	17.05.2019	30.05.2019 at 03:30 PM	18.06.2019 at 06:00 PM

The details terms & conditions are available on the website - www.aiimsraipur.edu.in and CPP Portal www.eprocure.gov.in
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Below mentioned Allottee(s) are informed to deposit the outstanding demand in full within 15 days from the issue of this advertisement in order to continue with their allotment. All allotment whose payment is not received within the specified time frame would be termed as cancel as per the Affordable Housing Policy 2013 of Government of Haryana.

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2	971	D-209	Ram Lal	9	4284	F-108	Geeta Yadav
3	1743	B-316	Satpal Singh	10	4817	D-609	Seema Yadav
4	1765	C-612	Veena Sharma	11	5651	C-907	Manoj
5	2953	F-315	Ravinder Singh Kadian	12	5702	F-405	Swapnil Modi
6	2976	A-102	Pankaj Kumar	13	5772	A-001	Krishna Bhardwaj
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IndusInd Bank Q4 profit dips 62%; IL&FS exposure takes toll

PTI ■ MUMBAI

IndusInd Bank on Wednesday reported 62 per cent fall in net profit at ₹360 crore for the March quarter 2018-19 due to higher provisioning for loans extended to IL&FS.

Its profit in the year-ago period stood at ₹953 crore. The private sector lender has a total exposure of ₹3,004 crore to IL&FS Group, of which ₹2,000 crore is to the holding company and ₹1,004 crore to operating companies/ special purpose vehicles.

The entire exposure to IL&FS was classified as non performing asset (NPA) in the fourth quarter.

"While the bank witnessed robust growth in its topline as well as in operating profits, aggressive one time provisioning for IL&FS depressed the bottom line," the bank's MD and CEO Romesh Sobti told reporters.

During the quarter, it made a provisioning of ₹1,253 crore towards IL&FS Group. For the full year, provisions stood at ₹1,803 crore.

It has a 70 per cent provisioning for exposure to the holding company and a 25 per cent to the SPVs.

Sobti said the bank has made a sufficient amount of provisioning for the exposure to the IL&FS Group.

"We have good reason to

believe and there are indications in the market that there could be 90-100 per cent recovery on this particular exposure," he said.

Net interest margin (NIM) stood at 3.59 per cent as against 3.97 per cent in the year-ago period.

Net interest income (NII) grew 11 per cent to ₹2,232 crore as against ₹2,008 crore. Core fee income rose 27 per cent to ₹1,419 crore from ₹1,113 crore in the same quarter last year.

Gross NPAs stood at 2.10 per cent as against 1.17 per cent, while net NPAs were 1.21 per cent compared to 0.51 per cent.

The bank's special mention accounts-2 (SMA2) exposure was ₹641 crore as at March-end 2019.

Its advances and deposits grew 29 per cent each to ₹1,86,394 crore and ₹1,94,868 crore as on March 31, 2019.

It is looking at a loan growth of over 25 per cent in the current financial year.

The announcement of results was delayed as the bank was waiting for a final approval from National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for its merger with microfinance company Bharat Financial, Sobti said.

The proposal has been approved by the RBI, CCI and Sebi.

ILFS crisis: ED conducts fresh raids in Mumbai

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday carried out fresh searches in Mumbai in connection with its money laundering probe in the multi-crore IL&FS payment default crisis, officials said.

The residences and offices of at least four directors of the firm are being raided in Bandra, Khar, Nariman Point and Goregaon area of the metropolises, they said.

Some documents have been recovered during the searches, the officials said.

The central agency had first carried out searches in this case in February after it filed a criminal case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The searches are aimed at collecting additional evidences and documents, they said.

The debt crisis at the infrastructure lender came to light following a series of defaults by its group companies beginning September, 2018.

Jet Airways shares rise over 5% on Hinduja stake buy buzz



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of grounded Jet Airways advanced over 5 per cent on Wednesday, a day after the diversified Hinduja Group said it is evaluating the opportunity to invest in the airline.

On the BSE, the airline's scrip jumped 5.17 per cent to close at ₹158.55. Intra-day, it touched a high of ₹164.90.

The stock has gained 27.75 per cent in the past three sessions. On Friday, it had closed at ₹124.1 per share.

On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), the stock settled at ₹153.80, gaining 1.96 per cent. After opening at ₹152 a

unit, it touched an intra-day high of ₹165.

In terms of equity volume, over 3.9 crore shares were traded on the bourses.

"Hinduja Group is evaluating the Jet Airways opportunity," the group said in a statement Tuesday.

The grounded carrier shuttered its operations on April 17 and the lenders, led by State Bank of India, are still scouting for investors to revive the airline, which has a debt burden of over ₹8,000 crore.

On Tuesday, the scrip closed with a 14.73 per cent gain at ₹150.75, while on Monday, it rose 5.88 per cent to settle at ₹131.40 on the BSE.

Sebi lays out accreditation framework for investors willing to invest in start-ups

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi Wednesday came out with framework for accreditation of investors seeking to invest in start-ups that would be listed on Innovators Growth Platform (IGP).

The IGP, earlier known as Institutional Trading Platform, has been created to facilitate listing of start-ups or new-age ventures in sectors such as e-commerce, biotechnology and data analytics.

In a circular, Sebi provided framework including eligibility criteria and procedure to be recognised as an accredited investor (AI) and also mentioned the validity of accreditation.

Regarding the eligibility, Sebi said "any individual with a total gross income of ₹50 lakh annually and who has a minimum liquid net worth of Rs 5 crores or any corporate with net worth of ₹25 crore" is eligible to be an AI.

While laying down the procedure for accreditation, Sebi said the investor having a demat account with a depository needs to make an application to the exchanges or depositories in the prescribed manner for recognition as an AI.

Exchanges and depositories shall be responsible for verification and maintenance of the AI data, Sebi added.

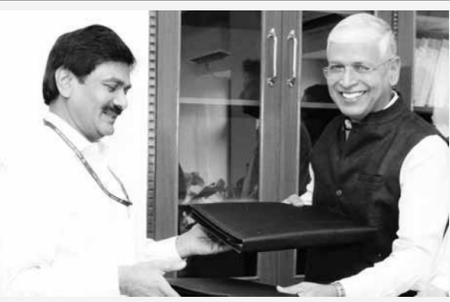
Business Corner



Today in a befitting ceremony at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, gallant BSF men have been awarded with medals and honoured by the Chief Guest Shri Ajit Doval, NSA. Total 22 members of the Force were decorated with Medals in which 11 members with Police Medals for Gallantry, 10 Officers and men (including 02 retired members) have been awarded with Police Medals for Meritorious Service and 01 Officer with Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak



Northern Railway working towards the commitment to strengthen its infrastructure has added another feather in its cap in the form of a 22 km long doubling of section from Khatauli to Muzaffarnagar in connection with Meerut City-Muzaffarnagar rail line doubling on Ghaziabad-Saharanpur section of Delhi Division. SK Pathak, Commissioner Railway Safety (Northern Circle) conducted an intensive inspection and speed trial on the section today. Trial Train was successfully run at 120 km/hr clocking upto 140 km/hr. The CRS has expressed satisfaction on the construction quality of the 22km long doubled line



National Fertilisers Limited (NFL) has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Department of Fertilizers, Government of India, for the financial year 2019-20. Under the MoU, the company has been given a target of sales turnover of ₹13,500 crore, which is 10% higher than the previous year



Jindal Stainless Foundation (JSF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) in New Delhi. The MoU will intensify 'Project Krishi Unnati', an ongoing CSR initiative of Jindal Stainless Foundation aimed at doubling farmers' incomes



TAFE — Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited, the third largest tractor manufacturer in the world and second largest in India (by volumes), has announced a brand association with actor Akshay Kumar for Massey Ferguson tractors

NITI AAYOG'S ECONOMIC AGENDA FOR NEW GOVT LIKELY TO FOCUS ON BOOSTING PVT INVESTMENT: KUMAR

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Niti Aayog is working on the economic agenda for the new Government where the focus will be on achieving long term sustainable growth and boosting private investments in the country, the think tank's Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar said on Wednesday.

Lok Sabha election results would be announced on Thursday and the new Government would be in place in the coming weeks.

In an interview to PTI, Kumar said Niti Aayog would submit an action plan to the new Government.

"Niti Aayog is preparing something (economic agenda)

and that will be submitted to the new Government.

"The basic thing is that we need to take steps to increase private investments in the economy. That's a real issue and to increase the private investment, it requires greater access to credit for small and medium enterprises (SMEs)," Kumar said.

3 Chinese airlines seek Boeing compensation over 737 Max

AP ■ BEIJING

China is stepping up pressure on Boeing Co. As its airlines demand compensation for the grounding of 737 Max jetliners after fatal crashes in Ethiopia and Indonesia.

Two of three major state-owned carriers — Air China Ltd. And China Southern Airlines Ltd. — said Wednesday they want compensation for their aircraft being grounded. The third, China Eastern Airlines Ltd., announced a similar request last month.

China, along with North America and Europe, one of the biggest markets for jetliners. That makes its response critical for Boeing.

It was among the first countries to ground the 737 Max in March following crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia that killed a total of 346 people.

Investigators have suggested a flight-control system was to blame for both 737 Max crashes.

"We must use punishment and tell the Americans their practice of using concealment and fraud to extract benefits from others, while benefiting themselves, is unfair," said the Global Times newspaper, which is published by the ruling Communist Party and



known for its nationalistic tone. Air China, which has 15 of the 737 Max jets, also wants compensation for delays in aircraft deliveries, an employee of its publicity department said. He declined to give his name or details of the claim.

China Southern wants compensation for disruption due to being unable to use its 737 Max planes, said an employee of its publicity department. He would give only his surname, Wang.

It's unclear how many flights have been disrupted. The country's aviation regulator said in April any changes in design or training will be "fully evaluated" based on the results of investigations into fatal 737 MAX crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia.

That suggested Beijing wants to examine and approve

any changes instead of relying on Boeing or the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration.

China is one of nine countries represented on an FAA review panel, along with Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, Japan, Indonesia, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.

"Let everyone participate to show you aren't cheating," said Guangcha.Com, a news website.

Boeing estimates Chinese carriers will buy 7,700 jetliners over the next two decades.

The Chinese government alternates orders between Boeing and Airbus in order to maintain competition and hold down prices.

A state-owned manufacturer also is developing a Chinese competitor to the 737 and Airbus's A320.

Appeal for Identification



General public is hereby informed that one male Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 55 Years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Wheatish, Sex: Male, Face: Oval, Build: Thin, Wearing: White & Black Strip Shirt and Black Pant was found dead on 07.05.2019. Place of Recovery: Found Dead body in Jurisdiction, P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 59A, has been lodged at P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi on 07.05.2019. Any clue come to notice please inform undersign.

SHO
PS. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi
DP/8958/NW/19 Ph.: 011-27495198, 27495527

REGENT ENTERPRISES LTD
Registered Office: E-205 (LGF), Greater Kailash-II, New Delhi-110 048
Phone: 011-29213191
Email: stradersltd@gmail.com
CIN: L15500DL1994PLC153163

NOTICE
Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligation and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held on Thursday, 30th May, 2019, inter alia to consider, approve and take on record the Audited Financial Results of the Company for the quarter ended on 31st March, 2019 along with the Auditors Report thereon.

FOR REGENT ENTERPRISES LTD
Place: New Delhi Sd/-
Date: 21.05.2019 Vikas Kumar
Whole Time Director
DIN: 05308192

NORTHERN RAILWAY OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE

For and on behalf of President of India, The Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer/Coaching, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites "On Line Open Tenders" for following work:

1. Name of work	"Housekeeping of Inspection Carriage Coach care Centre Delhi" for two year
2. Work place	Delhi Division
3. Approx. cost of work	Rs. 8989901.71/- (Including GST)
4. Earnest money	Rs. 1,39,800/- (Note : It should be in the form of net banking or gateway only. FDR not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Board letter no 2015/CR-1/CT/5/1 dated 31.08.2016)
5. Date & time of submission of tender bid and opening of tender	On 14.06.2019 Up to 15:00 hrs. and opening after that.
6. Website particulars where complete details of tender document can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in

No. 197-S/2/HK/IC/19/MC-IV Date: 21.05.2019 1539/2019
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Delton Cables Limited
CIN: L31300DL1964PLC004255,
Website: www.deltoncables.com

Regd. Office: Delton House 4801, Bharat Ram Road 24, Daryaganj, New Delhi - 110002
Phone: 011-23273907
Email: dcd@deltoncables.com

NOTICE
NOTICE is hereby given that the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 30th day of May, 2019, inter-alia to consider and approve the audited Financial Results for the Quarter/Year ended on 31st March, 2019.

This information is also available on the website of the Company i.e. www.deltoncables.com and also on the website of the BSE Limited i.e. www.bseindia.com.
For Delton Cables Limited Sd/-
Date: 22.05.2019 Vikas Rawat
Place: New Delhi (Company Secretary)

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Home Finance
Registered office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai - 400051
Corporate Office : RPG Towers, Andheri Kurla Road, J.B. Nagar, Andheri (East), Mumbai-400059
Branch Office: ICICI Bank 2nd Floor, Videocon Tower, Jhandewalan Ext, New Delhi- 110055

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property / Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Meena Mohan/ Pawan Kumar/ NHDEL00000744773	Flat No. 103, 1st Floor, Amarपाली Patel Platinum, Gh 001, Sector 119, Noida/ May 17, 2019	November 30, 2017 Rs. 61,76,264/-	Del/ncr
2.	Amit Munjal/ Deepa Anand/ NHDEL00000795332	Flat No-T-G-1204-A, 12th Floor, Amarपाली Platinum, Gh- 001, Sec- 119, Noida Uter Pradesh 201301/ May 17, 2019	March 31, 2018 Rs. 49,86,661/-	Del/ncr

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 days Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : 23.05.2019 (Authorized Officer)
Place : Delhi/NCR ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd.

NSE gets interim relief from SAT in co-location case

Mumbai: The Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) on Wednesday stayed Sebi rulings that directed the National Stock Exchange to disgorge profits of over ₹625 crore in the co-location case.

However, the tribunal directed the bourse to deposit ₹625 crore with Sebi in two weeks. The exchange would have to continue to deposit revenues from the co-location facility to an escrow account. On Tuesday, the NSE moved the tribunal challenging Sebi's rulings against it in the co-location case.

In April, Sebi directed the exchange to disgorge profits of over ₹1,000 crore and imposed a six-month ban on launching new derivative products besides action against other entities, including some current and former officials. PTI

Govt stops issuing Reliance-BP penalty notices for KG-D6 gas output shortfall

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has stopped issuing penalties on Reliance Industries and its partner BP plc for natural gas production from eastern offshore KG-D6 fields not matching the targets after the matter went into arbitration, according to an RTI reply by the DGH and sources.

While a challenge by Reliance-BP to the imposition of penalties in the form of disallowance of recovery of a part of the cost of incurred on the fields led to the Government stopping issuing notices after 2016, a similar arbitration proceeding had not prevented it from selling shares, seizing dividends and confiscating tax refunds — totalling about \$1 billion, to recover retrospective tax dues from Cairn Energy Plc of UK.

The Government had between 2012 and 2016 disallowed Reliance from recovering the cost of \$3.02 billion for KG-D6 output lagging targets, but no notice was issued after that even though production has plummeted to a fraction of the projections.

The Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) in reply to an RTI stated that in all, four notices were issued that disallowed recovery of a part of the cost incurred by

Reliance-BP in producing gas from Dhirubhai-1 and 3 (D1&D3) fields; the last one being on June 3, 2016.

DGH in the RTI reply declined to share copies of the notices on grounds that the information was "commercial confidence of the third party" and said details cannot be disclosed because "the subject information is sub-judice before Arbitral Tribunal/Court of Law."

While emails and text messages sent to Oil Secretary M M Kutty and DGH seeking comments remained unanswered despite reminders, sources said the notices were stopped as the issue was being heard by an international arbitration panel and it would have tantamounted to contempt of proceedings if the Government were to go ahead and keep imposing penalties.

Emails sent to Reliance and BP soliciting comments too remained unanswered.

A three-member arbitration panel was constituted in 2015 to hear Reliance-BP challenge to disallowance of cost recovery.

This was said to have led to stopping of issuance of cost recovery disallowance notices to Reliance-BP, but the Government issued Cairn Energy's near 4.8 per cent holding in Vedanta Ltd, sized

dividends due to it totalling ₹1,140 crore (\$164.2 million) and confiscated tax refund of ₹1,590 crore (\$249 million) when an international arbitration tribunal was hearing the British firm's challenge to a move to impose ₹10,247 crore tax retrospectively.

The cost recovery disallowance notices to Reliance-BP were issued as gas output lagged targets, a phenomenon that Oil Ministry and DGH has insisted was because of the company not drilling the committed number of wells on the fields.

The total penalty slapped till 2016, which was in the form of disallowing recovery of cost incurred for missing the target during six years beginning April 1, 2010, was \$3.02 billion.

The Production Sharing Contract (PSC) allows Reliance and its partners BP PLC of the UK and Canada's Niko Resources to deduct all capital and operating expenses from the sale of gas before sharing profit with the Government.

Disallowing costs will result in the Government's profit share rising. The Government claimed an additional \$175 million as its profit share after the cost disallowance in 2016.

IRAN REFUSES TALKS UNLESS US SHOWS 'RESPECT'

IAN S ■ TEHRAN

Iranian Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, has said that his country won't negotiate with US President Donald Trump unless Washington shows Tehran "respect" by honouring its commitments under the disputed nuclear deal.

In an exclusive interview with CNN on Tuesday, Zarif warned that the US was "playing a very, very dangerous game" by boosting its military presence in the region.

The Minister's remark comes after Trump in a series of tweets on Sunday asked Iran "never to threaten" the US and warned Tehran that if it wants a fight, it would be "the official end" of the Islamic nation.

"Iran never negotiates with coercion. You cannot threaten any Iranian and expect them to engage. The way to do it is through respect, not through threats," the Minister said.

Zarif said there "will be painful consequences if there is an escalation", but added that Iran was "not interested in escalation".



Javad Zarif File photo

Instead, he called for an immediate end to the "economic warfare" waged by the US on Iran, saying that sanctions were "depriving citizens of their means of livelihood".

"All we want to do is sell our oil," Zarif said, adding that the US was "just a bully preventing people from buying our oil".

He said the US sanctions, which have hit the Iranian economy hard, "amounts to terrorism" on the country's citizens.

Zarif also accused Washington of walking out first on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

(JCPOA), the 2015 deal designed to limit Iran's nuclear capabilities in return for the lifting of sanctions.

"We acted in good faith," Zarif told CNN of the deal, which was signed by the US, Iran, Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia. "We are not willing to talk to people who have broken their promises".

Iran has announced it would be partially withdrawing from the deal on the one-year anniversary of the US's departure from the accord. It gave the remaining signatories until July 7 to ease restrictions on Iran's badly hit banking and oil sectors, or face unspecified retaliation.

The Minister also criticized the US for sending the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier

US stance on Iran 'deterrence, not about war': Pentagon chief

Washington: The US defence chief said President Donald Trump's administration was seeking to deter Iran but not start a war, after he briefed members of Congress.

"This is about deterrence, not about war. We are not about going to war," Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan told reporters after exiting the closed-door meeting with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Shanahan credited robust US moves in recent weeks, which included the deployment of an aircraft carrier strike group, with thwarting Iranian threats.

"We have deterred attacks based on reposturing of assets, deterred attacks against American forces," Shanahan said. "Our biggest focus at this point is to prevent Iranian miscalculation. We do not want the situation to escalate," he said.

Pompeo said that he and Shanahan placed Iranian actions within the context of "40 years of terrorist activity," since the 1979 Islamic revolution replaced the pro-Western shah with a staunchly anti-US clerical regime.

The briefing did not satisfy many of the Democrats, who say that the heightened tensions are the results of President Donald Trump administration's aggressive stance and shunning of diplomacy. "I worry very much that, intentionally or unintentionally, we can create a situation in which a war will take place," Senator Bernie Sanders, an independent running for the Democratic presidential nomination, told reporters. Saying that the Iraq and Vietnam wars were based on lies by previous administrations, Sanders said: "I believe that a war with Iran would be an absolute disaster, far worse than the war with Iraq." **AFP**

strike group and a bomber task force to the Persian Gulf. "Having all these military assets in a small area is in of

US fingers Iran on Gulf attacks but eases tone

Washington: President Donald Trump's administration charged Tuesday it was "quite possible" Iran was responsible for the sabotage of Gulf oil interests but said its robust response had stopped potential attacks on Americans.

Top Trump officials appeared to be toning down weeks of fiery warnings to Iran before delivering a classified briefing to the full Congress, where opposition Democrats have accused the administration of hyping intelligence and pushing the United States dangerously close to war. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the US has not made "a definitive conclusion" that can be presented publicly over the sabotage of oil tankers off the UAE or drone strikes on a crude pipeline in Saudi Arabia. **AFP**

itself prone to accidents," Zarif said. "Extreme prudence is required and the US is playing a very, very dangerous game."

Trump may blacklist Chinese surveillance tech firm: Report

IAN S ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump's administration is considering blacklisting a Chinese video surveillance giant from buying American technology, in a latest attempt to counter Beijing's global economic ambitions, a media report said.

The move would effectively place the company, Hikvision, on a US blacklist. It would mark the first time the Trump administration punished a Chinese company for its role in the surveillance and mass detention of the Uyghur Muslim ethnic minority, informed sources told *The New York Times* on Tuesday.

The development is also likely to inflame the tensions that have escalated in President Trump's renewed trade war with Chinese leaders.

Trump, in the span of two weeks, has raised tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods, threatened to tax all imports and taken steps to cripple the Chinese telecom

equipment giant Huawei. China has promised to retaliate against American industries.

Hikvision is one of the world's largest manufacturers of video surveillance products and is central to China's ambitions to be the top global exporter of surveillance systems.

The company has said that its products enable their clients to track people around the country by their facial features, body characteristics or gait, or to monitor activity considered unusual by officials, such as people suddenly running or crowds gathering.

The Commerce Department might require that American companies obtain government approval to supply components to Hikvision, limiting the company's access to technology that helps power its equipment.

Administration officials could make a final decision in the coming weeks, the sources said.

Call our leader Abe Shinzo, not Shinzo Abe: Japan to world

Tokyo: Ahead of a series of important international events in Japan, including the G20 summit in June and the Rugby World Cup later this year, Japan has requested the English-speaking world to call its Prime Minister as Abe Shinzo, not Shinzo Abe.

In Japanese, people are referred to by their family name first, followed by a given name, the same pattern as used by Chinese and Korean.

For almost a century and a half, however, Japanese names have been written in English the opposite way round, with the given name first. This practice was adopted during the Meiji Era (October 1868 to July 1912) as a part of broader attempts at internationalization.

As it entered the new "Reiwa" era with the arrival of a new emperor, the Japanese government has said it would like to settle the matter once and for all.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono said the government hoped going forward that the Prime Minister's name "would be written Abe Shinzo, just like Chinese President Xi Jinping and South Korean President Moon Jae-in".

"I am planning to issue a request to the international media," Kono said, adding he hoped Japanese English-language media would follow suit, CNN reported on Wednesday.

The request comes as Japan is set to host a number of major events, including the G-20 summit of world leaders in June, followed by the Rugby World Cup in September and the Summer Olympics in 2020.

Also, US President Donald Trump will arrive in Japan for a state visit on Saturday, when he will become the first foreign leader to meet Emperor Naruhito since his coronation.

It was unclear whether the US government will conform to Kono's request. **IAN S**

Bomb-laden drone from Houthis rebels targets Saudi airport

AP ■ DUBAI

Yemen's Iranian-allied Houthi rebels attacked a Saudi airport and military base with a bomb-laden drone Tuesday, an assault acknowledged by the kingdom as West Asia tensions remained high between Tehran and Washington. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage.

The attack on the Saudi city of Najran came after Iran announced it has quadrupled its uranium-enrichment production capacity, though still at a level far lower than needed for atomic weapons, a year after the US withdrew from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers.

Underlining the tensions, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani is seeking expanded executive powers to better deal with "economic war" triggered by the Trump's administration's renewal and escalation of sanctions targeting the Islamic Republic, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

Taliban leader among 16 killed in air raids in Af

IAN S ■ LASHKAR GAH (AFGHANISTAN)

As many as 16 Taliban militants, including one of their local leaders, were killed in a series of air-strikes in Afghanistan's Helmand province, officials said on Wednesday.

The air raids took place in the Marja and Sangin districts of Helmand on Tuesday, leaving 16 Taliban militants, including one of their local leaders named Mullah Hamza alias Dulgay Mishar dead, provincial governor's spokesperson Omar Zawak was cited as saying by Xinhua news agency.

Five militant hideouts were also destroyed in the raids, the official said, adding the operation targeting militants' hideouts would continue.

Zawak said no casualties were inflicted on the government forces or civilians during the raids.

South Africa lawmakers re-elect Cyril Ramaphosa as president

AFP ■ CAPE TOWN

South African lawmakers on Wednesday re-elected Cyril Ramaphosa as the nation's president, two weeks after the ruling ANC party returned to power in legislative elections.

Ramaphosa was "duly elected president of the Republic of South Africa," chief justice Mogoeng Mogoeng told parliament after Ramaphosa was the only name nominated by lawmakers in Cape Town.

MPs from the African National Congress, which won 230 out of 400 seats on May 8, choose the head of state in the parliament's first post-election sitting.

The ANC won the ballot with 57.5 percent of the vote, its thinnest majority since the end of apartheid.

Ramaphosa will be sworn in on Saturday and name a deputy president and cabinet at the weekend.

Trade war harming 75% of US firms in China: Survey

IAN S ■ BEIJING

More than seven out of 10 US companies in China (74.9 per cent) are being adversely affected by the ongoing trade war between China and the US, according to a survey released on Wednesday by the American Chamber of Commerce in China.

"The negative impact of tariffs is clear and hurting the competitiveness of American companies in China," according to the report which includes the findings of the survey of member companies made by AmCham China and AmCham Shanghai.

The survey was carried out from May 16 to 20. About 250 companies participated in

it of which 61.6 per cent were manufacturing-related, 25.5 per cent were service-related, 3.8 per cent retail and distribution-related, while 9.6 per cent belonged to other industries.

The survey was carried out after US President Donald Trump issued a tariff increase from 10 per cent to 25 per cent on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods on May 10, escalating the trade war between the two countries.

The survey was carried out after the rise in tensions unleashed by Trump, which in turn triggered a reaction from the Chinese authorities with new tariffs.

The impact of the tariffs has been felt through lower

demand for products (52.1 per cent), higher manufacturing costs (42.4 per cent) and higher product sales prices (38.2 per cent), Efe news reported.

To address the impact of tariffs, the survey reported that companies are taking measures such as delaying or cancelling investment decisions (33.2 per cent) or adopting a "China, for China" strategy (35.3 per cent) which seeks to establish manufacturing and sourcing within China to mainly serve the Chinese market.

"Such strategy constitutes a rational choice for many companies to insulate themselves from the effects of tariffs while maintaining their ability to pursue domestic market opportunities," the report added.

FORMER MALAYSIAN KING SULTAN AHMAD SHAH PASSES AWAY

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia's seventh King and football veteran Sultan Ahmad Shah passed away here on Wednesday at the age of 88.

Ahmad Shah was also the fifth Sultan of Malaysia's central Pahang state.

The state's Chief Minister Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail said in a statement that Ahmad Shah died at the National Heart Institute in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday morning, according to state news agency Bernama.

Born in 1930, Ahmad Shah was proclaimed the fifth Sultan of Pahang in 1974. He became the seventh Yang di-Pertuan Agong, or the supreme head of state from 1979 to 1984. **IAN S**

Four killed, 12 injured in Mogadishu car bombing

IAN S ■ MOGADISHU

At least four people were killed and 12 others injured in a car bomb attack in Somalia's capital Mogadishu on Wednesday, the police said.

A police officer told Xinhua news agency that the car filled with explosives went off as the officials were checking vehicles in Mogadishu's Bondhere district, causing deaths and injuries.

"The blast happened in a traffic area at a police checkpoint. So far, we can confirm four people died in the explosion. We are establishing more

details on the incident," the officer said.

A Somali military officer and his bodyguards were among the dead, while a lawmaker was among those injured in the blast, the report said.

Abdulkadir Abdurahman Adan, Director of Mogadishu's free ambulance service Amin Ambulance, said they took 12 injured people from the scene.

The blast came barely four days after a car laden with explosives went off at El-Gabta junction in Mogadishu's Hamarweyne district leaving no casualties.

UN: Climate change affecting developing nations most

IAN S ■ ADDIS ABABA

United Nations officials on Wednesday said developing nations were facing the brunt of climate change despite their little contribution to the problem.

A joint statement was made by Mary Robinson, Ireland's former President and UN Special Envoy on El Nino and Climate, and Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Vera Songwe during a climate-focused meeting in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital.

Robinson said, "those who suffer the worst effects of climate change are often the least responsible for it".

She called for the need for climate justice as the least responsible countries suffer the most from the global threat that emanated from climate change, Xinhua news agency reported.

Robinson was appointed UN Special Envoy along with Macharia Kamau of Kenya in 2016 to provide the leadership required to tackle climate-related challenges.

ECA's Songwe said the African continent could leverage to its advantage in the global fight against the impacts of climate change.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unknown dead body was found from **Green Belt along NH-44, Near Singnu Dram, Narela Delhi**, dated 14.05.2019. In this regard a **DD No. 74-A dated 14.05.2019**, has been lodged at **P.S. Narela, Delhi**.

The Description of the dead body is given as under: **Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Sex: Male, Age: About 30-35 Years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Shallow, Identification Mark: 'OM' Tattoo mark on Right Hand and Left Hand is Missing, Wearing: Black & White Colour Lining Shirt, Blue Colour Track Pant and Grey Socks.**

Sincere efforts have been made by the local Police to trace out the dead person but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone having any information about this dead person, please inform undersigned.

SHO

P.S. Narela, Delhi
Ph. No. 011-27282350, 07065036323

POLICE HEADQUARTERS J&K SRINAGAR

Phone/Fax No.: 0194-2443031/2443032 (Sgr), 0191-2459029/2459255 (AMU) Website : www.jkpolice.gov.in, E-mail : phojk@jkpolice.gov.in

NIT NO: 27 OF 2019
DATED: 21.05.2019

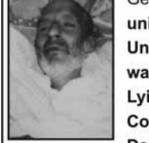
For and on behalf of the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir State, e-tenders are hereby invited from Original Manufacturers or their authorized dealers having proper authorization of the manufacturers to quote against the tender for the supply of B. R. Lectern and B R Brief Case as indicated in the detailed SBD & BOQ. The download of NIT shall start on **21.05.2019 at 11:00 hours**. Tenders shall be submitted online on J&K State e-procurement Portal **www.jktenders.gov.in** before **10.06.2019 upto 18:00 hours**.

The tenders (technical bids only) will be opened online on **12.06.2019 at 11:00 hours at Police Headquarters, Pirbagh Srinagar, J&K**. Pre bid Meeting will be held at PHQ Pirbagh Srinagar J&K on **28.05.2019 at 15:00 hrs**. In case of unforeseen circumstances, the date of opening will be next working day or else as notified separately. Detailed tender documents with terms and conditions are available on J&K State e-procurement Portal **www.jktenders.gov.in**.

No.: DDPK-NB-675/19
Dated: 22.05.2019

Sd/- (Mubassir Latifi) JKPS, AIG (Provision/Transport)
For Director General of Police, J&K Srinagar

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male namely **Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, was found on 07.05.2019 at 01:06 PM, Lying at Gurdwara Wali Gali, Krishna Colony, Singhu Border Road, Narela, Delhi**. In this regard proceeding **DD No. 42-A, dated 07.05.2019** has been lodged at Police Station, Narela, Delhi. Identification of unidentified dead body of male is as under:

Name: Unknown, Age: Approx 55 Years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Shallow, Wearing: White Lining Shirt and Grey Pant.

If anyone have any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.

SHO

Police Station, Narela, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27280435, 8750870324

Saneh Industrial Investment Limited

CIN:L74899DL1980PLC060079
Regd. Office: Deltion House 4801, Bharat Ram Road 24, Daryaganj, New Delhi - 02
Phone: 011-23273907

NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 30th day of May, 2019, inter-alia to consider and approve the audited Financial Results for the Quarter/year ended on 31st March, 2019.

For Saneh Industrial Investment Limited
Sd/-
Date: 22.05.2019 Vijender Kumar Gupta
Place: New Delhi (Director)

Jeff Bezos finally gets 'amazon' domain: Report

San Francisco: After seven years of trying, Jeff Bezos led e-commerce giant Amazon has finally bagged the 'amazon' domain name from the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

The e-commerce giant first applied for this domain in 2012 but its approval took seven years because a group of South American countries through which the river Amazon flows, raised objections.

However, in a meeting last week, ICANN's board finally made a decision that it has repeatedly sought to avoid for all these years, The Register reported on Tuesday.

"The Board finds the Amazon corporation proposal of April 17, 2019 acceptable, and therefore directs the ICANN organisation's President and CEO, or his designee(s), to continue processing of the 'amazon' applications according to the policies and procedures of the New gTLD Programme," the report quoted ICANN as saying in an official document. **IAN S**

Study: Over 60% e-cigarette smokers want to quit

New York: Over 60 per cent e-cigarette users want to quit smoking and over 25 per cent smokers have already tried to stop using the electronic device, says a new study.

In the study, published in the journal *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*, the researchers observed that most smokers don't want to use e-cigarettes forever and wish to stop using it exactly the same way a traditional smoker tries to quit smoking.

"Most of the discussion about e-cigarettes has focused on the relative harm as compared to traditional cigarettes, the efficacy of e-cigarettes as a cessation device, and the alarming increase of their use in children," said study co-author Marc Steinberg, Associate Professor at Rutgers University, US.

"Our data suggests that e-cigarette users do not want to use these devices forever. Eventually, they want to stop using e-cigarettes the same way a traditional smoker wants to quit smoking cigarettes," Steinberg added.

The study highlighted that

the smokers tried several strategies including medications, counselling and social support to stop using e-cigarettes.

"The strategies that people reported using to quit e-cigarettes include many of the strategies we recommend for quitting traditional cigarettes such as FDA-approved nicotine replacement products or medications, counselling and social support," said study author Rachel Rosen, a student at the University.

"While e-cigarettes may be associated with reduced harm as compared to combustible cigarettes, they also are potentially addictive and the e-cigarette aerosol still contains toxic substances," she said.

As e-cigarette use continues to increase and as more e-cigarette users want to quit, the researchers believe that it will be necessary "to be ready to help those who may have difficulty stopping on their own".

About 10 million US adults smoke e-cigarettes. Most of them smoke traditional cigarettes too. Several users say they used e-cigarettes in an attempt to quit traditional cigarettes. **IAN S**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mrs. Kranti Devi & Mr. Jay Kant Mandali who is purchasing the Portion of Plot No.31, Area Measuring 50 Sq. Yds. Part of Plot No.29, 30, 31, out of Total Area Measuring 640 Sq. Yds., Part of Khasra No.38/10, situated in the area of village Hastasi, Colony known as Press Enclave, Village Nagari, Part II, New Delhi from Mr. Jai Bhawan Singh, Mr. Badlo Ram Tiagi and further will be mortgaging against the financial assistance from VASTU HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION LTD. To comply the requirements of bank/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property please hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 08 days from the date of this notice, at below address:
Lucem Legal LLP
269, Rama House, Ground Floor, Masjid Moth, Opp. Uday Park, South Extn., New Delhi- 49
Contact # 011-40046316

PUBLIC NOTICE

Indraprastha Gas Limited ("IGL") has issued a Letters of Intent for setting up of CNG Station at the site located at following locations and to be operated by following Operator having received such Application from the Operator, and conducting due diligence and following due process. Name of Applicant - Vikas Malik, Address of proposed station- Khasra No. 105/1/2/2, Khata Khiloni No. 241/193 village Jharoda Kalan, Delhi, However, if any person has any objection or claim regarding the setting up of CNG Station at the said site, kindly contact us within 07 days from the publication of this notice, with the relevant and appropriate proof to substantiate the objection/claim, failing which, it shall be deemed that there is no objection/claim for the setting of CNG Station at the said site.
Contact us:
IGL Bhawan, Plot No. 4, Community Center, R.K.Puram, Sector 9, New Delhi-110022
iglcnp@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Indraprastha Gas Limited ("IGL") has issued a Letters of Intent for setting up of CNG Station at the site located at following locations and to be operated by following Operator having received such Application from the Operator, and conducting due diligence and following due process. Name of Applicant Sunil Dahiya, Address of proposed station- khata No. 392/361, Khasra No. 17/16 Min Village Dansha, Tehsil Najafgarh, Dist.-South West Delhi, Delhi, However, if any person has any objection or claim regarding the setting up of CNG Station at the said site, kindly Contact us within 07 days from the publication of this notice, with the relevant and appropriate proof to substantiate the objection/claim, failing which, it shall be deemed that there is no objection/claim for the setting of CNG Station at the said site.
Contact us:
IGL Bhawan, Plot No. 4, Community Center, R.K.Puram, Sector-9, New Delhi-110022
iglcnp@gmail.com

SHIVA, PANGHAL LEAD HOME DOMINATION

Indians pugilists rule the roost in 52kg category as all four Indians secure semifinal berth

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

It was a spectacular homecoming for World championship Bronze medallist Shiva Thapa, while Asian Games Gold medallist Amit Panghal also lived upto his billing reaching the semifinals in 52kg category at the second India Open boxing tournament here on Wednesday.

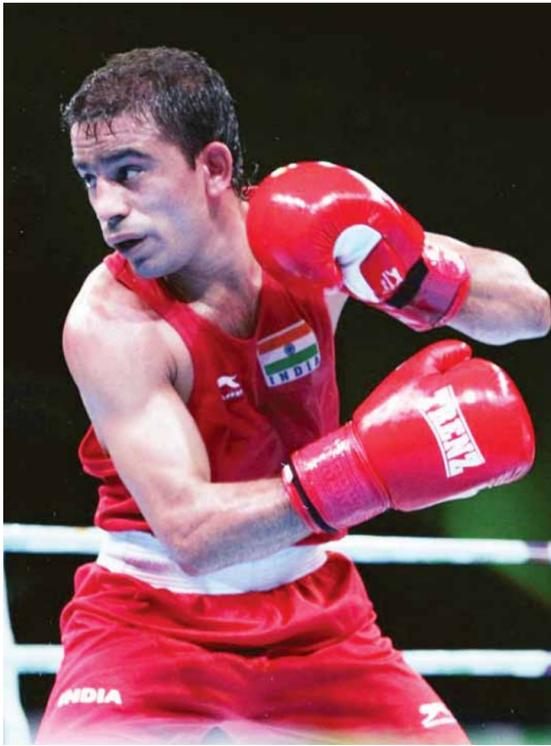
Five other Indians also progressed to the semifinals at the Karmabir Nabin Chandra Bordoloi Indoor Stadium.

Three years after he was crowned national champion at the same venue, a matured Thapa returned stronger as he clinically executed his plans to outwork his taller Mauritius opponent Hellene Damien 5-0 and set up a semifinal clash against D Krystian Sczepanski of Poland in the 60kg category.

"I was facing a taller opponent like him for the first time in my category," said Thapa, who will switch to 63kg after the tournament keeping in mind of the approved weight categories for Olympic qualification.

"He had a better reach so my strategy was to hit him from the close range and then quickly go out of his reach. It worked out perfectly."

All the buzz of the day was about the 13th bout of the day as hordes of school children, Shiva's family members including his father Padam Thapa waited anxiously for the local favourite to come inside the ring.



"I can't express in words the amazing feeling. The crowd was all at their toes and it was about living up to their expectation," said Thapa, who last month became the first Indian male boxer to claim four consecutive Asian medals with his Bronze at the Asian Championship in Bangkok.

Ankit and Manish Kaushik also had 5-0 wins over their respective opponents making it a three-Indian lineup in the 60kg category.

In the 52kg category, Indians ruled the roost with Panghal, national champion P L Prasad, former world youth champion Sachin Siwach and reigning Commonwealth Games champion Gaurav Solanki making it an all-Indian lineup.

Panghal, who claimed the 49kg gold after defeating reigning Olympic champion Hasanboy Dusmatov of Uzbekistan in the Asiad final in Jakarta last year, opted to play a waiting game against Thailand Chakapong Chanpirom in the first round.

Having moved up to Olympic category 52kg after winning Gold at the Strandja meet in Bulgaria earlier this year, Panghal then stepped up his pace to win 5-0.

"It took sometime for me to assess him and get a grip of his style of play but I'm happy that it paid off," Panghal said.

"It's a tough category. Many new boxers will come in to meet the Olympic qualification standard. I

have to watch both," Panghal, who had clinched a Gold in his new weight category in the Asian championship beating Dusmatov again, added.

Panghal will take on reigning national champion Prasad in the semifinal, while the other half will see Siwach face-off against Bidhuri. Fresh from a Bronze at the GeeBee Boxing tournament Finland, Siwach did his homework well to exact revenge on world championship Bronze medalist Rogen Ladon of Philippines.

The two-time former Olympian had defeated Siwach by a split-decision in the President's Cup quarter-finals in Astana last year.

Siwach rectified his mistake and waited to capitalise on the Filipino's mistakes to go for the kill as he won 4-1 via split decision.

"Last time I went for an allout attack that did not pay off. I watched videos of the bout and this time I could rectify my mistakes," Siwach said as he also got the support of his father and uncle who had come all the way from Haryana to support him.

He will next face Solanki, who had it easy against Louis Fleurot of Mauritius to seal a 5-0 win.

"We never faced in a competition. But I've been his sparring partner in the camp. We all know each other's strengths and weaknesses. I'm 100 per cent confident of an easy win," Siwach said.



India bow out of Sudirman Cup

PTI ■ NANNING

India crashed out of the Sudirman Cup mixed team badminton championships after losing 0-5 to 10-time champions China in the second and final group match, here on Wednesday.

After going down 2-3 to Malaysia in their opening Group 1D match, India needed an extraordinary effort to get across the mighty Chinese but the shuttlers yet again produced a below-par performance to go down in a lopsided contest.



The gap between India's mixed doubles pair of Pranaav Jerry Chopra and N Sikki Reddy and Chinese combination of Wang Yiliu and Huang Dongping was evident once again as they went down 5-21, 11-21 against the world No 2 pair to trail 0-1.

Sameer Verma, whose straight-game loss to Lee Zii Jia proved to be vital against Malaysia on Tuesday, once again took the court after Kidambi Srikanth suffered an injury during practice sessions here.

"Won't be playing today due to an injury caused during practice. Will be backing the team for today's all-important match," Srikanth had tweeted ahead of the clash.

In Srikanth's absence, Sameer fought for an hour and 11 minutes in the men's singles tie before losing 17-21, 20-22 against Olympic champion Chen Long as India slumped to 0-2 deficit.

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, who recently made a comeback after recovering from a shoulder injury, and Chirag Shetty were then given the task of taming the world No 7 pair of Han Chengkai and Zhou Haodong but the Indian men's doubles pair lost

Schoolgirl stuns Tai

AFP ■ NANNING

Seventeen-year-old South Korean schoolgirl An Se-Young stunned Taiwan's world number one Tai Tzu-yung to burnish her fast-growing reputation.

Rising star An, who is ranked 50th in the world, roared back to defeat Tai 14-21, 21-18, 21-16 in 66 thrilling minutes.

Taiwan and title-holders South Korea were already into the quarter-finals of the mixed-team world championships, but this was further evidence of An's precious talent.

The teenager An, who also won the New Zealand Open said: "My strategy was to defend in the beginning of each rally and then to take my opportunity."

"My coach advised me to pay attention to the front and keep the rally going. I'm surprised I could beat her."

The 24-year-old Tai said that she had a niggling injury but did not use that as an excuse.

"She's tall, powerful and has very good footwork," the Taiwanese said of her young opponent, who only turned 17 in February.

"She's good in all aspects of the game. She will be an outstanding player in future for sure."

21-18, 15-21, 17-21 to allow China take an unassailable 3-0 lead.

Saina Nehwal then went down 12-21, 17-21 to All England Champion Chen Yufei in a 33-minute women's singles match, while World No 3 women's doubles pair of Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan beat Ashwini Ponnappa and Sikki 21-12 21-15 as India sunk without a trace.

'Stimac wants India to be one of Asia's best'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian footballers Rahul Bheke and Brandon Fernandes says newly-appointed chief coach Igor Stimac wants the team to be one of Asia's best.

Stimac's appointment has been greeted with much optimism by the players, with as many as nine debutants having got a call-up to the national team camp.

Bheke, who scored the match-winner in the Indian Super League final for his club Bengaluru FC against FC Goa stated that "Stimac wants us to be one of the best teams in Asia".

"We have had a couple of session under him (Igor Stimac), and he is really apprehensive of our abilities as a team. He wants us to target doing well in Asian tournaments, and be one of the best teams in Asia," Bheke said. "I will keep doing what the coach



asks of me and keep trying to work my socks off in his pattern of style of playing football."

FC Goa player Fernandes also highlighted Stimac's desire to be "among the best in Asia".

"He comes with a rich experience. With his experience, I feel it was the right choice to appoint him. He has already shared that he wants us from

us," Brandon said.

Stimac has been conducting fitness tests, along with some footballing drills, which the players enjoyed.

The squad will be training in the capital till June 1 and leave for Buriram, Thailand the following day. India have been drawn to play Curacao in their first match of the King's Cup on June 5.

India beat Korea 2-1, clinch series

JINCHEON: The Indian women's hockey team came from a goal down to eke out a close 2-1 win over South Korea in the second game and take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series, here on Wednesday.

The Indians had earlier defeated Korea by identical margin in the opening game of the series.

India will take on Korea in the inconsequential last match of the series on Friday.

On Wednesday, skipper Rani Rampal (37th minute) and Navjot Kaur (50th) scored for India after Lee Seungju gave South Korea the lead in the 19th minute through a field strike.

"Our performance was much better than the first match. Our skill control in today's game was much better and the quality was good and consistent. I believe we could have scored more goals but the intensity and effort was good from the team," India's chief coach



Sjoerd Marijne said after the game.

Marijne said good results here would boost the team's confidence ahead of the important FIH Women's Series Finals in Hiroshima later this year.

"I am happy with the adjustments the team made. It is nice we have won two matches in this three-match series. This will surely boost the team's spirit ahead of the FIH Women's Series Finals Hiroshima 2019," he added. PTI

Van Persie demands 'fair chance' for Solskjaer



AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Robin van Persie has urged Manchester United to keep faith with Ole Gunnar Solskjaer after the under-fire manager's turbulent end to his first season in charge.

Solskjaer presided over a miserable conclusion to a campaign that saw United fail to qualify for the Champions League after finishing sixth in the Premier League.

However, Van Persie, whose goals helped United win their last Premier League title in 2013, is adamant Solskjaer deserves more time to get the club back on track.

"I think it's the perfect match, it's just they're having a bad spell," Van Persie told BBC Sport on Wednesday.

"Back in the day it was normal for a manager to get time. Nowadays if you lose six games, you're out. Is that the solution? "Give someone time, especially if it's a kid from the club."

Former United striker Solskjaer had made a positive impact after replacing the sacked Jose Mourinho as interim boss in December.

Solskjaer oversaw a 15-match unbeaten domestic run and led United to a stunning Champions League last 16, second leg win over Paris Saint-Germain.

But United's form dipped dramatically once Solskjaer was hired on a permanent basis in March and a run of six defeats from their last 10 games shattered their top four hopes.

Solskjaer's problems have mounted amid claims that United midfielder Paul Pogba wants to join Real Madrid, while the boss is reportedly unhappy with the fitness levels and commitment of some of his squad.

The 46-year-old, whose only other managerial spells came at Cardiff and Molde, needs to make a flying start to next season if he is to avoid calls for his dismissal.

But Dutch forward Van Persie, who scored 58 goals in 105 games for United, says his old team need to let the Norwegian grow into the role rather than panicking at the first sign of bad results.

"It's funny because when he started everyone was so positive, they were winning and they made a miracle by beating PSG," Van Persie said. "Everyone was screaming like, 'Give the guy a permanent deal'. And then since that permanent deal the luck went away a little bit; they've been losing more games than they want to."

Van Persie, who retired at the end of this season after a spell with Feyenoord, doesn't think United's problems will be solved only by splashing out on new signings.

"If a player has a couple of bad games, 'OK, sell him!'. If he doesn't score a few goals, 'OK, he's out, he's finished,'" he added.

"Back in the day you used to get time, you can make mistakes, you can learn. Now I get the feeling that time is less. Ideally, you would get time — as a player, as a coach."

Hazard is my Chelsea benchmark: Pulisic

AFP ■ LONDON

Christian Pulisic says he wants to make the same impact that Eden Hazard has had at Chelsea and hopes to play alongside the Belgium superstar at Stamford Bridge.

The US international signed a five-and-a-half year contract with Maurizio Sarri's team in January but was immediately loaned back to Germany to finish the season at Borussia Dortmund.

"It is incredible to see what Eden can do," Pulisic, 20, told the



BBC. "He (Hazard) is a guy to look up to and what I would love to become."

"It is definitely a goal. Any player would be dumb not to want to be in the same team as him."

But the £58 million (\$73 million) signing appears unlikely to get his wish to play alongside Chelsea's star man, with Hazard persistently linked with a move to Real Madrid.

Pulisic, who scored four times in 20 league appearances last season for Dortmund, who finished as runners-up to Bayern

Munich, said he wanted to inspire young American footballers.

"I don't want to be looked at as someone who is the youngest to do this or that," said Pulisic, who is both the youngest player to captain the United States and to score for them in a World Cup qualifier.

"I just want to be an established player and someone people respect, who is successful in this league."

"It is completely new to me and something not a lot of American players have experienced."

Thorgan Hazard joins Dortmund



AFP ■ DORTMUND

Borussia Dortmund confirmed on Wednesday they have signed Thorgan Hazard, the younger brother of Chelsea star Eden, on a five-year deal from Borussia Moenchengladbach.

The 26-year-old winger announced in April that he was joining Dortmund, who finished run-

ners-up in the Bundesliga this season, with only the details of the transfer to sort out.

"I am grateful for five great years at Borussia Moenchengladbach and the wonderful memories," said Hazard in a statement on Dortmund's club website.

"Now was exactly the right point in time to take the next step in my career."

"I am proud to be able to play for Borussia Dortmund — it is a top club with unbelievable fans."

Germany's top-selling daily Bild says the transfer should cost about 25 million euros (\$28m) plus additions.

The Belgium international scored 46 goals and provided 44 assists in 182 appearances for Gladbach.

Hazard is the third new signing to join Dortmund for next season.

Germany international Nico Schulz will arrive from Hoffenheim in a deal worth 27 million euros, while teenage defender Mateu Morey, 19, is joining on a free transfer.

Messi, Aguero in Argentina squad

AFP ■ BUENOS AIRES

Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi and the returning Sergio Aguero headed the 23-man Copa America squad announced by Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni.

Paris Saint Germain winger Angel Di Maria was also included but there was no place for striker Gonzalo Higuain, who is on loan at Chelsea from Juventus.

"These are the best players in an important time for the national team," said Scaloni on Tuesday ahead of the tournament hosted by Brazil, which begins on June 14.

Argentina will play in Group B alongside Colombia, Paraguay and guests Qatar, the 2022 World Cup hosts and current Asian champions.

Messi, who only returned to the Argentina squad in March after an eight-month



absence following the World Cup in Russia, will turn 32 during the competition.

Di Maria, like Messi, made his post-World Cup return in March ahead of friendlies against Venezuela and Morocco, but Manchester City's Aguero had not been called up since Argentina's 4-3 last 16 defeat to eventual champions France in Russia.

Another high-profile omission was Inter Milan forward Mauro Icardi, who has been left out of the Italian team's line-up for the last two months over a dispute regarding a contract renewal.

"Keeping everyone happy is difficult," admitted Scaloni, who said he'd had "doubts right until the end" over the final squad make-up.

vivacity

PROUD OF MY FILMS: SANYA MALHOTRA

-P 14



GET OVER GLOSSOPHOBIA

The fear of public speaking is very real. However, there are techniques to help you overcome your fears. There are even ways to help harness your energy in a positive way, says TEAM VIVA

The words "public speaking" cause fear and anxiety in the minds of otherwise competent and confident people. Does the thought of speaking in front of a group evoke fear, make you sweat, and get your heart pounding? It's likely you have glossophobia - the fear of public speaking.

Glossophobia is one of the most common of fears. There are many ways to increase business exposure so why bother to overcome your speaking jitters? Stepping up to the podium not only positions you as an expert in your area of business but it also provides effortless referrals and improved sales opportunities.

Presenting a non-sales informative speech warms up your target market and builds trust. Unlike endless cold calls, the people you present to and follow up with are more receptive to listening to your offering of products and services.

Overcome your fear of public speaking and boost your business with these seven tips.

If you're new to the world of public speaking, start small. Find a few friends and family to practice on. Begin by speaking to smaller groups and build up from there. The size of the audience makes no difference. If you know your topic, your pre-speaking fear will quickly evaporate.

Nothing helps ease the fear of public speaking more than knowing your material. The ability to connect with your audience comes from having the confidence you won't get lost during your delivery. Rehearse several times before the big talk. Time your presentation and always have back up material in case time

is left over.

Mastering the art of public speaking comes not from memorizing word for word your entire speech. The real pros know their material by remembering key points and prompts on subtopics and examples to cover.

The majority of business presentations and speeches are boring monologues filled with endless PowerPoint slides and bullet points. Trash the presentation and make your material the focal point of the talk. If you do use PowerPoint, take the approach of using visuals that quickly convey your message.

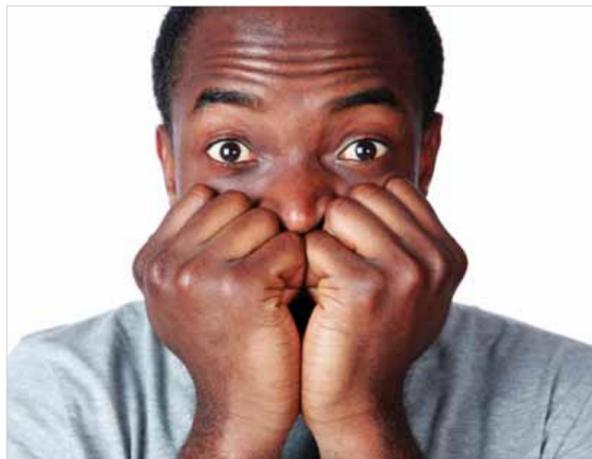
The most fearful moment of any presentation is the one minute before your stage entrance. Use the tactic of elite athletes by visualizing a positive outcome and using deep belly breathing to reduce stress and build confidence.

Prior to your public speaking on stage introduce yourself to a few members of the audience in the front row. During your talk look these people in the eye to ease your nerves and connect with your audience.

Creating a monologue presentation puts the entire task of informing and entertaining the audience on you. Make your talk a two-way interaction with questions and participation to reduce boredom and speak with ease. Having the group involved also gives you time to reorganize your thoughts if things are going off track.

Fear of public speaking is the most common of all phobias. It's a form of performance anxiety in which a person becomes very concerned that he or she will look visibly anxious, maybe even have a panic attack while speaking. Over time, people try to protect them-

PRIOR TO YOUR PUBLIC SPEAKING ON STAGE INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO A FEW MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE IN THE FRONT ROW. DURING YOUR TALK LOOK THESE PEOPLE IN THE EYE TO EASE YOUR NERVES AND CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE



selves by either avoiding public speaking or by struggling against speech anxiety. In this way, people get Tricked into making the fear of public speaking more chronic and disruptive.

Some people do this with avoidance. They choose college coursework in such a way as to avoid public speaking, rather than taking the classes they want. At work, they pass up promotions and assignments which would require speaking. The fear of public speaking may even lead people to choose a career that doesn't call for public speaking, rather than one they want. This is often the case with people who have feared public speaking from a very young age.

Others don't go that far, but will go to great lengths to avoid making presentations, or even just having to speak at a meeting. They may deliberately arrive late, hoping to miss the customary introductions.

Many others will gamely accept an assignment and show up to give a speech when it's important to their career. But they try to get through those situations without feeling afraid. They focus on what they feel, rather than on the message they've come to deliver. This is often the case with people whose fear of public speaking developed later in life. The more successful they become in their career, the more they are called upon to

share their expertise with groups, and the more anxious they become.

You feel nervous, your palms sweat, your stomach ties itself into knots. You don't want to do it. But you can overcome this fear of oral presentations with these simple public speaking tips!

In business, it is essentially important for you to be able to get your point across. It is likely that all of us will one day have to speak in public. Whether we are giving a formal presentation to an audience, or simply asking our boss for a promotion, speaking skills are essential to getting ahead in a professional setting.

The fear of public speaking is very real. However, there are techniques to help you overcome your fears. There are even ways to help harness your energy in a positive way.

Record your speech on your phone or video camera. Record yourself giving the talk from beginning to end. Then listen to it or watch it, and make notes on how you could make it better. Some people do not like listening to the sound of their voice on tape, so it is important that you get used to your own voice and speaking style.

When you focus on your breathing your voice will have more resonance and you will relax. Breathe calmly and focus on getting into a rhythm. Although this is a public speaking exercise, breath-work will help reduce stress and improve clarity in all areas of life.

Sometimes squeezing some lemon into your water helps as well. It helps lubricate your throat. Try to avoid sugary beverages before speaking. These can dry out your mouth and make it harder to talk.

Trend Blazer

Ajay's throwback with Tabu

Actor **AJAY DEVGN** took a dig at his *De De Pyaar De* co-star **Tabu** with a throwback image of the two from the film *Vijaypath* (1994).

The actor posted the image on social media, in which he can be seen sleeping with his mouth wide open while Tabu is sitting beside him, looking completely disinterested. He captioned it: "Still haven't figured, if the reason to fall asleep was the puzzle or Tabu."

The two are in costume for the song *Aayiye aapka intezaar tha*.



'I am really proud of all the films that I have done. I learnt something new about acting. Box office collection is not in my hands, but I am grateful. With the online platform, a film never dies. Though Pataakha didn't do well at the box office, it really worked online. But in future, I have to be careful. I want to be a bankable actor.'
—Sanya Malhotra



Actress **KARISMA KAPOOR** says she chose not to do full-fledged roles in films for a while as she wanted to be at home with her children. But now the *Dil To Pagal Hai* star is back in the saddle in a different avatar and on a new platform.



Did she get nervous acting in front of the camera after a gap? Karisma said, "Acting is ingrained in a person. It is something that never goes away. I was waiting for something really interesting. It was out of my choice that I didn't do any film because my kids were very young."

O'Shea is a huge fan of Godzilla

Actor **O'SHEA JACKSON JR** or **OMG**, is set to take on the big screen as a member of the military in the cast of *Godzilla II: King of the Monsters*. The actor is a huge fan of the monster.

"I was nerding out really hard," he said. "You don't have anything else terrorising cities like Godzilla does. He is dominating and destroying, but he saves too. I always disliked those who acted like Godzilla didn't just save them. This'll be the first Godzilla film where I actually care about the humans."

Directed by **Michael Dougherty**, the film follows the heroic efforts of the crypto-zoological agency, Monarch as its members face off against god-sized monsters like the mighty Godzilla, who collides with Mothra, Rodan, and the three-headed Ghidorah.



REAL MEN & THEIR MISSION

Director **RAJ KUMAR GUPTA's** latest, *India's Most Wanted*, like his past outings, draws inspiration from an actual operation to capture a terrorist, says **SAIMI SATTAR**

Dressed in a white shirt, blue jeans and black rimmed glasses, Raj Kumar Gupta could pass off as just any man in the crowd. Not many might take a second look at him as there is an inherent ordinariness in his demeanour and attire. And it is this quality that has been imbued in the characters that people his newest film, *India's Most Wanted*, which stars Arjun Kapoor alongside four newcomers.

The film is based on the real story of five RAW agents who pool in their money and go out and capture one of India's most wanted terrorists and that too without firing a weapon. The trailers have been garnering eyeballs and the men who are a part of it have an everyday ordinariness, which is in sharp contrast to the beefy protagonists that one usually sees in Hindi action films. The director, whose debut film *Aamir* (2008) still sets the benchmark in realistic cinema, says, "Being well built is not proportionate to bravery. People who are physically strong might not rise to the occasion. It is about mental courage, tact and trade craft. I met a lot of people who work in RAW and they look like very real people."

He points out that for any intelligence operations officer, the ability to blend in with the surroundings is essential. "They were regular men. They might have been walking here and doing regular jobs and you wouldn't be aware that these are the people who protect us by risking their lives," he says. Reflecting on their sacrifices, he felt a compulsion to celebrate these unsung heroes for a reason. "What do they get in return for their services? They stay away from their family for so long. They do not even expect gratitude and rather see it as their duty. This made the story very humane and personal," says he.

Gupta remembers that the story came to his attention when he read something in the newspapers and decided to pursue it further. "I started meeting people and reading about the incident which got me more and more interested. There was a lot of layering. You feel that these people, who go on a mission, would have weapons and government support but my research revealed something to the contrary," he says.

Like *No One Killed Jessica* (2011) and *Raid* (2018), his other films, this, too, is rooted in reality. Gupta prefers to stick to this genre and even the manner of approaching a film, for a reason. He says, "It is something that breathes life into



storytelling. People are emotionally more connected with stories that they hear or read or when something comes out of reality. It gives you a sense of belonging or a connection. For us, filmmakers, it is important that when we hear a story, it should touch us intellectually or emotionally."

When *Aamir*, his first film was released, which too was based on terrorism, the socio-political climate in the country was very different as was the way people reacted to acts of terror. "The tragedy and emotion remain the same. When an act like this occurs, people suffer as innocent lives are lost. There is a human and an emotional cost. That remains the same even now. However, the consumption of how we see information and how we conceive it, has changed because of social media and fake news. Whether these are responsibly consumed or not depends on the individual and his/her understanding of right and wrong. Maybe one doesn't handle

responsibly and that is the real change that we are witnessing. People receive a message in a WhatsApp group and start believing it. A restrained reaction is essential rather than a knee-jerk one," he says.

In the current context, Gupta also points out that love for a country does not mean proclaiming it from rooftops or hyper nationalism. "One would always have love for one's country and motherland, for that is inherently why one lives here. It doesn't mean that one starts shouting that 'I am a nationalist and love my country'. However, in a certain kind of situation you might end up saying it. In the film, people, who are working for the country and serving it because they love it, do say so. This is done in context and has to be seen within it. There is more to nationalism than the hyper variety that we see on social media," he says.

The film stars Arjun Kapoor whose last outing, *Namaste England*



(2018), did not fare too well at the box office. Considering that the film making business often works on the saleability of a star, did Gupta consider any other actor, maybe Ajay Devgn, who was the lead in *Raid*, for the role? "I never thought in the manner of hits of an actor. It took me three years to complete the script as I was also doing *Raid*. When that released, Arjun called to congratulate me on its success and this just happened instinctively. I was looking for a very normal kind of character who could mingle with the crowd and blend in without being noticed. I instinctively offered him the script and he loved it. And that's how we came together," explains he.

As in the past, this time too Gupta has shot at live locations. He says, "The nature was such that it had to be shot in real locations in Patna and Nepal. It was because the reality that I wanted to portray would not come through otherwise."

However, shooting outside studios can be a logistical nightmare as there are incessant crowds and the fact that things cannot be controlled. Gupta agrees, "It is quite challenging to do a film like this. While shooting in real locations, nothing is in your control so you try to do your best in the given scenario. It is undoubtedly difficult, but if one is passionate one just does it. In a studio, I wouldn't have been able to achieve the same flavour or reality."

Even the elements of humour in his film come from real life situations that Indians can relate to. There is a particular sequence in the trailer where one character complains that more money is spent on floral showers during Republic Day than on an intelligence mission, which makes one laugh. "I don't write for the sake of writing. It is written to identify and strike a chord by drawing it from reality," he says.

Gupta has written the script of all his films, including *Ghanchakkar* (2013), though not *Raid*. How does

he wear the two hats and balance them? "When you are writing a script, you are not thinking of direction. Writing is a very isolating and different process. It takes time and is done within four walls so, it is a little painful and excruciating. But once I finish, I let the director in me take over."

With *India's Most Wanted*, he has also turned producer which means an additional responsibility. However, he has found a way to balance that by handing it out. "My partner helped in the production and so did the team. I concentrate on the writing and direction but what does happen when you turn producer is that you start seeing things in a different perspective. But I leave it to my partner," he reiterates. He got married last year to his long time partner, Myra Karn.

Gupta is currently working on a script of a film on Ravinder Kaushik, India's foremost spy, who was conferred the title of 'The Black Tiger' for his service to the nation. He has acquired the rights to Ravinder's story from his family. "It will take time and I don't know when I will finish it," he says.

Gupta, who hails from Hazaribagh, got interested in writing during his graduation days at the University of Delhi. "I was interested in creative writing and made my way to Mumbai. The move to direction happened organically. I became an assistant director and later an associate director. I kept writing for three, four or maybe five years. *Aamir* was the fifth script that I wrote. The others are still lying with me but I have no intention of putting them on screen as they are not good enough," he says.

Of course, an outsider coming to Mumbai entailed a certain amount of struggle especially given the fact that the industry often works within cliques and coterie. "One goes through a struggle in every field, especially when you are in a city where you don't know your way around and you should take in stride. But I don't wish to elaborate on it," he says.

Talking about the influences on his craft, he says, "I am not influenced by anyone. Reality and the way I see things differently have shaped me more than any other person. I take a situation and think about it which influences my filmmaking."

Clearly, while he might not be influenced, but given his filmography, the soft-spoken director is bound to influence a generation of filmmakers to come.

(The film releases on May 24.)
Photo: Pankaj Kumar



A MEETING WITH COPS

Actress **RANI MUKERJI** met the top female cop of Rajasthan during the shoot of *Mardaani 2*

Actress Rani Mukerji, who is currently in Rajasthan shooting for her next, *Mardaani 2*, was invited to meet the Kota police force and their families at an informal gathering. Rani, who plays the role of a top cop in Rajasthan, was extremely delighted to meet the top female cop of the city, Dr Amrita Duhan, the assistant superintendent of police.

"About 300 police officers and their families met Rani and had a great time interacting with each other," said a source.

"She spent about an hour with the gathering and thanked the Kota police for their incredible support during the filming of *Mardaani 2* and also said that the film will make every police officer in Rajasthan, as well as India, proud. She dedicated the film to all the women police officers of the country who work tirelessly and courageously to safeguard law and order in society and protect the innocent. Rani was overwhelmed with the warm response of the cops and their families towards her," the source added.

Produced by Aditya Chopra, the film will be Rani's next release after the global hit *Hichki*. The film marks the directorial debut of Gopi Puthran.

CANNES DIARIES

When three legends meet

With actors **LEONARDO DICAPRIO** and **BRAD PITT** by his side, filmmaker **QUENTIN TARANTINO** made a fairytale debut at the festival

Twenty-five years after premiering *Pulp Fiction* in Cannes, Quentin Tarantino returned to the French film festival with neither great vengeance nor furious anger but a gentler fairy tale about 1960s Los Angeles.

Once Upon a Time In ... Hollywood made its much-anticipated debut in the festival, giving the festival its most concentrated splash of celebrity and frenzy. The film's two stars, Brad Pitt and Leonardo DiCaprio, brought a fittingly old-school Hollywood glamour to the red carpet, where throngs of onlookers swelled along the Croisette.

Much of the plot of *Once Upon a Time In ... Hollywood* had been carefully kept under wraps leading up to the premiere. DiCaprio plays a Westerns actor anxious that his notoriety is slipping. Pitt plays his stunt double, friend and, because of a drunk driving offence, his driver. Though set against the backdrop of the Manson Family murders, much of Tarantino's film is invested in recapturing the radiance of a bygone Hollywood.

For a filmmaker often associated with blistering dialogue and ecstatic explosions of violence, *Once Upon a Time In ... Hollywood* finds the 56-year-old Tarantino working at a more relaxed pace, spending generous amounts of time in odes to spaghetti Westerns and '60s TV shows.



The film is Tarantino's first, which is not being released by Harvey Weinstein. After Tarantino cut ties with the disgraced mogul, the project attracted the interest of most studios. Sony Pictures landed the film and gave it a \$95 million budget — a very rare gamble on a high-priced original movie.

Instead of superheroes or intellectual property, *Once Upon a Time In ... Hollywood* will instead bank on the draw of Tarantino and his two film stars. Margot Robbie also co-stars as Sharon Tate. The film releases in US theaters on July 26.

Speaking about the film with, DiCaprio recalled one of the "most ominous and sad" experiences he has had in the entertainment industry. The actor was one of the last people in Hollywood to see actor River Phoenix alive. "I grew up revering River Phoenix as the great actor of my generation. I wanted an opportunity to shake his hand. And

The two stars brought a fittingly old-school Hollywood glamour to the red carpet, where throngs of onlookers swelled along the Croisette

one night, at a party in Silver Lake, I saw him. It was almost like something you would see in *Vertigo*, because I saw there was something in his face, and I'd always wanted to meet him, and as he was walking towards me, I kind of froze.

"Then the crowd got in my way, and I looked back and he was gone," DiCaprio said. "It was an existential thing where I felt like, he disappeared in front of my very eyes, and 'the tragedy that I felt afterward of having lost this great influence for me and all of my friends,' he continued.

"The actor we all talked about. Just to be able to have that, and I remember extending my hand out... And then two people came in front and when I looked back, he wasn't there."

—Agencies

SONAM'S ETHEREAL LOOK

Whenever Sonam Kapoor Ahuja steps out on the red carpet, she practically slays it. The clotheshorse that the lady is, she makes one look forward to each of her outings, this time at Cannes.

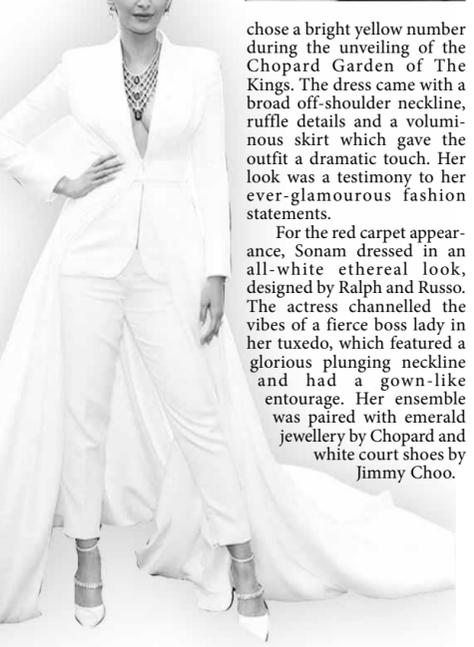
Beginning from a monochrome and dramatic red, the actress slayed her debut at the festival through her five different avatars. The red dress with furr-like sleeves was followed by a navy blue gown and then a white-golden strapless dress that brought a pinch of Indianness to her diva look, which was designed by Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla.

Spreading the sunshine, the actress



chose a bright yellow number during the unveiling of the Chopard Garden of The Kings. The dress came with a broad off-shoulder neckline, ruffle details and a voluminous skirt which gave the outfit a dramatic touch. Her look was a testimony to her ever-glamorous fashion statements.

For the red carpet appearance, Sonam dressed in an all-white ethereal look, designed by Ralph and Russo. The actress channelled the vibes of a fierce boss lady in her tuxedo, which featured a glorious plunging neckline and had a gown-like entourage. Her ensemble was paired with emerald jewellery by Chopard and white court shoes by Jimmy Choo.



EXPLORE SUNNY SIDE OF LIFE

A holiday in the Maldives not only provides the ultimate in perfect relaxation, it also introduces guests to the essence of pure nature says, ANKITA SAXENA

The Maldives, an island nation in the Indian Ocean, is none less than a dreamy holiday destination. With 99 percent of sea and just one percent land, this country is an amalgamation of over 1,190 coral islands ringed by a beautiful landscape of reefs, which makes it the most dispersed country in the world. Its unique geography and breath-taking natural beauty has made the destination one of the most sought-after holiday destinations in the world. To decide to have a holiday in the Maldives is to choose not just the perfect destination for a vacation, but also to discover the sunny side of life.



MELTING POT OF CULTURE

From local cuisine to music, the culture of Maldives reflects a rich blend of the many cultural aspects, introduced by seafarers who settled in the country in the ancient times. Enjoy the local cuisine which reflects use of spicy curries and coconut milk and fish as the main staples and either white rice or Rosh (a thin variant of Indian flatbread) as a popular accompaniment. However, those who want to try something familiar there is a range of world cuisine available. Sway to the music played with the local Boduberu (big drum) and dance to the amalgamation of songs from various countries to truly indulge in the Maldivian spirit.

EXPERIENTIAL STAY

Maldives offers accommodations to suit every pocket, where you can choose from a guesthouse, hotel, resort or a

liveboard. The stay itself is a experience in this island country. Of the 1,190 islands, more than 120 have been developed as resorts and are in operation, and at least another 50 are under development.

Since Maldives is popularly known for a 'one-island-one-resort' concept, each of the registered tourist resorts is on its own uninhabited island with superlative architect-designed accommodation, either in beachside rooms or overwater villas. When staying in overwater villas, be mesmerised with the opulence and exclusivity but don't miss out to climb down from the room into the ocean at any time—to call a part of the ocean your own.

SATISFY THE ADRENALINE RUSH

The Maldives are the white-sand, palm-fringed castaway islands of your imagination. The water is so clear

you can see the brightly colored fish from your lounge. Dive, snorkel, sail or simply sit back and soak it all in.

If you want the adrenaline of adventure sports, the Maldives has it all. From skimming the Indian Ocean waters on a jet-ski to parasailing, kayaking and surfing, Maldives is the ideal destination for an active beach holiday. Water based activities like canoeing, banana ride, water scooters and parasailing are just some of them. The Maldives underwater offers you a chance to experience bliss like never before as the sun's rays illuminate the crystal clear waters. Diving and snorkeling are not to be missed when in this country. Most holiday resorts and hotels in Maldives have dive centers with professional guides, instructors or marine biologists who offer different types of diving and snorkeling excursions.

ACTIVITIES GALORE

There is no complete description of the boundless beauties of the Maldivian islands and its vibrant and multicolored waters. Although the appeal of these isles is their isolation, there is plenty to do and you can choose to be as active as you wish. A holiday to the Maldives is incomplete without a dolphin watching trip as this destination is one of the best places on the planet to experience these creatures up close. Many resorts and hotels in Maldives offer dolphin watching excursions to popular sites every day. Get a chance to get particularly close to dolphins, and you may even get to swim with them!

Cruising on a traditional dhoni, which is one of the oldest sea vessels in Maldives, is the best local experience. It is a good idea to experience fishing where you would be able to catch tuna, emperors, snappers, squirrelfish, jacks and other reef fish.



Jammu pitches Buddhist trail

As an initiative to apprise people about the rich heritage and culture of the Jammu region, the Directorate of Tourism, Jammu organised a heritage walk from Jio Potha Ghat at Akhnoor to Ambaran, which is locally known as 'Pambaran'. Over 200 people gathered for this walk which was flagged off by Om Prakash Bhagat, KAS, Director Tourism, Jammu in the presence of Anusuya Jamwal (KAS), Deputy Director Tourism, Jammu, Gopal Singh (KAS), SDM Akhnoor and Deepesh Singh, Chairman Municipal Committee Akhnoor. The importance of Ambaran lies in the fact that it is the earliest recorded Buddhist site in the entire region of Jammu and has been visited by his holiness, the Dalai Lama in 2011. Jio Potha Ghat is located at

the bank of River Chenab where under a tree the coronation of Raja Gulab Singh was performed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh on June 17 in 1822. During the walk, participants were made aware about the historical and cultural importance of monuments like Jio Potha Temple and other landmark monuments like Pandav Gufa, Gurudwara Tapo Asthan Sant Baba Sunder Singh Ji Ali Begh and the Parshuram Temple.

The historic details about the site were explained by Jai Karan Singh, assistant archaeologist from the Archaeology Survey of India Srinagar Circle. The discovery of this important site was due to excavations by Srinagar circle of Archeological Survey of India which revealed, Ambaran's Buddhist history as a monastery which was active

for about 900 years between 2nd Century BC and 7th Century AD, a period belonging to the pre Kushana, Kushana, post Kushana and post Gupta eras.

Director Tourism, while addressing the gathering said that the Department is making every effort to promote the state's historical places which have tourism potential. Besides this in view of upcoming Amarnath Yatra would target to divert people to local Jammu destinations.

Other officers who joined the heritage walk were Sheena Sahni (KAS), Assistant Director Tourism Jammu, Ambika Bali, Assistant Director Tourism NHW Batote and Surinder Kumar Bhat, Conservation Assistant Archaeological Survey of India Srinagar Circle Jammu.

BHARTI AXA LIFE INSURANCE WINS FICCI CLAIMS EXCELLENCE

Bharti AXA Life Insurance has been conferred with the 'Claims Excellence Award' by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) for its customer-friendly claims services, including dedicated claims handler and one of the best claim settlement ratios, in the life insurance sector during its 20th Annual Insurance Conference—FINCON 2019. "This award is a recognition of our pledge to provide protection against the uncertainties of life and timely support to customers and their families in every possible manner in the hour of need. We have successfully maintained an improved and robust track record in claims settlement in the past few years. We continue to enable faster claims settlement as our prime responsibility," said the managing director and chief executive officer of the company, Vikas Seth.

Ease of claims process related initiatives, effective claims settlement turn-around-time from intimation to dis-



bursement and improved claim settlement ratio were the differentiators that led to Bharti AXA Life Insurance winning the distinguished accolade.

Commenting on the feat at the first FICCI Insurance Industry Awards 2019, the chief operative officer of the company, Ishita Mukherjee, said, "We are happy to receive this award which is a testimony to the trust reposed in the company and its products and services by customers, other stakeholders and the industry. Our tech-driven customer services initiatives with a human touch ensured customised and

faster solutions and helped us improve claims settlement ratio gradually. We are committed to further raise our customer services bar."

Bharti AXA Life Insurance improved its individual claim settlement ratio, the number of claims paid to the number of claims received, to 96.85 per cent in the financial year 2017-18. As many as 30 insurance companies participated in the FICCI Insurance Industry Award, which recognises efficiency, excellence and contribution of both life and non-life insurance companies in the domestic insurance landscape.

LIC deliberates on corporate strategies



LIC of India's 59th All India Senior Divisional Managers' Conference was held in Mumbai recently wherein the annual corporate strategies were deliberated upon. The divisional heads, representing 113 Divisions all across the country, zonal heads from eight different Zones as well as all operational heads in the rank of Executive Directors from Corporate Office participated in deliberations for finalising strategies on various aspects of marketing, customer service,

information technology, HR, international operations and new initiatives for the current financial year.

LIC has registered a market share of 74.71 per cent in number of Policies and 66.24 per cent in the First Year Premium Income for the year 2018-19 and achieved the highest ever First Year Premium Income of ₹1,42,191.69 crore. The performance in settlement of claims continues to be a matter of pride for the Corporation. The top achievers of 2018-

2019 were felicitated during the conference. Panel discussions, brainstorming on corporate strategies for the objectives of the current financial year and planning of activities towards execution of the same, formed the agenda of the gathering. The managing director and chief executive officer of IDBI Bank, Rakesh Sharma, was the guest speaker at the event where he shared his vision on the Bank's association with LIC of India and the synergies that can happen between LIC offices and IDBI Bank outlets.

IDBI Bank tied up with LIC of India as Corporate Agent in February, 2019 and in the first month i.e. March, 2019 they have procured 20,980 Policies with Premium of ₹139.70 crore. In the current year i.e. 2019-2020, till date, they have completed New Business of 1929 Policies and Premium of ₹30.21 crore and are occupying the top rank among all Bancassurance partners of LIC of India.

SUSHMITA SINGH CROWNED FIRST MISS TEEN INDIA



The Indian national director of Miss Teen World 2019 crowned Sushmita Singh (18), from Kalyan, Mumbai, the first ever Miss Teen India World while Samragyi Bansal and Pritika Pahwa took home the 1st and 2nd Runner-up titles respectively at a glittering ceremony at the Flying Dutchman, Logix City Centre, Noida.

Sushmita, an aspiring student of mass media, will now represent India in El Salvador, Central America, in one of the world's top three biggest international beauty contest for teenagers—Miss Teen World (Mundial) by Francisco Cortez, who is a maker of national and international beauty queens for the last 35 years. Jasmeet Kaur believes India is emerging as a strong force in the teen category of beauty pageants and is positive that Sushmita will make the nation proud.



The chairman of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) N N Sinha, signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the vice president of Korea Expressway Corporation K H Lee, at Seoul in order to cooperate further in road and transport infrastructure development projects of India. This cooperation aims to promote technical and institutional knowledge exchange in the field of road and transport between India and Korea.

NMDC ESTABLISHES A GLOBAL DEPARTMENT

NMDC while maintaining its leadership position in the Indian iron ore industry is also focussing on increasing its geographic foothold globally. NMDC currently has presence in Australia, Mozambique and Tanzania and is also looking

to diversify into strategic and critical raw materials and also the other emerging opportunities in key minerals which has potential to deliver the long term benefits to the company and the country.

To give a structured

thrust on the above areas, NMDC has created a separate department—'NMDC Global' to pursue those international opportunities for acquisition of mineral assets and strategic tie ups regarding emerging technologies.

ASSAM RIFLES AFFILIATES WITH INDIAN COAST GUARD



Assam Rifles, the oldest paramilitary force and the Indian Coast Guard, the youngest Armed Force, have signed a 'Charter of Affiliation' at the Directorate General Assam Rifles (DGAR) Headquarters at Laitkor, Shillong. Both the forces are Border Guarding Forces; one guards the coastal frontiers while the other guards the Indo-Myanmar border. The affiliation has been carried out between the 3rd (Naga Hills) Battalion of the Assam Rifles and the Indian Coast Guard ship—'Shaurya'.

This initiative will facilitate greater understanding of operational ethos, sharing of best practices from each other, building camaraderie and utilisation of each other's assets

for operations, training and sports and adventure will be carried out. The signing of the 'Charter of Affiliation' was proceeded by a joint wreath laying ceremony at the Assam Rifles War Memorial and a combined 'Guard of Honour' led by Capt Ruchi Pathak of Assam Rifles.

The event was attended by Lt Gen Sukhdeep Sangwan, SM, Director General Assam Rifles and Director General Rajendra Singh, PTM, TM, Indian Coast Guard along with host of officers and men from both the Forces. Both the Director Generals expressed their gratitude to the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Defence for clearing the routes for this historic affiliation.



IMS to empower rural India with IT education

Institute of Management Studies (IMS) Ghaziabad, a 29-year-old flagship institute of the IMS Society Ghaziabad, and the CSC Academy, a society established by the CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd (CSC SPV), have announced a strategic alliance to develop and deliver short term IT courses to students living in rural areas of India.

As part of this alliance, IMS Ghaziabad and CSC Academy will work together for short term courses which would ideally be suited to students in the rural areas of the country. IMS Ghaziabad and CSC Academy would work jointly to identify need-based courses and their delivery by CSCs in the rural heartland. These courses will contribute to the various sectors such as financial inclusion, education, healthcare and liveli-

hood generation which will help in enriching the quality of life in rural India.

The director of IMS Ghaziabad, Prof Alok Pandey, said "As a leading provider of management and IT education, we are delighted to extend our involvement with CSC Academy to empower students in rural areas. With this alliance, we will unlock new opportunities and bring additional value to student's community."

The secretary of CSC Academy, Dr Dinesh Tyagi, said "Working in rural areas, this partnership will create and deliver short term courses in IT to vast majority of students who are deprived of quality infrastructure and lab facilities. The courses would run on intelligent LMS with remote proctored exams."

Chittaranjan Locomotive Works observes Anti-Terrorism Day



An annual feature, the Anti Terrorism Day was observed in Chittaranjan Locomotive Works at the Administrative Office in West Bengal recently, to uphold and promote peace, social harmony and understanding among all fellow human beings and fight the forces of disruption threatening human lives and values. The principal head of the departments, senior officers, staff council members and employees present on the occasion followed the Anti Terrorism pledge as read out by the principal chief electrical engineer, Ram Prakash.

Newly constructed Khatauli-Muzaffarnagar doubled rail section tested

Working towards the commitment to strengthen its infrastructure, the Northern Railway has added another feather in its cap in the form of a 22km long doubling of section from Khatauli to Muzaffarnagar in connection with the Meerut City-Muzaffarnagar rail line doubling on Ghaziabad-Saharanpur section of Delhi Division.

The Commissioner Railway Safety (Northern Circle) SK Pathak, conducted an intensive inspection and speed trial on the section. The trial train was successful-

ly run at 120 km/hr, clocking upto 140 km/hr. The CRS has expressed satisfaction on the construction quality of the doubled line. Consent for regular train operations on the newly constructed portion with running speed upto 110 km/hr has been granted to Northern Railway.

The completion of the doubling work and regular train services on the section will facilitate smooth and timely operations of passenger and goods trains providing better opportunities to the people of the sugar producing region of the country.



J&K's first ever peaceful elections since 1990

A delegation of the German Embassy led by Second Secretary on Political Affairs and Protocol, Bastian Weber, along with the German Embassy Political Advisor, Sakshi Arora, called upon Jammu and Kashmir KVIB vice chairperson, Dr Hina Shafi Bhat, to get the first hand review of the security and political situation in the Kashmir valley.

Bhat informed the delegation that this is for the first time in the history of J&K that the state witnessed peaceful and casualty free parliament elections since 1990. "The change in the socio-political scenario of the state is evident from the fact that all the political parties participated in the election," said Bhat and credited the peaceful atmosphere to the Governor of J&K. She stated that the state has witnessed vigorous development under the Governor's rule, which was otherwise ceased. "Education, sports and infrastructure remained the thrust areas during the present dispensation," said Bhat, adding that the people of the state, especially the Kashmir region, are happy with the working of the Governor. On assembly elections in the state, she informed

that the Election Commission of India has to take the final call, but it would be based on the situation in J&K.

"All these years, elections in J&K were carried by exploiting aspirations of the common people. Mainstream political parties in connivance with separatists were habitual of fooling people, but we want clean elections to keep democracy alive," said she and further commented that under the BJP party, all the three regions of the state received equitable treatment.

While deliberating on presence of BJP in Kashmir, Bhat commented that the way things are changing at ground level, it goes on to show that BJP is being liked by the right minded and progressive people. "BJP is now a recognised party in the Kashmir valley, with more than two lakh members. People are showing faith in the policies of the Prime Minister and they have high expectations from him with regards to the solution of Kashmir imbroglio." She also expressed her opinion to say that the opposition parties have now resorted to create apprehensions about abrogation of Article 370 and 35 A, as they do not find any substantial ground to criticise the BJP.

VIRAT ALONE CAN'T WIN WC: TENDULKAR

Sachin feels Indian teammates need to step up & perform consistently and help captain Kohli during WC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Stacking up staggering numbers with monotonic regularity may have become a day job for Virat Kohli, but he can't win a World Cup without support from his teammates, feels Sachin Tendulkar.

"I think you will always have a couple of individuals stepping up every game but without team support, you can't do much. Just because of one individual, you can't win a tournament. No way. Unless, others chip in at every crucial stage. If that doesn't happen, there will be disappointment," Tendulkar said when asked if Kohli will carry the same burden like he did, specifically during the 1996, 1999 and 2003 editions.

Tendulkar is hardly worried that India doesn't have a settled No 4, saying the slot can be kept flexible as per requirement and match situation.

"I think we have batsmen, who can do the job. Number four is just a number and it can be adjusted. I particularly don't see No 4 as a problem. Our boys have played enough cricket to know their roles whether it is No 4, 6 or 8. Situational awareness is the key," the world's highest run-getter in Tests and ODIs said.

However, Tendulkar is not entirely happy with how the balance of ODIs is skewed towards batsmen, taking bowlers out of equation in white ball cricket with every passing day.

"It's become one sided with



"I THINK YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE A COUPLE OF INDIVIDUALS STEPPING UP EVERY GAME BUT WITHOUT TEAM SUPPORT, YOU CAN'T DO MUCH. JUST BECAUSE OF ONE INDIVIDUAL, YOU CAN'T WIN A TOURNAMENT"

introduction of two new balls and flat pitches have made lives of bowlers much more difficult. One team is scoring 350 and the other is chasing down inside 45 overs," Tendulkar said in reference to the recent England versus Pakistan series where bowlers had a nightmarish time.

What Tendulkar finds even more disappointing is that reverse swing had been taken out of equation with two new balls.

"The ball is staying hard. I mean when was the last time you saw reverse swing in ODIs?" questioned the iconic batsman.

"When we played and there was one new ball, it would start reversing from 28th or 30th over. Some teams could get it to reverse even earlier. At the death, the ball would go soft, even get discoloured. These were chal-

lenges that batsmen faced. But now the ball remains hard and the bats are getting better," lamented Tendulkar, who played six World Cups.

According to him, wrist spinners are the one breed of bowlers who will do well, and India have two in Kuldeep and Chahal.

The Australians read the duo quite well during the home series in India but the maestro said that it won't matter much in England.

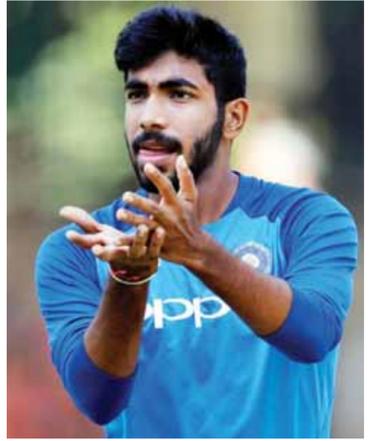
"Let's understand this. There are a number of bowlers who have been read well by batters but yet they end up getting a lot of wickets. So Kuldeep and Chahal shouldn't be too worried about Australia series," he said, adding both will play a massive role during the middle overs.

"Agreed the Aussies read them well but does that mean they wouldn't be committing mistakes or can't be forced to commit mistakes."

What Tendulkar liked about the composition of the World Cup-bound India team is the blend of youth and experience.

"There is a good balance in the side. We have a number of guys with 8-10 years of experience and at the same time we have talented youngsters like Kuldeep, Rahul, Chahal, Hardik (Pandya) and Jasprit (Bumrah) with a couple of years of international cricket.

"So it's a perfect blend with all the makings of a wonderful team. I rate our chances very high," concluded Tendulkar.



Host of match-winners, Dhoni's expertise make India favourites: Mithali

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A slew of match-winners coupled with Mahendra Singh Dhoni's expertise make India favourites to lift the upcoming ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, believes Mithali Raj, captain of national women's ODI team.

"The Indian team has a lot of match-winners now," Mithali said in a video posted on Twitter.

"Of course, the captain (Virat Kohli) leads from the front with the openers Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan, but we also have fast bowlers like Jasprit Bumrah and the spinners," she said.

"But overall I think, the team which posts a big total and the bowlers who are able to do the job to contain those runs, is the team which is going to win. But then we do have a lot of depth. We have the expertise of Dhoni in the side. So, I can't pick one player, but India definitely has a lot of match-winners."

Asked which team has a better chance to lift the trophy, Mithali said, "India is absolutely going in as favourites because they have been doing very well in the one-dayers and in other formats in the recent past."

Mithali, however, also picked hosts England as another team who can go on to clinch their maiden 50-over World Cup title.

"But I cannot rule out the home team (England). Even they have done very well. They had some 10 to 15 victory streaks in the one-dayers. They will also play on home conditions. Having said that, I think as an Indian I will root for India," she said.

Buttler is England's dangerman: Ponting

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

England boats of a number of E-match-winners in their 15-man World Cup squad, but former Australia captain Ricky Ponting has handpicked Jos Buttler as the dangerman for the hosts in the showpiece.

"The dangerman for England is gonna be Jos Buttler. I just watched him develop over the last 2 or 3 years. I had a chance to coach him at Mumbai Indians 3 or 4 seasons ago when he was really sort of starting to make his mark in international cricket," Ponting was quoted as saying in a video posted at Cricket Australia website.

"What he has done in the last 12 to 18 months whether in a T20, One-Day game or a Test match for England, it's really outstanding. So, Jos Buttler is England's dangerman for me."

"He (Buttler) might not take the gloves but his middle-order batting is out of this world. He scores 360 degrees around the ground, hits the ball incredibly hard, hits the ball a long way as well," he added.

Besides Buttler, England's team comprises of match-winners like



skipper Eoin Morgan, Jonny Bairstow, Joe Root, Ben Stokes and Jofra Archer to name a few.

The two-time World Cup winning skipper said England's depth in the batting department makes the hosts a force to reckon with in the upcoming World Cup.

"I think England's great strength right now in their One-Day team is how deep they bat. That allows all

their top-order to play probably with more freedom than most other teams," Ponting said.

"Someone like a Buttler or (Ben) Stokes or Moeen Ali coming in at 7, 8, 9, allows their top-order to go hard. They are a really confident outfit. They have got great depth in their squad and obviously would be playing in conditions they are very much used to."

This Eng squad is the best I've seen: Vaughan

PTI ■ LONDON

In-form England have the "best opportunity" to break their title jinx in the ODI World Cup and they will be at the heart of what promises to be a "special" showpiece event, said former captain Michael Vaughan.

"It's the best opportunity in my time for England — I remember 1992 as a youngster, watching that final at college," Vaughan said.

"They got to the semi-finals of the Champions Trophy two years ago but didn't get over the line on that occasion. They've got to see that as a real positive experience and if they get into the semis again, play smart cricket."

Vaughan also termed England's 15-man World Cup squad as the best he has ever seen.

"This England squad is the best I've seen. They have earned the right to be favourites," Vaughan was quoted as saying by BBC Sport after England named their 15-man squad for the tournament.

"I think we're in for a special World Cup — world-class players, world-class teams — and I think England will be right at the



heart of it," he said.

England included pace sensation Jofra Archer in the squad besides all-rounder Tom Curran and Hampshire off-spinner Liam Dawson in place of David Willey and Joe Denly, who were named in England's provisional squad.

"I feel for Willey, he hasn't really let England down, but it's the nature of international sport that you have to be ruthless," Vaughan said.

"You have to pick who you feel is the right 15 and I feel they've got it right."

Bowlers are scared of me but won't admit: Gayle

PTI ■ LONDON

Self-proclaimed 'Universe Boss' Chris Gayle on Wednesday boasted that bowlers across the world are "scared" of him but would not admit it on camera.

Gayle said off camera though, the same bowlers would say, "he is the man, he is the man". Gayle, who amassed 424 runs at an average of 106 in four matches against tournament favourites England earlier this year, has arrived in the United Kingdom for his fifth and final World Cup.

"Youngsters coming at my head — it's not as easy as it was like one time before. I was quicker then. But they'll be weary. They know what the Universe Boss is capable of. I'm sure they will have it in the back of their mind, 'Hey, this is the most dangerous batsman they've ever seen in cricket,'" Gayle told cricket.Com.Au.

Asked if his opponents are still scared of him, Gayle said: "Can't you tell? You go ask them. Go ask them on camera. They're going to say, no, they're not scared. But you ask them off the camera, they're going to say, 'Yeah, he's the man. He's the man.' They're going to say, 'he's the man.'"

"But they won't say it (on camera), they won't be frank and upfront and say, 'Listen to me straight up, Chris Gayle is the man.'"

"But I'm enjoying it. I'm always enjoying the battle against fast bowlers, it's good. Sometimes those things actually give you extra drive as a batter. When you have a battle, I like those challenges."

Maxwell keen to play a part with the ball

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Better known for his Bhard-hitting abilities, Glenn Maxwell has set his sights on becoming an asset for Australia with his part-time off-spin in the upcoming ICC World Cup.

Maxwell has averaged five overs per match since Aaron Finch took over as skipper, compared to just 2.4 overs under Steve Smith's captaincy.

He also completed his full quota of 10 overs three times in the recent tours of India and the UAE.

"That's probably the clarity I have with my role," the Victorian told reporters when asked about his role as a bowler.

"It's something I did a little in Dubai and India, I started to get a few more overs and get that consistency. To have that continue into my time at Lancashire where I got plenty of time at the bowling crease, you get that rhythm and feel of the ball



coming out consistently.

"You need that as a part-time bowler to have that consistency and time at the crease. Just get the cobwebs out a bit," Maxwell added.

Maxwell's effectiveness with his part-time spin can be assessed from the fact that he finished as Australia's third-most economical bowler in the 10 games against India and Pakistan on the sub-continent. "A lot of the time I

bow I just try and limit boundary balls. If they (batsmen) hit good shots off my bowling then I'm not too fazed. But if I'm limiting boundary balls and giving myself the best chance to squeeze a few dot balls and some tight overs it might create some pressure at the other end," he said, emphasising his role as a bowler.

"I think it's important for me to bowl in a partnership with someone."

Mortaza urges caution on World Cup hopes

AFF ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Mortaza has poured cold water on fan hopes for this month's World Cup, warning that the seventh-ranked team was facing an uphill battle in the group stage.

Supporters were jubilant after a tri-nation series win against Ireland and West Indies on the weekend handed Bangladesh its first ever multi-team tournament trophy.

But Mashrafe's side start the Cup race with a bracing fixture against South Africa, New Zealand and top-ranked hosts England in their first three matches.

"It will be difficult for us because our opponents in the opening three games are extremely strong," Mashrafe told reporters late on Tuesday before heading to England.

"To get a positive result against them won't be easy."

Mashrafe said the win had heightened expectations of Bangladesh fans, along with other recent triumphs including the side's semi-finals appearance at the 2017 Champions Trophy.

"In the last five to seven years, people have started to come to watch us with expectations that we will win," he said.

"All I can say is that the World Cup will be a different ball game. If you follow cricket in England, you will see that



a lot of runs are scored. It will need a different approach." Bangladesh hope to at least match their previous best performance in a World Cup, reaching the quarter-finals in 2015.

Rahane scores hundred on County debut

PTI ■ NEWPORT

India's Test vice-captain IJinkya Rahane had a memorable English County debut, scoring a hundred for Hampshire against Nottinghamshire in a Division One game here on Wednesday.

Rahane thus became the third Indian to score a hundred on county debut after Piyush Chawla, for Sussex against Worcestershire and Murali Vijay for Essex against Nottinghamshire.

Rahane, who had scored just 10 in the first innings, struck a patient 119 off 260 balls, hit 14 boundaries and shared a 257-run stand for the third wicket with Sam Northeast, who was unbeaten on 131 at tea on the third day.

Rahane came in at No 3 in the fifth over of the innings and was dismissed by off-spinner Matthew Carter at the stroke of tea in the 70th over. Rahane reached his hundred with a cover drive off Carter that fetched him two runs. The celebration was muted. This was his 30th first-class hundred.