



SummitTIMES

Vol 03 | Issue 139 | Gangtok | Monday | 28 May 2018

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

300 clean-up drives across the country under Himalayan Cleanup initiative

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 MAY:

Responding to the recall of the Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI) and Zero Waste Himalaya to beat plastic pollution a host of organizations from across the 12 mountain States of the country took part in the nation-wide Himalayan Cleanup on 26 May, a press release from Zero Waste Himalaya informs. The release further informs that with the involvement of Government, Non Government Organisations, community based organisations and volunteers, around 15,000 participants were mobilised by more than 200 organisations who participated in the clean-up campaign.



events were organized throughout the Himalayan region of the country," the release informs. 'Beat Plastic Pollution', the theme for World Environment Day 2018 is

a call to action for people to come together to combat one of the greatest challenges of plastic pollution. In Sikkim, the Himalayan Cleanup was taken

up by the Rural Management and Development Department with most Block Administrative Centers being involved in the initiative in their own areas. Other organi-

zations that made up the over 80 cleanups happening in Sikkim simultaneously were led by Namchi Municipality, Namchi College, Tsomgo Pokha

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Hamro Sikkim Party to be launched on 31 May

REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 27 MAY:

Hamro Sikkim Party founding member, MN Dahal, while addressing a press conference at Deorali here today, announced that the official launch of HSP has been finalized for 31 May. HSP was unveiled last month on 26 Apr at a press conference at the Press Club of India in New Delhi. "We announced the party in Delhi particularly to raise the issues of Sikkim before the national media and to make sure that the Central Government hears our problems," Mr Dahal said. The founding member further added that it was time for a new generation to take over and deliver a government of new ideas and aspirations. Commenting on the delay of the launch pro-

gramme, Mr Dahal alleged that the Sikkim Democratic Front Government was 'misusing the government machinery' to create hurdles for the new party to organize its launch programme. Mr Dahal further slammed the SDF party's decision to conduct gram sabhas in all the villages of the district on the same day as HSP's launch saying that the ruling party is 'misusing' the Panchayati Raj system of the State. "SDF party can certainly ask its party cadre to not attend meetings of other political parties but they cannot misuse the Panchayati Raj system to prevent common people from attending programmes of other parties," Mr Dahal added. Mr Dahal has called on the SDF to scrap the gram sabhas scheduled to be held on 31 May.

Mr Dahal also reiterated to the media and people that HSP was not just Bhaichung Bhutia's party saying that they are looking for a person with a 'clean-image' to lead the party. "He [Bhaichung] is a part of the party but we still have not decided on the presidency of the party. He is one of the founding members like us. We believe in collective leadership," Mr Dahal added. Talking about the speakers set to address the launch, Mr Dahal said that the programme will be addressed by Bhaichung Bhutia and former minister, Ram Bahadur Subba. He further informed that a 12-13 member council will be announced during the launch to guide the party in its upcoming programmes.

Officials inspect Mantam Lake, assure to restore bamboo bridge within 3 days

WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 27 MAY:

District Magistrate [North], Karma R Bonpo, along with the Superintendent of Police [North] and other officials inspected Mantam Lake yesterday accompanied by panchayat members from Sakyong Pentong and Lingthem Lingdem Gram Panchayat Units. Heavy rainfall over the past few days had caused a substantial rise in water level in the lake making it difficult for people to commute through the bamboo bridge constructed over the lake.



The overflowing waters had also damaged some parts of the bridge

which the visiting officials have assured to re-

store within three days. The steel bridge how-

ever according to the officials is still intact and

out of danger of being swept away.

Study calls for focus on menstrual hygiene management

KOCHI, MAY 27 (PTI): A study released on the eve of the Menstrual Hygiene Day has emphasised the need for educational curriculum to focus on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) along with its practical and biological aspects. "The national educational curriculum focuses on practical and biological aspects of menstruation and personal hygiene rather than MHM," said the new WaterAid-UNICEF global report. There is a lack of information on psycho-social changes and reproductive health or skills-based hygiene education and low capacity among teachers/frontline staff on MHM, said the report quoting various studies. In a statement, Wat-

erAid India has called for WASH facilities that are responsive to the menstrual hygiene needs of women and girls. With more girls and women having access to toilets than ever before, Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) has critical implications for their ability to be able to manage their monthly menses in a safe and hygienic manner, it said. Several studies report that many girls do not change pads in school and that more girls would attend if better facilities existed, the report said. The report quoting various studies in 2015 and 2016 said that girls typically miss 1-2 days of school per month.

In Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, menstruating girls are asked to stay away from religious spaces, kept in isolation, not allowed to play outside, or go to school, it added. The report said 70 per cent of mothers consider menstruation "dirty," further perpetuating taboos. It said 58 per cent use hygienic protection (locally prepared pads, sanitary pads and tampons) while 52 per cent of girls are unaware of menstruation pre-menarche. The report also highlighted lack of dedicated operations and maintenance funds, poor construction standards, weak management and poor water availability

inside toilets in schools. Hand-washing facilities with soap, sanitary products/disposal mechanisms (in light of increasing pad use and need for disposal systems), and hygiene education can be strengthened in many schools, it said. Arundati Muralidharan, Manager-Policy at WaterAid India said: "Today, we have a critical window of opportunity to provide girls and women across India with clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene, and ensure that these facilities are responsive to their monthly menstrual needs." The benefits conferred by such actions will complement ongoing efforts to improve the

health and well-being of adolescents, and to keep them in school on reaching puberty, she added. Good menstrual hygiene calls for the use of clean material to absorb or collect blood that can be changed in privacy and as often as necessary, using soap and water for washing the body as required and having access to facilities to dispose of used menstrual management materials, the report said. The ability of a girl or woman to maintain hygiene during her menses, is therefore intimately linked with the availability of water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities in her home or community, school, place of work, and other public spaces, it said.

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High Court turns down Pristine Life Sciences plea to remove plant and machinery

**VISHNU NEOPANEY
GANGTOK, 27 MAY:**

Pristine Life Sciences Pharma Company located opposite Bhanu Park in Singtam, East Sikkim, received a huge jolt after the High Court rejected its plea to remove its plant and machineries from Sikkim after it faced closure in March earlier this year for allegedly violating air and water pollution norms.

The pharmaceutical company had sought the High Court of Sikkim's permission to remove its plant and machineries from Sikkim to other parts of the country. This was rejected by the division bench of the High Court.

Pharmaceutical industries in Sikkim are presently under judicial scanner for alleged violation of air and water pollution norms and con-

ditions stipulated in their licenses. As of now, none of the Pharmaceutical industries in Sikkim have fulfilled 100% of the provisions laid under the schedule-M of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945.

The pharma company in question reportedly wants to remove its plant and machineries from Sikkim and handover the property to its landlady, Ruth Kartak Lepchani.

However, the landlady had objected the pharma company's plea and had stated that the pharma company had done unauthorized construction and had also caused damage to her property.

After hearing both sides, the HC, in its order last week, granted liberty to Pristine Life Sciences Pharma Company as well as Ms Lepchani to approach the competent Civil Jurisdictional Court

for appropriate relief in accordance with law.

The State Government had previously cancelled the drugs manufacturing license of Savi Health Science Pharmaceutical Company at Majitar, East Sikkim, after an inspection carried out by State Pollution Control Board officials on the directions of the High Court revealed that there was serious non-compliance of provisions laid

under the schedule-M of the Drugs & Cosmetics Rules, 1945.

The Health Department in its closure order to Pristine Life Sciences had put on record that "...You are directed to discard all the processed tablets, capsules & sterile products as per Sikkim Pollution Control Board norms with intimation to the office of the undersigned".

SKM holds East District executive committee meet in Pakyong



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 MAY:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha held a District Executive Committee [DEC] meet for its East District party officials at Pakyong today.

The meet was chaired by working presidents Navin Karki and Mohan Subba and was attended by Nakul Das Rai, Anand Lama, Bishnu Khatiwara, Enchung Bhutia and Nee-lu Chettri along with zonal presidents, vice-presidents, general secretaries, constituency level committee in-charge and zonal committee members, a press release from the party informs.

The meeting primarily discussed the party's future activities and decided to conduct regular interaction with CLC members in order to analyze ground reports of their respective constituencies, the release informs.

CLC presidents from

12 constituencies presented progress reports of their respective constituencies and said that the party's popularity has grown.

They further informed that the party will gain more supporters after the release of its president, PS Tamang (Golay).

Working president Mr Subba expressed his happiness over the party's progress and congratulated the members, supporters, youth wing and workers for working for the betterment of Sikkim and its people.

"Recent activities conducted by the party have resulted in the party's increase in popularity and has come as a confidence booster," he added.

"SKM workers should be vigilant against any misdeeds and malpractices of Sikkim Democratic Front government," Mr Karki said.

'Only BJP can create opportunities for youth in Sikkim'

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 MAY:

Bharatiya Janata Party Sikkim Pradesh congratulated and conveyed its best wishes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the National BJP unit on completing four years of government at the Centre.

State BJP president, DB Chauhan, further expressed confidence that BJP 'will again prevail in the upcoming elections in 2019.'

"We are also eager to form a BJP government in Sikkim," he said.

Addressing a press



conference here today, Mr Chauhan highlighted that the PM has 'taken strong decisions in the

last four years and has earned the respect of the people across the world.'

"The BJP-led Union

government is very transparent and has always looked after Sikkim and its people," he added.

The BJP state spokesperson, JB Darnal, in turn said that regional parties in the State have seeded 'fear' in the minds of the common people against the national party.

"Sikkim Democratic Front has always targeted BJP by calling us an outside party," he pointed out.

Mr Darnal however maintained that the BJP State unit has always worked in the interest of Sikkim and its people.

"We have been successful in changing people's perception towards us by working honestly and for their develop-

ment," he added.

He further stated that only a BJP government can create opportunities for youths in the State.

Responding to the allegations of Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee president, Bharat Basnet, of SDF and BJP being 'allies,' Mr Chauhan said that SDF being a part of BJP-led NDA and also the North-East Democratic Alliance [NEDA] is based on the federal structure of Central Government.

"SDF was once a member of Congress-led UPA but that did not make them allies, did it?" Mr Darnal fired back.

Eduwork Japan Center of Excellence seminars in Darj Hills



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 MAY:

Gorkhaland Territorial Administration and Gorkha Janmukti Vidhyarthi Morcha, along with Eduwork Japan Center of Excellence, Gangtok, organised a seminar on education and career opportunities across various districts and sub-divisions of the Darjeeling Hills.

This series of seminars concluded on 26 May at Leivan's Hall at St. Joseph's School, North Point, Darjeeling.

The series had begun on 19 May at Kalimpong Town Hall followed by

a seminar on 21 May at GDNS Hall, Kurseong, and at Soureni Hall at Mirik on 23 May.

Numerous students expressed interest to join the Japanese Vocational Skill Development Program presented by EduWork.

In all, the seminars saw the participation of around 40 schools and colleges with over 2,000 of students in attendance.

The EduWork Japan Centre of Excellence in Gangtok was launched by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling on 31 January 2018 at Chintan Bhawan, Gangtok.

Nipah claims one more life in Kerala, death toll climbs to 13

KOZHIKODE, MAY 27 (PTI): The death toll due to Nipah rose to 13 in Kerala, with one more person succumbing to the deadly virus here today.

Twenty six-year-old Abin, hailing from Palazhi in the district, died at a private hospital after battling for life for one week, official sources said.

Kalyani, a septuagenarian woman who was undergoing treatment at the Government Medical College here, died yesterday.

After the outbreak of Nipah at a hamlet in Perambra here last week, 16 people have tested positive, of whom 13 have died so far.

Health Minister KK Shylaja told reporters that the authorities had collected details of people who had direct contact with the deceased persons and all of them are now under observation.

However, the authorities are still clueless about the actual source of the spread of the virus.

As samples of insectivores bats tested negative for the virus, samples of fruit-eating bats are now being collected to be sent for expert tests.

Rhenock JHS conducts cleanup drive under Himalayan Cleanup initiative

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 MAY:

Rhenock Junior High School, in collaboration with Rhenock Police Station, Golden Cross Pharmaceutical Company and Rhenock Community Health Center, carried out a cleanliness drive in and around Rhenock Bazaar under the 'Himalayan Cleanup' initiative on 26 May.

The cleanup drive was supported by NGOs, residents and panchayats of the area, a press release informs.



SBS's 43rd branch opened at Mangalbarey

GIALSHING, 27 MAY [IPR]: State Bank of Sikkim inaugurated its 43rd branch at Mangalbarey under Rinchenpong constituency in West Sikkim today.

Area MLA, KS Lepcha, inaugurated the bank at a function which was also attended by SBS chairman, KB Chamling, SBS Managing Director, SBS

General Manager and Block Development Officer [Mangalbarey].

The newly opened branch will benefit the customers of Takuthang Chuchen, Mabongseg-yang, Suldung Kamling, Parengoan, Jhusingthang and Khaniserbong Gram Panchayat Units under Mangalbarey Block Administrative Center.



SKM labour front meets in Mamring



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 MAY:

A meeting of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha's labor front was held at Mamring in South Sikkim today chaired by SKM acting president, MLA Kunga Nima Lepcha.

An SKM press release informs that the meeting was attended by around 400 workers from different factories located in South Sikkim.

Mr Lepcha assured to help the workers and make separate laws for

workers once the party forms government in the State, informs the release.

He also lashed out against the State Government for not working on issues and interests of the workers of Sikkim.

He appealed to the workers to come forward and fight for their rights.

The meeting was also addressed by SKM general secretary, Prem Raj Gurung, spokesperson Jacob Khaling and labour front vice-president, PR Subba.

Sumbuk Village Dev Group convenes first meeting



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 MAY:

Sumbuk Village Development Group today called a meeting of 'like-minded' people of the village at Sumbuk Senior Secondary School to discuss the newly-formed group's future plans and formation of the executive committee, a press release informs.

Group member Shiva Kumar Pradhan ex-

plained the agenda of the meeting and talked about the aims of forming the development group.

The members unanimously agreed to work for the development of students in the first phase of its mission.

Executive committee of the group will be formed during the group's next meeting on 10 June, it is informed.

Gangtok on Monday, 28 May

Temp: 26°C/13°C
Forecast: A blend of sun and clouds; a couple of morning thundershowers, then a thundershower in spots
Sunrise: 04:42 AM
Sunset: 6:24 PM

300 clean-up drives across the country under Himalayan Cleanup initiative

contd from pg01

ri Sanrakshan Samiti, Lachen Tourism Development Committee and many other educational institutes, NGOs and volunteers of the State.

In Gangtok, the clean-up drive was organised by the Zero Waste Himalaya at Tashi View Point with more than 50 volunteers from Sikkim University, Sikkim Government College, GB Pant, EQUIP and Ted X Gangtok Group.

Mayor, Gangtok Municipal Corporation, Shakti Singh Chaudhary and Principal Secretary, Forest Department, Dr Thomas Chandy and GMC commissioner, Tsewang Gyachho flagged off the drive.

The planning for The Himalayan Cleanup was undertaken at a workshop organized in Gangtok on 11 May with participation of representatives from 12 mountain States comprising of Swachh Bharat Mission representatives, civil societies and academia, as per the release.



KASS painting drive at Riverine Elementary School

SINGTAM, 27 MAY: After successfully completing its painting drive at several schools, artists from Krypton Arts Society of Sikkim, led by their president, Kripesh Singh, today carried out a painting drive at Riverine Elementary School in Rongli, East Sikkim. [from YOGEN THATAL]

Footballers Nirmal Chettri and Kunzang Lachungpa interact with students

MANGAN, 27 MAY [IPR]: Footballers Nirmal Chettri and Kunzang Lachungpa interacted with the students of Mangan Senior Secondary School at a programme organized by District Collector [North], Karma R. Bonpo, at the school premises on 26 May.

They shared their experiences with the students and encouraged them to follow their passion and work earnestly to achieve their goals in life.

Nirmal shared his mantra of success and urged students to follow the three Ds in life - Discipline, Dedication and Duty.

"A winning mentality is required for success in any field of life," he said.



The interactive session was attended by District Collector [North], Additional Director [District Human Resource Development Department] along with teachers and students of the school.

iShippo founder Karma Bhutia addresses tech conferences in Singapore and Thailand



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 27 MAY:

Sikkim-based entrepreneur and founder of Demi Solutions and iShippo, Karma Bhutia, addressed two conferences this month at Singapore and Thailand, a press release informs. Mr Bhutia spoke about the application of

data science and machine learning at the Seamless Asia 2018, a tech conference held on 03 and 04 May at Singapore.

Seamless Asia is Asia's largest and longest-running conference focused on bringing together the converging worlds of ecommerce, retail and payments.

The conference had

over 6,000 participants, 200 speakers and 150 sponsors and exhibitors from across 40 countries.

Mr Bhutia also addressed the gathering at Startup Thailand 2018 conference in Bangkok, Thailand on 19 May on artificial intelligence to further the evolution of retail, payments and logistics.

Man digitises over 1,100 schools in Maha

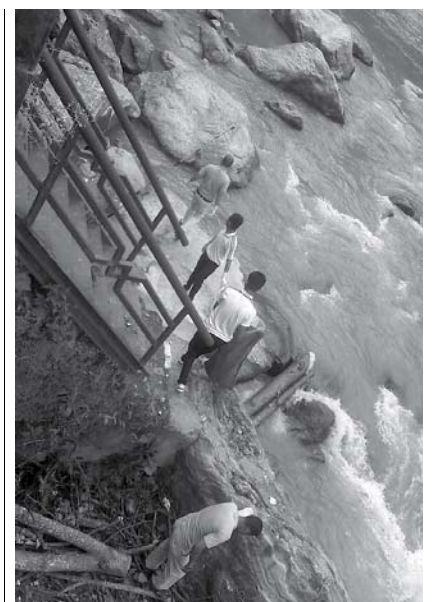
NEW DELHI, MAY 27 (PTI): A man in Maharashtra has transformed 1,100 rural schools in Dhule district by replacing blackboards with digital projectors and introducing Internet in the institutes through public participation.

Impressed by this, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has decided to analyze the impact of his work and on the basis of it, the panel will make recommendations to the central and state government.

Thirty-six-year-old Harshal Vibhandik did engineering from Mumbai and MBA from the US. He returned to India after working in the USA for few years with an aim to transform schools in his native Dhule district.

"I got this idea of digitisation of schools when I was working in the USA," Vibhandik said.

He used to organise 'Prerna Sabha' (inspiration conference) in villages and collected donations from people to provide computers and projectors to schools in tribal-dominated areas.



Singtam SSS cleans Singtam Khola walkway under 'Himalayan Cleanup'

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 27 MAY:

Singtam Senior Secondary School's Eco-Club, National Service Scheme [NSS] unit, Sports Club and Sikkim Against Addiction Towards Healthy India [SAATHI] team took part in the nationwide Himalayan

Cleanup initiative by conducting a cleanup drive along the Singtam Khola walkway on 26 May, a press release informs. An inter-house skit competition was also held as a part of the school's Saturday house activity on the theme 'Harmful effects of plastics'.

Sikkim based Manuscript Publication releases its first book, 'Chichimira'

SANDEEP PRASAD GANGTOK, 27 MAY:

Sikkim based publishing house, Manuscript Publication, today released its first book titled 'Chichimira' at a programme conducted by Vhiya Kavita at Nepali Sahitya Parishad in the capital today.

The book features 17 short stories by Yuva Baral.

The programme also had a panel discussion on modern Nepali short story writing participated in by Prabin Rai and Jay Cactus.

The event was attended by renowned writ-



er GS Lama as the chief guest accompanied by President, Nepali Sahitya Parishad, Rudra Poudyal, as the guest of honour.

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12th Vajra Thongdrub recitation at Samdruptse to be held in October

NAMCHI, 27 MAY [IPR]: A coordination meeting of the Vajra Guru Puja Committee of Namchi was held at Serdup Choling Monastery today.

The meeting, chaired by Serdup Dunzing Rimpoche, was also attended by former Sangha MLA, Phitook Tshering Lama, Dorjee Loben from Ngadak Gumpa, members of the Samdruptse Management Committee, executive members of the Puja Com-

mittee and local residents.

The meeting was held to discuss the committee's plans to organize the 12th edition of Vajra Thongdrub Recitation Puja. These prayers have been held annually since 2007.

The committee unanimously agreed to conduct the puja in grand fashion as the event this year marks the completion of one cycle of the Vajra Guru Thongdrub recitation which, accord-

ing to the committee, is a landmark achievement.

The event will also be planned as a tribute to Chief Minister Pawan Chamling who sanctioned the construction of the statue, they informed.

"All the participants this year will receive the accumulated merit of all the previous pujas along with the present one," the organizers believe.

Various decisions regarding preparation of

the puja along with distribution of assignments to various individuals and organizations were finalized today.

During the meeting, the organizing committee expressed gratitude towards former District Collector, Raj Yadav, for his support towards the further development of infrastructure at Samdruptse.

The committee has decided to hold the puja this year from 04 to 19 October.

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SummitTIMES

The Economics of Freedom

Free expression will require self reliance

Freedom remains but a concept till the people who claim to be, say, politically free or individually independent, are also financially independent. We see it in families every day, but refuse to understand its import. Children wanting to become independent find a livelihood before they leave the "mool" ghar. What applies to individuals applies to a people too.

Now let's look at Sikkim. Political freedom in the form of democracy came in 1975. Political expression has been relatively free since, but is the State really free? Can a State, which actually protested the extension of Direct Taxes with the slogan- "No income, what tax?" - ever be free? How much 'independence', we mean of the executive and political kind, can be expected when the spending power is so completely dependent on what Delhi will release?

For anyone who has tried to figure out why Sikkim remains so compliant and feeble when it comes to engaging Delhi and why its "long-pending" demands are still carefully and politely worded in memorandums and public statements even when the delay hurts, the answer is simple. Sikkim was never free to take its own decisions because it is still not, in the jargon of the development-types, self-sustaining. The health of its coffer dictates a subservience which an economy sustained on grants enforces. It is not being implied that the Centre continually played dirty with Sikkim, but what cannot be ignored is that Delhi can afford to be disinterested. In that, the State has failed itself. No matter how stringent and passionate the sloganeering in Sikkim, the State loses its voice the moment it steps out of the confines of Rangpo. Through the years, no one, neither the ruling nor the Opposition in any real sense, has displayed any keenness in offending a paymaster who has admittedly been extravagantly lavish through most of the years. All the professed attachment to Article 371F and Old Laws gets diluted into meek memorandums which gather dust in the powerful corridors of Shastri Bhavan.

What applies to the politics percolates down to the people as well, with a substantial chunk dependent (economically) on the Government. Education, jobs, celebration, sorrow, whatever the need, it is to Manan Bhawan of Samman Bhawan that everyone troops to. In doing so, the people relinquish the right to question, debate and disagree. They also lose the interest to do so because everything is paid for and lazy hands don't seek explanations. No one squabbles over real issues because interests rarely move beyond the preparation of the latest list of government 'hand-out' nominees. Even as you read this, a new list of beneficiaries is being drawn up somewhere for some new scheme or appointments at the like.

While we might have grown comfortable with this option, we owe the next generation to survive with some more self respect. And, self-respect will come only when Sikkim becomes self-reliant. Self-reliance might demand many sacrifices, but rest assured it sets the future free. For Sikkim, with a population of barely 7 lakhs, the task is easy. It does not take much to change the mind-set of so few. There are enough stories take heart from of how shanties in Mumbai (and that's about all that the population here measures to despite the trappings of being a full-fledged State) have pulled off miracles by banding together and remaining focused. But one should not look towards the State alone to make the people self-reliant. Such expectations go against the very grain of the concept itself. And neither should the government think that it can deliver self-reliance. All that is required of the government is to Govern, not over-govern even though the success of this very attitude at the Centre makes this a hard sell. Nevertheless, make the conditions available for self-expression and the people will express themselves economically as well. Let us make mistakes and learn from them because no one, not even the government, is perfect, because at the end of the day, it's only when the pockets are freed that the mind can be truly liberated.

WRITE US: Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence.

Mail us at: letters@summittimes.com

Voters have freed women from this insidious law

FIONA DE LONDRA
theconversation.com

I write this sitting in a small café in Ranelagh, a prosperous part of Dublin. It is early on Saturday morning and, although you wouldn't think it just by walking down the street, I may have woken in a new Ireland.

If exit polls are to be believed, an overwhelming majority of Irish people have voted to repeal the 8th amendment of the national constitution. The Irish Times/Ipsos MRBI poll suggested 68% of voters chose to repeal the amendment against 32% who were opposed. Another, by RTE put the repeal vote at 69.4%. The result is due to become clear around mid-morning.

This insidious, cruel and harmful provision was inserted in 1983 as a preemptive strike against women's liberation. It has reduced women in pregnancy to a constitutional being with the right only not to die and the obligation to sacrifice all else to bring the foetus to term.

The sanitised story of the 8th amendment is that it recognises the right to life of the foetus with due regard to the equal right to life of the pregnant woman. The lived reality of this constitutional story is more than 170,000 journeys across the Irish Sea to access abortion, thousands of illegal abortions through self-administration of the abortion pill, and countless women "caught out" and becoming mothers when they did not want to. It is part of a long, difficult and deliberate construction of Irish womanhood as linked inextricably to motherhood, of sex as stigma, and of establishment attempts to use the force of the law to keep us in our nation-building, post-colonial place.

NO FREEDOM WITHOUT THE FREEDOM OF WOMEN

Now men and women, the young and the old, parents and those without children, politicians (including those considered conservative), and generations of activists who always believed we would finally unshackle ourselves from this constitutional

confinement have cast votes to usher in a country of free women and girls.

The path ahead will be bumpy and hard. As in every other country, the forces that oppose sexual freedom, bodily autonomy and women's ethical agency will continue to do so. And they remain powerful. But they can no longer rely on a constitutional text to fuel their mission.

Under the next 36th amendment to the constitution "provision may be made by law for the regulation of termination of pregnancy". That legislation will, should the count back up the exit polling, go through the political process and hopefully be completed



by the end of the year. Until then we will continue to rely with gratitude on the kindness and care of doctors and nurses in the UK and elsewhere to provide the healthcare Irish women need. Today, as I watch the votes being counted, nine women will get on planes and go to London, Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester for their abortions. But they will go knowing they are among the last.

Ní saoirse go saoirse na mban (There is no freedom until the freedom of women).

[the writer is Professor of Global Legal Studies, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham]

IRELAND ABORTION REFERENDUM

Historic abortion referendum marks a huge cultural shift

CLAIRE PIERSON
theconversation.com

In a historic referendum, the Irish people have voted by a landslide to repeal the 8th amendment to the country's constitution, allowing the government to legislate for abortion. The vote illustrates the monumental shift in attitudes towards women's rights in Ireland. It's also testament to the power of a grassroots mobilised campaign which enabled women to share 35 years worth of experiences of pregnancy under the 8th amendment.

High-profile cases such as that

involved in having to travel, being able to afford or get leave from work, worries about confidentiality and access to follow-up treatment.

Exit polls also asked people about their reason for voting Yes. They revealed "women's right to choose" as the top influencing factor for voters followed by "risk to health or life". This is indicative of a wider shift in attitudes towards women, the impact of the 8th amendment on all pregnancies, and the recognition that women can be trusted to make decisions about their pregnancy.

WHAT NOW FOR

NORTHERN IRELAND?

One of the most heartening things to witness in this campaign was the north-south solidarity on the island. Alliance for Choice (Northern Ireland's key grassroots activist group campaigning for abortion rights in the region) regularly campaigned for a Yes vote in the Irish counties bordering Northern Ireland. But what now for Northern Ireland?

As with the 2015 same-sex marriage referendum, Northern Ireland will again be left behind on abortion rights. There, approximately 1,000 women travel to England each year to have an abortion or buy abortion pills online. The situation is untenable.

A UN inquiry into Northern Ireland's abortion laws recently found them to be a grave and systematic violation of women's rights. Opinion polls consistently show strong appetite for change. The UK government allows Northern Irish women to access abortion freely on the NHS in Britain but appears unwilling to intervene directly by legislating to enable them to access care in Northern Ireland.

The final sentence of the British 1967 Abortion Act states that "This Act does not apply to Northern Ireland". It's vital that now, the solidarity witnessed on the island of Ireland is also extended to women in the north, by those in England, Scotland and Wales.

[the writer is Lecturer in Politics, University of Liverpool]

How 'media snacks' – from HQ Trivia to Candy Crush – are transforming the workplace

ETHAN TUSSEY
theconversation.com

When Snow White sang "Whistle While You Work," she was participating in a long tradition of using entertainment to manage the stresses of labor.

That same year, factory owners in the United Kingdom became interested in exploring whether music could improve productivity and invested in research to determine the optimal tunes for doing so. Workers welcomed the change, viewing it as a reprieve from the mind-numbing monotony of the mechanical age.

Today, smartphones and the internet largely perform this role, giving workers an array of daily distractions.

Media companies have taken note and are increasingly investing in the development of what I call a "procrastination economy," which is centered on the development of products designed for those moments when we pull out our phones or surf the web for a few minutes of distraction.

It could be during your commute or while you're hanging out in a waiting room. But the workplace is an especially fertile place for media designed to avert people's attention from the task at hand.

However, that doesn't necessarily mean we are compulsively checking our phones to the detriment of our ability to do our job well. As alluring as Candy Crush may be, it doesn't compare to a steady pay check. No, instead, these new products can enhance camaraderie and add to the various ways workers have, for years, navigated the work day.

DISENGAGING FROM THE TASK AT HAND

Whether it's listening to the radio in the break room or sneaking a book into the bathroom, media have long

played a role in the workday.

The digital age transformed labor; the assembly line gave way to the cubicle; and work required constant engagement with the computer. These same computers also brought with them a form of distraction: the internet. During the workday, employees could now easily access their favorite news sites or chat with their friends.

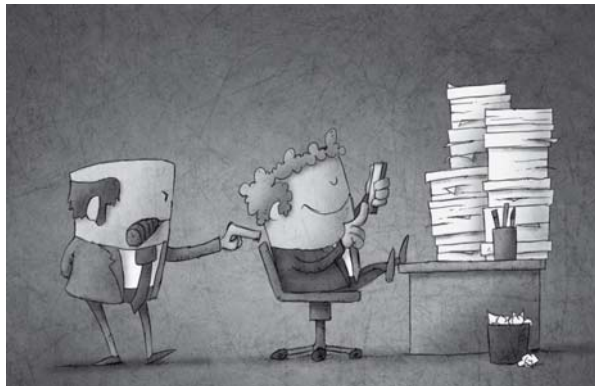
A particularly ingenious development of the era is the "boss button," a computer hack for transforming a chat window or video game into an

at their disposal. This daily trivia contest attracts around a million players each weekday afternoon at 3 p.m. EST. The game takes about 15 minutes, as participants answer 12 questions for a chance to win cash prizes.

This game show app is a perfect example of the procrastination economy: It asks participants to plan their day around a short, scheduled distraction, with advertisers paying to sponsor it.

'SNACKING' ON MORSELS OF MEDIA

An implicit assumption of these devel-



anonymous spreadsheet. Employers combated this trend by installing nanny software to prohibit surfing on certain websites.

With an assist from the tech industry, employees found a new outlet with their smartphones. A good example of how mobile companies positioned themselves as an ally of the worker is a 2009 commercial for the now-defunct Windows Phone that features a bored employee inviting anthropomorphic mobile apps into a meeting.

Now workers have distractions like the live mobile game show HQ Trivia

opments is that they kill productivity. But research on computer use at work has shown that short web surfing breaks during the day have restorative benefits that improve productivity, offer stress relief, or fill downtime between projects. Socializing online can also be less time-consuming than chatting with a colleague.

Then there are those who say that the older forms of procrastination – hanging in the break room, chatting at the water cooler – were better because they built camaraderie. Critics of smartphones often point to the ways that they isolate us from each other,

drawing us into our own bubbles.

But it turns out that these newer products of the procrastination economy can help build camaraderie. Since a lot of digital media is available on demand, colleagues can watch clips and short episodes together that, in the past, they would have only been able to watch at home. In my ethnographic observations of modern workplaces, I've found that people often synchronize their break times with coworkers. Then they'll use their tablets or smartphones to select a show that they all enjoy and can watch together during a break.

Even HQ trivia can bring people together. Its hosts often promote the game as a group activity, since the questions tend to be challenging enough that it's exceedingly difficult for one person to answer them all correctly. Teachers have paused class to play as a group, and some workplaces have made the game show a team-building exercise.

HQ is just one selection on the menu of what some have dubbed "media snacks." It includes games like Words with Friends that can be played in short bursts. It could also be subscription services like Netflix that are offering ever shorter stand-up comedy specials to fit neatly into the rhythms of the day or late night talk shows that divide up segments into bite-size morsels for people to quickly consume on YouTube.

The procrastination economy has turned simple mobile games into lucrative products. It can make a subscription service a vital source of content both at home and at the workplace.

And the best part? Smartphone screens are so small that a boss button isn't even necessary.

[the writer is Associate Professor in the School of Film, Media & Theatre, Georgia State University]

Hydel power likely to get regulatory boost

KOLKATA, MAY 27 (PTI): Hydel power projects may get a regulatory boost to solve their problems towards offering a competitive tariff structure.

"Extend the useful life of the project up to 50 years from existing 35 years and the loan repay-

ment period up to 18-20 years from existing 10-12 years for moderating up-front loading of the tariff," Central Electricity Regulatory Commission has suggested in its consultation paper for the tariff regulation for 2019-2024.

Hydel projects get

project loan for 10-15 years, which is a major cause for high tariff in hydel power, resulting discoms reluctant to buy hydel power, power department officials had said earlier.

If the useful life is extended in the final reg-

ulation then it will be a major relief when projects are facing huge time and cost overruns. The repayment burden can be moderated and that would felicitate demand, a banker told PTI.

The final multi-year tariff regulation by CERC

is expected to be rolled out by December after it goes through the consultation process, a CERC official indicated.

According to available data as on September 2017, 18 hydro projects of 6.2 GW capacity were stalled midway.

Currently, while hydro projects with total 145.3 GW capacity have been allotted across the country, only 30.7 per cent of the projects have been completed.

Currently, the share of hydro power is just 14 per cent in the country.

DRI seizes 6 kg ivory worth Rs 35 lakh in Assam

NEW DELHI, MAY 27 (PTI): The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has seized 24 pieces of ivory weighing about six kilograms collectively from two persons, including a contractual employee of the railways, near the Guwahati Railway Station.

The duo was to smuggle out the ivory to Nepal. It has been confirmed by wildlife officials that the tusks were extracted after killing at least five adult and subadult elephants. Since the ivory has been sourced from Hojai, it is believed that the elephants were in all likelihood killed in the Karbi Anglong region of Assam, the DRI said in a statement issued today.

The interception took place yesterday as the recipient of the ivory, Suraj Kumar Das, hailing from West Bengal was in the process of receiving the package from one Mohammad Badrul Hussain, hailing from Hojai district of Assam, it said.

Das is working as a coach attendant of Saraighat Express, the agency said.

Interrogation of the

two has revealed that Hussain had picked up the package containing ivory from a person at Hojai and was supposed to deliver it to Das for subsequent smuggling to Nepal through another person based in New Jalpaiguri, it said.

It is a known fact that endangered species are regularly slaughtered for their parts especially because of the rising demand in the international market, the DRI said.

The market value of about six kilograms of ivory is around Rs 35 lakh.

The DRI had seized about 12.4 kgs of ivory from a bus at Siliguri on February 15 this year. In this case too, the ivory was sourced from Lakhimpur district of Assam.

Further investigation to unearth the masterminds behind the gang of poachers and smugglers of animal parts is underway, the probe agency said.

There is an urgent need to step up the fight against wildlife crime, which has environmental, social and economic ramifications, and a concerted effort is the need of the hour, it added.

RBI guv to brief parliamentary panel on mounting NPAs

NEW DELHI, MAY 27 (PTI): RBI Governor Urjit Patel will appear before a parliamentary panel on June 12, of which former prime minister Manmohan Singh is a member, to brief them about banking frauds and mounting non-performing assets (NPAs).

Patel will talk about the conditions of nationalised banks in view of rising NPAs and the future course of action to tackle bank frauds.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance is headed by senior Congress leader Veerappa Moily and has members from almost all major political parties.

Members of the panel said the governor of the central bank will also answer queries on a spate of

banking scams unearthed in the last few months.

The committee was earlier briefed by Financial Services Secretary Rajiv Kumar on the queries related to the banking sector.

Former prime minister Manmohan Singh, who is a member of the committee, is likely to attend the meeting on June 12.

Patel had recently said that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) did not have adequate powers to deal with public sector banks.

We would like to know what kind of powers the RBI governor needs, a member said, adding that regulation is an important part and that is why the governor has been called.

Tripura govt sets deadline to phase out plastic bags

AGARTALA, MAY 27 (PTI): The Tripura government has set August 15 as the deadline to phase out plastic carry bags, state minister Sudip Roy Barman said.

The government, as part of the 'Himalayan Cleanup' programme, urged people to replace their plastic bags with biodegradable ones.

The Himalayan Cleanup campaign has been launched by a Delhi-based organization in 12 mountain states in the country to end plastic pollution in the hilly areas.

Barman, the state science, technology and environment minister, said the initiative will go a long way in restoring ecological balance.

"Plastic waste damages marine life, contaminates soil and clogs drains. The environment department is taking measures to free the state of plastic bags by August 15," Barman told

reporters after launching the drive here.

People have to realize that plastic is not biodegradable and burning it could only produce harmful gases, the minister stated.

"Random plastic use for packing food items and groceries has to be stopped. If necessary, the government will consult an expert agency to find out alternatives," he added.

Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb has recently asked the Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC) to construct at least 500-metre road with plastic waste as a measure to curb plastic pollution.

He also asked the AMC to start door-to-door garbage collection in all parts of the municipal area.

Explaining the root of the problem, Barman said, "Raids and seizures can't end the use of plastic. If production is not stopped, the problem will not be solved."

EC will need 24 lakh EVMs in case of simultaneous polls in 2019



NEW DELHI, MAY 27 (PTI): If simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies are held in 2019, the Election Commission (EC) will require nearly 24 lakh EVMs, double the number required to hold only the Parliamentary polls.

During their discussion with the Law Commission on May 16 on the issue of holding simultaneous polls, the EC officials had said they would need around Rs 4,500 crore to buy nearly 12 lakh additional electronic voting machines (EVMs) and an equal number voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) machines.

The estimate was based on the current cost to procure the devices, sources privy to the deliberations had told PTI.

In case simultaneous polls are held, two separate sets of EVMs and VVPAT machines will have to be placed in separate compartments for those contesting the Lok Sabha polls and the Assembly elections respectively.

"There are nearly

10 lakh polling stations across the country. Since EVMs and paper-trail machines are deployed in every polling station, the requirement is for 10 lakh EVMs and an equal number of paper-trail machines. In addition, 20 per cent of the machines are kept in the reserve. That comes to two lakh. Therefore, to hold the Lok Sabha polls in 2019, the EC needs 12 lakh EVMs and an equal num-

ber of VVPAT machines," explained a functionary.

Thus, if simultaneous polls were held in 2019, the EC would require double the number of the EVMs, which was 24 lakh, he added.

The functionary said as of now, five polling personnel are deployed per polling station. For simultaneous polls, the poll panel believes seven personnel will be required per polling station.

IMD teams up with BSNL to send extreme weather warnings

NEW DELHI, MAY 27 (PTI): The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is teaming up with state-run Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) to send extreme weather warnings to people, a senior Ministry of Earth Sciences official said.

The move comes after the IMD came under criticism from several quarters, including some state governments for not sending out specific alerts, a charge denied by the weather body.

The IMD is trying to team up with BSNL to push the alerts to common people. The BSNL

has come up with a technology. If the IMD sends an alert, they will pass it on to all BSNL numbers in Delhi (about an impending extreme weather event warning like thunderstorm, dust storm, heatwave), M Rajeevan, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences told PTI.

The area specific alerts will be sent to users if they are in that particular place where the extreme weather pattern is going to occur, even if their phone numbers do not belong to that particular



telecom circle.

For instance, a BSNL user has travelled from Pune to Delhi, where an extreme weather event is forecast. The user will still get the message, Ra-

jeevan said.

The exercise is being carried out on an experimental stage, and if successful the plan is to rope in other weather agencies as well, the official said.

Rajeevan, however, said the government agencies have limitations in disseminating information, especially in scenarios like thunderstorms wherein the entire weather pattern forms and wreaks its fury in two to three hours.

More than 200 people died due to thunderstorms across the

country this month, with Uttar Pradesh alone witnessing half the deaths. In 2016, extreme weather had claimed lives of 1,600 people with heat-wave topping the list.

The IMD cannot reach to every individual. The IMD's job is to prepare the forecast. There should be some intermediary agencies who can take our forecast and pass it on to people, the official said.

The Prime Minister's Office had recently asked the weather body to advise people on the action they need to take when it issues severe weather warnings.

All arrangements made for Nagaland Lok Sabha bypoll: CEO

KOHIMA, MAY 27 (PTI): All arrangements have been made for the peaceful conduct of the bypoll to the lone Lok Sabha seat in Nagaland tomorrow, Chief Electoral Officer Abhijit Sinha said.

A total of 11,97,436 electorate, comprising 6,07,589 men and 5,89,847 women voters, are eligible to exercise their franchise, the CEO told reporters here yesterday.

The counting of votes will take place on May 31. Out of the 2196 polling stations, 260 are declared as "critical" and 211 as "vulnerable", Sinha said.

Voting in 1855 polling stations will start at 7 am and end at 4 pm while in 309 booths it was end an hour ahead, he said, adding that 253 polling stations would have all women polling teams

while two polling booths in Wokha district would be manned by only differently abled polling personnel.

The CEO said that 225 polling stations would have live web screening and 257 offline videography.

He said that 3196 EVMs and 3075 VVPAT machines had been dispatched for all the polling stations.

A total of 40 companies of Central Armed Police Forces along with 80 companies of the Nagaland Armed Police, 770 home guards and 2600 village guards have been deployed for the bypoll, he said.

Returning Officer M Patton said that during campaigning, various forces had seized Rs 84,000 and 8829 litres of liquor.

The by-poll is a

Palm plantation drive in Odisha to check lightning deaths

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 27 (PTI): The Odisha government has decided to resort to the traditional practice of planting palm trees on both sides of roads, farm lands and forest boundaries as a measure to check casualties due to lightning strikes.

In a letter to forest officials, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests D Swain said palm trees are good lightning conductors.

He asked the regional chief conservators and divisional forest officers to undertake a massive plantation drive across

the state, which, on an average, witnesses 400 lightning fatalities every year.

The traditional practice of palm plantation, discontinued due to urbanization and development, could be the answer to the natural disaster, the letter said.

The trees also have wide range of uses- its fruits are eaten, stem used as wood and leaves for thatching, baskets, mats and others.

"Lightning usually hits the tallest object first. This palm tree, which is tallest, will work as lightning conductor,

decreasing the death toll," the letter explained.

Palm trees also protect coastal areas from storm and cyclones, while their roots can protect embankments against soil erosion, it added.

Ronaldo's future casts cloud over Real's historic treble

KIEV, MAY 27 (AFP): Cristiano Ronaldo cast a shadow over Real Madrid's third consecutive Champions League triumph by suggesting he could have played his last game for the Spanish giants in Saturday's 3-1 win over Liverpool in Kiev.

Ronaldo, 33, has now won five European Cups in all, but failed to score in a fourth final as Gareth Bale was the hero for Real after coming off the bench to score twice.

"I am going to enjoy this moment and in the next few days I will give an answer to the fans, who have always been at my side," Ronaldo told BeIN Sports Spain.

"It was very nice to be at Real Madrid. In the next few days I will speak," Ronaldo later admitted his immediate post-match comments had been ill-timed.

"It wasn't the perfect time. I don't want to take away any credit from what



Madrid have done. To win three consecutive Champions Leagues is a unique moment, he added.

"Personal situations are not important at this moment," Ronaldo's comments appeared to target Real president Florentino Perez for a lack of support.

However, Perez hinted he was tired of Ronaldo's

intimations he could leave.

It isn't the first time Ronaldo, who joined Real from Manchester United for a then-world record fee in 2009, has appeared close to the exit door at the Santiago Bernabeu.

In 2012 he claimed to be "sad" in Madrid, and, even after securing a first European Cup and La

Liga double for Madrid in 59 years last season, Ronaldo was also reportedly looking to leave.

Then, it was for what he perceived as a lack of support from the club over an ongoing tax investigation into the management of his image rights from the Spanish authorities.

Ronaldo himself said this week of speculation over who might arrive at Real: "They always speak about 50 players and in the end no one comes." "Here the most important thing is the club, and the most important thing is that we are celebrating this Champions League," Perez told Antena3.

"I am not going to go into the personal situations of any player because, as he himself says, nothing ever happens." Ronaldo still has three years to run on a lucrative five-year contract signed in 2016.

"Cristiano likes to be wanted," said Real Madrid captain Sergio Ramos.

"He will not find a better place than here. He is our true star, whether he scores goals or not. I don't know why he has said that, but we respect him," Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane, who become the first ever manager to win three consecutive European Cups, said that Ronaldo must stay.

"I'm not thinking about that. We are thinking about what we are doing now, about the game, about what we have achieved," said the Frenchman. "Cristiano has to stay.



Salah injury 'serious', says Liverpool boss Klopp

KIEV, MAY 27 (AFP): Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp revealed that Mohamed Salah's injury that forced him off in the first half of the Champions League final today was "serious".

"It is a serious injury. He is in hospital for an X-ray. It is either the collarbone or the shoulder itself," Klopp said after Liverpool's 3-1 defeat by Real Madrid in the final in Kiev.

"It doesn't look good. That's it."

Salah, who scored 44 goals for Liverpool this season, came off just half an hour into the game in tears after hurting himself in a challenge with Sergio Ramos.

Liverpool had been on top at that point, but following the shock of the Egyptian's injury they went on to lose due to a combination of two goalkeeping howlers by Boris Karius and a superb Gareth Bale goal.

However, Klopp believed losing Salah was the turning point.

"Of course it was a big moment in the game.

I know if you say that after you lost it sounds like you're a bad loser but for us it was like a harsh challenge. It was like wrestling.

"The shock of the boys was obvious."

Salah later left the NSC Olimpiyskyi stadium with his arm in a sling, not stopping for waiting journalists.

The official Twitter account of the Egyptian team, @Pharaohs, posted a picture of Salah with the caption: "Get well soon @MoSalah".

However, Klopp admitted that Salah now risks missing out on the World Cup -- he has been hoping to lead Egypt in their first appearance at the tournament since 1990, but their opening match is against Uruguay on June 15, less than three weeks from now.

"We wanted everything and got nothing. We lost an important player and probably Egypt lost for the World Cup an important player.

"From what I said so far it doesn't look really good."

138-yr-old Pune school opens its doors to girls

SANDIP KOLHATKAR

PUNE, MAY 27 (PTI): Ending the decades long tradition, a 138-year-old school, started here by freedom fighters including Bal Gangadhar Tilak, is all set to open its doors for girls from the upcoming academic session.

The decision to this effect has been taken by the school management to break the "gender stereotypes", its principal said.

The New English School was started by Tilak along with social reformers like Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and Vishnushastri Chiplunkar in 1880.

The institution, run by the Deccan Education Society, had the co-education system till 1936.

However, the education society then started another institution - Ahilyadevi High School - exclusively for girls in the city.

Gone are the days when boys and girls were taught in different schools, said Nagesh Mone, who recently took over as the school's principal.

"While growing up, the students should know that men and women are equal and in order to break the gender stereotypes, it is important to start co-education at the early stage of schooling so that a holistic and gender-neutral atmosphere can be created," he said.

He said it has been observed that mutual respect, interaction and healthy competition is high among students in the co-ed system.

"The students interact cautiously when they are together in co-ed schools. Some sort of power balance always works in the background, and it is also needed to enhance the overall quality of the education," Mone said.

So far, 25 girls have taken admissions for the next academic year, he said.

The school management is hopeful that male students will adopt to the change positively and that the co-ed system would enhance the overall quality and standard of education in the institution.

Porter no. 15: Life of first woman coolie at Jaipur railway station

ARUN SHARMA & VEDIKA SINGHANIA

JAIPUR, MAY 27 (PTI):

Manju Devi stands tall in her fraternity, being the first woman porter of the North-West Railways, in a profession that is considered a male bastion.

She has been the sole breadwinner for her three teenage children. She lost her husband 10 years ago.

After overcoming family disputes and psychological hurdles and encouraged by her mother Mohini, Devi acquired her deceased husband Mahadev's porter license no. 15 and took to the demanding task of hauling luggage of passengers at the Jaipur Railway Station. Authorities initially told her there were no women porters and hence it would be difficult for her. But she persisted and eventually given the badge number, she had said.

It took her a while to get a grasp of the realities of her job and the chal-



lenge included designing her own uniform. Now, clad in a red kurta and white salwar, she sets out every day to work in multiple shifts, to make ends meet for her family.

Devi was among 112 women who were

felicitated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, besides former beauty queens -- Aishwarya Rai and Nicole Faria -- mountaineer Bachendri Pal, Anshu Jamsenpa, missile woman Tessy Thomas and

private detective Rajani Pandit.

She was among a gathering of 90 women achievers from different backgrounds at Rashtrapati Bhavan on January 20, this year and President Ram Nath Kov-

ind had said that he got "emotional" on hearing her story.

"I weighed 30 kgs and the passengers' luggage was also 30 kgs but it was nowhere to the burden of feeding three children," Devi narrates in jest.

'My grandmothers didn't tell me stories'

ZAFRI M. NOFIL

NEW DELHI, MAY 27 (PTI): Many children had their granny as their first storyteller but author Ruskin Bond says neither of his grandmothers told him any tale while he was a kid.

As a boy, the author was very fond of reading and wanted to emulate his favourite authors and be one of them himself. He read everything he could lay his hands on - from Charles Dickens, PG Wodehouse, Somerset Maugham to Graham Greene.

"I read everything from detective stories to the classics. It all made a difference. The books, the authors you read in the formative years are the ones that have the most impact," says Bond, who turned 84 on May 19.



The prolific writer says the love of language and literature has kept him going. And he is also inspired by nature and the streams, hills and trees.

"Many people had their grandmothers to tell them stories but nobody told me any. I started reading early and thus I read my own stories," he says.

"One of my grandmothers was a very silent

woman, the other one used to scold me a lot. So I don't recall them telling me any story," Bond told PTI in an interview.

Asked if he would have taken any other profession if not writing, he says, "Even before I finished school, I wanted to be a writer. So any other ambition at that time would have centred around being a football player or a

tap dancer that I wouldn't be doing anyway. So I think I probably made the right choice."

On whether he fears that he might run out of ideas, the writer says, "The older you get the more you have to look back upon. Life stretches behind you. So you don't really run out of people, you might run out of places in a way. So you have more to write about as you grow older."

Bond was born in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, and grew up in Jamnagar, Dehradun, New Delhi and Shimla. As a young man, he spent four years in the Channel Islands and London. He returned to India in 1955. He now lives in Landour, Mussoorie, with his adopted family.

Bond escaped his jail-like boarding school in the hills and went on to live with his father in Delhi. His time in the capital is filled with books, visits to the cinema, music, and walks and conversations with his father - a dream life for a curious and wildly imaginative boy, which turns tragic all too soon.

"When I ventured into writing at the age of 17, I just wanted to be a good and successful writer," he says.

His first novel "The Room on the Roof", written when he was 17, received the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize in 1957. Since then, Bond has written a number of novellas, essays, poems and children's books.



LOS ANGELES, MAY 27 (AFP): International Boxing Federation super flyweight champion Jerwin Ancajas beat Jonas Sultan by unanimous decision on Saturday in the first all-Filipino world title fight in 93 years.

Judges in Fresno, California, awarded the verdict to Ancajas by scores of 119-109, 119-109 and 117-111 as the southpaw improved to 30-1-1 while Sultan fell to 14-4.

Ancajas stretched his win streak to 17 fights by successfully defending his title for the fifth time in the matchup of 26-year-old compatriots.

Sultan was the first rival who went the distance against Ancajas since his unanimous decision over Puerto Rican southpaw McJoe Arroyo in 2016 to take the title.

Sultan, whose win streak was stopped at five, had decisioned former world champion John Riel Casimero last

September for his title chance.

It was the first all-Filipino world title fight since 1925 in Manila, when Pancho Villa kept his world flyweight title with a unanimous decision over Clever Sencio, taking the last victory of his career.

World Boxing Association super flyweight champion Khalid Yafai of Britain remained unbeaten, stopping Mexican rival David Carmona after seven rounds on the undercard.

Yafai, making his US debut, rose to 24-0 with his 15th stoppage inside the distance while Carmona fell to 21-6 with five draws.

The 28-year-old English son of Yemeni parents risked losing his title for a third time, but because Carmona weighed in above the 115-pound weight limit, he couldn't have claimed the crown even with a victory.

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Got justice for Savita, says grieving father while thanking Irish voters for historic referendum on abortion

LONDON, MAY 27 (PTI): The still-grieving father of Savita Halappanavar, the 31-year-old Indian dentist who died of sepsis in 2012 after being denied an abortion during a miscarriage, has welcomed the result of Ireland's landmark referendum to overturn the abortion ban, saying "we have got justice for Savita".

Savita's death was

a catalyst for the movement to repeal the eighth amendment, paving the way for new legislation to allow for the termination of pregnancies in the predominantly Catholic country.

The Eighth Amendment grants an equal right to life to the mother and unborn, is now set to be replaced. In the referendum held on Friday and results

announced last night, people in Ireland voted overwhelmingly to overturn the abortion ban by 66.4 per cent to 33.6 per cent. Hundreds of People chanted Savita's name soon after the outcome of the referendum was announced.

Ireland's Indian-origin Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, who campaigned in favour of liberalisation, said it was "a

historic day for Ireland," and that a "quiet revolution" had taken place.

Varadkar told people at Dublin Castle that the result showed the Irish public "trust and respect women to make their own decision and choices."

Reacting to the outcome of the referendum, Andanappa Yalagi, Savita's father said he was "very happy".

Yalagi said: "We've got justice for Savita, and what happened to her will not happen to any other family now."

"I have no words to express my gratitude to the people of Ireland at this historic moment," he said.

He said Savita's death had devastated the family.

"It's still very emotional after five years. I

think about her every day," he said.

An independent inquiry into Savita's treatment found there had been an "over-emphasis on the need not to intervene until the foetal heart had stopped", as well as poor patient monitoring and risk assessment. It strongly recommended that the Irish parliament consider changing the law, and "any necessary

constitutional change".

Savita's husband, Praveen Halappanavar had said that he and his wife had repeatedly asked for the pregnancy to be terminated after her admission to hospital, but they had been told: This is a Catholic country".

Meanwhile, the Irish Times reported that the Irish Cabinet will on Tuesday consider a re-

quest from the Minister for Health to draft the Heads of a Bill to implement the decision of the people.

Health Minister Simon Harris said he expected it be published by the summer recess and passed by the end of the year. There is a strong mandate to implement the decision of the people as soon as possible, the minister added.

Pak's ex-president Zardari to contest general election

KARACHI, MAY 27 (PTI): Former president and Pakistan Peoples Party Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari has said he will contest for a National Assembly seat from his native town Nawabshah in the upcoming general elections, making his return to the electoral and parliamentary politics after a gap of 24 years.

The 62-year-old leader made the announcement during an Iftar party hosted by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at the Chief Minister's House here last evening.

He has been elected as Member of National Assembly from Karachi's area of Lyari in 1990, and from Nawabshah in 1993.

Zardari said he could have chosen Lyari as his electoral constituency but later decided in favour of the constituency from his native town.

He also predicted that no party will hold the majority in the next assembly.

Zardari served as the 11th President of Pakistan from 2008 to 2013.

Rohingya brace for monsoon

COX'S BAZAR (BANGLADESH), MAY 27 (AFP): Marooned on a dusty slope in the world's largest refugee camp, Osir Rahman looked to the hill where a Rohingya girl was buried in a landslide just days earlier and contemplated his chances should the earth give way beneath his feet.

"Our families would be killed. There are children everywhere around here. We constantly fear that rain could trigger a landslide," the 53-year-old told AFP on the steep embankment where he lives with nine family members in a bamboo shack.

For the 700,000 Rohingya Muslims who have fled to southeast Bangladesh in the past nine months, the approaching monsoon season poses the most serious threat since they were violently expelled from Myanmar.

Close to one million of the stateless Muslim minority live in the Cox's Bazar district but the new arrivals, stranded on unstable hills in bamboo and plastic shacks, are especially vulnerable.

A massive operation to shore up the camps against disaster is in overdrive, with bulldozers levelling hills and refugees bunkering down however they can.

But as the rains approach, the young girl's death this month in a torrent of mud and rock has heightened fears of a much greater tragedy.

There is a dearth of safe land to relocate the estimated 200,000 refugees in direct danger of floods and landslides.



The result in Ireland's historic referendum on relaxing abortion laws has been a "resounding" yes. Speaking shortly after the result was confirmed, the country's prime minister Leo Varadkar said it marked "the day Ireland stepped out from under the last of our shadows and into the light". The country has voted in favour of ending the abortion ban with 66.4% in favour with 33.6% against. The only area to have voted to keep the ban was the county of Donegal. Exit polls released after Friday's vote had suggested more than two thirds of voters wanted to change the country's strict law.

Cost of prosecuting Hafiz Saeed too great: Ex-ISI chief Durrani

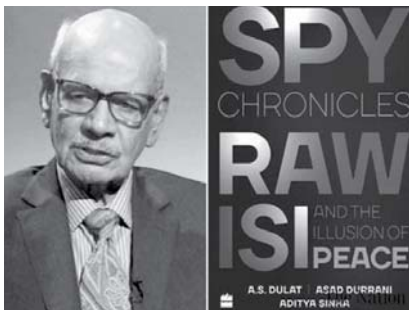
NEW DELHI, MAY 27 (PTI): The cost of prosecuting Mumbai terror attacks mastermind and banned Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) head Hafiz Saeed is too great, says former ISI chief Asad Durrani.

"If you prosecute Saeed, the first reaction will be: it's on India's behalf, you're hounding him, he's innocent, etc. The political cost is big, now," he says.

Durrani, 77, mentions this in a new book in which he features in conversation with former RAW chief AS Dulat and the two discuss topics including everything related to India-Pakistan ties: the surgical strikes, Kulbhushan Jadhav, Nawaz Sharif, Kashmir and Burhan Wani.

When Dulat asks him, what is Saeed's value to Pakistan, Durrani replies, "The cost of prosecuting him is too great."

Saeed, who carries a USD 10 million American bounty for his role in terror activities, was under



house arrest from January to November last year.

The JuD is believed to be the front organisation for the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) which is responsible for carrying out the Mumbai attacks in 2008 in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed.

Saeed was declared a global terrorist by the US and the UN after the Mumbai strikes and was put under house arrest in November 2008 but freed by a court some months later.

"He was taken to the

courts though they had nothing (new) against him. It is still possible that he was detained to let the storm blow over. In six months, he could come out," writes Durrani about Saeed's detention.

In the book, published by HarperCollins India, Dulat and Durrani are in conversation with Aditya Sinha.

On asked by Dulat if Saeed's house arrest was choreographed, Durrani says, "What's new, as far as Hafiz Saeed is concerned, is more evidence available? One would expect

that there's an arrangement with Hafiz Saeed.

Asked if there were any positive implications for Indo-Pak relations from Saeed's house arrest, he says, "There are very few positives on the India-Pakistan front right now. But this can provide breathing space to a country that is constantly under pressure."

Meanwhile, Pakistan's powerful Army has accused Durrani of 'violating' the military code of conduct and has summoned him tomorrow seeking clarification over his book "The Spy Chronicles: RAW, ISI and the Illusion of Peace".

Durrani mentions in the book that Mumbai remains the only incident in which he decided that he would be available to any Indian and Pakistani channel to say that whoever has done this, be it state-sponsored, ISI-sponsored, military-sponsored, should be caught hold of and punished.

"It's not only about those 168 people dead, four days of carnage, etc. At the time Pakistan could ill afford its eastern front caught in a war. There were enough problems in the West and within the country. I don't know who did it, but there were questions that David Headley named an ISI major. It created difficulties for us," he says.

On reports that Headley collaborated with Saeed, he says, people can go ahead and investigate as all these stories have floated around.

"For eight years, both of us have advocated joint investigation, joint trial, intelligence sharing, get on with the anti-terrorism mechanism, etc, for the simple reason that we can't do anything until and unless this is resolved.

Till then, Hafiz Saeed, ISI, Jaish-e-Mohammed: it's possible they had nothing to do with it, that there's a third or fourth or fifth party involved," he says.

Trump revives hope for summit with Kim; says date and location "hasn't changed"



WASHINGTON, MAY 27 (PTI): US President Donald Trump said today that he is still looking at a summit on June 12 in Singapore with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and things are moving "very nicely" towards the meeting.

"We're looking at June 12 in Singapore. That hasn't changed. It's moving along pretty well, so we'll see what happens," Trump told reporters at the White House during a meeting with a US prisoner freed by Venezuela.

His remarks came after the surprise meeting between Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in in the demilitarized zone on Saturday during which the two leaders discussed the summit meeting with the US.

"I just want to mention we're doing very well in terms of the summit with North Korea. Looks like it's going along very well," said the US president in response to questions from reporters.

"As you know there are meetings going on as we speak in a certain location which I won't name. Like the location, it's not so far away from here. And I think there's a lot of good will. I think people want to see if we can get the meeting and get something done," he said.

"If we got that done and if we can be successful in the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, it would be a great thing for North Korea,"

Trump added. "It would be a great thing for South Korea, be great for Japan and great for the world great for the United States, great for China."

Trump said a lot of people are working on it. "It's moving along very nicely," he said.

When asked about the talks between Moon and Kim, the president replied, "the talks have gone very well."

On Thursday, Trump abruptly cancelled the proposed summit meeting with the North Korean leader on June 12 in Singapore and blamed Pyongyang's "tremendous anger" and "open hostility" for his dramatic decision.

He had described the cancellation of the summit as "a tremendous setback" for North Korea and warned that the US military is ready to act should Pyongyang take any "foolish and reckless" action.

But within 24 hours he said the meeting could still go ahead after productive talks were held with North Korean officials.

Washington has made it clear it wants to see the "complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization" of the North. But Pyongyang has vowed it will never give up its nuclear deterrence until it feels safe from what it terms US aggression.

In April, Trump had stunned the world by accepting an invitation to meet Kim in an unprecedented sit-down.

India, Sri Lanka files among 195 files destroyed in UK

ADITI KHANNA LONDON, MAY 27 (PTI): Around 195 files including documents relating to relations between India and Sri Lanka at the peak of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) led civil war have been destroyed by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), sparking concern among archivists and researchers.

While the FCO said any destruction decision would have been taken based on the country's records policy, experts believe the loss of the files means there is no record of an

important period of history.

Britain's MI5 and the Secret Air Service (SAS) had reportedly advised Sri Lanka's security forces during the LTTE crisis between 1978 and 1980.

"Two of the documents they destroyed were called 'Sri Lanka/India relations' from 1979 and 1980," said journalist and researcher Phil Miller, who discovered the files were missing as part of a freedom of information request.

The documents are expected to have had references to India's relations with the island nation, includ-

ing the work of the Indian Peace-keeping Force (IPKF) during the period.

"Removing or destroying historical records from public custody at the National Archives hurts all of us and is an illegal act," said Vairamuttu Varadakumar, founder of the Tamil Information Centre, registered as an independent community-based non-profit organisation in 1981 with a mission to empower Tamil-speaking people to improve their quality of life through access to knowledge and other projects.

"It appears that the For-

eign Office's action is designed to cover up the involvement of the SAS and MI5 in the training of Sri Lankan security forces that might be potentially embarrassing to Her Majesty's government," he said.

"We find recently that there has been an increasing interest in the history, politics and human rights of the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka among researchers, particularly among the younger generation. National archives, libraries and documentation centres are places of memories," he added.

Varadakumar also claims

that Indian authorities had seized documents that belonged to the Tamil Information Centre back in 1987.

"The Tamil Information Centre had two branches, one in Madras and one in Madurai from 1984 until 1987. The Indian authorities asked us to close them down saying that a peace accord has been signed between the government of Sri Lanka and India and they would help us transport the materials to Trincomalee and set up an archive there, which did not happen," claimed Varadakumar, a Tamil from north-

ern Sri Lanka based in London.

The centre fears that the destruction of FCO files adds to the loss of information, which dates back to the burning of the Jaffna Library by the Sri Lankan army in 1981, which housed palm-leaf manuscripts and ancient documents, and the destruction of the Jaffna Museum in 1989.

The FCO kept a list of file titles, showing that the destroyed papers would have covered a range of important subjects, from security cooperation and arms sales, to foreign aid and requests for political asylum.

BTS' 'FAKE LOVE' VIDEO HITS 100 MILLION VIEWS IN RECORD TIME

BTS continue to barrel past former milestones with their new album, Love Yourself: Tear and its lead single, "Fake Love," as its music video has passed 100 million YouTube views in record time for a K-pop group.

The world-renowned boy band dropped the "Fake Love" video on 18 May and cleared the 100 million-view threshold on 27 May- approximately eight days, eight hours and 45 minutes after its release.

Even if YouTube tweaks its view counter later, that easily makes "Fake Love" the fastest music video by a K-pop group to clear 100 million views. BTS formerly held the record with "DNA," which took a little over 24 days to achieve the same feat.

"Fake Love" also becomes one of the top 10 fastest YouTube videos to hit 100 million views. As far as music videos go, it lands between Miley Cyrus' "Wrecking Ball" (6.1 days) and Shakira's "Can't Remember to Forget You" featuring Rihanna (10 days). It also falls right behind Turkish Airlines' "Kobe vs. Messi: The Selfie Shootout" ad, which crossed the 100 million mark in 7.9 days. YouTube's own 2016 recap video remains the fastest video to reach 100 million views, followed by Psy's "Gentleman" and Taylor Swift's "Look What You Made Me Do," both of which took just under four days to clear the mark.

"Fake Love" also logged the best 24-hour YouTube debut of 2018 with 35.9 million views. The K-pop septet notched the third-best debut of all time, once again topped only by Swift's "Look What You Made Me Do," (43.2 million views 24 hours) and Psy's "Gentleman" (36 million views in 24 hours).

BTS could become the first K-pop act to score a No.

1 album on the Billboard 200, ending Post Malone's three-week reign. The incredible first-week streaming figures for "Fake Love" could also give the group their highest Hot 100 chart position yet, surpassing the Steve Aoki remix of "MIC Drop," which debuted at No. 28 last year. However the charts shake out this week, the numbers don't lie: BTS have one of the most dedicated fanbases in the world, and that fandom loves to see its favorite artist succeed.



WHITE-HOT! Singer-songwriter Dua Lipa performs at UEFA Champions League Final between Real Madrid and Liverpool in Kiev, Ukraine.

Infinity War directors say fans are wrong to blame Star-Lord

Warning! Spoilers ahead [do not read if you have not watched the movie]

Avengers: Infinity War directors Anthony and Joe Russo explain why fans should stop blaming Star-Lord for Thanos' victory. Almost a month and two new blockbusters (Deadpool 2 and Solo: A Star Wars Story) later, Avengers 3 remains to be a popular topic of conversation among fans. Between trying to predict how Earth's Mightiest Heroes can, ultimately, defeat the Mad Titan in Avengers 4 and dissecting the film's best moments, there's still so much to talk about regarding the latest Marvel offering. This includes whether or not Peter Quill should be held accountable for his consequential outburst on Titan.

While Star-Lord's loss of control looked like it was the moment that ruined the Avengers' chances of defeating Thanos, the Russo Brothers argue that it's simply not the case. If anything, he wasn't the only one that let his emotions get the best of him, thus making him only one factor in the long list of reasons why they lost.

The directing duo recently discussed the controversy surrounding Star-Lord's meltdown. Both Anthony and Joe Russo are in agreement that people don't need to solely blame Peter Quill for what happened - and it's not because everything was part of Doctor Strange's plan. Here's what they had to say:

Joe: "His mother was dying of cancer when he was kidnapped by pirates at the age of 10. He was raised by pirates. He



had to murder his father to avenge the death of his mother. His girlfriend, who he was in love with, was murdered by another corrupt paternal figure ... He made a very emotional choice."

Anthony: "Thor also let his emotions get the better of him. Thor could've killed Thanos more quickly than he tried to with the ax. He showed up, and he took a moment — because of his anger, because of his motivation — to tell Thanos that he told him he would die ... and finish him off in a very deliberate way. Thor sort of got lost in his emotions in a similar way as Star-Lord and could also have been responsible for Thanos."

Joe Russo furthered by pointing out that, all throughout the film, almost everyone had somehow contributed to their defeat. He said: "They make very human choices. I think if we learn anything from narrative is to put yourself inside the POV of someone — or the character itself — you should be able to empathize with that character, understand the choices that they make."

The Russos' explanation for Star-Lord's outburst illustrates Marvel Studios' attention to detail regarding their heroes' characterization. While it was frustrating to see the outlaw mess things up at the worst possible moment, it wasn't uncharacteristic for him to do so (which still isn't a good thing for a hero). Meanwhile, in Thor's case, considering everything that he has gone through because of Thanos (the death of Loki and Heimdall, as well as the murder of many Asgardians), the God of Thunder also understandably let his emotions get the best of him. The only difference between the two is, Thor can still make-up for his momentary lapse in Avengers 4, while Star-Lord may have to wait until Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3 before he's given a chance to win back frustrated fans.

I will never pick a role just because its glamorous, says Swara Bhasker

MUMBAI, MAY 27 (PTI): She may be playing an ultra-glamorous role in her upcoming movie "Veere Di Wedding", but actor Swara Bhasker says she will not compromise on the content of the film even if she is choosing an out-and-out commercial project.

The actor, who has been part of critically-acclaimed projects like "Nil Battey Sannata" and "Anaarkali of Aarah", says her past choices have made her aware of the fact that she needs to pick performance-oriented characters.

"There are people who have offered me films that were so-called glamorous but there was nothing much for



me to do in them. So I didn't do that. I have a body of work that justifies that I should have something fairly substantial to do. I can't do something random just to be seen in a certain clothing... I will not be able to do that," Swara told PTI.

The actor said filmmakers tend to stereotype her because of her previous films,

but producer Rhea Kapoor believed in her and offered the role of Sakshi to her.

"I have done more desi characters and so people assume 'she can do only this'. Kudos to Rhea's vision. It shows she has an imagination. Also, the fact that Rhea's sister Sonam knows me, helped because she knows the person I am," she said.

The trailer of "Veere Di Wedding", which was also stars Kareena Kapoor Khan, Sonam Kapoor Ahuja and Shikha Talsania, has got mixed response as some sections of the audience have criticised the language of the film.

Swara said the makers

have tried to show things in as real manner as possible.

"I think the criticism is misplaced because this film is about four young urban women, their friendship and their choices. The fact is that young urban women in India, who belong to a certain class or cultural background or lifestyle, they drink, some of them smoke, some use cuss words with friends. We are simply depicting that.

"It is not that it is the only thing we are showing. It is not a story about four women drinking or using cuss words, it is about friendship," she said.

"Veere Di Wedding" will release on June 1.

Imtiaz yet to lock the script and cast for his next

MUMBAI, MAY 27 (PTI): Reports have been doing the rounds that filmmaker Imtiaz Ali will collaborate with either Ranbir Kapoor or Shahid Kapoor for his upcoming film, but the spokesperson of the director today refuted the rumours saying he is "yet to finalise" the script for his next project.

The spokesperson said Imtiaz has also not taken a final call on the casting of his forth-

coming film.

"Imtiaz has many stories in his mind and is yet to finalise the one that he wants to make next. So at this point there is no question of casting for it. We'd like to categorically state that no actor has been finalised for his next film as yet.

"The official announcement which will be made as an when we are ready," the spokesperson said in a statement.

Imtiaz's last directorial venture was 2017 film "Jab Harry Met Sejal", featuring Shah Rukh Khan and Anushka Sharma.

» THE DAY AHEAD «

ARIES: The more attention you try to get from other people today, Aries, the more people are going to ignore your fancy displays and grandiose ideas. Take a much more sensitive approach. You'll be able to lead people better when you walk behind them. Earn the respect of others by understanding and relating to their emotions. Your heart is big and bold, and you have a great deal of love to give.

TAURUS: Take care of the people around you, Taurus. Service to others is an important part of the day, as compassion and caring are at the forefront of your mind. Take this opportunity to become a reassuring caregiver for someone close who needs a nurturing shoulder. You'll win a great number of loyal friends to your side as you share your passionate nature with others.

GEMINI: You may feel as if you're sinking into an emotional vortex, Gemini. Be careful about assuming that things are yours when they aren't really. It's important that you not accuse someone of being a thief when you have no facts to back up this claim. Keeping things in balance may be difficult with the great amount of emotional sensitivity in the air at this time.

CANCER: Your thinking is quite clear, Cancer, and you'll find that your emotions support your mental processes. Your psychic nature is also strong, so you should trust any hunch you have. The masculine and feminine sides of your being are working together harmoniously to balance out the degree of give versus take in your world. The key at the moment is to not take on as your own other people's problems.

LEO: You may need to keep your spaceship idle today and perform a safety check for your crew, Leo. Make sure everyone on board is informed of the destination. It could be that you just picked them off the street without really telling them where they'd end up. It's important that you not drag people unwittingly into your world. If they voluntarily give the controls to you, however, that's a different story.

VIRGO: Things may not be as obvious as they first seem to day, Virgo. Don't get started on a project until you understand the full scope of what you're getting into. Otherwise, you may find yourself caught in the middle of an emotional drama that leaves you little room for escape. Don't be surprised if your motivation suddenly dissipates and you're left with no incentive to get your work done.

LIBRA: Don't try to force your ideas on anyone, Libra. It's important to maintain neutrality so you can act from a stable state of mind when someone brings you an issue that needs to be dealt with right away. The key is to act rather than react to a situation. If you know you're right about something, keep it to yourself. There's no need to rub it in anyone's face and tell them they're wrong.

SCORPIO: Your intuitive nature is especially strong, Scorpio. You won't have to think about things because you'll have the ability to just know the answers. If any penetrating detective work needs to be done, this would be an excellent time to do it. Your caring, sensitive nature will get you through any door you want to walk through today. Keep that smile on your face at all times.

SAGITTARIUS: Any argument you start today is likely to erupt into a brutal emotional battle, Sagittarius, so beware. Try not to tread on anyone else's turf, because you'll find that he or she is likely to be possessive and rather belligerent about defending what is rightfully theirs. Avoid volcanic eruptions of energy. Don't pick fights where they aren't needed. You can civilly resolve issues without doing harm to others.

CAPRICORN: You may find that people are likely to challenge your mental process today, Capricorn. Don't be surprised if they seem to argue with your ideas left and right. Your heart may be especially tender, and any sort of belligerent dispute could affect you deeply. On the other hand, you can use your sensitivity to calm a situation that needs to be remedied.

AQUARIUS: The key for you today is to use your heart more than your head, Aquarius. Base your actions on your feelings and your inner knowing of the situation. Facts may deceive you. It could be that you've come to rely so much on a linear, logical way of thinking that you can't see any other way. It's important that you see the interconnectedness of many of the different areas in your life.

PISCES: Things should go especially well for you today, Pisces, so don't worry about a thing. Life doesn't necessarily get easier as you get older. You just learn how to deal with things. You'll find this to be true right now as your incredible sensitivity and wisdom are making it possible for you to attain a clearer perspective. You realize that things are much better than you may have thought.