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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."

Continued on Page 4



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

Ranjan 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.

VVPAT tally could delay final results, says Sahoo

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Subrat Sahoo, Chief Electoral Officer, Chhattisgarh said on Wednesday that there will be a minimum of 11 rounds of counting and in case of any dispute it can go up to 22-25 rounds, depending on the situation.

This might delay final result announcement, the CEO said, adding that 5% of VVPAT machine slips will be also counted.

Addressing media persons, Sahoo said in case the EVM and VVPAT slip give different figures of vote polled, than the VVPAT slips tally will be considered as final.

He stated that the differences can be due to non-display of votes in EVM machine, or non removal of the mock poll votes.

Sahoo pointed out that this difference can be of one or two votes because the VVPAT slip can be accurate as mock poll slips are removed before actual poll begins. But the Returning Officer decision will



be "full and final" for the votes polled.

For first time, Election Commission of India has made arrangement for the voters to know the results through Commission portal 'Suvidha' where even the voter trends in the entire country and also state can be seen, he said.

All the preparations at 27 counting centres have been

completed. Citing example of Raipur Parliamentary constituency where counting of 7 Assembly constituencies will be held in Raipur and two segments in Baloda Bazar district, the Raipur Returning Officer will announce the final result of each round, while ARO can give details of each round at local level of each constituency.

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 supreme 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 supreme N Chandrababu Naidu, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Uttar Pradesh Mahayathbandhan 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 Hind!" 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.

IAF accomplishes BrahMos feat

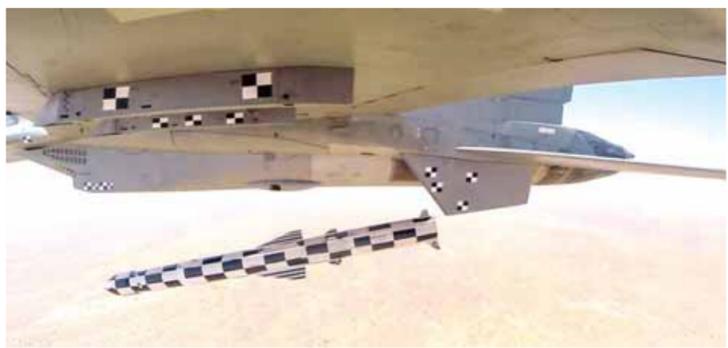
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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. "The launch from the aircraft was smooth and the missile followed the desired trajectory before directly hitting the land target," IAF spokesperson Group Capt Anupam Banerjee said.

The IAF became the first air force in the world to have successfully fired an air-



IAF successfully test-fires air version of BrahMos missile from its frontline fighter aircraft Su-30 MKI on Wednesday

PTI

launched 2.8 Mach surface attack missile of this category on a sea target on November 22, 2017.

"Today's was the second such live launch of the weapon. The integration of the weapon on the aircraft was a very complex process involving mechan-

ical, electrical and software modifications on aircraft," the IAF said.

It said the software development of the aircraft was undertaken by IAF engineers, while the HAL carried out mechanical and electrical modifications on it.

"The dedicated and synergistic efforts of the IAF, Defence Research and Development Organisation, BrahMos Aerospace Ltd and HAL have proven the capability of the nation to undertake such complex integrations," the IAF said.

Chhattisgarh's votes count first trend after 9 am

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Subrat Sahoo, Chief Electoral Officer, Chhattisgarh said the counting in all the 27 centres of the state will commence at 8.00 am on Thursday for the 11 Parliamentary constituencies.

The first trend of votes count in Chhattisgarh is expected to be available after 9 am.

Addressing media persons on Wednesday, he said in all the 27 centres around 5,184 counting employees and 1500 micro-observers have been deployed.

For Lok Sabha Polls 2019 around 41,197 personnel were issued postal ballot out of which 22,901 have been received. Similarly, 17,223 registered service electors through ETPBS were sent online postal

ballot out of which 10,803 ballot papers have been obtained.

He pointed out that for assembly-wise counting total 14 tables will be used. But after permission from Election Commission of India additional tables have been allocated for Pandariya and Kawardha in Kabirdham district, Raigarh, Sarangarh and Kharsia in Raigarh district, Bhilaiagarh, Kasdol and Baloda Bazar for Baloda Bazar district where 21 tables will be used.

Sahoo said counting of postal ballot papers will be done in the first 30 minutes. In case if counting is incomplete, then as per new directives of the ECI, the penultimate round of counting will not be stopped for EVM. He gave in detail on what conditions the postal ballots can be rejected.

"A total of 478 complaints were received through c-VIGIL out of which 259 were valid. Till May 22, a total of 7,78,03,105 cash, 7144.22 litres of liquor costing Rs 12,93,588 and other materials worth Rs 85,01,269 were seized," he said.

He said Election Commission, New Delhi resolved 55 complaints out of 99 it received. Transfer related 295 complaints were received out of which 118 were taken up and 117 are pending.

There were 149 complaints of model code violation out of which 56 were resolved. Through NGS portal 1011 complaints were received out of which 966 have been resolved. There were 55 complaints of suspected paid news out of which 47 have been confirmed as paid news case.

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

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 Ramadan 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 banning 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 Ramadan, 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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- 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
- 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 Ramadan
- 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 Ramadan. 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 chahate 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 win 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

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



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

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 3000 rooms have been arranged along with other extensive facilities to render all possible assistance to the MPs.

Thus, the Lok Sabha secretariat 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.

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 "willfully and deliberately" misled the court in the Rafale fighter jet case and this amounted to "wholesale fraud".

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.

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, heeding 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.

Cong slams unilateral NIA probe into Bhima killing

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Congress on Wednesday raised objection about the way National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe was set up by the Union government into the killing of BJP legislator Bhima Mandavi.

It has objected that the state government was not taken into confidence while handing over the probe to the NIA.

State general secretary and chairman communication wing of the PCC Shailesh Nitin Trivedi in a statement termed the announcement of the NIA probe into the matter a political decision. When the state government had already ordered a judicial probe headed by a retired Chief

Justice, the declaration of NIA probe was an encroachment into the powers of the state government and attack on its autonomy.

It was questionable that whether BJP doesn't have faith on judicial probe set up by the state government. State BJP had earlier demanded a CBI probe into the matter and the Congress government in the state going a step further had set up a judicial probe, headed by a retired Chief Justice, he said.

BJP government at the Centre doesn't even wait for the lifting of the model code of conduct and sought recommendation from Chhattisgarh government. This showed its intention, which is purely unjustified, he added.

BJP decries DGP's statement on NIA probe

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

BJP took objection to the statement of Chhattisgarh Director General of Police over the National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe on the killing of lone BJP MLA Bhima Mandavi in a Maoist attack.

The DGP in a statement had said without recommendation from the state government, the NIA cannot legally conduct the probe.

BJP spokesperson Sachchidanand Upasane had stated that for the NIA probe the permission or approval of the state government is not required and that the state DGP is unaware of the provision.

Upasane claimed that

the "irresponsible statement" of the DGP might be politically motivated, which is against the status of the post he holds as well as public service conduct.

He pointed out that the DGP should have welcomed the high-level probe befitting the dignity of his post, instead of giving any statement. Government might come and go but in an administrative setup, which is run by codes and rules, law and constitution, things continue to move.

Upasane said administrative officials should confine themselves to public service code and refrain from giving political statements. Instead they should work for providing justice to the victims.

Baghel stresses on effective implementation of Forest Rights Act Committees for Forest Rights Act to be reconstituted

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said that effective implementation of Forest Rights Act should be ensured in the state.

In a review meeting held at Chief Minister's residence on Wednesday, Baghel gave instructions to organise workshops in Raipur, Ambikapur and Jagdalpur on implementation of the Act, according to a government press release.

It was decided in the meeting that this workshop would be held in Ambikapur headquarters of Sarguja Division on May 28, in Raipur on May 29 and in Jagdalpur headquarters of Bastar Division on May 30.



Chief Minister, Forest Minister, Chief Secretary, Regional Ministers, MLAs, Collector, District Panchayat CEO, Forest Department Officers, SDOs of Forest and Revenue Department, CEO of Janpad Panchayat, Assistant Commissioner, Tribal Development will also mark their presence in all of these workshops.

Chief Minister said that in these workshops, detailed and comprehensive information about Forest Rights Act should be provided, so that its effective implementation could be ensured. It should also be ensured that only eligible beneficiaries are provided forestland rights certificates. He also gave instructions for distribution of community forestland rights

certificates.

The CM also instructed officials to reconstitute the committees formed at Gram Panchayat, Janpad and District-level for implementation of the Act. He added that the applications for forest land rights certificates, which were rejected before, should be reconsidered.

He also directed officials concerned to redress the cases of demarcation, transfer and division within the time-limit prescribed under Public Service Guarantee Act.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Sunil Kumar Kujur, Additional Chief Secretary CK Khetan, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Gaurav Dwivedi.

Congress urges CEO to freeze telecom towers during counting

Suspects EVM hacking during the counting process

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Expressing fear of Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) hacking, Congress candidate from Mahasamund constituency Dhanendra Sahu demanded of Chief Electoral Officer Subrat Sahoo to jam all the private telecom towers during the counting process.

A Congress delegation led by him and comprising chairman legal cell Kiranmayi Nayak, state general secretaries Girish Dewangan and Shailesh Nitin Trivedi met the CEO and demanded that all the mobile towers within the 1000 meters circumference of the counting centre be made non-functional



by cutting off the power supply and prohibiting use of generators to run them.

The Congress candidate also handed over a memorandum to the CEO in which he

claimed that he came to know from party workers that some suspicious persons were seen testing their laptops within the vicinity of Gariaband counting centre.

There is a mobile tower of a private telecom company within 500 meters range from the counting centre of Gariaband and therefore there is a possibility of manipulation in the EVM by the suspected people, he said.

"Hence, it is requested of you to kindly stall all the private telecom towers situated at the vicinity of the counting centers of my constituency i.e. Gariaband, Dhamtari and Mahasamund", he demanded. Meanwhile, the CEO had assured the Congress candidate Sahu that he would take information from the returning officers of the concerned districts and will take necessary steps.

Heavy security arrangements for peaceful counting in state

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

A day ahead of counting, senior administrative and police authorities reviewed all the preparations made for the even across the state, including state capital Raipur.

Raipur Senior Superintendent of Police Arif Sheikh on Wednesday inspected the counting centre at the capital located at Government Engineering College premises, Sejbahar. Adequate security arrangements have been made here for peaceful conduct of the counting process.

SSP Sheikh during his



inspection gave necessary instruction to the police personnel. The forces have been divided into four sectors and heavy security has been deployed in order to maintain law-and-order situation during the

counting, police sources said.

A final rehearsal was also made on Wednesday where the SSP gave necessary instructions to the cops.

A total of around 1000

cops have been deployed in the city, including 500 at the counting centre, the SSP informed.

SSP Sheikh has instructed the cops to be alert and vigil while performing the duty.



A model counting centre has been prepared at the Government Engineering College, Sejbahar, Raipur where the counting of votes polled in the 7 Assembly segments under Raipur Parliamentary constituency will be held on Thursday (May 23). Photo Santosh Sahu

Aman, Yasmin file defamation suit against PCC Spokesperson

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Former principal secretary to the chief minister Aman Singh and his wife Yasmin Singh, who was a contractual employee with the state government, have filed a defamation suit against Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress spokesperson Vikas Tiwari for "maliciously maligning their image."

The suit has been filed before the judicial magistrate at a local court in Bhopal.

Notable, Congress spokesperson Tiwari in a letter to chief secretary had accused Singh of amassing disproportionate property. A Special investigation Team probe has already been set up by the state government against Singh to investigate into the matter.

Tiwari also alleged that Singh's wife Yasmin was given undue advantage and was appointed in a high salary as a contractual employee in the state government.

The suit has been filed before the judicial magistrate at a local court in Bhopal

On the basis of Tiwari complaint against Yasmin the state government has also formed a probe committee headed by Principal Secretary Renu G Pillai, which is investing into the matter. Meanwhile, Singh in his defamation suit has filed a case based on the complaint of Tiwari to the Chief Secretary and had argued that all the allegations against them were baseless.

Singh had also claimed Tiwari had "maligned his image by propagating false allegations against him in social media platform as well as before the print and electronic media."

The case has been filed under section 499 and 500 of the IPC, which deal with criminal defamation.

Kaushik must emulate MJ Akbar: Congress

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

State general secretary and chairman communication wing of the PCC Shailesh Nitin Trivedi on Wednesday said Congress had nothing to do with allegations of harassment raised by a woman against Leader of Opposition Dharamlal Kaushik.

However the Congress leader advised Kaushik to emulate former Union Minister M.J. Akbar, who had resigned over "Me Too" allegations. In a statement Trivedi said Congress doesn't believe in politics of vengeance and had nothing to do with the allegation of a woman against Kaushik.

The woman accused the BJP leader of making indecent proposal to her during



Holi festivity in 2017.

He further said as Kaushik being Leader of Opposition in the state assembly enjoys the status of a cabinet minister, he immediately should quit the post and face the probe. "We are ready to set up a probe committee if Kaushik so suggests," he further added.

Odisha lift 9th Hockey India sub-junior boys title

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Hockey Odisha lifted the 9th Hockey India Sub Junior Boys National championship beating Uttar Pradesh in a shoot-out by 3 goals to 1 in the final match played on Wednesday at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Hockey Stadium.

K L Verma, Vice Chancellor of the Pt Ravishankar Shukla University gave away the prizes to the winning and runner up teams as chief guest.

In the nail-biting final match, in 24th minute Laban Lugun scored first goal for Hockey Odisha but in the 38th minute Hockey UP equalized. In the 49th minute, Ankit Prajapati of the UP scored another



goal to make the tally 1-2 but Prabin of Odisha leveled the score in the 52nd minute. The match was then decided on a shootout, in which Odisha won by 3-1.

Jharkhand was placed in the third position while Sports Authority finished in the fourth position.

Minister Choubey discharged from SGPGI, Lucknow

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources Ravindra Choubey, who was undergoing treatment at Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS), Lucknow, was discharged from the hospital on Wednesday.

Choubey however didn't return to Raipur but proceeded to national capital New Delhi to take rest at his daughter's residence there. Official sources in the Congress informed that Choubey has completely recovered and will soon return to the state capital Raipur.

Till he is in the national



capital, he would attend the important meetings, including the state cabinet by travelling from there, sources said.

Notable, Choubey suffered a mild cardiac arrest around a month ago. The 60-year-old politician fainted at a hotel in Lucknow and was admitted to

SGPGI, Lucknow where he was kept in an Intensive Care Unit for about a fortnight.

Choubey suffered cardiac arrest while he was camping in Uttar Pradesh capital to campaign for party, mainly in Amethi and Rae Bareilly Lok Sabha parliamentary constituencies.

Bastar art shop at Raipur airport

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

A Bastar Art shop was inaugurated by GP Upadhyay, Additional Chief Secretary HRD, Government of Sikkim at Swami Vivekananda Airport Raipur on Tuesday.

"The 1987 batch IAS officer, Upadhyay lauded the facilities at the Raipur airport. He also appreciated the lighting and spaciousness of the Raipur airport," Director Raipur Airport Santosh Dhoke said.

Upadhyay after having a lunch at a restaurant in the airport appreciated the quality of food there.

Bastar art shop at the airport will enable the artisans to directly reach premium customer segment. It will also act



as a spot where people coming from other places could get some authentic Bastar brass metal, Kosa silk and jewellery under one roof, an official from Raipur airport stated.

BATTLEGROUND HARYANA

Lok Sabha result will act as a 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 multi-cornered 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 percentage and Karnal recording the lowest with 64.68 percentage.

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 Navveen 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)

at that time could not win a single seat losing two it had contested. The INLD had won two seats.

The BJP had registered victory on Lok Sabha seats including Gurugram, Faridabad, Kurukshetra, Karnal, Ambala (reserved constituency), Bhiwani-Mahendragarh and Sonapat, INLD had won on Sirsa (reserved constituency) and Hisar seats while Congress had won on Rohtak seat.

Political analysts believe that the poll outcome on May 23 in Haryana will provide answers to far-reaching political questions that have dominated the electoral debate in Haryana. The poll outcome will indicate who benefitted the most from the polarization of non-Jat and Jat votes on Jat-dominated parliamentary constituencies in Haryana, they say.

Any surge in BJP's tally from last time will suggest that the popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is still high in the state. For other political players including INLD, JJP-AAP and LSP-BSP alliance, their performance will decide their dominance in the regional politics. The results

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.

Prestige and honour at stake in Punjab

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

As the results of the recent-ly held parliamentary elections will be doled out on Thursday, the winners in Punjab will take it all — not just the seats in the Lok Sabha but the prestige and honour that was involved in the high-staked ballot battle.

The warm political winds blowing across the State will bring more than just victory for the candidates in fray and also for the parties they represent. It will rather determine the fate and stature of political parties standing tall behind their candidates, other than the top leaders who were steering the bandwagons of their respective outfits.

Already witnessing a political storm, not even the political pundits can swear whether the winds of change will sweep the well entrenched candidates off their feet, and bring in the new ones in these constituencies. Or else, the tempest will subside into a lull without uprooting the trees.

With the Shiromani Akali Dal's power couple in fray, the stakes are high for the state's regional party; while its ally — the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) — has sent across a message that it was taking Punjab seriously after 2017 assembly polls debacle by cautiously choosing to field Sunny Deol and Union Minister Hardeep Puri.

For the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh, under whose captainship the Congress swept the State just about two years back, it is a prestige battle besides his popularity test. In addition, the results would appreciate or reject the Congress Government's policies and programmes in the State after its two-year in power. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which stunned the traditional political players in 2014 but failed to keep up the momentum in these five years, is looking for a repeat of its previous performance.

But, it is the fourth front — the Punjab Democratic Alliance (PDA) comprising six political outfits with some coming into being just few months ahead polls — is eyeing to do what AAP did in 2014 with a strong footing in Patiala, Faridkot, and Khadoor Sahib constituencies.

Earlier, Punjab's political battleground has always witnessed more or less direct contest between the two major arch rivals — SAD-BJP combine and the Congress. But, with the emergence of AAP in 2014 general elections and formation of a maha-gathbandhan under

the banner of PDA, the contest in many high profile assembly segments has become out-of-the-ordinary.

BATTLE OF SURVIVAL FOR AKALIS

For SAD, which was pushed into the background with just about 15 seats in the 117-member House after ruling the State for a decade, 2019 elections is the battle of its political survival.

And that was why, its president Sukhbir Badal decided to throw his hat in the electoral ring from Ferozepur — a known Akali bastion, besides renominating his Union Minister wife Harsimrat Badal from Bathinda eyeing a hatrick despite not-so-favourable reports.

After a resounding defeat in 2017 state polls, SAD was relegated to distant third, even losing the coveted post of the Leader of Opposition to the nascent AAP. In an apparent attempt to reclaim what it lost in 2017, the party fielded the top guns — Sukhbir, Harsimrat, Bibi Jagir Kaur, Parminder Singh Dhindsa, Charanjit Singh Atwal, Prem Singh Chandumjra, among others — on the 10 seats it contests in alliance with BJP.

Besides other seats, Ferozepur and Bathinda are the most important for the SAD because of the Badals, and winning these two would be enough to catapult it back in the state's political game. Otherwise, a loss on any of the two seats would leave it struggling for saving face.

BJP'S ATTEMPT OF REVIVAL IN PUNJAB

Always playing a second fiddle to its ally in Punjab with just three seats in the Lok Sabha and 23 in the state assembly, the saffron party has given enough indications to show that this border state is high on its priority list.

It took its time to choose its candidates. And when it did, it threw one surprise after another. Moreover, it started preparing and strategising for the elections at an early stage, giving it ample time to chalk out its line of attack carefully besides mobilising the party cadre.

BJP pull out all the stops to take Bollywood action her Sunny Deol on board — a decision which has not only gave the much-needed push to its campaign, but also that of the Akali Dal. Besides, it has also fielded an "outsider" Sikh face and the Union Minister Hardeep Puri from the prestigious Amritsar seat.

PRESTIGE BALLOT

BATTLES OF PRESTIGE

CONSTITUENCY	CONGRESS	SAD-BJP	AAP	PDA
Bathinda	Amarinder Singh Raja Warring	Harsimrat Badal	Prof Baljinder Kaur	Sukhpal Khaira
Ferozepur	Sher Singh Ghubaya	Sukhbir Badal	Harjinder Singh (Kaka Sran)	Hans Raj Golden
Gurdaspur	Sunil Jakhar	Sunny Deol	Peter Masih	Lal Chand
Patiala	Preneet Kaur	Surjit Singh Rakhra	Neena Mittal	Dr Dharamvir Gandhi
Sangrur	Kewal Singh Dhillon	Parminder Singh Dhindsa	Bhagwant Mann	Jassi Jasraj
Khadoor Sahib	Jasbir Singh Dimpa	Bibi Jagir Kaur	Manjinder Singh Sidhu	Bibi Paramjit Kaur Khaira
Amritsar	GS Aujla	Hardeep Puri	Kuldeep Singh Dhalwal	Daswinder Kaur
Jalandhar	Chaudhary Santokh Singh	Charanjit Singh Atwa	Justice Zora Singh	Balwinder Kumar
Hoshiarpur	Raj Kumar Chabbewa	Som Parkash	Dr Ravjot Singh	Khushi Ram
Sri Anandpur Sahib	Manish Tewari	Prem Singh Chandumjra	Narinder Singh Shergill	Vikram Singh Sodhi
Ludhiana	Ravneet Bittu	Mahesh Inder Singh Grewal	Prof Tejpal Singh	Simarjeet Singh Bains
Faridkot	Mohd Sadique	Gulzar Singh Ranike	Prof Sadhu Singh	Master Baldev Singh Jaiton
Fatehgarh	Dr Amar Singh	DS Guru	Bandeep Singh Dullo	Manwinder Singh Giaspura

BATTLE: MORE FOR CAPT DECIMATED AAP LOST

CURRENT PARTY-WISE BREAK-UP

Party	Lok Sabha (13 seats)	Vidhan Sabha (117 seats)
Congress	4	78
SAD	4	15
BJP	1	3
AAP	4	20

THAN CONG TRACK

The 2019 general elections is the battle of prestige more for Capt Amarinder than for the Congress party for more than one reason. Apart from a popularity test of his two-year-old government, the winning and losing of candidates would also have an impact on Capt Amarinder's standing in the party as it was his choice that prevailed in selection of candidates.

As the campaign committee head, Capt Amarinder toured across the State campaigning for all candidates. However, he made an extra effort to ensure the victory of his wife Preneet Kaur in their citadel, Patiala, which she lost in 2014 to Dr Dharamvir Gandhi when Capt Amarinder was busy contesting against BJP stalwart Arun Jaitley in Amritsar.

A win would, combating strong anti-incumbency, reinforce its stature in the state politics, besides giving a stamp of approval to the programmes and policies of his government.

Marred with defections and rebellion by its legislators, AAP has lost what it achieved in 2014. It emerged on the state's political scene with a bang by winning four seats, but failed to maintain the same force in these five years. Two of its MPs parted ways and are now the part of different political outfits. Eight of its total 20 legislators rebelled, with two went on to form a new political outfit, two shifted their loyalties towards the Congress, while the remaining campaigned against the party while still being its part.

In 2017, AAP was seen as a possible alternative to the state's traditional parties. But post 2017, it disintegrated with little patience. Now, party's state unit chief Bhagwant Mann is leading a fight for party's political survival.

PDA EYEING TO DO WHAT AAP DID IN 2014

Providing a new alternative in Punjab, PDA turned the

contest into a multi-cornered fight on almost all seats. Comprising several splinter groups — AAP rebel M.L.A. Sukhpal Khaira's Punjab Ekta Party, Bains brothers Lok Insaaf Party, Dr Gandhi's Nawan Punjab Party, besides Bahujan Samaj Party and the Left parties, PDA is expecting to do what AAP did in 2014.

In fact, its candidates has been getting massive support in some of the constituencies including Bibi Paramjit Kaur Khaira in Khadoor Sahib, Master Baldev Singh Jaiton in Faridkot, and Dr Gandhi in Patiala — having the potential of stunning the traditional parties.

MAIN ISSUES

Religion has remained the main issue in this election with the ruling Cingres sin oumb taking on the akalis for their alleged involvement in sacrilege and related firing cases, the SAD-BJP combine targeted the Congress on the issue of 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

Besides, the SAD-BJP leader also tried to cash in on the BJP-led Central Government's decision on opening of the Kartarpur Sahib corridor. This time, the serious issues like drug menace, sand mafia, development, farm distress, unemployment took a backseat.

PNS

Opp raps EC, calls EVMs...

From Page 1 "Starting from candidate affidavits, VVPAT or VVPAT counting. Every thing cannot be correct just because EC says so. Faith comes with Facts and intent behind actions in past," he tweeted.

The DMK also 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.

Results to weather...

From Page 1 The Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi had said, "We are not inclined to modify our order. (For) how many days will we hear the same matter."

In their memorandum to the EC, the Opposition parties had said that in order to make the process more transparent, paper slips must be counted first and if there is a discrepancy with what is shown digitally on the machines, then all votes - instead of the 5 per cent the EC has decided to at present - in the Assembly segment of that parliamentary constituency should be cross-checked.

Election official cite existing orders to point out that in case there is any mismatch between electronic candidate-wise result of the Control Unit and the candidate-wise VVPAT slips manual count, recounting of the VVPAT slips of that particular VVPAT shall be conducted till the recount is tallied with the EVM count or one of the previous VVPAT slips count.

Meanwhile, Twitter was abuzz on Tuesday with several videos of EVMs being stored and moved from one unauthorised storage house to another in Uttar Pradesh. The EC, however, rejected all the allegations of mishandling of EVMs and VVPAT and maintained that all machines are safe and secure.

छत्तीसगढ़ लोक सेवा आयोग, रायपुर

क्रमांक 588/02/परीक्षा/2018 रायपुर, दिनांक 21-MAY-2019

छ.ग. लोक सेवा आयोग के अंतर्गत वाहन चालक, भूव्य, डाक रनर एवं फरॉश परीक्षा-2018 के संबंध में महत्वपूर्ण सूचना

छत्तीसगढ़ लोक सेवा आयोग द्वारा छ.ग. लोक सेवा आयोग के अंतर्गत वाहन चालक, भूव्य, डाक रनर एवं फरॉश परीक्षा-2018 को लिखित परीक्षा दिनांक 26.05.2019 को जिला-रायपुर के निर्धारित परीक्षा केन्द्रों में निम्नानुसार आयोजित की जाएगी:-

Name of Exam.	DATE	DAY	TIME	SUBJECT
वाहन चालक, भूव्य, डाक रनर एवं फरॉश	26-05-2019	SUNDAY	10.00 AM TO 11.00 PM	General Knowledge of Chhattisgarh

उक्त परीक्षा हेतु आयोग द्वारा प्रवेश पत्र दिनांक 16.05.2019 को जारी कर दिया गया है। अभ्यर्थी आयोग की वेबसाईट www.psc.cg.gov.in से प्रवेश पत्र डाउनलोड कर सकते हैं। छ.ग. लोक सेवा आयोग हेतु भूव्य/डाक रनर/वाहन चालक/फरॉश पदों में से एक से अधिक पदों हेतु आवेदन करने वाले ऐसे अभ्यर्थी जिन्होंने अलग-अलग आवेदनों में त्रुटिपूर्ण प्रविष्टि की है, को एक से अधिक प्रवेश-पत्र जिनमें परीक्षा केन्द्र भी अलग-अलग हो सकते हैं, जारी हुए हैं। ऐसे अभ्यर्थियों को किसी एक ही परीक्षा केन्द्र से परीक्षा में सम्मिलित होना है।

ऑनलाईन आवेदन में की गई त्रुटि का उल्लेख करते हुए अभ्यर्थी छ.ग. लोक सेवा आयोग को लिखित आवेदन प्रस्तुत करें, जिसके आधार पर अभ्यर्थी को समस्त आवेदित पदों हेतु अभ्यर्थिता पर विचार किया जा सके।

सचिव
छ.ग. लोक सेवा आयोग,
रायपुर

G- 70116/3 Ryp/Dtd 22.5.19

IRAN REFUSES TALKS UNLESS US SHOWS 'RESPECT'

IRAN ■ 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 retal-

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 result 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

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

IRAN ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump's administration is considering blacklisting a Chinese video surveillance giant by 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.

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

IRAN ■ 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

IRAN ■ 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 include 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.

Four killed, 12 injured in Mogadishu car bombing

IRAN ■ 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 her 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 Aamin 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

IRAN ■ 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 cli-

mate 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



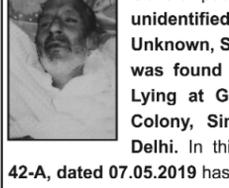
General public is hereby informed that an unknown dead body was found from Green Belt along NH-44, Near Singnu Dram, Narela Delhi, dated 14.05.2019. In this regard a DD No. 74-A dated 14.05.2019, has been lodged at P.S. Narela, Delhi.

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 DP/299/ON/19

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 DP/300/ON/19

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.

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 adding 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.

POLICE HEADQUARTERS J&K SRINAGAR
 Phone/Fax Nos.: 0194-2443031/2443032 (Sgr), 0191-2459029/2459255 (JMU) Website : www.jkpolice.gov.in, E-mail : phqj@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 & BQ. 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 1800 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.
 Sd/- (Mubassir Latif) JKPS, AIG (Provision /Transport)
 For Director General of Police, J&K Srinagar
 No: DIPK-NB-675/19
 Dated: 22.05.2019

Saneh Industrial Investment Limited
 CIN:L74899DL1980PLC060079
 Regd. Office: Delton 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)

PUBLIC NOTICE
 Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mrs. Kirani 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 840 Sq. Yds., Part of Kharsa No.38/10, situated in the area of village Hastal, Colony known as Press Endave, Vikas Nagar Part-II, New Delhi from Mr. Jai Bhagwan S/o Mr. Badloo Ram Tyagi 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 herby 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 Ex.II, New Delhi- 49
 Contact # 011-40063116

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- kharsa No. 105/21/2, Khata Khoni 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
 iglcnpp@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, Kharsa No. 17/16 Min Village Dansha, Tehsil Najafgarh, Distt.-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
 iglcnpp@gmail.com

PAPER WITH PASSION

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 powerhouses 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 (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 communique.

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) "with-in 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 (Khyirong). The line between Shigatse and Khyirong 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 Nepal." 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, 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 tragi-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 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

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

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

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

demonstrate its credibility in punishing those parties and leaders violating the Model Code of Conduct but it remained a mute spectator to shoddy electioneering. The EC's failure to act is really sad. The country definitely needs a dynamic and unbiased electoral body and certainly officials like Seshan.

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-handed), 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 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 paean 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 Shariatina, 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.

Shariatina 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.

Shariatina 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 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 irrevocably, 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)



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 policy 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 EC 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 hotted 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 was 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.

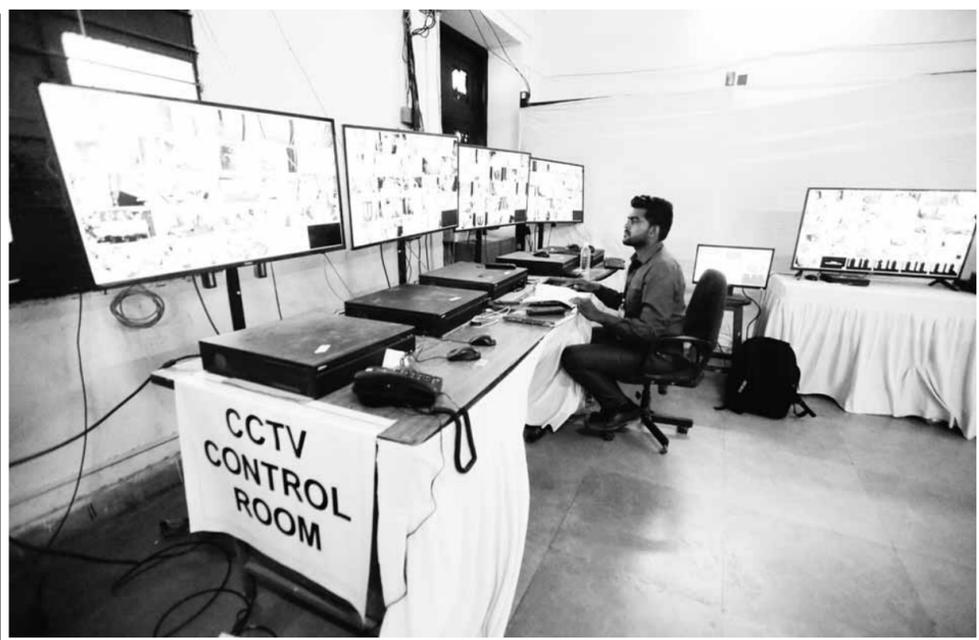
The State Assembly was kept in suspended animation to allow for the possibility of any new combination of parties to form a Government in the State.

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 Sajid 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

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 Thillaneri. 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

Ahead 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 injured soldiers and others. Out of these injured soldiers, 34 year old Naik Shreeshaillappa 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, RLS 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 (vyapariyon 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

Ballia (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 alluresments 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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 E-mail: secretarial@feedbackinfra.com || Website: www.fedco.co.in

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	Debenture 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

1 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.

2 The rating for the Non Convertible Debentures of the Company as assigned by the Credit Analysis and Research Limited is "CARE BBB+ (SO)".

3 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:**

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

Note 2:

a) 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

b) 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

c) 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.

d) Figures of the previous year have been regrouped and reclassified to conform to the classification of current period, wherever considered necessary.

e) 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 (GZ) 'D' ctg. for an area of 409MT ²
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

No. 23AC/393/CS-Pkg/SMK/2016 Dated: 21.05.2019 1551/19

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान, रायपुर (छ.ग.)

All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Raipur (C.G.)

Tatibandh, G.E. Road, Raipur - 492 099 (CG), www.aimsraipur.edu.in

Advt. No. AIMS-RPR/Adv. Cell/CS & HS/2019/1065 Date: 22-05-2019

Director, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Raipur Chhattisgarh, Gov. 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.aimsraipur.edu.in and CPP Portal www.eprocure.gov.in

Stores Officer

RMG RESIDENCY

HRERA Regn. No. 206 of 2017 dated 15.09.2017

Licence No. 12 of 2015 dated 09.10.2015
 Building Plans Approved on 21.12.2015
 Memo No : ZP -1102/AD(RAJ)/ 2015/25264

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 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.

S. No.	App. No.	Unit No.	Customer Name	S. No.	App. No.	Unit No.	Customer Name
1	929	F-212	Poonam Yadav	8	3128	D-410	Jagmohan
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-807	Manoj
5	2953	F-315	Ravinder Singh Kadian	12	5702	F-405	Swarnil Modi
6	2976	A-102	Pankaj Kumar	13	5772	A-001	Krishna Bhardwaj
7	2979	A-002	Puran Chandar	14	6041	C-808	Heena Rakheja

Disc.: In case the applicants have made the payment & their details are still reflecting kindly ignore this advertisement.

RMG DEVELOPERS PVT. LTD.
 Corp. Off: 5F-05, NINEX City Mart, Sec.-49, Sohna Road, Gurugram-122018, Haryana
 Regd. Off: Gopi Ram Building, Kh. No. 300, Sultanpur Village, New Delhi-110030
 Tel: +91-124-4699399 Email: ninex@ninex.in Web: www.ninex.in

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 metropolis, 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

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 Jeewan 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 is, 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, Built: 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
P.S. 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: straderstd@gmail.com
CIN: L15500DL1994PLC153183

NOTICE
Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations 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.

Pursuant to this, the Company has decided to close trading window for insiders from 23rd May, 2019 to 1st June, 2019 (Both Days Inclusive). Trading Window will re-open on 2nd June, 2019.

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

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: dd@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)

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. 6988901.71/- (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-ICT/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/24HK-IC/19/MC-IV Date: 21.05.2019 1539/2019
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

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, Amrapali Patel Platinum, Gh 001, Sector 119, Noida/ May 17, 2019	November 30, 2017 Rs. 61,76,264/-	Dell/ncr
2.	Amrit Munjal/ Deepa Anand/ NHDEL00000795332	Flat No-T-G-1204-A, 12th Floor, Amrapali Platinum, Gh-001, Sec-119, Noida Uter Pradesh 201301/ May 17, 2019	March 31, 2018 Rs. 49,86,661/-	Dell/ncr

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantor(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
Place: Delhi/NCR

Sd/ (Authorized Officer)
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 taxes due 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 still held 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 the 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.

Monnet Industries Limited
Registered Office: Plot No. 216, Sector-C, Uria Industrial Complex, Raipur-493221 (Chhattisgarh), Corp. Office: Monnet House, 11, Masjid Moth, Greater Kailash-II, New Delhi-110048 (INDIA) Phone: +91 11 29218542-46; Fax: +91 11 29218541, Email: isc_mind@monnetgroup.com; Website: www.monnetgroup.com CIN:L51103CT1982PLC009717

NOTICE
Notice is hereby given Pursuant to Regulation 29 & 47 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulation, 2015, that a meeting of Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 30th May, 2019 at the corporate office of the Company, inter-alia, to consider and approve the Audited Financial Results of the quarter and financial year ended 31st March, 2019.

This information is also available on the website of the Company (www.monnetgroup.com) and on the website of the Stock Exchange. (www.bseindia.com)

Dated: 22.05.2019
Place: New Delhi

By order of the Board of Directors
MONNET INDUSTRIES LIMITED
Mahesh Kumar Sharma
Whole-Time Director

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 up to 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 Szczepanski 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 Rogan Ladon of Philippines. The two-time former Olympian had defeated Siwach by a split-decision in the President's Cup quarterfinals 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 all-out 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 others 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 Yilyu 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-ying 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 quarterfinals 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."



'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 add-ons. 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.

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 in "no way" 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 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 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 hard-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

bowl 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

AFP ■ 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 Ajinkya 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.