



**‘STRANGER THINGS’  
LAWSUIT DROPPED A  
DAY BEFORE TRIAL**

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**LEONARDO DA VINCI DESIGNED  
AN IDEAL CITY THAT WAS  
CENTURIES AHEAD OF ITS TIME**

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**THE KINGS, MUMBAI-BASED  
HIP HOP GROUP, WIN ‘WORLD  
OF DANCE’ SEASON 3**

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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## Dikchu residents peeved by extended power cuts

**WANGCHUK BHUTIA  
MANGAN, 06 MAY:**

The people of Dikchu Bazaar, East and North Sikkim and its surrounding villages have expressed their dismay over extended power cuts in the last ten days. The people here have complained to the Energy and Power Department but nothing has been done to solve the problem.

In the last one week, there was power supply only for two days. The people here have said that they have no option left but to gherao the Power Department office in Gangtok. Local residents plan to march to Gangtok from Dikchu.

“We have sacrificed our land and environment for the nation in order to generate power but we have been neglected and deprived of power supply,” said a Dikchu resident.

It may be mentioned here that electricity to Dikchu is supplied from Phodong.

## Envenomed Gujarat man kills snake with retaliatory bite

**VADODARA, MAY 6 (PTI):** A 60-year-old man died from snakebite in Gujarat’s Mahisagar district but not before he bit back and killed the reptile too, a village official said Monday.

The incident happened on Saturday afternoon in Ajanwa village in Santrampur tehsil, over 120 kilometres from here, said Ajanwa sarpanch Kanu Baria.

“Parvat Gala Baria was standing near a spot where maize was being loaded from a field onto a truck. A snake slithered out and while others there ran away, he continued to stand claiming he had caught snakes earlier,” the sarpanch said.

“He grabbed the snake which retaliated by biting him on the hands and face. However, Parvat bit back and killed the snake too,” he said.

He was rushed to a hospital in Lunawada town and then shifted to a bigger medical facility in Godhra but succumbed later in the day from the venom injected into him by the snake, sarpanch Baria said. Ajanwa police has registered a case, an official said.

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## Thakurbari construction 99% complete



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 06 MAY:**

The under construction Thakurbari temple, situated in the heart of the capital, is getting the finishing touches and is expected to be ready within this year.

Around 99% of the

works have been completed, informed architect and engineer of the temple, Kiran Rasaily while talking to media persons here on Monday. The mandir is expected to be inaugurated after the declaration of election results, he added.

The bhoomi puja of the temple was held in the presence of the Chief Minister Pawan Chamling in 2002 and the construction work started with the laying of the foundation stone by the CM on 30 October 2003. However, due to conflict

within the construction committee of the temple and shortage of funds, construction work remained incomplete for around 13 years.

In 2016, under the initiative of Gangtok MLA, Pintso Chopel Lepcha the CM announced

to complete the remaining work of the temple. Following the same, construction was again started under the supervision of architect Kiran Rasaily and the contract was offered to Kamlesh Agarwal.

Mr Rasaily informed that the State government has provided Rs 6.5 crore so far from 2016 for the construction of the Thakurbari. He also expressed his deep gratitude to the CM for extending support in the completion of the work.

The Mandir which had a wooden structure earlier now has three concrete floors wherein the top floor has idols of major gods and goddesses, followed by basic hawan hall where basic Puja ceremonies and Pravachan would be done, and on the second floor, there is a congregation space for devotees and can accommodate around 700 devotees.

## Governor appeals for donations for cancer patient

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 06 MAY:**

Governor, Ganga Prasad has appealed to all Sikkimese, charitable organisations, enterprises and institutions to come forward and donate generously towards the treatment of Sikkimese daughter, Bandana Subba who is undergoing treatment for cancer at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi since 03 April 2019.

“I appeal to all my fellow Sikkimese to come forward for this charitable cause and provide financial assistance at this time of distress of our daughter, Bandana Subba who is battling cancer at AIIMS New Delhi. I appreciate the efforts of some noble souls who have taken the lead



towards raising donations by way of Marathon Race and other similar events. I am happy to join this charitable cause and contribute Rs 50,000 towards the treatment of Sikkimese daughter,” the Governor has said in a press release.

The donations can be made directly to Bandana Limboo, through her Account No. 33820102483, IFSC Code SBIN000 6954 (SBI Jorethang), the release adds.

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## Girls outperform boys in CBSE class 10 result, 13 students share top rank with 499 marks



New Delhi, May 6 (PTI): Girls outperformed boys yet again in CBSE class 10 examination, in which the top rank was shared by 13 students with 499 out of 500 marks.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Monday announced the class 10 results and 91.10 per cent candidates cleared the examination, an improvement of 4.40 per cent since last year.

The pass percentage of girls was 92.45 per cent against last year’s

88.67 per cent, while that of boys was 90.14 per cent against last year’s 85.32 per cent.

Girls have done better than boys by 2.31 per cent. The pass percentage of transgender candidates was 94.74 per cent.

The second rank was bagged by 25 students who scored 498 out of 500 marks, while the third rank was shared by 59 students who got 497 marks.

Congratulating the students, Prime Minister Narendra Modi

tweeted, “Proud of my young friends who have successfully cleared the CBSE Class X examinations. Wishing them the very best for their journey ahead. May these young minds continue making us proud. Congratulations also to their teachers and parents! #CBSE10thresult”.

Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar also took to Twitter to congratulate the students as well as CBSE for seamless conduct of the exam.

turn to pg02

## SBS inaugurates its 48th Branch at Tashiling Scretariat



**ARPAN PRADHAN  
GANGTOK, 06 MAY:**

The only bank under the Government of Sikkim, State Bank of Sikkim (SBS) that completed its 50 years of service in the Sikkimese society re-opens its Tashiling Secretariat Branch at the newly constructed Tashiling Scretariat today.

Chief Secretary, AK Srivastava, Government of Sikkim inaugurated the Tashiling Secretariat Branch which is its 48th branch of the SBS. The branch at Tashiling Secretariat was earlier closed and shifted to the Manan Kendra due to the devastating earthquake that had damaged the entire Secretariat Building.

The inauguration function had the presence of Finance Secretary, VB Pathak, Chief General Manager (SBS), PW Bhutia along with the officials from various departments and other banks.

Speaking on the occasion Chief Secretary congratulated SBS for inaugurating the new branch at Tashiling Secretariat which will cater the employees in the newly constructed secretariat premises that has various annex building and a total of 7 building at its premise.

He urged the SBS administration to work with the current technology and provide customer friendly services at the branch. turn to pg02

## Deserted roads, near-empty booths mark polling in militancy-infested Pulwama and Shopian

**SUMIR KAUL  
SHOPIAN/PULWAMA (JK), MAY 6 (PTI):**

Deserted roads leading to polling booths and overbearing presence of security forces were dominant scenes on Monday in militancy-infested Pulwama and Shopian districts of Jammu and Kashmir where voting ended for Anantnag Lok Sabha seat with only three per cent of the electorate exercising their franchise and over 25 per cent polling stations not recording any vote.

At some places people were seen in groups discussing the security situation and the elections and they were quite vo-

cal about their non-participation in the political process. Pulwama and Shopian, which form part of South Kashmir, have seen maximum number of encounters last year as well as this year. The number of terrorists killed in encounters in 2018 was above 80 and it stands at 40 as of now this year.

Officials at several polling stations were idling around, while security forces maintained a vigil against possible disruption by miscreants or an attack by militants, who could have surprised in view of thick vegetation and apple trees dotting the area.

## CJI gets clean chit in sexual harassment allegations, woman says “gross injustice” done

**RANJIT KUMAR SINHA  
NEW DELHI, MAY 6 (PTI):**

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi Monday got a clean chit from the Supreme Court’s In-House Inquiry Committee which “has found no substance” in the allegations of sexual harassment levelled against him by a former woman employee of the apex court.

The 3-member Committee, which completed its task in 14 days, proceeded ex-parte as the woman had opted out of the inquiry on April 30 after participating for three days.

Immediately after the office of apex court’s Secretary General came out with the findings of the committee, the woman issued a press statement saying that she was “highly disappointed and dejected”.

She said “gross injustice” has been done to her as a woman citi-

zen of India and “worst fears” have come true, and all hope of justice and redress from the highest Court of the land have been shattered.

She said that she will consult her lawyer and decide on the next steps.

A notice by the office of Supreme Court Secretary General said the report of the Committee, headed by Justice S A Bobde, “is not liable to be made public”. The Committee, also comprising two woman judges of the apex court -- Justices Indu Malhotra and Indira Banerjee -- had on May 1 recorded the statement of the CJI who had appeared before it.

“The In-House Committee has found no substance in the allegations contained in the complaint dated April 19, 2019 of a former employee of the Supreme Court of India. Please take note that in case of Indira Jaising vs Supreme Court

of India and Anr (2003), it has been held that the report of a committee constituted as a part of the In-House Procedure is not liable to be made public,” the notice said.

It further said: “The In House Committee has submitted its report dated May 5, 2019 in accordance with the In House Procedure, to the next senior judge competent to receive the report and also sent a copy to the judge concerned, namely, the CJI.” The Committee submitted its report to Justice Arun Mishra -- number four in seniority.

After the CJI, Justice Bobde is the next senior most judge, followed by Justices N V Ramana, Arun Mishra and R F Nariman.

The findings of the panel were not submitted to Justice Ramana as he was part of the Committee when it was constituted but recused him-

self after the former woman employee, who is the complainant, expressed certain reservations over his inclusion. After opting out of the Committee inquiry, she had issued a press statement describing as “very frightening” the atmosphere of the panel and raised various objections including denial of her lawyer’s presence. The panel was constituted on April 23, 2019.

On April 25, Justice Ramana recused himself after the complainant expressed her reservations over his inclusion on the ground that he is a close friend of the CJI and a regular visitor to his house.

In Justice Ramana’s place, Justice Bobde had inducted Justice Malhotra as she had also alleged that the Committee was not formed in accordance with the Vishaka guidelines laid by the top court. In a letter

to Justice Bobde, the woman had said that as per the guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court in the Vishaka judgement, for holding inquiry into the allegations of sexual harassment at work place, the committee must have a majority of women.

Justice Bobde on April 23 had told PTI, “This is going to be an in-house procedure which does not contemplate representation of advocate on behalf of parties. It is not a formal judicial proceeding.”

Though there was no time frame to complete the inquiry, Justice Bobde had said the future course of action will depend on “what comes out of the inquiry” which will be “confidential”.

The allegations against the CJI had become public on April 20 when some news web portals had come out with the stories.

turn to pg02



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### SBS inaugurates...

He expressed his happiness to be a part of this event and marked this as a noble event in the history of the bank.

Speaking to SummitTIMES, MD, HK Chettri, SBS said that the Tashiling Secretariat branch, SBS had been shifted to its New Location at Manan Kendra in the year 2011 due to devastating earthquake and now it is re-shifted to its original location which is a joyous moment for the Bank. He said that with the approval of the State Government the branch at the Manan Kendra will stay as it is to serve the interest of the people and various other Departments located nearby Manan Kendra.

The Tashiling Secretariat also provides various facilities like rest of the other bank branches can provide and has planned to install ATMs at the Secretariat premises soon.

“The SBS is serving the people of Sikkim since the last 50 years and now the Golden Jubilee Celebration is celebrated in a worthy manner by opening this new branch at Tashiling Secretariat”, adds Mr Chettri.

### Girls outperform...

“Congratulations to over 16 lakh students who have succeeded in #CBSE Xth board examinations and best of luck for those who couldn't make this time but will make it in next attempt. Congratulations team #CBSE for conducting hassle-free & glitch-free Class Xth Board examinations and declaring results in record time,” he said.

Government-run Kendriya Vidyalayas have outperformed others with a pass percentage of 99.47 per cent. Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs), also run by the government, have achieved a pass percentage of 98.57, while for private schools the percentage is 94.15. Other government-run and aided schools in the country have achieved a pass percentage of 71.91 and 76.95, respectively.

Foreign schools, affiliated to the CBSE, have achieved a pass percentage of 98.75 per cent.

The Trivandrum region performed the best with a pass percentage of 99.85, followed by Chennai and Ajmer with 99 and 95.89 per cent respectively.

The maximum number of toppers were from Uttar Pradesh, including eight of the 13 top rankers, 13 of the 25 second rankers and 19 out of the 59 third rankers. Delhi was ranked second last among top ten states with a pass percentage of 80.97 and Guwahati was last with 74.49.

A total of 2.25 lakh students scored above 90 per cent and 57,256 scored above 95 per cent.

The percentage of students placed in compartment has gone down by 3.57 per cent since last year.

Union minister Smriti Irani, whose son had made her proud with his class 12 results last week, was a pleased mother yet again with her daughter's performance in class 10 examination.

“10th board results out . Daughter scored 82% . Proud that inspite of challenges she has done well. Way to go Zoe,” Irani tweeted.

### CJI gets clean...

The woman had sent her affidavit to 22 judges of the apex court about the alleged sexual harassment.

Within hours of the allegations coming into public domain, an unprecedented hearing by a bench comprising CJI and Justices Mishra and Sanjiv Khanna had taken place on April 20 which was Saturday.

Though the CJI had recused himself midway of the hearing, he had described the allegations against him as “unbelievable” and had said a larger conspiracy was behind it and he would not stoop so low even to deny these allegations.

Later, a fresh bench comprising Justices Mishra, R F Nariman and Deepak Gupta was set up to hear the matter which appointed retired apex court judge, Justice A K Patnaik to inquire into the allegations of larger conspiracy to frame CJI Gogi and fixing of benches in the top court.

The allegation was made by a advocate Utsav Singh Bains who had filed an affidavit in this regard.

The top court said the inquiry by will not deal with the allegations of sexual harassment against the CJI and added the outcome of the inquiry will not affect the in-house committee which is dealing with the complaint against the CJI.

Hours before the information on the submission of the report became public, the apex court agreed to hear a plea seeking direction to the CBI to lodge an FIR into the alleged conspiracy to “fix” Chief Justice of India. The matter was mentioned for urgent listing before a bench comprising Justices S A Bobde and S A Nazeer by advocate M L Sharma, who claimed that there was a conspiracy to malign the CJI in a “concocted, false sexual harassment” case.

“What is the urgency? You have filed it and it will come up for hearing,” the bench said added, “It will be listed in due course,” it added.

# Organic farming training at Lingchom Tikjek

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 06 MAY:**

Mevedir, a service provider agency under the Organic Sikkim initiative, organized a ward-level training on various aspects of organic farming on 05 May at Lingchom Tikjek, West Sikkim.

At the training, farmers were made aware of the importance of sourcing organic seeds and avoiding hybrid and GMO seeds since these are not permitted under organic farming.

They were also informed about the vegetable supply chain of Mevedir and how a cold storage unit is being operated at Melli, South Sikkim.

Working in clusters, the farmers can under-



take planned cropping of various seasonal and off-season vegetables which can then be collected and dispatched to

Melli on a regular basis.

These materials would be processed by sorting grading, cleaning and packaging in pouch-

es and placed in urban markets where customers are looking or genuine organic products. Farmers were informed

that Mevedir is working for marketing the organic produce and would be working with cluster and progressive farmers to

## Bihar records 57.86 per cent voters turnout on 5 LS seats in 5th phase

**PATNA, MAY 6 (PTI):** An estimated 57.86 per cent voters turnout was recorded on five Lok Sabha constituencies of Bihar which passed off peacefully Monday, state election office said.

Polling on these seats was 2.17 per cent more as compared to 2014 poll, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) H R Srinivasa told reporters here.

Polling passed off peacefully with no incidents of any violence and poll boycott reported from any of the five lok sabha constituencies, the CEO said.

The five Lok Sabha seats that witnessed voting in Bihar Monday included Sitamarhi, Madhubani, Muzaffarpur, Saran and Hajipur (reserved).

Except for Sitamarhi, the rest four seats were won by NDA in the 2014 election.

Sitamarhi from where RLSP of former union minister Upendra Kushwaha candidate had won last time has gone to RJD's Arjun Rai in the current election.

Saran is witnessing a straight fight between former union minister Rajiv Pratap Rudy and RJD's Chandrika Rai, father-in-law of Lalu Prasad's elder son Tej Pratap Yadav.

The RJD supremo has himself represented the Saran seats a number of times in the past.

Hajipur (SC reserved) seat, from where Union Minister Ramvilas Paswan was elected on nine occasions previously, is seeing fierce contest between Paswan's younger brother Pashupati Kumar Paras and RJD's Shiv Chandra Ram.

Madhubani is wit-

nessing a triangular contest between BJP, VIP and rebel Congress leader Shakeel Ahmad. Ahmad is in fray despite a mahagathbandhan candidate Badrinath Purve of fledgling Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP) in the field. Congress has suspended Ahmad.

Altogether 87,66,722 voters exercised their franchise on 8899 polling stations in the five Lok Sabha constituencies to decide the fate of h 82 candidates including six women, the CEO said.

Muzaffarpur witnessed the highest voters turnout of 61.30 per cent, followed by Saran at 58 per cent, Hajipur (57.22 per cent), Sitamarhi (56.90 per cent) and Madhubani (55.50 per cent), Srinivas said.

Srinivasa was accompanied by his two Additional CEOs- Sanjay Kumar Singh, Balamurugan D and Additional Director General of Police (ADG) (Headquarters) Kundan Krishnan- at the press meet.

A total of 29 persons were arrested as a preventive measure during polling Monday, Srinivasa said.

The Commission received 51 poll related complaints from five Lok Sabha constituencies relating to bogus voting, EVM malfunctioning, polling withheld etc. which were timely redressed, he said.

The repolling was held today at polling stations number 339 and 340 under Lakhisarai assembly segment of Munger lok sabha constituency, the CEO said adding that 52.52 per cent of voting was recorded at these two polling stations. Earlier in the

day, acting on the basis of inquiry report, Chief Electoral officer (CEO), Bihar suspended 20 poll personnel in connection with electoral malpractice that took place on the above mentioned two polling stations of Munger lok sabha constituency during the fourth phase of polling on April 29 last.

Departmental action has been initiated against these personnel apart from lodging FIR against 10 of them, he said.

The Commission has initiated action on the basis of a probe report into the incident of bogus voting and thrashing of a journalist at polling station number 339 and 340 of Lakhisarai assembly constituency of Munger lok sabha constituency.

It may be noted that a journalist of a private english TV channel was attacked by a group of persons when he had gone to report the incident of organized bogus voting at these above two polling stations in Munger Lok Sabha constituency.

Braving searing summer heat, people of all age groups were seen standing in long queues on many polling stations in the five Lok Sabha constituencies.

A wheelchair 105-year-old Girija Nandan Sharma cast his vote at a polling station in Jaaranga village in Gaighat assembly segment of Muzaffarpur Lok sabha constituency.

Namrata- who came from Canada to Muzaffarpur just for the purpose of exercising her franchise in the festival of world's largest democracy- cast her vote at booth number 200 in Muzaffarpur town area.

## Maoists choose democratic path in Nepal as armed revolution fails to change system: Prachanda



**SHIRISH B PRADHAN  
KATHMANDU, MAY 5 (PTI):**

Ruling Nepal Communist Party president Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Monday said armed revolutions have not been able to change any system and that that is why Maoists have chosen the peaceful and democratic path in the country.

Prachanda, who was once a strong proponent of armed struggle in the Himalayan kingdom to overthrow the monarchy and establish a republic country, said there is a need for serious discussion on Marxist ideology and its experiment in Nepal.

Addressing a programme organised here to mark the 201st birth anniversary of Karl Marx, a German philosopher who is considered the father of communism, he said several armed revolutions have failed in the world context.

Such revolutions have not been able to change any system...That is why we have chosen the peaceful and democratic way out," Prachanda, who is a former Maoist leader, said.

He said socialism will not come through the development of capitalism, and neither it can be brought without dismantling the feudal system.

We need to develop nationalist capital and need to bring movement in ideology and organis-

tion if we are to establish a system based on socialist ideology...A conscious jolt is needed to bring a socialist revolution in the country, the former prime minister said.

He said there is a need for serious discussion on Marxist ideology and its experiment in Nepal. Addressing the event, senior NCP leader Jhalanath Khanal said the Karl Marx thoughts are highly relevant in the contemporary global politics. "It is not possible to go for socialism if we did not transform ourselves in line with the spirit of the 21st century," he pointed out.

Khanal praised the Chinese model of economic development which is based on socialism.

"China has achieved sound and stable economic growth by adopting unique type of socialism. The country has been able to lift millions of people out of the poverty in the past three decades which is exemplary, he said, adding, "We can learn from China in terms of successful practice of the socialism."

Marx, a socialist revolutionary, was an advocate for communism. He laid the foundation for the understanding of labour and its relation to capital. His book Das Capital' showed the world the way towards a classless society.

collect their produce and supply to markets outside the state.

Before concluding the assembled participants were informed about the process of mulching and what are the benefits of the mulching was also highlighted. The farmers were given sample seeds of coriander, spinach, bio fungicides called Phasal Rakshak and Green SK (PSK) and encouraged to use these inputs in their field for better result. Mr Chettri also informed about the organic input store at Gayzing where they can buy these above mentioned inputs and seeds anytime of the week.

The training program was attended by more than twenty farmers.

## KV Kpg student tops CBSE in district

**SUMMIT REPORT  
KALIMPONG, 06 MAY:**

Vijay Singh Negi of Kendriya Vidyalaya, Kalimpong, has secured 96.4% marks in the CBSE Class 10 board examination and emerged the topper of Kalimpong district.

Neha Sahu of the same school with has 92.28% came in second in the district. The school has posted 100% results this year in both class X and XII.

Vijay Singh Negi scored 94 in English, 99 in Hindi, 97 in Mathematics, 95 in Science and 97 in Social Science.

Similarly, the Central School for Tibetans has also posted 100 percent class X and Class XII results. A total of 38 students from CST had given the examination of whom 31 came in the first division and seven in the second division.

## 85.61 per cent votes cast in repolling in 7 booths in Assam

**GUWAHATI, MAY 6 (PTI):**

An estimated 85.61 per cent voting was cast in repolling across seven booths in Kokrajhar and Dhubri Lok Sabha constituencies of Assam on Monday, election officials said.

Repolling was conducted in two polling stations in Dhubri and five in Kokrajhar.

An Election Commission official said that an average of 85.61 per cent voting took place till 5 pm across the seven booths.

While the two booths in Dhubri recorded around 85 per cent polling, it was 85.85 per cent in the five stations across Kokrajhar.

### Deserted roads...

after one of its resident Adil Dar became a suicide bomber for Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist group and triggered an explosive laden car near a CRPF convoy killing 40 personnel. There are 350 votes in this village. The threat perception to poll process in these districts was not unfounded as militants lobbed a locally assembled grenade at a polling station but there was no damage to life or property in the attack. A police official said the explosive was a "socket grenade", a crude bomb manufactured locally with ex-

plosive material fitted in a pipe. Incidents of pelting of stones by miscreants were reported from many places in the twin districts. Shattered pieces of windscreens could be seen at some places, highlighting the dangers of moving between places in the poll-bound areas.

Pulwama and Shopian districts have witnessed low key campaigning both due to security reasons and general disinterest among people in the elections.

No wall, street or building is festooned with colourful flags and

banners of the parties.

Security forces working to ensure smooth conduct of the polls have cracked the whip on trouble-mongers. While there are no official figures, a rough estimate is that 400 youths have been picked up and lodged in jails as a precautionary measure.

Pulwama, known as the "Anand (delight) of Kashmir" for its congenial climate, innumerable springs and waterfalls, hogged the headlines when a suicide bomber rammed his car into a CRPF convoy on February 14, killing

40 paramilitary forces. Since then the campaign for 2019 Lok Sabha polls has revolved around Pulwama and terrorism with parties making nationalism a key poll issue.

The elections to Anantnag parliamentary seat was divided into three phases.

Earlier Anantnag voted on April 23 in which 12.8 per cent votes were cast. This was followed by the second phase in Kulgam on April 29 which recorded around 10 per cent voting. Not a single vote was cast in 320 of the 1,250 polling booths in the

two districts, they said. Giving details, they said that Pulwama recorded a polling percentage of 0.8 per cent as only 652 out of 84,775 people cast their ballots. In neighbouring Rajpora assembly seat, 1.6 per cent polling was recorded at the end of the day.

Tral, which has also been witness to numerous encounters, accounted for 1.1 per cent polling.

Moderate polling could be seen at some polling stations in Pampore Assembly segment, the hometown of National Conference candidate and former High Court judge Hasnain Masoodi. This area recorded a polling

percentage of 5.1 per cent. In neighbouring Shopian district, 4.3 per cent votes were polled and at adjacent Wachi 2.5 per cent was recorded. Total number of votes polled were 15,500, out of an electorate of 5,21,989. This includes 2,249 votes polled by Kashmir Pandit migrants in Jammu and Delhi.

The polling for Anantnag Lok Sabha seat is being held over three legs in view of security threats and the election authorities have clubbed many polling stations at one location to ensure minimal dispersion of security forces in Shopian and Pulwama districts.



## Chinmaya Mission launches Chinmaya Football Team



### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 06 MAY:

Chinmaya Mission, Sikkim Centre, launched the Chinmaya Football Team at Paljor Stadium, Gangtok on 05 May, 2019.

They were drawn from Yuvaveer Groups under the guidance of Acharya Smaran Chait-

anya and Yuvaveer Tara Prasad Dhungel.

The programme had the presence of Secretary Transport Department, SD Dhakal, Government of Sikkim, Joint Director, Ram Bahadur Bishwakarma, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, General Secretary of Chin-

maya Mission Sikkim Centre, SK Sarda and students of Bal Vihar Groups and their parents.

Later the team along with others members visited MG Marg, Gangtok and offered khadas on the bust of Mahatma Gandhi and sang the national anthem.

## Wandering Souls holds inter school scholastic fest at Lingi Payong

### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 06 MAY:

Wandering Souls of Sikkim organized an inter school scholastic festival titled NEEV: A Foundation for Better Future at Government Secondary School, Lingi Payong, South Sikkim on 04 May.

The event was supported by Lingmoo Payong Gram Panchayat and Lingi Payong Secondary School and coordinated by HM, Suraj Sharma, Lingi Payong Secondary School.

As per a press release, 80 students from 8 schools across Lingi Payong participated in 8 scholastic competitions like quiz, debate, poetry, essay writing etc in various categories during the daylong festival. Var-



ious competitions were judged by Bibhushan Dhungyal (Asst Controller of Exams, SMU), Prahlad Sharma (Principal, Mamring Sr Sec School), and SMU Assistant Professors, Prayash Gupta & Deepa Sharma.

The daylong event was organized in line with our objective to provide a platform for the young minds in rural Sikkim to foster their creative genius and thereby lay a foundation for better future.

The event was attended by BDO, Yangang, Kishore Thapa as the chief guest along with Lingmoo Payong Gram Panchayat president, Yogesh Bhandari, School Heads of the participating schools, teachers,

students and others.

WSOS extends its hearty gratitude towards all our sponsors, participating schools, participants, judges and all others who supported us in making our event successful, the release adds.

## Navy launches 4th Scorpene-class submarine Vela

MUMBAI, MAY 6 (PTI):

The Navy on Monday launched the Scorpene-class submarine Vela, the fourth of six underwater warships being built in India with French collaboration, with an aim to boost Indian capability to defend and secure the strategic sea lanes.

The Vela submarine will undergo a number of tests conducted by the Navy before it is commissioned in the defence fleet, an official said.

Defence production secretary Ajay Kumar's wife Veena Ajay Kumar launched the submarine at Mazagon Dockyard in Mumbai.

The state-owned Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited has entered into a contract for construction and transfer of technology for six Scorpene-class subs with French collaborator Ms Naval Group (formerly DCNS). INS Vela is the fourth in that series.

The fifth Scorpene-class submarine will be launched soon, an MDL official said.

Before Vela, MDL

launched Kalvari, Kanderi, Karanj submarines.

While Kalvari has been commissioned, the others are at various levels of trials and tests.

INS Vela was first commissioned on August 31, 1973 in the Indian Naval Service and continued to serve for 37 years. It was the country's oldest submarine when it was decommissioned on June 25, 2010, MDL said in a statement.

"Today, we are bringing the new Vela with modern machinery and technology to guard the seas," the MDL official said.

Eight warships and five submarines are under construction at MDL, the company said, adding the submarines' capacity includes anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare.

Addressing a gathering at the Mazagon dock, defence production secretary Kumar said, "MDL was the first shipyard in the country to build submarines way back in 1992, when the dock built INS Shalki."

The first submarine in the Scorpene class,

INS Kalvari, has been commissioned, and the second is on the cusp of delivery, he said.

The third submarine has successfully completed its deep diving trials and with the launch of the fourth on Monday, the MDL has retained the world-class skills required for submarine construction, he said.

Under the Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti initiative launched a year ago, MDL was asked to file 50 intellectual patents and it exceeded largely by 130 per cent, he added. MDL chairman and managing director Rakesh Anand said, "With the launch of P5 B Destroyer 'Imphal' on April 20 and Vela today, we have contributed towards the country's safety."

Asked about possible exports from MDL, he said, "We are in talks with some companies from various countries. In some cases, the talks are at an advance stage. We cannot reveal it now."

MDL recently reported an annual turnover of Rs 4,500 crore, another official said.

## AAP's Sanjay Singh meets Delhi police chief, seeks probe into attack on Kejriwal



NEW DELHI, MAY 6 (PTI):

Senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh Monday said he met Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik and sought a detailed probe into the recent attack on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal during a roadshow in the New Delhi constituency.

During the roadshow on Saturday, Kejriwal was slapped by a man. The AAP has alleged that the BJP is behind the "cowardly act".

Singh said Kejriwal has been attacked nine times and it indicates that a bigger attack on him is impending. In his meeting with Patnaik on Monday, he sought a detailed inquiry.

The AAP leader also alleged that Kejriwal was attacked after he publicly questioned ties between Modi and Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Singh also questioned the silence of Congress president Rahul Gandhi

on the matter.

"All opposition parties condemned the attack but Rahul Gandhi was silent. It means both the BJP and the Congress are involved in the conspiracy," he said.

Singh said the AAP has conveyed its concerns to Patnaik in writing.

Kejriwal was standing in an open jeep when the accused, identified as Suresh, jumped onto the vehicle and slapped the chief minister before being pulled down.

Delhi police said preliminary interrogation has revealed that Suresh (33) is a scrap dealer in the area, who was an AAP supporter and used to organise rallies and meeting for the party.

Suresh told police that over time, he got disenchanted with AAP due to the behaviour of its leaders and he was angered further due to the party's "distrust in the

armed forces". However, Singh, in his letter to Patnaik, said Kejriwal was never disrespectful towards the armed forces so the attacker's reasons do not make sense.

It was not the first time that Kejriwal was assaulted during a roadshow or a gathering.

In November 2018, a man tried to smear chilli powder on Kejriwal's face inside Delhi Secretariat. Kejriwal has also been heckled and physically assaulted a lot of times.

In February 2016, some people attacked his car with iron rods and sticks in Punjab's Ludhiana. A month before that, a member of the Aam Aadmi Army, Arjun Aro- ra, threw ink at Kejriwal.

During the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, some people threw eggs and ink at Kejriwal and other AAP leaders while they were campaigning in the Varanasi constituency.

## ECI postpones polls in Patkura seat due to cyclone Fani

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 6

(PTI): The Election Commission of India (ECI) has further postponed the polling for Patkura Assembly constituency in coastal Kendrapara district due to the devastation caused by cyclone 'Fani' in Odisha, an official said on Monday.

"In view of the serious devastation caused by cyclone Fani, ECI has decided to extend the completion of the elections from Patkura assembly constituency for 60 days," Odisha's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Surendra Kumar said, adding that the date of the poll will be suitably decided after assessing local situation.

Earlier, the ECI had fixed May 19 as the date

of polls for Patkura assembly segment. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik ahead of the cyclone making land-fall, had urged the ECI to postpone the polls in view of the cyclone.

The state government had argued that the polls should not be held when the people are exposed to miseries due to the calamity. Polling in Patkura Assembly seat was initially scheduled on April 29, but it could not be held because of the death of BJD candidate Bed Prakash Agarwal on April 20. Then, the ECI had fixed May 19 as the new date for the polls in Patkura.

All the three major parties, BJD, Congress and BJP have fielded their candidates in Patkura.

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## SC seeks EC reply on plea challenging appointment of observers for LS polls in West Bengal

NEW DELHI, MAY 6 (PTI):

The Supreme Court Monday sought responses from the Election Commission, the West Bengal government and others on a plea challenging the appointment of two retired bureaucrats as special observer and central police observer in the state for the ongoing Lok Sabha polls.

The plea, filed by an Independent candidate of the Barrackpore Lok Sabha constituency in West Bengal, came up for hearing before a bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Deepak Gupta.

The bench issued notice on the petition and posted it for hearing before a vacation bench on May 21.

"Issue notice, returnable on May 21. List before the vacation bench of this court," the bench said.

Barrackpore was one of the seven constituencies in West Bengal

where polling was held Monday in the fifth phase of the general elections.

The petition, filed by Independent candidate Ramu Mandi, alleged that the two observers -- Vivek Dubey and Ajay V Nayak -- have been appointed in contravention of the law so as to ensure "certain favours" are granted at the time of election.

It stated that Dubey has been appointed as central police observer for West Bengal and Jharkhand while Nayak has been appointed as special observer for West Bengal only.

The petitioner alleged that he is "apprehensive" that these observers will "indulge in favouritism and partisanship" and their appointment will directly be against his interest as an Independent candidate.

"There appears to be no reasonable or cogent reasons to nominate or appoint retired officers

as observers especially when there are multiple senior officers who are currently in service and are known to have impeccable integrity and reputation," the plea said.

Mandi further alleged that the observers were causing "prejudice" to him and he apprehends that his chances of being elected was being jeopardized by their "illegal" appointment.

"Numerous attempts have been made by them to jeopardize the election process by making unnecessary and unwarranted statements in public about the West Bengal's purported precarious condition," he claimed in his plea.

The petition also alleges that Dubey and Nayak's appointment as observers do not fulfill the requirement laid down under the Representation of the People Act, since they were retired bureaucrats and not "officers of government".

Sd/  
Col D N Bhutia  
Secretary



## Sensitive to Disasters

*Begin with sensitization,  
end with preparedness*

The monsoon months will soon be upon us, bringing with them a period of “natural” calamities and ex-gratia payments and repairs and rehabilitations. The winter was largely uneventful in as much as disasters are concerned, save the odd bush-fires. Of course, there is the ever-present possibility of earthquakes, but that has nothing to do with seasons. So, as Sikkim comes out of the festive mood and preps for a hot summer with its nor’wester evening showers, it would do well to invest some time on disaster sensitization programmes.

Until a few years ago, the arrival of autumn would also include a flurry of such activities at schools, panchayats, urban settings and sometimes even for elected representatives. One does not know whether these were intentionally planned for this time of the year, but they were apt in a way because they served the purpose of taking stock of what the monsoons unleashed, lessons learnt and discussions on how to prepare better in future. Agreed, these exercises delivered very little on ground, but were still better than continuing blissfully disinterested. Because such initiatives came when the monsoons were on the wane, they conveyed an intent that rose beyond the typical knee-jerkism that Sikkim displays even though it sits on an earthquake prone zone, is perpetually hit by landslides and has of late also developed a weakness for fires.

The residents of the capital, who sit in on most decisions, must be heaving a sigh of relief that monsoons of late, despite their extended durations, have been lenient on Gangtok even as some other parts of the State slipped away; even more reason why a series of sensitizations are required for the urban areas because urban memories run even shorter than the traditional retention capacities of the people. Take Gangtok’s example – despite the nightmares and stress delivered on it in the past decade by earthquakes, slides, even some fires etc. The earthquake which rattled Gangtok on Valentine’s Day 2006 is almost forgotten now and very few appear to have learned anything from the string of landslides which poured down Gangtok with devastating effect in 1997. The 18 Sept temblor, people remember, but even that is fading memory at least in as much as the do’s and don’ts go. What cannot be forgotten either is that Gangtok, and several other parts of Sikkim, also have a track record of having emptied out into the streets when rumour spread that an earthquake would be visiting again. Some of the people’s representatives who now represent urban populations must have been among the thousands who camped out that embarrassing night of March 2006. So yes, a sensitisation on urban risk management is well invested especially for the councilors because they are aware of the death-traps that urban housing infrastructure has become and will hence take easily to risk management tips provided they are reminded often enough of the need.

The Teesta valley and portions of Rangeet were hit severely by landslides last year, cutting off villages, forcing relocation of families and traumatising with the wild rush of debris. Almost everywhere, the affected people were caught unawares [in that they had no mitigation plans ready] and the landslides were “unexpected” one is told. The correct term would really be “unprepared.” Unprepared, is inexcusable for a population that has lived with slides and shakes since forever and specially not at this juncture when there is not only a full-fledged department for Disaster Risk Management and earmarked funds as well.

How can any area in Sikkim not have a risk reduction plan to limit the damage caused by landslides and earthquakes? How can any area not have a ready response plan of action spelled out and codified, still? Unless one understands the causes, how can safeguards against such disasters in the future be devised? Preparation requires accepting that a threat exists and then understanding the reasons causing them. This applies as aptly to the problem of garbage management as it does to disaster risk management. It is also important to bear in mind that subject experts are not area experts and hence speak in wide generalisations when what is really required are customised plans for Sikkim. The experts and their knowledge can be best utilised if one makes Sikkim-specific details available to them so that they can advise the State exactly where it is going wrong and what it should set right. It is here that the State fails. The knee-jerkism refuses to go away. Everyone gets busy with the distribution of relief and completion of restoration works. Of course these are required, but at the risk of sounding too repetitive, it is equally important to study what has happened.

Not just study, but also remember.

# Leonardo da Vinci designed an ideal city that was centuries ahead of its time

ALESSANDRO MELIS  
*theconversation.com*

The word “genius” is universally associated with the name of Leonardo da Vinci – a true Renaissance man, he embodied scientific spirit, artistic talent and humanist sensibilities. Exactly 500 years have passed since Leonardo died in his home at Château du Clos Lucé, outside Tours, France. Yet far from fading to insignificance, his thinking has carried down the centuries – and still surprises today.

The Renaissance marked the transition from the Middle Ages to modernity, after the spread of the plague caused a global crisis resulting in some 200m deaths across Europe and Asia. Today, the world is on the cusp of a climate crisis, which is predicted to cause widespread displacement, extinctions and death, if left unaddressed. Then, as now, radical solutions were called for to revolutionise the way people live and safeguard humanity against catastrophe.

Around 1486 – after a pestilence that killed half the population in Milan – Leonardo turned his thoughts to urban planning problems. Following a typical Renaissance trend, he began to work out an “ideal city” project, which – due to its excessive costs – would remain unfulfilled. Yet given that unsustainable urban models are a key cause of global climate change today, it’s only natural to wonder how Leonardo might have changed the shape of modern cities.

### THE BIRTH OF URBANISM

Although the Renaissance is renown as an era of incredible progress in art and architecture, it’s rarely noted that the 15th century also marked the birth of urbanism as true discipline.

The rigour and method behind the conscious conception of a city had been largely missing in Western thought until the moment when prominent Renaissance men pushed forward large-scale urban projects, such as the reconfiguration of Pienza, the expansion of Ferrara and the construction of the fort town Palmanova.

These works surely inspired Leonardo’s decision to rethink the design of medieval cities, with

their winding and overcrowded streets and with houses piled against one another.

### DISCOVERING LEONARDO’S CITY

It is not easy to identify a coordinated vision of Leonardo’s ideal city because of his disordered way of working with notes and sketches. But from sources including the Paris manuscript B and the Codex Atlanticus – the largest collection of Leonardo’s papers ever assembled – a series of innovative thoughts can be reconstructed, regarding the foundation of a new city along the Ticino River, designed for the easy transport of goods and clean urban spaces.

Leonardo wanted a comfortable and spacious

elegant palaces and streets, the lower layer was the place for services, trade, transport and industry.

But the true originality of Leonardo’s vision was its fusion of architecture and engineering. Leonardo made designs for extensive hydraulic plants to create artificial canals throughout the city. The canals, regulated by locks and basins, were supposed to make it easier for boats to navigate inland and transport goods.

Leonardo also thought that the width of the streets ought to match the average height of the adjacent houses: a rule still followed in many contemporary cities across Italy, to allow access to sun

and reduce the risk of damage from earthquakes.

### FICTION AND THE FUTURE

Although some of these features existed in Roman cities, before Leonardo’s drawings there had never been a multi-level, compact modern city which was thoroughly technically conceived. Indeed, it wasn’t until the 19th century that some of his ideas were applied. For example, the subdivision of the city by function – with services and infrastructures located in the lower levels and wide and well-ventilated boulevards and walkways above for residents – is an idea that can be found in Haussmann’s renovation of Paris under Emperor Napoleon III.

It is necessary to wait even until the 20th century to see the same ideas represented in the vertical city of Futurist architects, or in the modern city of Hilbeseimer or Le Corbusier – as well as in dystopian tales such as Fritz Lang’s Metropolis and Philip Dick’s Blade Runner. Certainly, creating a city with different levels opens up the possibility of greater inequality between city-dwellers.

Today, Leonardo’s ideas are not simply valid – they actually suggest a way forward for urban planning. Many scholars think that the compact city – built upwards instead of outwards, integrated with nature (especially water systems) with efficient transport infrastructure – could help modern cities become more efficient and sustainable. This is yet another reason why Leonardo was aligned so closely with modern urban planning – centuries ahead of his time.

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city, with well-ordered streets and architecture. He recommended “high, strong walls”, with “towers and battlements of all necessary and pleasant beauty”, and felt the place needed “the sublimity and magnificence of a holy temple” and “the convenient composition of private homes”.

His plans for a “modern” and “rational” city were consistent with Renaissance ideals. But, in keeping with his unconventional personality, Leonardo included several innovations in his urban design. Leonardo wanted the city to be built on several levels, linked with vertical staircases. This design can be seen in today’s high-rise buildings, but was absolutely unconventional at the time.

Indeed, his idea of taking full advantage of the interior spaces by positioning flights of stairs on the outside of the buildings wasn’t implemented until the 1920s and 1830s, with the birth of the Modernist movement. While in the upper layers of the city, people could walk undisturbed between



# Sudanese women are using social media to trade – and break gender barriers

GRIET STEEL  
*theconversation.com*

The role of women in the recent protests in Sudan has attracted a great deal of attention. This is because women who try to have a prominent public role in the country face criticism and can be accused of neglecting their family duties. This was particularly true after the introduction of Sharia law and Sudan’s public order laws in 1983. These laws shaped gender norms and defined the position of women in Sudanese society.

But the rise of social media – and the use of smartphones – has enabled women to transcend these traditional gender norms and challenge the boundaries between different spaces.

Four years ago I started research in Sudan’s capital Khartoum on a group of 45 Sudanese women entrepreneurs called Facebook traders – tajirat al-Facebook. The women used smartphones to trade goods such as cosmetics, garments, traditional Sudanese dresses, fashion accessories and perfumes from their homes.

My research showed that their online activities enabled them to

work at home without jeopardising social expectations based on class, gender and religion.

Facebook and WhatsApp also allowed them to create spaces where they could socially interact exclusively with other women and contribute to broader political debates, like discussions around the recent uprising. Many Facebook traders posted flags and other iconic images from the uprising on their commercial adverts.

Business intertwined with political engagement and contributed to the protest from people’s living rooms.

This shows the potential that online activities by Sudan’s Facebook traders have to help women navigate restrictive environments. As one of the women said: “ligayt nafsi fi-l-shughul” – they found themselves in the business and, due to the business, were able to live their own lives.

### FACEBOOK TRADERS

Khartoum’s Facebook traders are Sudanese women who are generally economically better-off because their husbands – or other male relatives – have well-paid jobs. They are well-educated and have enjoyed higher education opportunities at

prestigious universities in Sudan and abroad.

But they ended their professional ambitions or careers when they got married and had children. Several women said that their husbands discouraged them from working outside the home. The husbands considered it their duty to financially support the family and were concerned about their own reputations. They were also concerned about their wives’ attention being taken away from the house and children.

For most, there was initially no direct economic motive to sell products. Several women started their online activities out of boredom and to escape the social isolation of being confined to the house. However, this has changed significantly. Because of the country’s economic downturn and inflation, their activities are now an important “hidden” addition to the household budget.

Online trade, through social media, meant the women could combine work with family, business and fun. It created opportunities for them to distract themselves from some of the constraints they faced as rabbat bayt (housewives), but also to be more ac-

tively engaged in city life in general.

Working from home gave the Facebook traders freedom. Relying on mobile phones, delivery boys, digital connectivity and online platforms, they navigated public life from the intimate sphere of the home. Doing business allowed the buyer and seller to enter into more private conversations in which daily experiences, private issues and emotions were exchanged.

Men were not allowed to participate in these all-female platforms. Some traders even indicated that they specifically switched from open pages to closed groups to avoid the involvement and control of men.

This meant that Facebook traders could organise their economic activities to fit in with the gender segregation codes of the Islamist project, yet also created spaces to make extra money in times of economic hardship.

My research shows that communications technologies have paved the way for a new kind of female entrepreneur who can pursue commercial goals of profit that are combined with social engagement.

*[the writer is Assistant Professor, Utrecht University]*



# Mamata's wish: Modi's chest swells to 112 inches



**KOTULPUR (WB), MAY 6 (PTI):** Mamata Banerjee, one of the most strident critics of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said Monday she wishes his fabled 56-inch chest doubles to 112 inches as she wants everybody to be in good health.

"He has a good figure, I want it to get better; I will be happy if 56-inch becomes 112-inch. I want everybody to be in good health," she told an election rally here with a deadpan expression on her face.

Known for pulling no

punches against her political adversaries, least of all Modi, the West Bengal chief minister soon set aside the apparent nicety.

"But he is cunning enough to know that drinking tea that has been repeatedly boiled

is bad for health. He is not offering tea in claypot anymore," Banerjee said, referring to Modi's 'chaiwala' background here in Bishnupur Lok Sabha constituency.

"So now he has given up being a chaiwala and

has become a chowkidar," the caustic TMC supremo said.

Banerjee emphasised on her party's secular credentials, saying the TMC stands for "Temple, Mosque and Church".

Earlier in the day, Modi had said West Bengal under Banerjee was known for "triple T -- Trinamool, Tolabaazi, Tax". Tolabaazi is a term used in the local parlance to describe organised extortion.

She said before accusing the TMC of engaging in 'Tolabaazi', the prime minister should make public "how much money he earned from demonetisation".

Banerjee alleged the Modi government's tenure was replete with instances of corruption, including in the Rafale fighter jet deal.

She claimed nobody could speak freely against Modi for fear of CBI and Income Tax raids.

## Aizawl records max temp of 36.7 degree Celsius



**AIZAWL, MAY 6 (PTI):** Mizoram's capital Aizawl on Monday recorded a maximum temperature of 36.7 degree Celsius, the hottest day in the last 20 years, officials said.

For Aizawlites, who live at the top of a hill, 1,132 metres from sea level, any temperature above 32 degree Celsius is always warm.

The minimum temperature Monday was 17.6 degree Celsius,

they said.

The maximum temperature on Sunday was 33.4 degree Celsius while the minimum was 17.5, the officials said, adding that on Saturday the maximum was 33 and minimum was 18.2 degree Celsius.

Monday was the hottest day ever in the history of Aizawl since 1999 when temperature recording began in the capital city, the officials said.

Meanwhile, the cyclone Fani, which hit the state on Friday evening and Saturday resulted in some trees being uprooted and many districts including southern Mizoram's Lunglei and Mizoram-Bangladesh-Tripura border Mamit district being powerless for days, they said.

Telecommunication was also disrupted in many places across the state.

## Trump turnaround on Mueller testimony angers Democrats

**WASHINGTON, MAY 6 (AP):** President Donald Trump's turnaround on whether the special counsel should appear before Congress "Bob Mueller should not testify," he tweeted has sparked criticism from Democratic lawmakers eager to question the author of the report on Russia's election interference. Trump had previously said he would leave the question of Robert Mueller testifying to Attorney General William Barr. The attorney general has said he has no objection to Mueller testifying. Not only did Trump in tweets Sunday contend that Mueller's report didn't reveal collusion and that there was no obstruction, he asserted: "Bob Mueller should not testify."

No redos for the Dems!" Tensions between the White House and House Democrats have been fueled by disputes over calling administration officials before multiple committees, among them former White House counsel Don McGahn, and obtaining an unredacted copy of the special counsel's report and its underlying evidence as well as information relating to Trump's personal and business finances.

"First @realDonaldTrump repeatedly tried to fire Mueller," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N Y, tweeted Sunday in response to Trump's messages. "Then he refused to be interviewed by Mueller. Now he's trying to silence Mueller."

For a man who constantly proclaims his innocence, @realDonaldTrump is acting awfully guilty. Mueller must testify publicly before Congress. "Today, Trump announced he is opposed to Mueller testifying before Congress. Before the American people," tweeted Rep. Adam Schiff, the California Democrat who

chairs the House Intelligence Committee. "He also opposes letting McGahn appear. Barr's testimony alone designed to protect Trump isn't going to cut it. They will testify. The American people deserve the truth."

Trump's repeated statements on collusion and obstruction differ from the report's.

On collusion, Mueller said he did not assess whether that occurred because it is not a legal term. He looked into a potential criminal conspiracy between Russia and the Trump campaign and said the investigation did not collect sufficient evidence to establish criminal charges on that front. Mueller didn't charge Trump with obstruction but wrote that he couldn't exonerate him, either.

In his tweets Sunday, Trump did not indicate if he would take any steps to block Mueller, who is a Justice Department employee. The president tweeted after a Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee said he was hopeful Mueller would testify, noting that May 15 has been proposed.

"We hope the special counsel will appear" at that time, Rhode Island Rep. David Cicilline told "Fox News Sunday" and added that "we think the American people have a right to hear directly from him." Cicilline later tweeted that "nothing has been agreed to yet."

The House Judiciary Committee chairman, Democratic Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York, said last week the committee was "firming up the date" for Mueller's testimony and hoping it would be May 15.

Cicilline said on Fox that "obviously until the date comes, we never have an absolute guarantee" and in his tweet later, said that "we hope the Special Counsel" will agree to the proposed date for his testimony.

## 20 poll personnel suspended for electoral malpractices in Munger LS seat



**PATNA, MAY 6 (PTI):** A total of 20 polling personnel were suspended by the Election Commission on Monday in connection with electoral malpractices in Munger Lok Sabha constituency during the fourth phase of polling on April 29.

The Election Commission will always take action against those who are found involved in electoral malpractices

and tampering with the EVMS, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Bihar, H R Srinivasa, said.

"Twenty polling personnel, including presiding officers, polling officers, magistrates and police personnel, were suspended for their involvement in electoral malpractices at two polling booths," Srinivasa said, adding, they had also assaulted a journal-

ist covering the elections there on that day.

The Election Commission had received complaints from the journalist and others in this regard after which it had ordered an inquiry into the alleged incident, Srinivasa said.

Repolling is being held at both the booths on Monday, a statement issued by the Bihar CEO's office said.

## 12 suspected Rohingyas held in Mizoram



**AIZAWL, MAY 6 (PTI):** A total of 12 suspected Rohingyas from Bangladesh were arrested in Mizoram for entering the state without valid travel documents, a police officer said on Monday.

Eight women and four boys from Bangladesh were taken from a house to Bawngkawn police station here on Sunday, Deputy Inspector General of Police (Northern Range) Lalbiaktanga Khiangte said.

It is suspected that they were victims of hu-

man trafficking. Khiangte said the arrested people had some mobile phones without sim cards in their possession.

Investigation is on to find out their identities.

The 12 people were found in the residence of a woman who claimed that her cousin who lives at Tahan in Myanmar had asked for her a favour to keep the 'guests' before they were taken to the neighbouring country.

In late April, eight Rohingya women were detained at India-Myanmar border Vairengte

town for trying to enter Mizoram illegally and were pushed back.

They had claimed that they were from Kutupalong refugee camp at Sabulara in Bangladesh and were abducted on April 19 by a group of men who brought them to Mizoram by truck.

More than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims fled from Myanmar's Rakhine state to neighbouring Bangladesh since August 2017 after a military crackdown, triggering a massive refugee crisis.

New Delhi, May 6 (PTI): The Home Ministry Monday announced release of an additional Rs 1,000 crore to the cyclone-hit Odisha as announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A Home Ministry statement said the amount would be in addition to the Rs 341 crore that had been provided to the Odisha's State Disaster Response Force in advance.

As announced by Prime Minister after his aerial survey and review of relief efforts with the Odisha government, the Home Ministry has announced a further release of Rs 1,000 crore for assistance to the state, the statement said.

The extremely severe cyclone 'Fani' made a landfall in Odisha on May 3 causing extensive damage in the state and claiming at least 34 lives.

Meanwhile, the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC), headed by Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha, met Monday for a seventh time in quick succession and reviewed the coordination efforts and restoration measures in the areas affected by the cyclone.

The Odisha government has informed that restoration of the power and telecommunication infrastructure continues to remain the major priority and so far around 50 per cent power restoration has been reported while more works need to be done in Bhubaneswar and Puri, the statement said.

The Ministry of Petroleum informed that majority of petrol and diesel retail outlets are functional and sufficient stocks of diesel and other

The NEET examination, which was postponed in the state because of the cyclone, will be held on May 20.

The medicines dispatched by the central government have been received and all measures were being taken to prevent any outbreak of diseases, the statement said.

Reviewing the relief measures, the Cabinet Secretary stressed that power connectivity needs to be restored on priority basis as drinking water supply, telephone connectivity and banking operations need electricity.

The option of deploying vehicle-mounted mobile towers, as requested by the state, is being explored to provide connectivity in Puri and Khurda.

More than 2,500 gang men are working in Odisha to restore power lines, substations and the Steel Ministry has dispatched about 5,500 steel electric poles and another 15,000 will be supplied by May 14.

The Cabinet Secretary has directed that more manpower should be mobilised to restore power and also suggested that mobile service operators need to operationalise their towers in coordination with the state government, the statement said.

The Ministry of Petroleum informed that majority of petrol and diesel retail outlets are functional and sufficient stocks of diesel and other

fuels are available in Odisha. Three mobile diesel dispensers of 6,000 litres capacity each are being pressed into service.

The Finance Ministry has directed the insurance companies to settle insurance claims expeditiously and the State Level Banking Committee has been asked to convene to coordinate all banking issues, including functioning of ATMs.

The Railways has resumed train services on all the lines. The yard at Puri, which was extensively damaged will be restored fully by May 12.

The Defence Ministry has moved diesel generators to Odisha. Four helicopters of the Navy and the Indian Coast Guard are engaged in relief operations while the Navy and the Coast Guard are also running community kitchens for cyclone affected people.

The Cabinet Secretary directed that officers of central ministries and agencies should work in close coordination with the Odisha government and provide all required assistance expeditiously, according to the statement.

The Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary of Odisha participated in the NCMC meeting through video conference.

Senior officers from the Ministries of Home, Defence, Railways, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Power, Telecommunications, Steel, Financial Services and NDMA also attended the meeting.

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*Unpredictability while bowling did the trick against KKR: Jayawardene*

**MUMBAI, MAY 6 (PTI):** Mumbai Indians thrashed Kolkata Knight Riders by nine wickets to top the table and their head coach Mahela Jayawardene said unpredictability while bowling was the key to success against the visitors in their final IPL league game.

Electing to field, MI bowlers, led by Sri Lankan Lasith Malinga, put up a spirited show to restrict KKR to a sub-par 133 for 7, which the hosts chased down with 23 balls and nine wickets to spare at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday night.

Asked whether it was a planned move to use several bowlers in the power-play and bowl slow bouncer to Andre Russell, Jayawardene said, "We didn't want to be predictable. I thought we were bit predictable in Kolkata and in that scenario they batted well. So, we wanted to make sure that we don't give them that familiarity and try and create opportunity to take wickets."

He credited Hardik Pandya for bringing the hosts back into the match after KKR openers Chris Lynn and Shubman Gill conjured 49 runs for the first wicket. "We didn't get wickets (initially) but Hardik came and picked up those wickets and I thought Krunal (Pandya) bowled brilliantly to keep the pressure on and it was a good combination. "Then Mali (Malinga) with his experience, coming back and picking couple of wickets, we just didn't gave them loose balls this time around and that's what a quality attack can do," he noted.

Hardik is in incredible form with both the bat and ball and the MI coach said the Baroda all-rounder has adapted well.

"More than technically it was about his (Hardik's) temperament, be patient rather than force the issues. With Hardik, it is about holding his shape pretty much (and) he has got a lot of power going forward. It is not just one area where he has improved this year, he is hitting at different pockets, so it is very difficult for bowlers to bowl to him," explained Jayawardene. "It is not the easiest job in the world when you are batting at number 6 or 7, coming in and give (score) that extra runs for the team but he has adapted well, and he is still learning. So we are quite happy with the progress he has made over the years."

Malinga bowled round the wicket, which is a rarity, but the head coach revealed that it was an area which was worked upon and that the Sri Lankan pacer got rewards. "We have been working on it for a week or so, trying to create a different angle because the batsmen are getting used to him. That's something we are practising. He was quite comfortable," Jayawardene said.

"We told him it's about time (he) tries doing that in a game. He did so. That's a thing in modern day cricket. Even though you have been a great, you still have to find new ways of creating things. It was nice to see him opening up for that idea and getting rewards."

# Katich hints at lack of unity on field after KKR's exit

**MUMBAI, MAY 6 (PTI):** Kolkata Knight Riders' assistant coach Simon Katich admitted that there was tension on the field within their ranks, and said the string of six losses had contributed to the change in dynamics within the group in their disappointing IPL campaign this year.

Two-time champions KKR needed to win against Mumbai Indians on Sunday to qualify for the play-offs, but they slumped to a nine-wicket thrashing to crash out of the T20 tournament.

"There is no doubt and we can't hide from the fact that there was some tension on the field. That was pretty evident in the last, I guess, few games after we got into a bit of a roll with losses. We have to address that as a group," Katich said at the post-match press conference.

"What is so important in IPL is the dynamic of the group and, I guess the unity, and that is something KKR is very proud of, added the former Australian Test batsman.

MI first restricted KKR to a meagre 133 for 7 and then knocked off the runs by the 17th over itself with Quinton de Kock (30), skipper Rohit Sharma (55 not



out) and Suryakumar Yadav (46) completing the job with aplomb.

"It's a very successful franchise, something that everyone involved has worked very hard to contribute to over a long period of time. That's something we have to certainly work on to get better moving forward," Katich said.

"There is no doubt throughout this campaign that the dynamic in our group has cer-

tainly changed."

Katich was referring to the public criticism made by in-form all-rounder Andre Russell about some of the decisions taken by captain Dinesh Karthik, including not sending him up the batting order, and his statement of an unhealthy team atmosphere.

There was also a clear on-field display of lack of unity between the two players over the

last few matches.

Katich said the home defeats against Rajasthan Royals and Royal Challengers Bangalore played a key role in their ouster, eventually making their last match against MI a must-win one and that too at Wankhede, where they have a dismal record.

"It's disappointing. It's always a tough ask to come to Mumbai where we don't have a great record. Yes it would have

been nice to win and get through. To finish where we did (fifth on the table) - it's probably what we deserved. We had a great start but fell away badly through that middle phase," he said.

"Those two missed opportunities were good opportunities to shore up our play-off chances. Those games against RCB and Rajasthan at home, losing those two games was always going to come back and hurt us."

He credited the Mumbai bowling attack for its potency and said it was always difficult to play catch-up against the three-time champions.

"We lost that first wicket (Shubman Gill) first after powerplay. In terms of Andre (who was out for a duck), he has enjoyed coming up the order. Today wasn't his day - credit to Mumbai bowlers, they are class acts. (Jasprit) Bumrah and (Lasith) Malinga

they exploited the conditions well. It was a slowish wicket. At the end we weren't good enough."

"Mumbai are a team we can't play catch-up. In the last few overs we are going to face two-three overs of (Jasprit) Bumrah, (Lasith) Malinga and Hardik Pandya. We did it very well at home (when KKR won), but here we struggled," he said.

Katich praised Gill and pacer Sandeep Warrier, in particular, among the Indian lot of players.

"It's hard to pin it on one person in particular. Overall in the season we had a lot of positive signs. Young Shubman Gill looks like a talent for us in the future. He has done a variety of roles for us and played very well. A lot of overseas players performed really strongly. In terms of bowling Sandeep Warrier did a good job when he came for us in the last three games.

"Going ahead we need improvement in powerplay. We had struggled in powerplay overs, asked our spinners to come and do the job. We have three quality spinners. Unfortunately, you can't dictate terms with spinners if you don't take wickets up front, Katich pointed out.

## Patchy CSK banking on home advantage to outwit MI in Qualifier 1

**C Shyam Sundar Chennai, May 6 (PTI):** Handed a reality check in their last league fixture, defending champions Chennai Super Kings would bank on home advantage to seal their place in the summit clash when they take on a confident Mumbai Indians in the Qualifier 1 of the IPL here Tuesday.

After the gruelling league phase of the ongoing IPL, the stage is set for the play-offs with CSK and MI clashing against each other for a place in May 12 final.

There is hardly anything to differentiate between the two sides as both CSK and MI have won the title three times earlier. The Mahendra Singh Dhoni-led CSK has been patchy after a strong start and finished its league engagements with a six-wicket defeat to Kings XI Punjab at Mohali on Sunday.

But CSK will be happy to return to their den to take on table-topper MI, probably its biggest IPL rival, to decide which team seals a spot in the May 12 final. CSK boasts of a tremendous record at home this season, winning six of its seven games at the M A Chidambaram Stadium here and come Tuesday, it will act as a big advantage for the hosts.

A defeat, however, will provide both the teams a second chance in Qualifier 2 on May 10.

The CSK top-order has fired in fits and starts in the league phase and will need to come out all guns blazing against a formidable MI bowling attack that includes Jasprit Bumrah (17 wickets), Lasith Malinga (15 wickets), the Pandya brothers (Hardik 14 wickets and Krunal 10 wickets), leggie Rahul

Chahar (10 wickets) and possibly Mitchell McClenaghan. Skipper Dhoni (CSK's highest run-getter with 368 runs from 12 matches, 3 fifties) has been the mainstay of a rather inconsistent CSK batting unit and along with openers Shane Watson and Faf du Plessis and Suresh Raina holds the key in Saturday's game as the usually fluent Ambati Rayudu has struggled to get going.

CSK, however, will miss the services of the Kedar Jadhav, who sustained a freak shoulder injury in the match against Kings XI. But Jadhav wasn't in the best of form and his absence would open up a spot for either Murali Vijay or Dhruv Shorey.

Bowling has been CSK's strong point so far this season and becomes even more potent on M A Chidambaram stadium's sluggish wicket.

Imran Tahir (21 scalps), the second highest-wicket taker this season after Kagiso Rabada (25), has been at the forefront of an effective CSK spin trio, also including veteran Harbhajan Singh and Ravindra Jadeja (both with 13 wickets each). And the success of Tahir & Co against the powerful MI batting line-up could very well determine the course of the match. MI captain Rohit Sharma (386 runs), the impressive Quinton De Kock (492, third leading run-scorer), Hardik Pandya (380) and Kieron Pollard will be hard to stop once they get going and CSK's bowlers have a tough task at hand.

The onus would also be on the ever-improving Deepak Chahar, who has taken 16 scalps so far, to pick up early wickets for CSK and stifle the rival batting line-up.

## Playing Australia will boost our confidence, says Manpreet

**BENGALURU, MAY 6 (PTI):** Playing against a world class team like Australia will provide good exposure to youngsters and will boost the confidence of the team ahead of next month's FIH men's Hockey Series Final, feels India captain Manpreet Singh.

The India team travel Down Under for five matches starting Wednesday. The tour, marked as a preparation for next month's Hockey Series Final in Bhuj, will be newly-appointed chief coach Graham Reid's maiden assignment with the team.

The men's side will play two matches each against the Australian national team and Australia A and a lone game against the West-

ern Australia Thundersticks club.

"Playing a world class team like Australia ahead of the important Series in June will only help build our confidence. We had a good tournament in Malaysia in March and some of the youngsters did well there," Manpreet said.

"While Jaskaran Singh will make his international debut, it will be Gursahibjit's second tournament with the Indian team and Armaan Qureshi is also returning to the team after a long gap. I am confident these players will live up to the expectations. It will be good exposure for them against the world no.2 side," he added.

The team boasts of an interesting mix of experienced players and

newcomers. And Reid will look to test all combinations ahead of the Hockey Series Final, where India needs to finish on top to ensure a place in the final round of the Olympic qualifier scheduled in October this year. India began its season with a silver medal at the 28th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Ipoh, Malaysia and will hope to keep up the good show.

Talking about the ideology of the new coach, Manpreet said Reid emphasises on having team players rather than relying on individual performances.

"The new coach constantly reminds us why a team player holds more value to him than an individual player with excellent skill set.

## Kashmiri Pandits vote in special booths, hope for end of terrorism and return to homeland

**ANIL BHATT JAGTI CAMP (JAMMU), MAY 6 (PTI):** Living miles away from their native place for the past three decades, displaced Kashmiri Pandits Monday voted with the hope for an end to terrorism and peaceful return to their homeland.

"We want that South Kashmir should be freed from the twin grave threats (terrorism and radicalisation) to the composite culture of Kashmiriyat," 65-year-old Pyara Lal Pandita, who hailed from Pulwama district of the Anantnag Lok Sabha constituency, said after casting vote at a special polling station here.

The third and last phase polling for the Anantnag Lok Sabha constituency took place in Pulwama and Shopian districts on Monday. Polling was staggered in the constituency due to security reasons.

Kashmiri Pandits, who have been voting in exile for the past three decades in Jammu, Delhi and Udhampur for their



native assembly and parliamentary constituencies, say the situation in Kashmir is getting worse due to rampant radicalisation and terrorism, weakening the possibility of their return to and rehabilitation in Kashmir Valley.

Arvind Koul, who hails from Shopian, says his community members cannot return to their homeland unless and until there is restoration of "composite cul-

ture (Kashmiriyat) and humanity (insaniyat) as existed before the emergence of terrorism in the valley" in 1989-1990.

For 21-year-old Sunita Bhat from Tral of south Kashmir, "Peace and security are first and foremost conditions for settlement of a minority community."

"The government should consider these before formulating a rehabilitation policy," she said. Meanwhile, some

Kashmiri Pandits staged demonstrations outside a special polling station here on Monday after they found their names missing from the voter list. PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, Congress state president Ghulam Ahmad Mir, former Jammu and Kashmir High Court judge and National Conference candidate Hasnain Masood, BJP's Sofi Yousuf and Zaffar Ali of the People's Conference are among the

18 candidates in the fray from the Anantnag seat.

Anantnag district went to polls on 23 April, while voting in Kulgam district took place on 29 April, while Shopian and Pulwama districts voted Monday.

The Election Commission set up 21 special polling stations for Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu, one in Udhampur and four in Delhi to ensure their participation in the democratic process.

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Panama's Cortizo declares victory in presidential vote

**PANAMA CITY, MAY 6 (AFP):** Former Panamanian minister Laurentino Cortizo declared victory in the country's presidential polls on Sunday, though the electoral commission has yet to announce the official winner of the vote.

"I feel very happy. I won. We won. What we have to do now is join forces as a country," Social Democrat Cortizo told reporters.

Sri Lanka lifts curfew in Negombo; police says situation under control

**COLOMBO, MAY 6 (PTI):** Sri Lankan authorities Monday lifted an overnight curfew in the western coastal town of Negombo where violence erupted between groups of people over the weekend, days after the Easter bombings by Islamist extremists that killed more than 250 people in the island nation. The curfew was imposed on Sunday after a group of miscreants carrying swords attacked some people travelling on a three-wheeler in Po-rathota area of the town. The vehicle was set on fire. Several people were injured in clashes in Negombo, where St. Sebastian's Church was targeted in the Easter attacks carried out by suicide bombers who had pledged support for the ISIS.

Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said on Monday that Negombo was calm and curfew had ended at 7 am. The government also blocked some social media sites overnight, including Facebook and WhatsApp, in order to control the situation. The block was lifted early Monday. The police said an argument had instigated the clash and it was escalated after a drunken man's intervention. The curfew was imposed in the town as a precaution. Two people have been arrested in connection with the clashes.

Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo, said that it was a personal clash between two groups. "The situation was brought to my notice and we have restored calm," he said.

A senior police officer said an investigation was underway into the clashes. Negombo is a majority Christian town where the St Sebastian's church was attacked by a suicide bomber on the Easter Sunday. The Islamic State terror group claimed the attacks, but the government blamed local Islamist extremist group National Thowheeth Jamaath (NTJ).

Sri Lanka banned the NTJ and arrested over 100 people in connection with the blasts. Meanwhile, the schools reopened Monday after the Easter Sunday blasts.

Police and soldiers combed school premises and the surrounding areas to make sure it is safe for children to go back on Monday, a senior police officer said.

A million species risk extinction, are we one of them?

**PARIS, MAY 6 (AFP):** Humanity is rapidly destroying the natural world upon which our prosperity -- and ultimately our survival -- depends, according to a landmark UN assessment of the state of Nature released Monday.

Changes wrought by decades of pillaging and poisoning forests, oceans, soil and air threaten society "at least as much as climate change," said Robert Watson, who chaired the 132-nation meeting that validated a Summary for Policymakers forged by 450 experts.

One million animal and plant species face extinction, many within decades, they reported.

Alarming, the accelerating pace at which unique life-forms are disappearing -- already tens to hundreds of times faster than during the last ten million years -- could tip Earth into the first mass extinction since non-avian dinosaurs died out 66 million years ago.

In the short term, humans are not at risk, said Josef Settele, a professor at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research in Germany and co-chair of the UN Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

"In the longer term, it is hard to say," he told AFP. "If humans do go extinct, Nature will find its



way, it always does." Halting and reversing these dire trends will require "transformative change" -- a sweeping overhaul of the way we produce and consume almost everything, especially food, the report concluded.

"We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality-of-life worldwide," said Watson.

"By transformative change, we mean a fundamental, system-wide reorganisation." The pushback from "vested interests," he added, is likely to be fierce.

Drawing from 15,000 sources and an underlying 1,800-page report, the executive summary

details how our species' growing footprint and appetites have compromised the natural renewal of resources that sustain civilisation, starting with fresh water, breathable air, and productive soil. An October report from the UN's climate science panel painted a similarly dire picture for global warming, and likewise highlighted the need for social transformation "on an unprecedented scale" to cap the rise in temperature at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit).

The global thermometer has already gone up by 1C, and on current trends will rise another 3C by century's end.

Climate change and biodiversity loss, it turns out, feed off each other in a vicious cycle.

Deforestation and industrial agriculture are major drivers of species and ecosystem decline, but also account for at least a quarter of man-made greenhouse gas emissions.

Trees release planet-warming carbon dioxide when cut down, and the destruction each year of tropical forests covering an area the size of England shrinks the vegetal sponge that helps to absorb it.

Global warming, in turn, is pushing thousands of animals and plants out of their comfort zones, and intensifies the kind of heat-

waves and droughts that recently fuelled unprecedented fires in Australia, Indonesia, Russia, Portugal, California and Greece. The overlapping drivers of global warming and biodiversity loss point to shared solutions, but there is potential for policy conflict too, the new report cautioned.

Plans to green the global economy reserve a crucial role for burning biofuels and locking away the CO2 released, a technology known as BECCS.

But the huge tracts of land needed to grow energy crops on this scale -- roughly twice the size of India -- would clash with the expansion of protected areas and reforesta-

tion efforts, not to mention food production.

For the first time, the UN body has ranked the top five causes of species lost and the degradation of Nature. By a long shot, the first two are diminished or degraded habitat, and hunting for food or trade -- often illicit -- in body parts.

All but seven percent of major marine fish stocks, for example, are in decline or exploited to the limit of sustainability despite efforts by regional management organisations to fish sustainably.

Global warming is third on the list, but is likely to move up. "We can see the climate change signal getting stronger really, really

quickly," IPBES co-chair Sandra Diaz, a professor at the National University of Cordoba in Argentina, told AFP.

Numbers four and five are pollution -- 400 million tonnes of heavy metals, toxic sludge and other waste are dumped into oceans and rivers each year -- and alien species, such as rats, mosquitoes, snakes and plants that hitch rides on ships or planes.

"There are also two big indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and climate change -- the number of people in the world and their growing ability to consume," said Watson.

The heavily negotiated text does not set benchmarks for progress or "last chance" deadlines for action, as does the 2018 climate report.

Nor is the panel mandated to make explicit policy recommendations.

But it does point unmistakably to actions needed: reduce meat consumption, halt deforestation in tropical countries, discourage luxury consumption, slash perverse subsidies, embrace the concept of a low-growth economy.

The report will "serve as a basis for redefining our objectives" ahead of a key meeting of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in China in October 2020, said co-author Yunnan Jai Shin, a scientist at the Research Institute for Development in Marseilles.

Pilot says lightning caused deadly Russian crash landing



**MOSCOW, MAY 6 (AFP):** The pilot of a Russian passenger plane that erupted in a ball of fire on the runway of Moscow's busiest airport, killing 41 people, said lightning led to the emergency landing.

Investigators were on Monday working to understand the causes of the blaze after the Sukhoi Superjet-100 had to return to Sheremetyevo airport shortly after take-off Sunday evening. But pilot Denis Yevdokimov told Russian media the craft lost communication and needed to switch to emergency control mode "because of lightning" on the Aeroflot flight to the Arctic city of Murmansk.

He did not specify if the plane was struck directly. "We managed to restore communication through the emergency frequency on our radio connection. But the link was only for a short time and kept cutting out... it was possible to say only a few words," he told the Kommolskaya Pravda newspaper.

Videos on social media showed the plane crash-landing and then speeding along the runway with flames pouring from its fuselage.

Passengers could be seen leaping onto an inflatable slide at the front and running from the blazing plane as columns of black smoke billowed into the sky. Another video shot inside the cabin showed

roaring flames outside the window and passengers crying out in panic. Yevdokimov said he believed the plane burst into flames on landing, most likely because of full fuel tanks. At least two children were among the 41 dead and nine more people were in hospital, three of them seriously injured, authorities said. The aircraft's black boxes have been found and handed over to investigators, a source in the Russian emergency services told news agencies.

Several of the 78 people on board said they believed lightning was the cause of the tragedy, which came at the end of several days of public holidays following Workers' Day on May 1. "I saw a flash of white light," Dmitry Khlebushkin told the state RIA news agency.

Pyotr Egorov, also on board, told media: "We had just taken off when the plane was hit by lightning... the landing was very hard, we almost passed out from fear.

"The plane bounced on the tarmac like a grasshopper and burst into flames on the ground." The jet -- carrying 73 passengers and five crew members -- left Sheremetyevo at 6:02pm (1502 GMT), and the crew issued a distress signal shortly afterwards, officials said.

Russia's national carrier Aeroflot was once notorious for its poor

safety record but in recent years its image has improved and it has not had a fatal accident in more than a decade. The Russian Sukhoi Superjet-100 however has been dogged with problems since its launch in 2011. In 2012, a Superjet performing at an Indonesian air show slammed into a volcano, killing all 45 people on board. Indonesia blamed the crash on pilot error.

Technical problems with the plane have been reported in recent years and Russia has struggled to convince foreign carriers to purchase it. The government offered subsidies to encourage Russian airlines to buy the Superjet and Aeroflot has become its main operator. In September 2018, it announced a record order of 100 Superjet-100s.

The Murmansk region -- where many of those killed or injured are believed to be from -- went into a three-day period of mourning from Monday. Other Aeroflot flights are expected to be affected in the coming days. Russian President Vladimir Putin offered his condolences to the victims' loved ones and said the investigation "should be as thorough as possible", according to the Kremlin. Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev ordered a special committee to investigate the disaster.

China to cut reserve requirements for small banks

**BEIJING, MAY 6 (AFP):** China's central bank said Monday it would cut the amount of cash that small and medium-sized banks hold in reserve in Beijing's latest move to boost the stuttering economy.

Authorities will slash the reserve requirement ratio (RRR) on May 15, with the aim of lowering financing costs for small businesses, the People's Bank of China said in a statement.

For county-level rural banks with limited

scope, the RRR will be cut to eight per cent, in line with the rate at rural credit cooperatives.

Roughly 1,000 banks will benefit from the action, unlocking 280 billion yuan (USD 41.6 billion) for lending to small private companies, the central bank said.

It is the second such move this year as China seeks to blunt the impact of a weakening economy and slowing global demand for its exports.

The move comes as Donald Trump on

Sunday threatened to raise tariffs on hundreds of billions worth of Chinese goods at the end of the week, throwing a spanner in trade talks that had appeared on track to conclude soon.

Beijing's top policymakers outlined a looser monetary policy during parliamentary meetings in March with Premier Li Keqiang pledging China would reduce the amount of cash banks must keep in reserve to support growth.







**1994 FLASHBACK! !** The stars of Reality Bites, Ben Stiller, Winona Ryder, Janeane Garofalo and Ethan Hawke get together to celebrate the film's 25th anniversary at the Tribeca Film Festival.

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## Actor Karan Oberoi arrested for raping, blackmailing woman

**MUMBAI, APR 6 (PTI):** Actor-model Karan Oberoi has been arrested for allegedly raping and blackmailing a woman in suburban Oshiwara, a police official said on Monday.

The woman recently complained to police that Oberoi, who was in a relationship with her since 2016, allegedly raped her on the pretext of marrying her, he said.

He also shot some objectionable videos of the woman and demanded money from her while threatening

to release the clips, the official said.

Based on the woman's complaint, Oberoi was arrested on Sunday and booked under Indian Penal Code Sections 376 (rape) and 384 (extortion), Oshiwara police station's senior inspector Shailesh Pasalwad said.

Oberoi acted in some popular television serials like "Jassi Jaisi Koi Nahin" and "Inside Edge".

He also appeared in some advertisements of cars, bikes and apparels.

## Apurva Asrani to make directorial debut with Manoj Bajpayee in lead



**MUMBAI, MAY 6 (PTI):** Writer Apurva Asrani is set to make his feature directorial debut with a story dealing with mental health issues. The writer, who is best known for penning films like "Shahid" and "Aligarh", will be collaborating with critically-acclaimed actor Manoj Bajpayee for the movie.

The duo have previously worked together on "Satya" and "Aligarh". The untitled project will focus on the journey of a "forgotten genius who is slowly losing his mind", Apurva revealed on Facebook. "Pleased to announce my solo directorial debut, co-produced by and starring my 'Satya' and 'Aligarh' star, Manoj Bajpayee.

"My script traces the emotional journey of a forgotten genius who is slowly losing his mind. Since awareness & support for mental health issues is sharply lacking in India, we chose the 'Mental Health Awareness Month' to make this announcement," Apurva wrote. The writer-editor's last project was Amazon Prime series "Made in Heaven". He worked as a series editor on the show created by Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti.

your imagination to drive. You'll benefit from taking time to reflect: journal, meditate, draw or paint.

**CANCER:** Scan your social media profiles and do a Google search of your name. Are you representing online as well as you are in real time? Expressive Mercury shifts into Taurus and your tech-savvy eleventh house until May 21. Consider a virtual make-over—or makeunder if you've been guilty of timeline TMI. Streamline your tweets and posts, add your latest hits to LinkedIn and pose for profile photos that reveal your personality and your professionalism.

**LEO:** Polish up your presentation, Leo. Expressive Mercury treks into Taurus and your sector of success until May 21, giving you the high-pro glow. Wheels you set into motion now could lay the groundwork for years to come, so consider your ambitious path carefully. While live-it-up Leos are prone to major FOMO, reserve space in your calendar for VIP invitations and events that benefit your career.

**VIRGO:** You're always one to read be-

tween the lines, Virgo, but with your ruler, chatty Mercury, exiting your meticulous eighth house today, you're ready to focus on the big picture. Until May 21, the messenger planet cruises through Taurus and your visionary ninth house. This expansive and forward-thinking cycle has you feeling refreshed and worldly. Are you overdue for a vacation?

**LIBRA:** Don your Sherlock chapeau and let the sleuthing begin. Detail-obsessed Mercury slips into Taurus and your investigative eighth house until May 21, sounding the call for some detective work. Hidden agendas and vague intentions may be the norm, so take nothing at face value. Dig into your finances: You could discover hidden charges in need of canceling—and funds that can be flowed into your investment accounts.

**SCORPIO:** There you go, finishing people's sentences for them, Scorpio. With communicative Mercury roving into Taurus and your partnership zone until May 21, you're totally tuned in. Your sign is naturally

# 'Stranger Things' lawsuit dropped a day before trial

**LOS ANGELES, MAY 6 (PTI):** Filmmaker Charlie Kessler has dropped the idea theft lawsuit against Matt and Ross Duffer on the eve of the trial, accepting that the brothers' concept for the Netflix show "Stranger Things" was their brain child.

In an statement issued to The Hollywood Reporter, Kessler said the Duffers "independently created the show". "After hearing the deposition testimony this week of the legal expert I hired, it is now apparent to me that, whatever I may have believed in the past, my work had nothing to do with the creation of Stranger Things'.

"Documents from 2010 and 2013 prove that the Duffers independently created their show. As a result, I have withdrawn my claim and I will be making no further comment on this matter," he said.

In the lawsuit Kessler had alleged that he pitched a project at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival to the Duffers,

and they went on to stole his idea for a show set in a small town where a secret governmental project exists investigating the paranormal.

Brothers. "We are proud of this show and of our friends Matt and Ross, whose artistic vision gave life to 'Stranger Things,' and whose passion,



Netflix issued a statement after the lawsuit was dropped and said the company was pleased with the decision.

"We are glad to be able to put this baseless lawsuit behind us. As we have said all along, 'Stranger Things' is a ground-breaking original creation by The Duffer

imagination and relentless hard work alongside our talented cast and crew made it a wildly successful, award-winning series beloved by viewers around the world," a Netflix spokesperson said in the statement issued to Variety.

"Stranger Things" season three will premiere on July 4.

## The Kings, Mumbai-based hip hop group, win 'World of Dance' season 3

**MUMBAI, MAY 6 (PTI):** Mumbai-based hip hop dance group The Kings has been crowned as the winner of the third season of US-based reality TV show "World of Dance".

The NBC show is judged by singer-actor Jennifer Lopez, rapper Ne-Yo and dancer Derek Hough.

"Finally, #TheKings are the World Champions. We made it! India is on Top," the group posted on their official Twitter handle.

"World of Dance" also shared the name of the winner on its Twitter page.

"The Kings are officially #WorldofDance royalty. Sending big love to our champions," the post read.

For their final performance, the group dressed as gladiators and presented a powerful act, full of death-defying stunts and well-choreographed and coordinated moves.

They impressed the judges with their performance and scored a perfect 100 to win the competition which comes with the prize money of USD 1 million.

Suresh Mukund, the director/choreographer of the 14-member crew, said participat-



dian Flag flying high with the perfect score for our stellar performance... The journey of local dancers from the small gully of vasai Nallasopara to the world champions was really challenging filled with never ending hard work and dedication," he posted on Instagram.

Prior to "World of Dance", The Kings have also won the bronze medal at the World Hip Hop Championship 2015, San Diego. They were also the winner of India's Got Talent in 2011.

According to The Kings' official Twitter page, the group's story has been the subject of choreographer-director Remo D'Souza's "ABCD2".

## It ain't all roses: Kylie Minogue on fame

**LOS ANGELES, MAY 6 (PTI):** Pop star Kylie Minogue says being famous is not a cake walk and the celebrity status comes with a lot of "work, graft and insecurity".

The "Love at first sight" singer said success at times has a negative impact but it is important to stay strong.

"(It) takes a lot of work, graft and insecurity - not

always what the wrapped-up end product looks like. There have been times when I've thought, 'I just can't'. But you've got to take the knocks because they're always coming. It ain't all roses. But maybe otherwise it wouldn't be as sweet in the end," Minogue told The Sunday Times Style magazine.

After spending four decades in the entertainment

industry, the singer is still in no mood to slow down.

"I don't know how much time I've got before my showbiz hips and knees start to protest. They'll be like, 'You've been treading those boards for a long time, we think you should slow down a bit.' I keep threatening my team that I'm going to retire," she added.

**ARIES:** You've got money on your mind as mental Mercury decamps to Taurus and your belt-tightening second house until May 21. Over the next few weeks, inspiration could strike for a lucrative business project, or you might conjure new ways to ramp up brand awareness for your business. Crunch the numbers for the endeavor you wish to tackle—the dollar signs could surprise you!

**TAURUS:** Say what's on your mind and don't hold back! From now until May 21, talkative Mercury traverses through your sign, passing you the mic and giving your voice a platform. You're emerging from a quieter stage and ready for lights, camera, action! Clever Mercury gives you the green light to express your most grandiose ideas. Ask for what you want with the confidence that you'll get it.

**GEMINI:** Get those creative juices flowing, Gemini. Imaginative Mercury, your ruling planet, sets up shop in Taurus and your twelfth house of musing until May 21. For the next two weeks, give your chatty, analytical side a much-needed break and allow