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## DIRECTING IS FIRST JOB THAT ISN'T ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON MY LOOKS, SAYS OLIVIA WILDE

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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## C-DIVISION S-LEAGUE FIXTURE RELEASED



### Expect a more structured football league from next season

**SAGAR CHHETRI**  
**GANGTOK, 18 MAY:**

The C-Division Sikkim League football tournament will begin at Paljor Stadium on 20 May, Monday. The fixture for the league featuring 12 teams and 26 matches has been released. The participating teams have been divided into two groups for the league stages with the winner of each group taking on each other for the top spot of the C-Division. Both teams will however get promoted to SFA B-Division.

The Group A teams are: Red Panda Football Club, Namchi; Manik FC, Dzongu; Queen Valley FC, Penlong; Sumin FC, Sanju Football Academy, Sombaria and Namthang FC.

JVC Singtam; Mustang FC, Sang; Ranipool FC; NDFA, Mangan; Brotherhood FC and Sikkim Boys, Gangtok have been place in Group B.

Red Panda FC, Nam-

### Sex workers in WB make themselves heard with NOTA Sudipto Chowdhury

**KOLKATA, MAY 18 (PTI):** Having been consigned to the margins of society so far, sex workers in West Bengal are now expressing their displeasure with Lok Sabha candidates by pressing the NOTA button.

The workers said they had reached out to all 466 candidates in the state, urging for the inclusion of their demands in election manifestoes, otherwise they would be compelled to press the NOTA button.

"Most of us opted for NOTA in the last six phases," said Kajal Bose, a sex worker and the secretary of Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee, an NGO working for the sex workers' rights in West Bengal.

Under the leadership of All India Network of Sex Workers (AINSW), small groups reached out to each candidate in the state. "Starting from Darjeeling to the Sundarbans we went to candidates of all political parties with our demands," said Rita Roy, a sex worker and a member of one of the groups.

She said they asked candidates to include their demands in their election manifestoes, in-

cluding the demand for listing sex work as a recognised occupation by the Labour Ministry

Roy said some candidates met them, but others mostly said they were busy with campaigning. "During our meetings, we told them that if we do not get assurance from you, we will have no other option but to press NOTA," she said.

Another sex worker from Kolkata, Shibani Giri, however, said that candidates only gave them a verbal assurance. The sex workers from red-light areas such as Rabindra Sarobar, Ram-bagan, Sethbagan, Bow-bazar, Kalighat, Chelta, Kidderpore and Tolly-gunge are fighting for basic demands.

They are demanding access to grant of pension at 45 years of age, repeal of clauses of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA), decriminalisation of sex work and recognition of a self-regulatory board, formed by the workers, to prevent human trafficking in sex work.

The sex workers said their children face discrimination while applying for admission to schools and other institutions.

## SFA releases packed footballing calendar, introduces new events

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 18 MAY:**

Sikkim Football Association [SFA] released its annual calendar for football and other activities for the 2019 season here at SFA Football House on Saturday. The footballing season begins with the C-Division State League on 20 May and will conclude with AIFF D-Licence course in December.

Addressing a press conference here today, SFA vice-president Sonam T Ethenpa, informed that apart from its regular tournaments and events, the association will also be introducing new events this season.

He informed that SFA will be organising SFA U-17 Sikkim

League for the first time in the State mainly to provide a better and bigger platform to young footballers of the State.

"This league is also a selection trial for the upcoming Junior Nationals. The selection committee will shortlist the best 30 players from the league for the State camp to put together a strong Sikkim team," he said.

The league will have eight teams divided into two groups. Only players born on or after 01 July 2003 and in possession of a COI and birth certificate will be allowed, it is informed.

SFA is also organising the Pre-Independence Day Football Qualifying Match [knock-

out] from 23 to 31 July for the first time in the State. This tournament will feature six premier division clubs and the top-two teams will qualify for the Independence Cup 2019.

Mr Ethenpa further informed that SFA was also organising a Futsal Tournament for the first time from 03 to 10 November which will have around 20 teams.

He added that SFA has also decided to reintroduce Women's Sikkim-League Football Tournament which will be played from 14 to 20 October.

The SFA annual calendar for this year also includes Sir Tashi Namgyal Memorial Independence Day Football Tournament 2019 from 07 to 15 August. All

India Governor's Gold Cup Football Tournament 2019 expected to be held from 12 to 27 October depending on availability of funds and approval from AIFF.

SFA is also organising a Referee Refresher Course in November and AIFF D-Licence Course in December.

Mr Ethenpa informed that SFA has also received an offer from AIFF to organise the East Zone round of Santosh Trophy in Sikkim in the month of September.

"This presents a golden opportunity to the State but it is difficult to meet the requirements and guidelines of AIFF to host this round. However, the final decision will be taken at an SFA meeting," he said.

### Mamata writes to EC hours before the final phase of polling

**KOLKATA, MAY 18 (PTI):**

Hours before the final phase of Lok Sabha polling, Trinamool Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister wrote to the Election Commission Saturday in to ensure "peaceful and impartial" elections in the state without the interference of the BJP.

The EC should ensure that Sunday's polling is held without the "undue interference of the central government" and any "intervention by the ruling party at the Centre", Banerjee, West Bengal chief minister said in the letter written on her official letterhead.

Polling will be held in nine Lok Sabha constituencies in and around the city, including at Diamond Harbour where her nephew Abhishek Banerjee, considered to be the number two in Trinamool Congress, is seeking reelection.

"In the final phase of the election tomorrow, I would request your good

office to kindly ensure that election is completed peacefully, impartially and without any undue interference of the Central government and any intervention by the ruling party at the centre," Banerjee wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora.

She also requested the poll body to "protect democratic institutions and the federal structure of the country and extend due respect to the opposition parties".

Questioning the impartiality of the EC, Banerjee said the state has seen a number of "illegal, unconstitutional and biased decision during the election process because of the influence of the central government and the ruling party (BJP) at the centre.

As a result not only the state administration and its officers but also the common people of the state have been harassed and attacked in various manners, she wrote.

### Governor visits Sadam in South Sikkim

**NAMCHI, 18 MAY (IPR):**

Continuing his tour of South Sikkim, Governor Ganga Prasad visited various places in the district today. He was accompanied by SDPO (Jorethang), Sonam Wangdi Bhutia, Panchayat members and other officials.

Mr Prasad visited Ash Maya and Shalom home stays at Sadam, Upper Sukrabarey. The Governor was briefed by the home stay proprietors about the history and the functioning of the home stays. He was also informed that some rooms has been provided for the use of the visiting tourists and are equipped with basic minimum services.

Speaking with the homeowners, the Governor expressed his delight on the efforts of the local families in operating home stays which is inexpensive and will further promote the unique culture, organic farming of the state amongst the visiting tourist.



The Governor then visited the water harvesting tank at Gupti wherein he was informed about the techniques of water harvesting by the locals who also informed that the tank was built by SWRC NGO from Rajasthan in the year 1996, considering the geographic parameters of the area.

The locals also updated that the harvesting tank has supported each and every household of the area as this water is used for both drinking and cooking purpose. The Governor appreciated the endeavour of the locals to set up a water

harvesting tank which has in turn sustained the livelihood of the people.

The Governor also stopped at the floriculture nursery of Harka Pradhan wherein he took a keen interest to understand on how to nurture the different types of flowers and initiative in which the flowers can be marketed.

The Governor also sojourned the community aromatic distillation unit at Kerabari which is supported by State Institute of Capacity Building (SICB). This distillation unit majorly focuses on production of lemon

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## Graduation Day at Taktse International School

**SUNAKSHI SUBEDI**  
**GANGTOK, 18 MAY:**

Taktse International School, a co-educational school at Pangthang here, celebrated its graduation day on Saturday. TIS was founded and established in the year 2006.

The batch of 2018, the fourth graduating batch of the school, has ten students, four of whom - Ngawang Choden, Yonten Namgyal, Adhishwar Pradhan and Rinzing Chingapa - were present for the ceremony today.

The function started with an welcome address by Trustee and Founder of TIS, Pema Namgyal, who highlighted the achievements of the school and about how more and more resource persons from within the country and abroad were being invited to train the teachers and students.



In a recent development, TIS also received affiliation to the ICSE board in 2018, he informed.

Mr Namgyal informed that a group in the United States known as Friends of Taktse was instrumental in assisting the school and also hosted teachers and students when they visited USA.

About the Sikkim and students at Taktse, he said, "Sikkim is a blessed, hidden land and all the boys and girls here are extraordinary and exceptional."

The school, he said, worked hard to assist the students discover themselves and grow in confidence and learning.

Similarly, the school's

Director, Sonam Palden Denzongpa, in his address, remarked, "Education is not only about facts and figures, it is also about understanding and reflecting upon oneself, understanding your potential and understanding your mind. The emphasis must not only be on scores, and

wisdom and practical understanding skills need emphasis as well. We need scores, that is what developing nation is all about, but we also need practical understanding. Real learning delivers both."

The function included a cultural performance and speeches by the outgoing students.

### Mamata's nephew sends defamation notice to PM, demands apology

**KOLKATA, MAY 18 (PTI):** TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee Saturday sent a defamation notice to Narendra Modi, demanding an apology from the prime minister for "wildly fabricated allegations" against him at a rally earlier this week.

Modi has been given 36 hours to apologise or face legal proceedings, according to the notice served by Banerjee's lawyer, Sanjay Basu.

"... The malice with which you chose to invoke certain unverified, sensationalist and patently inaccurate information, ostensibly at the behest of your party members...

has compelled my client to address you vide this letter," said the notice, sent to the PM's official residence and the BJP state headquarters.

The state BJP leadership termed it as a "meaningless move" out of fear of defeat in the Lok Sabha polls.

"You (PM Modi) made certain wildly fabricated allegations with the sole intent to mislead the people you were addressing, in order to besmirch my client's well-earned reputation. Your speech punctuated by false, malicious and defamatory content, was an embodiment of political calculation and mischievous intent," the notice said.

Modi, during a rally in Diamond Harbour on May 15, had launched a broadside against West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee.

The prime minister had said that the days of the "bua-bhatija" government in the state are numbered, a charge he has often made referring to the CM and her nephew Abhishek Banerjee.

The TMC MP is considered the number two in the TMC and is seeking re-election from the Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha seat.

"Such vile and vindictive statements are unbefitting of the post you hold... In the event, an unconditional apology is not issued within 36 hours, my client will be constrained to initiate appropriate proceedings against you in accordance with the laws of this country without any further notice," the notice said.

Reacting to the development, BJP state vice-president Jaiprakash Majumdar said, "The elections (seventh phase) are going to be held tomorrow. Today, such a letter means nothing.

It is a meaningless move out of fear of defeat."



## 1984 riots survivors say they still await justice

**LUDHIANA, MAY 18 (PTI):** As Gurjal Kaur, 75, stares blankly at the dirty, moldering wall of her house, her nightmarish memories of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots turn into fresh bleeding wounds.

With Punjab going to polls on Sunday, Congress leader Sam Pitroda's flippant remark that "1984 hua to hua" and the BJP's relentless offensive over it has brought the anti-Sikh riots back into the political discourse.

The survivors of the riots in the CRPF colony of Ludhiana claim that successive Congress governments delayed justice to the affected families.

Kaur, who lost two of her sons, Harbhajan Singh and Amarjit Singh, in the 1984 communal flare-up, claims the Akalis have helped the survivors of the riots the most and that the previous Congress governments

at the Centre and in the state "ruined our lives".

Charanjeet Kaur, 59, who lost her two sons and husband in the riots, says, "We saw what people would not have seen during Partition. Mobs burnt thousands of Sikh men alive and raped the women."

Gurdeep Kaur of the women's wing of 1984 Sikh Katle-Aam Peerat Welfare Society alleges former Punjab chief minister Rajinder Kaur Bhattal did not let the grant given by the Centre reach the victim families in the state.

"The Akali government took some steps, but those were not enough. There are around 35,000 riot-affected families in Punjab, and the Badal government gave flats only to 3,000," she rues.

"Four commissions, nine committees, and

two SITs were set up to probe the killings. Why? It is clear that the Congress governments wanted to hide someone's role in the riots," she says.

Former AAP leader and senior lawyer H S Phoolka, who has been representing victims of the riots in court cases, says that instead of punishing leaders involved in the anti-Sikh riots, the Congress had elevated and promoted them.

A state Congress leader on condition of anonymity says no one can question Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on his commitment toward ensuring justice to the victims of the riots.

"He had himself resigned from Parliament to protest against what had happened..." the leader says.

## Voting under way in climate-dominated Aussie election

**SYDNEY, MAY 18 (AFP):** Australians flocked to the polls Saturday capping a bitterly fought election that may be the first anywhere decided by climate policy.

Between 16 and 17 million people are expected to vote across the vast island-continent, with the opposition centre-left Labor party tipped for victory.

Casting his ballot in Melbourne, would-be prime minister Bill Shorten was bullish about forming a majority government after a final poll showed his lead increasing.

"Today is the people's day," he said. "Be it buying a 'democracy sausage', the kids having a bit of a sugar cake or what have you, and voting." "In the event that the people of Australia voted to stop the chaos and voted for action on climate change, we will be ready to hit the ground from tomorrow." Weeks ago, Prime Minister Scott Morrison's conservative Liberals had been heading for an electoral drubbing.

But he has closed the gap with a fiercely negative campaign -- backed by powerful right-wing media -- targeting older, wealthier voters who face fewer tax breaks under Labor.

On the eve of the election, Morrison predicted it would be "the closest



election we've seen in many, many years".

But anger over his government's inaction on climate change may prove the difference between the two parties.

A season of record floods, wildfires and droughts have brought the issue from the political fringes to front and centre of the campaign.

In traditionally more conservative rural areas, climate-hit farmers are demanding action. And in several rich suburbs, a generational shift has seen eco-minded candidates running Liberal party luminaries close.

In northern Sydney, former prime minister Tony Abbott -- who once described climate change as "crap" -- appears at risk of losing a seat he has held for more than two decades to independent challenger Zali Steggall, a lawyer and Olympic medalist in Alpine ski-

ing.

Early rising voters in the constituency trickled into a beachside surf club to cast their ballots, as volunteers wearing bright orange "I'm a climate voter" t-shirts handed out pamphlets.

"I'm worried about the climate and that Australia is not doing enough," volunteer Catherine Willis told AFP.

Shorten has pledged quick legislation to increase renewable energy, while the Liberals said they would not risk the coal-fuelled economy's health to make the air cleaner.

Australia is among the world's largest exporters of coal, providing thousands of jobs in the northeast of the country.

A final survey by Newspoll published Saturday showed voters still deeply divided, with Morrison's coalition trailing Shorten's Labor 48.5 to 51.5 percent.

The campaign has been an often ill-tempered pitched-battle. Candidates have been egged and abused, and a slew have resigned for racist, sexist and otherwise jaw-dropping social media posts.

In Abbott's battleground seat, a 62-year-old man was arrested and charged with thrusting a corkscrew into the stomach of someone putting up campaign banners on the eve of the election.

If Morrison wins, it would be a monumental comeback, having scraped for his political life in the hope of not entering the history books as one of the shortest-serving prime ministers in Australian history.

He took office last August after a party room coup by conservative hardliners that ousted moderate pro-climate leader Malcolm Turnbull -- the latest in a series of political fratricides

that have made Canberra politics look like "Game of Thrones" meets "The Hunger Games".

Much of Morrison's cabinet has resigned or gone into virtual hiding during the campaign because of their unpopularity.

If Shorten is elected, he would become the sixth prime minister sworn into office in a decade.

The former union leader has struggled with low personal approval ratings but has become a more polished campaigner as the election has neared.

Still, his relative lack of charisma was underlined Thursday by the death of much-loved former prime minister Bob Hawke, an Oxford-educated lovable rogue, equally at home chugging a pint or debating Keynesian economics.

But the upswelling of sadness about Hawke's death could remind voters of less contentious times under Labor.

Should Labor win, Australia will likely get a vote on becoming a republic and, as Shorten put it, returning a head of state that the country has borrowed from the other side of the world for more than two centuries.

Polls opened at 8:00 am (2200 GMT) and the first exit polls are expected around 10 hours later.

## Nepal inaugurates educational institution built with Indian aid



**SHIRISH B PRADHAN KATHMANDU, MAY 18 (PTI):** A new building of a Nepal's educational institution, built with India's assistance, was inaugurated in the Udayapur district on Saturday.

The campus of the Shree Narad Adarsha Education in Chaudandigadhi Municipality of Udayapur District has been built with India's help which provided an aid of 3 crore (30 million) Nepali rupees, a statement from the Indian Embassy here said.

Former Urban Development Minister Nepali Congress leader Narayan Khadha inaugurated the two-storied campus building of the Shree Narad Adarsha Educa-

tion, in the presence of Indian Deputy Chief of Mission Ajay Kumar, it said.

The educational institution was established in 1971 as a secondary school and ungraded to a campus in 2003. It is affiliated to the Tribhuvan University.

Currently, the campus offers three-year Bachelor degree course in education management and humanities, apart from 10+2 level course to around 770 students.

At present, a total of 135 students are enrolled, about 70 per cent of which are girls, in the Bachelor of Education programme run by the institution.

The newly built structure include 12 class rooms, library, meeting hall, separate toilets for boys and girls and furniture, it said.

The new infrastructure will provide access to higher education to rural students of Udayapur and adjoining districts, including Bhojpur, Khaptang, Sunsari and Saptari, the statement said.

The project is the part of India's Small Development Programme Scheme under the India-Nepal Economic Cooperation Programme.

A Memorandum of Understanding for the construction of the building was signed in September 2016.

## Thousands gather to remember victims of civil war in Sri Lanka

**COLOMBO, MAY 18 (PTI):** Thousands of Tamils in Northern Sri Lanka observed the 10th anniversary of the brutal civil war between the government and LTTE by lighting oil lamps and remembering those who lost their lives in the over three-decade-long conflict.

Tamils gathered at Vellamullivaikkal, the scene of the final battle on May 18, 2009 when the government forces killed Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) chief Velupillai Prabhakaran, bringing to an end the bloody armed conflict fought mainly in the north and east of the island nation.

At least 100,000 people were killed in the conflict. Thousands of people, including security personnel, are still reported to be missing after the war.

According to the Army, 27,000 soldiers were lost in the war.

The anniversary falls nearly a month after Easter Sunday bombings, the worst terror attack in the country that killed 258 people and injured over 500 others.

The event saw attendance from people of all age groups. A child who lost her mother during the war lit an oil lamp to start the programme.

We would like to declare today as the Awakening Day of Tamil Nation against genocide and we declare year 2019 is a year to heighten the international support for political justice and campaign against genocide," Mullivaikkal Remembrance Forum, an organisation voicing the concern of Tamils, said during the event.

They vowed to strengthen the call to refer Sri Lanka to the International Crimes Court for

alleged war crimes committed during the war with the LTTE.

The government gained victory over the LTTE which had been fighting for a separate state for nearly three decades.

The Tamils alleged that thousands were massacred during the final battle, while the Lankan Army denies the charge, claiming it as a humanitarian operation to rid the Tamils of LTTE's control.

Students of the Jaffna University also held a commemoration ceremony at the institution's premises and stressed on the need for justice for Tamils in the country.

The government will commemorate the war heroes during the Victory Day celebrations on Sunday, the Ministry of Defence said in a statement.

President Maithripala Sirisena will preside over the programme.

"To coincide with the 'Dasavarshikabhisheka' commemoration, it is requested from the general public to light a 'Lamp of Peace' at all places of worship, state and private sector organizations, homes, police stations and tri-forces establishments island-wide on 2019.05.19 at 1900hrs," it said.

However, human rights organisations blamed the government of failing to provide justice to the victims even after a decade after the war, the Colombo Gazette reported.

The Amnesty International called on the government to end impunity and put accountability for crimes under international law and human rights violations and abuses at the heart of its transitional justice process.

## Patna's conjoined twins, treated as a single voter 3 yrs ago, now have separate voting rights



**PATNA, MAY 18 (PTI):** Two young women, residents of the Bihar capital and joined at the head since birth, have earned the right to be treated as separate individuals with independent voting rights.

Sabah and Farah (23), the conjoined twins who live in Samanpura locality of the city, would be casting their votes on Sunday as per their respective choice unlike the 2015 assembly polls in the state when their names were inscribed on a single voter ID card and their vote was, consequently, treated as one.

The twins cannot be denied their individuality on account of the way they are physically. They have different minds, different opinions and choices. Therefore, this time they have been issued separate voter ID cards and they will be allowed to cast their votes by turns, District Magistrate, Patna, Kumar Ravi told PTI Saturday.

He said the reason why they had been treated as a single voter could have been that

it has to be secret ballot and no other individual is supposed to be present when one is casting his or her vote. However, the twins are conjoined in such a way that their heads are turned, always, in opposite directions. So there should not be much of a problem.

Moreover, they were also made to attend the Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) workshop held recently. They have been told how to go about the exercise. Poll officials of the assigned booth have been directed to do the needful when they arrive, he said.

The Siamese twins are enrolled in the electoral roll for Digha assembly segment under Patna Sahib Lok Sabha seat which goes to polls on May 19.

Actor-politician Shatrughan Sinha, contesting on Congress ticket, is locked in a keen fight with Union Minister Ravishankar Prasad in Patna Sahib seat.

Their touching story was recently shared by the Election Commission of India on its

official twitter handle with the hashtag #Chunavkikahaniyan.

Born in a poor family, the girls were taken to the AIIMS at New Delhi by their parents where attempts were made, unsuccessfully, to separate them through surgical intervention.

Taking note of their plight, the Supreme Court had directed the state government to provide their family with a monthly assistance of Rs 5,000 which was later raised to Rs 20,000 at the instance of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

The sisters are die-hard fans of Bollywood actor Salman Khan, whom they fondly call bhai (brother) and the star had, learning about them, once arranged for their visit to Mumbai where they met their favourite hero in person and tied a rakhi on his wrist.

Reports had surfaced of their feeling devastated upon Khans arrest in the hit and run case and on the day when he was acquitted by the court the sisters had observed a fast and kept praying for his release.



# Chinmaya Mission Sikkim celebrates Buddha Purnima

## SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 18 MAY:**

Chinmaya Mission Sikkim Centre celebrated Chandi Purnima and Bhoudha Purnima at ICAR Devithan near Jalipool, today, informs a press release.

The program was attended by Centre Incharge Achariya Smaran Chaitanya, Executive Member, Dr LP Sharma, Yuvaveer Tara Prasad Dhungel, Yoga Acharya Neeraj Neopane and Bal Vihar and Chinmaya Yuva Kendra students and local gentries.



The program began with Acharya Smaran Chaitanya speaking on the sig-

nificance of Chandi Purnima.

Chinmaya Mission executive member, Dr LP Sharma spoke about Hindu goddesses and the need to pray to them. He also urged the youth to seek spiritual knowledge along with scientific knowledge.

After the program, 'prasad' was distributed to the gathered devotees. Tara Prasad thanked all the gathered devotees as well as Basant Chhettri of Sai Samiti for maintaining cleanliness in the devithan area and for supporting the program.



## Rajendra Bhandari releases new anthology

A poetry anthology by Rajendra Bhandari, "Itihaas ko Baduli," was released in Kalimpong today. The anthology contains 37 poems in the first volume. Upama Prakashan organised the program at Worship Centre here and an eclectic line-up of litterateurs, Manprasad Subba, Madhusudan Lama, Dev Bhandari, Dr Harkbahadur Chhetri, Pradeep Gurung Rudra Poudal, Umesh Upma and Thiru Prasad Nepal, were in attendance and jointly released the book.

## Bhim Army chief says atrocities on Dalits on rise Gujarat, warns of agitation

**NEW DELHI, MAY 18**

**(PTI):** Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad on Saturday warned of a large-scale agitation in Gujarat, alleging that atrocities against the Dalit community in the state were on a rise.

Citing an instance of Dalits being allegedly boycotted by upper caste people in Lohr village in Mehsana district after a youth from the community took out a wedding procession, he said several such incidents have happened in the state.

Following the incident, tensions ran high in the area and Deputy



Chief Minister Nitin Patel visited the village.

The Bhim Army chief met the Dalit youth Friday.

He cited another incident in an Aravalli district village where stones were hurled at a wedding procession of a

Dalit groom allegedly by upper castes people last week. The incident resulted in violent protests.

"The CM and the government is doing nothing when atrocities against Dalits are on a rise. No action is being taken against erring officers.

The incidents are in violation of the basic principles of the Constitution," he told PTI.

He said the state government did little to assuage the concerns of the Dalit community.

"If the state government does not take corrective measures, we will be compelled to launch an agitation. The Dalit community in the state should not think it is in minority. If needed, their brothers from other states will join them and launch a large-scale protest in the state," he added.

## Cong demands inquiry into issues raised by Lavasa, accuses Modi govt of pressuring EC

**NEW DELHI, MAY 18**

**(PTI):** Demanding a probe into charges made by Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa, the Congress on Saturday alleged that eroding institutional integrity has been the hallmark of the Modi government and asked whether the poll panel has become Election Omission" and a puppet in the PM's hands.

Lavasa is learnt to have written to the Chief Election Commissioner that he will be recusing from EC meetings as his dissent was not being recorded on clearances given by the poll panel to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over alleged poll code violations.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala asked whether the EC will save itself more embarrassment by recording Lavasa's dissent notes, as he accused PM Modi of "muzzling" democratic institutions.

Senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel said there must be a credible investigation into the issues raised by Lavasa, alleging the sanctity of the electoral process and the institutional integrity of the Election Commission is in jeopardy.

"There must be a thorough credible enquiry into the issues raised by Mr Lavasa and restoration of the Commission's independent status as the watchdog of world's largest democracy. Mr Lavasa's letter - contents of which have appeared in the media - is extremely serious.

The sanctity of the electoral process and

the institutional integrity of the Election Commission of India is in jeopardy, said Patel on Twitter.

Another senior party leader, P Chidambaram, said the EC has been "captured" by the Modi government.

In a series of tweets, he said, "Mr Ashok Lavasa, EC, complained that his 'dissent' was not being recorded and hence decided to stay away from meetings of the Commission. The CEC has replied that silence is eloquent. I am still trying to find the connection between the complaint and the answer!"

"CEC tells the people that some matters are best kept 'internal'. Is he saying that the people -- the voters -- should not know or be concerned about the manner in which the Commission is conducting its business?"

"There is no need for any more proof that another independent institution has been captured by the Modi sarkar."

In a statement, Surjewala said, "Election Commission has become 'Election Omission'. Shri Ashok Lavasa, one of the three members of the Central Election Commission (CEC), who dissented on multiple occasions when the Election Commission was busy giving clean chits to Modi-Shah duo opts out of EC meetings as the ECI even refused to record his dissent notes.

"This is a day-light murder of Constitu-

tional norms, set conventions and propriety. The poll panel's rules express preference for a unanimous view, but provide for a majority ruling in the absence of unanimity. Being a Constitutional body, the minority view has to be recorded, but this is being trampled to protect Modi-Shah duo."

He alleged that Lavasa's minority decisions going unrecorded "speaks volumes about the political pressure being exerted by the Modi Government on the EC".

Omitting the dissent of Election Commissioner, simply because he had asked for a notice to be issued to the PM Modi, has severely tarnished the institutional integrity of the Election Commission, he said.

Surjewala alleged that Modi has "taken upon himself the task of denigrating, damaging, decimating, dislodging and diminishing, the sanctity of every institution of India".

PM Modi demolished the integrity of India's premier investigation agency CBI in a mid-night coup to save himself from any scrutiny in the Rafale Scam.

Modi Government used CVC as the 'Colossal Veil to Cover Corruption' to publish a fallacious report, based on which an incumbent CBI Director was illegally removed.

The nation has to count only 5 more days to overthrow the 5 years of Mal-Governance of Modi Government, he said.

## 26 Maha dams hit zero water storage level as on May 18



**MUMBAI, MAY 18 (PTI):**

In a far cry from last year's situation, 26 reservoirs in Maharashtra have reached "zero storage" as on May 18, according to statistics put out by the Water Conservation department of the state government.

The department's website informed that water storage in Aurangabad Division, which comprises Aurangabad, Beed, Hingoli, Parbhani and Osmanabad districts, was 0.43 per cent as against 23.44 per cent at the same time last year.

The dams in these division are Paithan, Manjara, Majalgaon, Yeldari, Siddeshwar, Lower Terna, Sina Kolegaon and Lower Dhudna, all of which have zero storage at the moment, the department informed.

The storage in these dams in May last year was 3495 per cent in Paithan, 21.24 per cent in Manjara, 17.5 per cent in Majalgaon and 52.03 per cent in Lower Terna.

Other dams that have hit the zero storage level as on May 18 are Kadakpurna and Pentakli in Buldhana, Gosikhurd, Dina and Nand in Nagpur Division, Upper Tapi Hathnuri in Jalgaon, Waki, Bham, Bhavli and Pune-gaon in Nashik Division, Dibhe, Ghod, Pimpalgaon Joge, Wadaj and Temghar in Pune, Bhima, Kundali

Tata and Lonavala Tata in Solapur; it informed.

Meanwhile, Tisgaon dam in Nashik and Totladoh in Nagpur have 0.01 and 0.08 per cent water respectively.

It said water storage in the state's 103 large, medium and small reservoirs stood at 11.84 per cent, against 23.73 per cent last year.

Sanjay Lakhe Patil, a social activist, alleged that the state government's distribution of fodder camps for cattle in the drought-affected regions was not proper.

Terming it an "animal farm" situation where only the fittest survive, Patil said, "Only the strong political leaders got cattle camps, fodder; water in their districts in large numbers, whereas drought relief should have been distributed equitably."

He added that drawing dead water stock would impact the safety of the dams.

Dead water storage refers to the water in a reservoir that cannot be drained using the dams outlets and can only be pumped out.

"There is no surface and ground water in most parts of the state. The water quality supplied through tankers is of very poor quality. This is affecting the health of children and pregnant women in the rural areas. The government was in elec-

tion mode and ignored drought-relief measures.

It is monitoring such work from AC offices," he alleged.

"The Central Water Commission has issued an advisory to the Maharashtra government stating that water storage is the lowest in reservoirs here in a decade. Monsoon prediction of the IMD and Skymet is about a delayed one. It will be disastrous if there are no rains in June," he claimed.

Patil had petitioned the Bombay High Court on drought management under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

The state government is already under fire from the opposition Congress and Nationalist Congress Party which have claimed that it is monitoring drought from air-conditioned offices on mobile phones rather than through on-ground assessment.

Both NCP chief Sharad Pawar and Congress state unit president Ashok Chavan have been routinely attacking the Devendra Fadnavis government on the drought situation in the state.

The BJP, however, has rejected this criticism and has said that it has been putting technology to effective use to monitor the drought situation in the state.

**GANGTOK, 18 MAY (IPR):**

The training programme on counting of votes for the Returning Officers (ROs) and Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) was held today, for the General Election to Sikkim Parliamentary Constituency and Assembly Constituencies 2019 at the Office of Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Gangtok counting of votes which is scheduled to be

held on 23 May, 2019.

ROs and AROs of all the four districts attended the one-day training.

The training was conducted by CEO Sikkim, R Telang and Special CEO, Prabhakar Verma.

The training was conducted for all the ROs and AROs on process of counting, which involves postal ballot, EVM and VVPAT slip counting. Returning Officer, Kar-



ma R Bonpo, West District detailed the training through PPT on the counting procedures.

## NOTICE

In view of ensuing counting for Lok Sabha/Assembly Election 2019, this is to inform to the General Public that all the public related official work will be suspended from 13/5/2019 till 25/5/2019.

By Order.

DISTRICT COLLECTOR/EAST

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## Allow Girls Their Real Due

***Before we can become gender-neutral we will have to become pro-women***

A recent research in the UK has revealed that brighter than average girls, especially if they hail from financially underprivileged families, are more susceptible to depression in their teens than their peers. The same does not, however, apply to the boys, in whose case, they have been found to grow more confident as the years progress. That says a lot about how disadvantaged girls are even in “progressive” societies, and if one were to look with the same prism at the environment we have created around us, the picture would be rather dismal because we have internalized instincts which must leave our daughters look at intelligence and ambition as character flaws. Okay, character flaw appears to be too strong a word, but let’s accept it, too many women must be feeling frustrated with having to constantly recalibrate their potential to lower aspirations even as they watch mediocre men receive opportunities which had much better contenders.

Take the board exam results for instance, all of which were released recently, and while policy changes are being proposed on how students are graded at this watershed evaluation of their learning, what has not changed is the fact that girls continue to outshine boys in the overall results. The board exam results replay a data which everyone who has been through school has experienced – girls outperforming boys. In all probability, Sikkim has also mimicked this national pattern. It is important, however, that these statistics are not taken to suggest that gender equality is somehow approaching closer, and it should definitely not be plugged as a success of the Beti-Pad-hao, Beti-Bachao tokenism. If anything, such data only goes on to confirm that equality remains a distant goal.

When it comes to education, one could safely argue that girls in our country are short-changed when it comes to accessing it since only the more academically consistent of them or those hailing from financially stable families reach the class X and XII levels and hence a higher percentage of them get through. This would however also be a superficial reading of the situation because girls outperforming boys has been a trend which has been consistent for a while now. What has not been consistent though is the access this academically more perseverant section receives in later years. In less than half a decade since the girls trump boys in class X and XII exams, they start fading away in the years when their education should be in its strongest expression and they should be reinforcing their presence in careers and research.

Centuries of societal discomfort with a women-on-top scenario starts manifesting more strongly in these years and discourage women away from ambition. The society suffers as a result, because the section which has consistently been more responsible [like learning well when in school] is pressured away from the responsibilities of policy-making and programme delivery. Male domination of these sectors has been instituted by the historic oppression of women in our country. Our major religions, Hinduism and Islam, are in scriptural and practical terms deeply inhospitable to the emancipation of women. They fool us with the celebration of women as the mother and the homemaker, a dodge which they then leverage to prescribe strongly against individualism and independent women. In Sikkim’s case, the experience with Buddhism has not been much better because at heart even this faith is not as gender-neutral as some might suggest it to be and this is made obvious by the preponderance of male reincarnates against the extremely few women who return as Rinpoches.

Returning to the theme of education and the better performance of girls and how this is subconsciously suppressed when it comes to professional positions, sample this – the first person from Sikkim to clear the UPSC exams and become an IAS officer in Sikkim was a woman. She was probably representative of the better respect for education among women, and yet, it was nearly four decades after Sikkim had an organized administrative service that a woman became the Chief Secretary here. The delay was clearly because when it comes to careers and professions, the brightest lot is expected to step aside and make way for the second rung.

There is a staggering baggage of historic oppression and its attendant prejudices that women have to negotiate in our country, which is why their outshining males in education [for long dominated by men] should be celebrated every time it happens, even if it has become routine. After that, more attention needs to be paid to ensure that they remain in careers they are best suited for and ambition among them is respected. In fact, if the country is to become gender-neutral some day, it has to first consciously become pro-women.

# What’s behind the belief in a soulmate?

BRADLEY ONISHI  
theconversation.com

The world appears to be in a romantic slump. Marriage rates have plummeted over the last decade. And compared to previous generations, young single people today are perhaps spending more time on social media than actual dating. They are also having less sex.

Despite these trends, a yearning for a soulmate remains a common thread across the generations. Most people, it seems, are still looking for one. According to a 2017 poll two-thirds of Americans believe in soulmates. That number far surpasses the percentage of Americans who believe in the biblical God.

The idea that there is a person out there who can make each of us happy and whole is constantly conveyed through portrayals in films, books, magazines and television.

What accounts for the persistence of the soulmate ideal in the contemporary age?

## ORIGINS OF THE SOULMATE MYTH

Ten years ago, after a hard break-up, I decided to investigate. As a scholar of religion and culture who was trained in the history of ideas, I was interested in connecting the various iterations of the soulmate ideal through time.

One early use of the word “soulmate” comes from the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge in a letter from 1822: “To be happy in Married Life ... you must have a Soul-mate.”

For Coleridge, a successful marriage needed to be about more than economic or social compatibility. It required a spiritual connection.

Several centuries prior to Coleridge, the Greek philosopher Plato, in his text “Symposium,” wrote about the reasons behind the human yearning for a soulmate. Plato quotes the poet Aristophanes as saying that all humans were once united with their other half, but Zeus split them



apart out of fear and jealousy. Aristophanes explains the transcendent experience of two soulmates reuniting in the following way:

“And when one of them meets with his other half, the actual half of himself ... the pair are lost in an amazement of love and friendship and intimacy, and one will not be out of the other’s sight, as I may say, even for a moment.”

## THE RELIGIOUS SOURCES

These references aren’t limited to Coleridge and Plato. In numerous religious traditions, the human soul’s connection to God has been envisioned in similar ways. While the examples from religious traditions are numerous, I will mention just two from Judaism and Christianity.

At different points in the history of these two faith traditions, mystics and theologians employed erotic and marital metaphors to understand their relationships with God. Despite important differences, they both envision amorous union with the one divine force as the pathway to true selfhood, happiness and wholeness.

This idea is expressed in the Hebrew Bible, where God is consistently seen as the one to whom his chosen people, Israel, are betrothed. “For your Maker is your husband,” a passage in the Hebrew Bible says. Israel – the ancient kingdom, not the modern nation-state – plays the role of God’s spouse.

Throughout Israelite history this idea frames the relationship between the people of Israel and God, whom they know as Yahweh. When Yahweh ratifies his covenant with Israel, his chosen people, he is often referred to as Israel’s husband. In turn, Israel is envisioned as Yahweh’s wife. For the Israelites, the divine one is also their romantic soulmate.

This is illustrated in the Song of Songs, an erotic love poem with a female narrator. The Song of Songs is written from the perspective of a woman longing to be with her male lover. It’s filled with vivid physical descriptions of the two characters and the delights they take in each other’s bodies.

“Your channel is an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits,” the narrator recounts her man saying to her, before proclaiming that her garden is “a fountain, a well of living water, and flowing streams from Lebanon.”

Song of Songs is not only an unquestioned part of Jewish and Christian scripture, it’s been understood for millennia by Jewish sages as the key to understanding the most important events in Israelite history.

## EROTIC MYSTICISM

By the second century A.D., Christians too began framing their relationship with the divine in erotic terms through the Song of Songs.

One of the first, and most influential, was Origen of Alexandria, a

second-century mystic who became the first great Christian theologian. According to him, the Song is the key to understanding the soul’s relationship to Christ.

Origen calls it an “epithalamium,” which is a poem written for a bride on the way to the bridal chamber. For him, the Song is “a drama and sang under the figure of the Bride,” who is about to wed her groom, “the Word of God.”

Origen views Jesus as his divine soulmate. He anticipates the end of time when his soul will “cleave” to Christ, so that he will never be apart from him again – and he does this by using erotic terms.

His writings on the Song founded a rich and expansive tradition of Christian mystical texts based on the soul’s erotic and marital union with Christ.

## THE POWER OF THE MYTH

By tracing the soulmate ideal to these religious sources it’s possible to gain fresh perspective on its power and function in an age when more Americans identify as having no religious affiliation.

The soulmate myth informs the reality show “The Bachelor,” where young women wait for the attention of one chosen “bachelor” in hopes of finding true love. It is the same in the film adaptation of Nicholas Spark’s novel “The Notebook,” which follows the path of two lovers separated at various times by war, family and illness.

And then there are the Tinder users – wading through an excess of possible romantic partners, perhaps hoping that their one and only will eventually make them whole and happy.

In light of the myth’s history, it’s not surprising that even at a time when fewer Americans may be turning to God, they are still looking for their one true soulmate.

*[the writer is Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Skidmore College]*

# ‘The Big Bang Theory’ finale: Sheldon and Amy’s fictional physics parallels real science

ADILSON MOTTER  
theconversation.com

After 12 successful seasons, “The Big Bang Theory” has finally come to a fulfilling end, concluding its reign as the longest running multicamera sitcom on TV.

If you’re one of the few who haven’t seen the show, this CBS series centers around a group of young scientists defined by essentially every possible stereotype about nerds and geeks. The main character, Sheldon (Jim Parsons), is a theoretical physicist. He is exceptionally intelligent, but also socially unconventional, egocentric, envious and ultra-competitive. His best friend, Leonard (Johnny Galecki), is an experimental physicist who, although more balanced, also shows more fluency with quantum physics than with ordinary social situations.

Their steadfast friends are an aerospace engineer and an astrophysicist. The story revolves around the contrast between their intellect; obsession with comic books, video games, science fiction and fantasy; and struggles with the basics of human interactions, including those with their female counterparts.

Science, especially physics, is a recurring theme in the show and the scientific authenticity and contemporaneity are noteworthy. Part of the credit for that goes to David Saltzberg, a professor of physics and astronomy at UCLA who served as a technical adviser for the series.

Even though it is not intended to educate, “The Big Bang Theory” frequently refers to real science. Many science communicators and distinguished scientists have made guest appearances, from Bill Nye to Stephen Hawking. But perhaps nothing is more recurrent in the show than the use of the “scientist” trope as the punchline of joke after joke.

So how would a physicist like me get interested in this show? Not only is it the most popular sitcom on American television, but it’s also a pop culture bridge to science. While it is not the first time science has been represented in mainstream media, “The Big Bang Theory” is currently its most visible representation. In addition, it just happens that the fictional research in the show makes contact with my own real research.

## A SCIENCE-Y SETTING ON A POPULAR SHOW

I was first exposed to “The Big Bang Theory” through interactions with people from outside academia, who would often refer to it as soon as they pegged me as a physicist. Reports that their teenage kids loved the show were common.

But what really got my attention was a Guardian article in 2011 that suggested, albeit anecdotally, that the show was helping increase the enrollment of physics majors. Why? Possibly by bringing the attention of a broad audience to the subject or by making physics look cool. Now that I am familiar with the

show, I believe “The Big Bang Theory” is to physics what “CSI” was to forensics. It has brought physics, and especially the people doing physics, to a young audience of prospective science students.

As a physics professor and educator, I have a vested interest in attracting and nurturing talents in physics – and even in 2019, television can influence choices people make. While only good physics teaching and mentoring can convert interested students into talented scientists, a TV show like “The Big Bang Theory” can be what gets them into the classroom in the first place.

The show’s somewhat stereotypical image of physicists also has weaknesses, of which the most significant are the use of misogyny as a point of humor and a lack of diversity in the main cast. The perpetuation of stereotypes can reinforce the perception that certain groups don’t belong in physics. An entertainment show is not obligated to mirror real life, but this is a sensitive issue because physics still suffers from a lack of diversity and the dropout rates are high among certain underrepresented groups.

Notwithstanding, as the show developed, leading female characters took the stage: an attractive, down-to-earth neighbor, a successful microbiologist, and finally, there was the intelligent, accomplished Amy (Mayim Bialik), a neurobiologist selected through an online dating site as Sheldon’s perfect match. They married in the finale of the 11th season.

The same episode also marks one of the most celebrated moments of the series: Sheldon and Amy’s serendipitous discovery that put them on track for a Nobel Prize in Physics.

## A FICTIONAL THEORY WORTHY OF A NOBEL

It all starts with groom Sheldon’s difficulty straightening out his bow tie. Amy tells him “I don’t think it is supposed to be even. Sometimes a little asymmetry looks good. In the Renaissance, they called it ‘sprezzatura.’”

When later he explains to his mom why he’s leaving it a bit off kilter, she says, “Sometimes it’s the imperfect stuff that makes things perfect.” It’s one of the best lines of the entire show, and the one that gave Sheldon the final clue to their scientific breakthrough.

Sheldon: My equations have been trying to describe an imperfect world, and the only way to do that is to introduce imperfection into the underlying theory.

Amy: So, instead of supersymmetry, it would be super asymmetry?!

Sheldon: Super asymmetry! That’s it!!

The entire last season gravitates around the merits of “super asymmetry” and the threats of a competing group getting credit for it. In reality, no theory with this name exists, but the name was clearly inspired by supersymmetry, which does.

Supersymmetry concerns subatomic particles from which everything else is made. It proposes that every subatomic particle in the current standard model of particle physics has a so-called su-

persymmetric partner – essentially extra particles that exist in tandem with the already identified ones. This means that the underlying equations would remain unchanged under certain transformations, which has deep predictive implications. Supersymmetry has not yet been proved experimentally.

Now, how plausible is Amy and Sheldon’s super asymmetry as a physical theory? Depending on how you interpret what’s described in the show, it is either not sound or somewhat trivial in the subatomic world. However, it is highly nontrivial for collective behavior, which just happens to be my topic of research.

## THE REAL PHYSICS OF ASYMMETRY

I am an interdisciplinary physicist studying collective behavior in natural and engineered systems. Think of heart cells beating together, a power grid operating as a single system, shoals of fish schooling together, genes in a cell coordinating their activities and so on.

For a number of years, I’ve been working to understand why such systems can exhibit what we call behavioral symmetry – or homogeneity – even though the systems themselves are not symmetric – or homogeneous – at all. For example, your circadian clock can be well synchronized with the 24-hour cycle despite the fact that the individual neurons in the circadian system are quite different from each other. They exhibit the same period only when interacting with each other.

And here is how my research relates to Amy and Sheldon’s hypothetical theory. It’s generally assumed that individual entities are more likely to exhibit the same behavior if they are equal or similar to each other. Imagine lasers pulsing together, birds singing the same notes, and agents trying to reach consensus. My research shows that this assumption is in fact generally false when the entities interact with each other. Being equal doesn’t mean they’ll sync up. Since individual differences are ubiquitous and often unavoidable in real systems, such asymmetry (or imperfection) can be the unexpected source of behavioral symmetry.

There are instances in which the observed behavior of the system can be symmetric only when the system itself is not. My collaborator and I called this effect asymmetry-induced symmetry, but could have referred to it as a form of super asymmetry since it epitomizes the notion that imperfections make things perfect. Asymmetry-induced symmetry exposes scenarios in physical and biophysical systems in which we observe consensus because of – not despite – differences, thus adding a new dimension to the advantage of diversity.

“The Big Bang Theory” ends, but the message from the most gifted couple on television remains: We do live in a “perfectly imperfect universe.”

*[the writer is Professor of Physics and Astronomy, Northwestern University]*



FIELDWORK REFLECTIONS

Climate Change Through the Experiences of People Living Amidst Nature

MONGFING LEPCHA

“The climate is not changing, but we humans are changing... probably getting old and our capacity to tolerate the environmental stresses reduces with age.” While reading these lines, readers might take a pause for a good laugh or take it as an insensitive remark on climate change which is what I felt when I heard our Prime Minister uttering these lines when asked about climate change and its impact.

Yes, these are not my words, but the words of the leader of our nation and they have somehow got me thinking about whether other people too who are as ignorant regarding climate change and its impact feel that it’s their bodies getting intolerant of environmental stresses and not the human actions that has disbalanced the course of nature.

Well, I am not writing this to criticise anyone’s remark; rather, this is merely to showcase my fieldwork reflection which is focussed on the impact of climate change experienced by people living amidst nature.

Humans have always been part and beneficiaries of nature. The use of stone tools, introduction of agriculture, sedentary settlements, domestication of animals, pottery for storage and cooking and so on are the initial developmental phases of humans which have now reached a level that the days are not far when humans will be stepping on to another planet, probably to infect it with need and greed.

Because that is what that has caused our planet to suffer.

So far, I have been to different villages talking to different people regarding different cases and issues, listening to the stories, observing the places, living with them, walking for hours amidst the woods... In the field, we come across many things which are interlinked to one another. Sometimes it may be a casual talk on how the times were in olden days which gives us an idea about many things. Such is the case about the climate experienced by people living amidst nature. As I have mostly been to Lepcha villages and interacted with them, what I observed is that they are

very connected with nature as we are already aware that they are animist and the influence of other religions has not reduced this sense of being connected to nature. The bond can be seen in the different rituals they perform to different spirits and deities to please them and avoid their wrath (Param, Satap Rumfaat, Leerumfaat), and to thank them for providing them with food, especially at the beginning of spring and at the time of harvest (Mukzukdingrumfaat, Lyangrumfaat). It is also seen that most of the villages have their own guardian deities in the form of a hill or mountain peak, (like Thekung Pyakteng of Chawang or Sowang Village, Sunchel Punu and Nyekung Kutyek of Gor Village in North Sikkim). It is an undeniable fact that all humans at some point of time were hunter-gatherers and relied totally on nature for survival which still do but only with regard to extracting resources.

Since the Lepchas fall under the tribal category, they are still recognised as a hunting and gathering tribe. Although the mode of survival has changed and people no longer rely on hunting, yet, every year, they perform a ritual which is known as Panjokrumfaat in order to please and thank the forest deities. The ritual used to be performed by the male members who used to go hunting and if found a game they used to thank the forest deities. Now, even though hunting is not practiced anymore, still the male members go to the forest and perform the ritual where a sacrifice is made which is usually a rooster and head back to the village. When asked, an elderly person replied that it was a livelihood strategy of olden days when they totally relied on forest goods. He adds that he never saw anyone hunt more than what is required and they always thanked the forest deities as they are the providers.

With the above-mentioned facts, we can understand that the community shares a strong bond with nature and listening to their accounts about the impact of climate change does validate the issue. It is fascinating how the elder generation kept track of the seasons with different migratory birds. But now it seems

the migratory pattern of birds and animals have been disrupted, probably because of climate change as they have stopped showing up. Villagers have not seen many animals which used to frequent their jungles for many years. In one of Gor village of North Sikkim, Takmarzo, a species of rice which was once harvested in abundance, has now totally vanished from the area. Some streams have totally dried up. The villages which used to be covered with snow during winters have not seen snow for a decade or more. Monsoon has become very unpredictable because of which the harvest is not much when compared to the effort put into farming. Migration towards urban areas has led to a paucity of helping hands at the time of planting and harvesting. Many fertile lands have gone infertile or are left barren because of lack of labour and low harvest. The younger generation is more focussed on “development” which is the need of the hour but which is also at the cost of nature. Although climate change is a global issue and what I have mentioned above may be considered minor issues, but as the saying goes, “little drops of water makes a mighty ocean”. I have just cited examples from a community living in small villages of a State. Perhaps, these are the issues happening everywhere which have put our planet under great threat and which should be taken seriously taking appropriate measures.

People living in close proximity with nature have always been obliged towards nature and its gifts and helped safeguard it, yet when it comes to facing the consequences of climate change they too fall under the radar. Every time and everywhere we are reminded to contribute to safeguard nature, but how far and how many are serious about it only time can decide. But it is better to act on the impact of climate change to avoid further disastrous consequences instead of being ignorant because not everyone can afford to board the space ship to Mars with Ellen Musk which makes it even more important to save our planet earth.

[the writer is Research Scholar, Sikkim University]

EC gets Tripura HC notice over details about West Tripura LS seat

Agartala, May 18 (PTI): The Tripura High Court has served a notice to the Election Commission asking it to furnish details about West Tripura Lok Sabha constituency by May 21 in response to a petition seeking countermanding of elections in the seat.

The petition was filed by sitting CPI(M) MP and candidate of the constituency, Shankar Prasad Dutta on May 15.

Alleging large scale violence by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party during polling on April 11, Dutta had sought directions from the court to hold fresh polling for the seat.

The MP’s counsel Tapas Dutta Majumder said the petition was heard by the court of Justice Arindam Lodh on Friday and it issued the notice to the EC, state chief electoral officer and returning officer of the seat, asking them to furnish their detailed reply, considering the urgency of the matter.

Dutta had approached the Supreme Court, which had turned down the case for urgent hearing and asked him to take up the matter with the high court.

The Congress too has backed the demand by the CPI(M) seeking a fresh election.

On the poll panel’s directions, re-polling was done in 168 of the 1679 polling stations of the constituency on May 12.

There are two Lok Sabha seats in the state-- West Tripura and East Tripura (ST). Election in the East Tripura constituency was held on April 23.

EC orders repolling in two booths in Arunachal Pradesh



ITANAGAR, MAY 18 (PTI): Repolling will be held in two booths in Arunachal Pradesh on May 21, following complaints of electoral malpractices, officials said Saturday.

The repolling will be held in one booth in Koloriang constituency of Kurung Kumey district and one booth in Tali seat of Kra Daadi district, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer Liken Koyu said in a notification.

The decision of repolling was taken following recommendation of a team of the poll panel, who met representatives of different political parties here on May 14.

The polling stations are 28-Nampe in Koloriang constituency and 6-Gimba in Tali constituency.

Polling will be held from 6 am to 2 pm, the notification said.

Repolling has already been held in 18 booths in Arunachal Pradesh on April 20 and 27, including this two polling stations. However, several allegations of electoral malpractices were raised in the repolling as well.

Following the complaints, the Election Commission had deputed a four-member team who met the candidates of violence-hit Tali and Palin assembly constituencies in Kra Daadi district and Koloriang assembly constituency in Kurung Kumey district.

Tali, Palin and Koloriang assembly constituencies witnessed sporadic violence, including assault of polling officials, snapping of bridges and planting of explosives at a helipad during the repolling held on April 20 and 27.

A supporter of the NPP in Koloriang was also shot dead on April 26.

Nine LS seats in West Bengal to go to polls in seventh phase

KOLKATA, MAY 18 (PTI): Preparations are in place for the seventh and final phase of the general elections in West Bengal, where nine Lok Sabha constituencies will go to polls on Sunday.

An electorate of 1,49,63,064 will decide the fate of 111 candidates in these nine seats -- Kolkata North and Kolkata South, Dum Dum, Barasat, Basirhat, Jadavpur, Diamond Harbour, Jaynagar (SC) and Mathurapur (SC).

Eight seats, barring Jadavpur, will witness a four- cornered contest between the Trinamool Congress, the BJP, the Congress and the Left Front.

The Congress has given the Jadavpur seat a miss.

Sitting MP Abhishek Banerjee, who is the nephew of TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee and considered the number two in the party, is seeking re-election from the Diamond Harbour seat, where he is pitted against BJP’s Nilanjan Roy.

The CPI(M) has nominated Fuad Halim and the Congress Soumya Aich Roy for the seat.

In the Jadavpur seat, TMC’s celebrity candidate Mimi Chakraborty will contest against Anupam Hazra of the BJP.

The CPI(M) has fielded senior leader Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya.

Basirhat Lok Sabha seat will see another star TMC candidate Nusrat Jahan locking horns with BJP’s Sayantan Basu.

The Congress has nominated Quazi Abdur Rahim and the Left Front constituent CPI, Pallab Sengupta.

In the Dum Dum seat, the BJP has fielded Samik Bhattacharya against sitting TMC MP Saugata Ray. Left Front major CPI(M) has nominated Nepaldeb Bhattacharya, while the Congress announced the name of Saurav Saha.

TMC MP Kakoli Ghoshdastidar is contesting against BJP’s Mrinal Kanti Debnath in Barasat, where the Congress has nominated Subrata Dutta and Left Front Constituent All India Forward Bloc, Haripada Biswas.

In the Jaynagar (SC) seat, TMC’s Pratima Mondal will contest against Ashok Kandary of the BJP. The Congress has fielded Tapan Mondal and Left Front constituent RSP, Subhas Naskar.

Choudhury Mohan Jatua is the TMC candidate from the Mathurapur (SC) constituency against BJP’s Shyama Prasad Halder. The Congress has named Kritibas Sardar and the CPI(M) fielded Sarat Chandra Haldar for the seat.

Kolkata South will witness Mala Roy of the TMC battling it out against against BJP’s Chandra Kumar Bose. The CPI(M) has nominated Nandini Mukherjee and the Congress Mita Chakraborty.

In Kolkata North, Sudip Bandyopadhyay will contest against Rahul Sinha, the BJP national secretary. The CPI(M) has fielded Kaninika Bose and the Congress, Syed Shahid Imam.

A total of 710 companies of central forces are being deployed by the Election Commis-

sion to cover 17,042 polling booths to ensure free and fair voting, officials said.

The nine constituencies are spread across the three districts of Kolkata, South and North 24 Parganas.

The high-voltage campaign for the final phase saw poll meetings by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP president Amit Shah, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Congress leader Sachin Pilot and West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee.

The prime minister held four poll meetings on the last two days of the campaign, while Banerjee took part in several road shows at different places in the metropolis in the run-up to this phase.

Shah’s roadshow in the city on Tuesday was marred by violence and destruction of social reformer Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar’s bust in a college in north Kolkata.

In a first such action in India’s electoral history, the Election Commission ordered campaigning in the nine West Bengal constituencies to end at 10 pm on Thursday, instead of 6 pm on Friday, in the wake of the violence between the BJP and the TMC during Shah’s roadshow.

Besides general election observers and expenditure observers, the poll panel has for the first time deployed a special police observer and a special observer.

VVPAT will be also be used in all the polling booths along with the EVMs, EC officials said.

Odisha govt prepares massive plantation drive

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 18 (PTI): Odisha government has prepared a massive planation drive to create a green barricade along the coast as more than 20 lakh trees were destroyed in cyclone Fani that pounded the state at a wind speed of about 200 kmph, officials said Saturday.

The Rs 188 crore five-year plan aims to create a green barricade along the coast and generate green cover in cyclone hit Puri, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

The plan was approved at a high-level meeting held here under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary AP Padhi on Friday, they said.

As per the plan, about 130.5 lakh trees will be planted in 2019-20. While 80.5 lakh trees will be planted by the Forest department itself, another 50 lakh saplings will be distributed among various educational institutions, industrial estates and other private land holders for plantation in their respective areas.

Asking officials to take plantation drive in a mission mode, the chief secretary suggested to involve people, panchayats and civil societies for successful implementation of the plan.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Forest) Sandeep Tripathy said 104 lakh saplings are now available with 12 Forest divisions in the state. The meeting also resolved to plant one lakh trees with long life in the Balukhand sanctuary, parks and roadside in Puri, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

Less height trees will be planted in areas where electric wires pass so that they do not come in touch with the live wires, an official said.

As cyclone Fani has also caused huge loss to horticulture in an area of 24,780 hectares, the meeting decided to plant 18 lakh fruit-bearing trees. The plantation activities will be taken up by dovetailing funds available under MGNREGA, he said.

The meeting also discussed on re-plantation of partially uprooted trees in and around Bhubaneswar. A proposal worth Rs 24 crore has been approved for the transplantation of the partly uprooted trees. Around 3,290 partly uprooted trees have been replanted in the city.

According to preliminary reports, the loss on account of the damage to forest cover is estimated at Rs 537 crore, official sources said.

AIR to broadcast special programme on results of LS, assembly polls

NEW DELHI, MAY 18 (PTI): The All India Radio will continuously broadcast a special programme on results of the Lok Sabha and assembly elections in four states for 40 hours.

News Services Division of All India Radio (NSD-AIR) has made elaborate arrangements for providing authentic and latest results of the polls from May 23 morning.

For the first time, AIR, the biggest radio network of the country, will continuously broadcast a special programme on election results for 40 hours, an official statement said.

The AIR News will mount “Special Janadesh 2019” - bilingual programme in Hindi and English - from 7 am on May 23 to 11 pm on May 24.

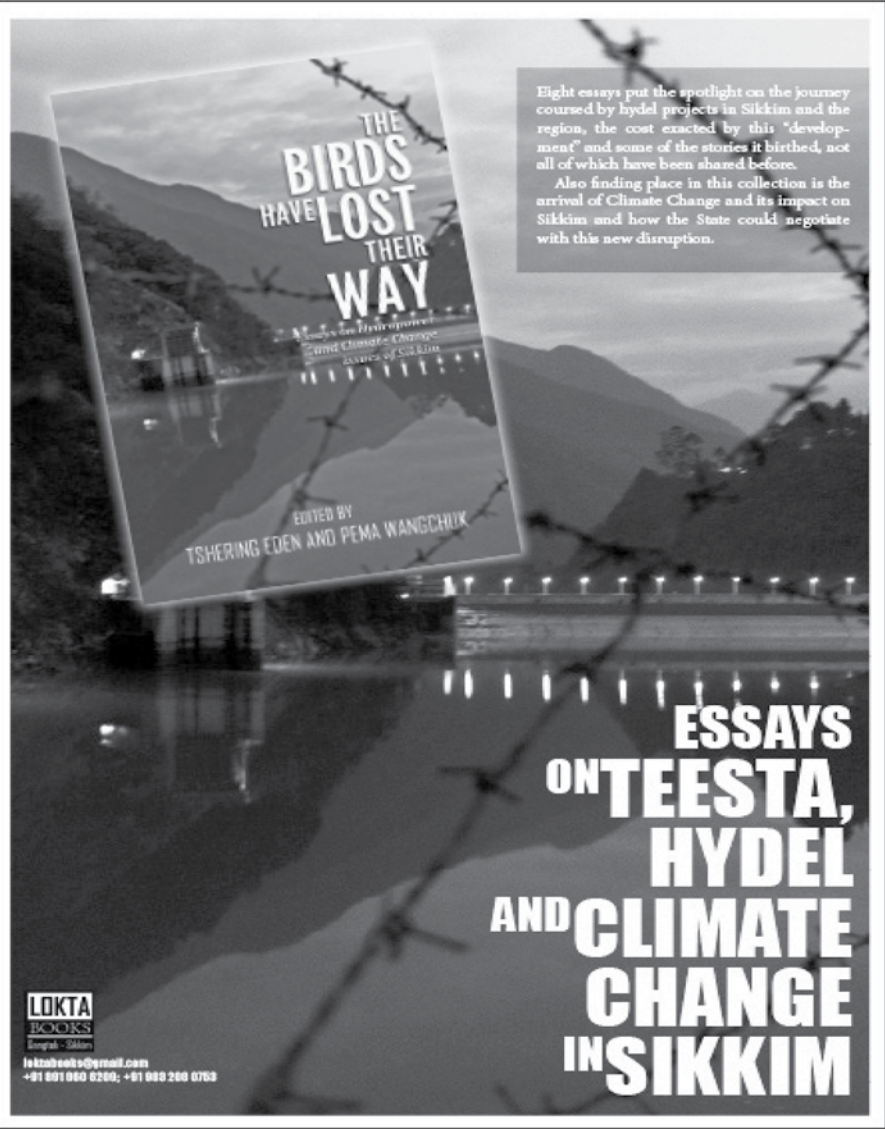
The programme will be broadcast on AIR FM Gold and other channels. It will also be available live on YouTube channel of AIR News, the statement said.

AIR correspondents from across the country will continuously provide latest live updates of counting of votes.

Similarly, all 46 Regional News Units of AIR throughout the country will mount special programmes and news bulletins in regional languages of their respective states, it said.

Hourly news bulletins will be available across the country through various channels like FM Gold, FM Rainbow, Vividh Bharati and other local channels of AIR, the statement said.

Along with the Lok Sabha election, assembly polls were held in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Odisha.





# WORLD CUP IN ENGLAND

## India: A test of Kohli's tactical acumen

**KUSHAN SARKAR**

NEW DELHI, MAY 18 (PTI): His manic consistency has already put him among the pantheon of greats but the World Cup in England will be Virat Kohli's hour of reckoning in his bid to create a lasting legacy as India's captain.

The first Indian captain to win a Test series on Australian soil, Kohli will be leading a team which has its own share of worries but is not short of game-changers, a must in a big ticket tournament.

Who bats at No 4? Is Kedar Jadhav good enough? Third pacer or an extra all-rounder? Kuldeep or Chahal or both? The World Cup will be much about Kohli, the captain as much as it is about Kohli, the batsman.

A World Cup victory will put Kohli in a league of his own and even those sceptical about his tactical nous, will have no other option but to grudgingly doff their

hats at his heady achievements.

Without doubt, the Indian captain will hold the key during the seven-week period where he is expected to cross 11,000 runs and also add a few more hundreds to the 41 he has already has in his kitty.

With the pitches expected to be as flat as pancakes, Rohit Sharma's flamboyance may fetch him a few 'Daddy Hundreds', may be even a fourth double, if the vice-captain gets going.

And then there is Shikhar Dhawan, who has never put a foot wrong at the ICC events since his international debut and would like the record to remain unblemished.

The trouble starts after this point, something that Men In Blue have not exactly been able to paper over despite fabulous show from the top three on more occasions.

The number four slot has been a topic of



discussion after Ambati Rayudu failed to inspire confidence and the maverick Rishabh Pant was left out of the squad defying logic.

Even the explanations given by the chairman of selectors MSK Prasad and skipper Kohli about Dinesh Karthik's experience under pres-

sure wasn't a convincing enough reason.

Save his 8-ball-29 in the Nidahas T20 final against Bangladesh, Karthik in his stop-start

### A T20-style championship for bikers begins in Bengaluru

**BENGALURU, MAY 18 (PTI):** The introductory edition of the FMSCI Indian National Rally Sprint Championship (2W) 2019 gets underway here on Sunday, with over 120 top bikers from different parts of the country set to compete in the new format.

Touted as the next big thing in motorsports, it will see the competitors go full throttle across a stretch of 6.2 treacherous kilometres in quest for glory. Bengaluru's top duo of Vishwas and Yuva Kumar, Pune's Jatin Kumar and Mumbai's Badal Doshi will be the key guys, each a champion in his own right.



The INRSC, conceptualised on the lines of a T20 match and promoted by Motorsports INC, is aimed at providing instant thrills to riders and spectators alike. In its first year, the Championship will see six rounds, with Chennai, Mangalore, Pune, Goa being the

other venues. Bengaluru will host the opening and final rounds.

A total of eight championship classes are up for grabs, including Group A up to 800cc, Group B up to 1300cc, Group B 131cc to 165cc, Group B 166cc to 260cc, Group B 261cc to 400cc,

Ladies Class upto 260cc, Scooter Class and Bullet Class.

Jai Das Menon, founder of Motorsports INC, was delighted with the response to the championship and he is confident that it will revolutionise two-wheeler racing in India.

"I am really very pleased with the number of entries. This shows that if provide the right format, every youngster will step forward to compete in it," he said.

Apart from the eight main classes, the amateur riders can try their luck in the non-championship class, the Star of Karnataka (2/4 stroke up to 260cv Group B).

### Stokes sees stuttering England to Pakistan series win

Nottingham, May 18 (AFP): Ben Stokes's unbeaten 71 rescued England from a top-order collapse as the World Cup hosts and favourites beat Pakistan by three wickets with three balls to spare at Trent Bridge.

Friday's win in a floodlit match saw England secure the series at 3-0 up with one to play, but it was far from routine.

England were cruising to a target of 341 at 201 for one when Jason Roy's dismissal for 114 sparked a collapse that saw three wickets lost for seven runs in 10 balls.

And when Moen Ali was out for a duck, England were 216 for five.

But Stokes steadied the ship and with No 8 Tom Curran (31) got England back on track in a stand of 61.

Curran, pushing for a place in England's final 15-man World Cup squad, had already taken four for 75 in Pakistan's 340 for seven.

This was a modest score at Trent Bridge, where England have twice set the record for the highest one-day international total, with last year's 481 for six against Australia following their 444 for three against Pakistan in 2016. - 'Got there in the end' -

"We got there in the end," man-of-the-match Roy told Sky Sports.



"I knew we had a big total on the board and I got out and I knew the job wasn't done so I was very frustrated.

"But then the boys came in and finished it off extremely well."

Jos Buttler, captaining England after regular skipper Eoin Morgan was given a one-game ban for a slow over-rate following Tuesday's six-wicket win in Bristol, was pleased by the way the world's number one-ranked ODI side had got out of a tight spot.

"You've just got to find a way to win and we're going to have situations where we play poorly through a phase of the game, but we've managed to come out the other end of that today to win the game," he said.

Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed was once again left lamenting his side's sloppy fielding.

"It was definitely tough luck for us after we put runs on the board,"

he said. "But unfortunately our bowling execution was not up to the mark and we didn't field well."

Roy, missed on 25 by Fakhar Zaman, reached his eighth ODI hundred in style, with fourth six in 75 balls faced, by lofting off-spinner Mohammad Hafeez over extra-cover. But the 28-year-old couldn't see England home, gloving a hook off Hasnain to wicket-keeper Sarfraz.

Test captain Joe Root (36) then edged left-arm spinner Imad Wasim to short third man where Hafeez held on at the second attempt.

England's 208 for three soon became 208 for four when Buttler, who made 110 not out at Southampton last weekend before being rested for Tuesday's six-wicket win, fell for a duck when he miscued a sweep off Imad to Hafeez at short fine leg.

Moen Ali was also out for a duck, top-edg-

ing a sweep off Shoaib Malik with Fakhar, running back from mid-on, holding a tough catch. Left-arm quick Junaid Khan reduced England to 258 for six with a superb right-handed caught and bowled off a slower delivery to dismiss Joe Denly.

And when Curran was yorked by Hasan Ali, England still needed 22 off 16 balls.

Stokes got the target down to 10 off 10 when he carved a six off Junaid that just cleared deep cover and he finished the job with a single.

He faced 64 balls, with five fours and three sixes.

Earlier, Pakistan failed to capitalise on Babar Azam's hundred.

Their innings fell away following a century stand between Babar, who made 115, and Hafeez (59).

Pakistan suffered a setback when Imam-ul-Haq, fresh from his career-best 151 at Bristol, had to retire hurt on three after missing an intended pull off an 89 mph ball from fast bowler Mark Wood that hit him on the elbow but X-rays showed no fracture.

Babar's 10th four, a leg-glance off Stokes, took him to his ninth ODI hundred and first against England, in 104 balls before he holed out off Curran.

### Indian shuttlers eye elusive medal at Sudirman Cup

**NANNING (CHINA), MAY 18 (PTI):** India will continue their hunt for an elusive medal when top shuttlers PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal spearhead the Indian challenge at the prestigious Sudirman Cup which gets underway here Sunday.

India reached the quarterfinals twice in the 2011 and 2017 editions but failed to cross the last eight stage.

The Indians would have to ensure they pull no punches when they face heavyweights China and avoid any early hiccups against 2009 semifinalists Malaysia in Group 1D to qualify from the group.

India's chances during the mixed team championship will depend on the quality singles players such as reigning BWF World Tour Finals winner Sindhu, 2019 Indonesia Masters champion Saina Nehwal, 2019 India Open finalist Kidambi Srikanth and BWF World Tour Finals semi-finalist Sameer Verma.

**Roy reveals baby drama after Pakistan hundred**

**NOTTINGHAM, MAY 18 (AFP):** Jason Roy was at a loss to explain how he had scored a match-winning century against Pakistan following an overnight visit to hospital with his baby daughter.

Roy's superb 114 was the centrepiece of England's chase as they beat Pakistan at Trent Bridge on Friday to go 3-0 up with one to play in a one-day international series.

Yet Roy's eighth century at this level came in trying circumstances, with the Surrey opening batsman saying he'd been more worried about daughter Everly than piling up the runs.

"It was a very emotional hundred. I didn't see it coming," Roy told BBC Radio's Test Match Special.

"I had a bit of a rough morning so this one is a special one for me and my family," added Roy, who returned to hospital after a three-wicket win, although his daughter's condition is not believed to be serious.

14-year international career has hardly done anything worth remembering.

Vijay Shankar, the man termed as the 'Three Dimensional' cricketer by Prasad or specialist opener KL Rahul could be the 'square peg in a round hole'.

Whoever is the choice, it will be more of an inspirational one rather than having any method to the madness as the 'Madmax' Pant waits in the wings.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni's final World Cup campaign will be an emotional one for his legion of fans but a strike-rate in 70s and inability to force the pace on a consistent basis between 35th and 50th over will keep opposition teams interested.

During the IPL, Dhoni is known to target the young Indian bowlers during the death overs, using all his expertise, something he might find

difficult against a Kagiso Rabada or a Pat Cummins or a Muhammed Aamir.

At No. 6 comes Kedar Jadhav, hopefully fit by the time India take on South Africa at Southampton on June 5.

The cheeky player that he is, Jadhav's below-par show in 14 IPL games is a cause of concern. At CSK, despite playing on conducive Chennai tracks, Jadhav wasn't bowled -- partially due to his dodgy hamstring and partly due to success of Harbhajan Singh and Imran Tahir.

Hardik Pandya's multi-dimensional talent at No. 7 is expected to be put to good use during the tournament. His ability to produce big sixes at the death can change complexion of the game.

The Indian team management and the selectors in the past two years, invested heavily in wrist spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal, who have got de-

cent amount of success.

But the Australians during their last ODI series in India, were able to successfully decode the duo with Usman Khawaja and Aaron Finch showing the way in Ranchi while young Ashton Turner (not in WC squad) followed suit in Mohali.

Kuldeep's poor IPL form has been an insult to the injury as he was the only World Cup bound India player, who lost his place in an IPL playing XI due to poor form.

But there is Jasprit Bumrah, who in coming years, will perhaps be one of India's greatest match-winners.

Mohammed Shami's swing up-front and Bumrah's yorkers at the death makes it for a heady cocktail.

Out of nine league games, winning six could prove to be good enough to qualify for the semi-finals for a team that has plenty of talent on offer.



Verma.

India first will look to quell the challenge of Malaysia on Monday before taking on the mighty 10-time champions China the next day.

The 13-member Indian team, seeded eighth this time, will look to draw inspiration from their sensational win over Malaysia en route to an unprecedented team gold at the Commonwealth Games 2018.

With former World No. 1 Lee Chong Wei missing in action this time, India will fancy their chances against Malaysia, who are likely to bank on Lee Zii Jia

in the men's singles.

In women's singles, Goh Jin Wei or Sonica Cheah will lead the charge for Malaysia but they are unlikely to pose any threat to Sindhu or Saina.

Malaysia will need their doubles to put up a good performance to salvage hopes of making it to the knockout stage.

But the return of Satwiksairaj Rankiredy after an injury gap will fuel India's hopes in both men's doubles and mixed doubles.

Satwik, who recovered from a shoulder injury to make a title-winning comeback at the Brazil International

Challenge recently, will form a formidable men's doubles pair with Chirag Shetty, while pairing with the experienced Ashwini Ponappa in mixed doubles.

At the last edition, India had put up a superb performance to upset 1989 winners Indonesia on their way to the quarter-finals where their run was ended by eventual runners-up China.

This time too China boasts of formidable team which comprises Olympic champion Chen Long and 2018 All England Champion Shi Yuqi in men's singles and reigning All England champion Chen Yufei in women's singles.

Besides, China also possess quality doubles combinations and all three Indian pairs will need to punch above their weights to pose a challenge to the formidable neighbours, who are eyeing their 11th title this time.

### Yogesh Kumar sails into last 16

**CHENNAI, MAY 18 (PTI):** Karnataka's Yogesh Kumar outclassed Uday Kumar (TNBSA) by four frames to nil to reach the last 16 in the N Manimaran & Kishan Kothari Memorial SVS Club Snooker Championship 2019 here Saturday.

Yogesh Kumar ran away with the first two frames, conceding only 16 points. He encountered some resistance in the third, winning it 62-27 and then won the fourth easily to notch up a 68-09, 84-07, 62-27, 66-10 victory.

In another match, Vijay Nichani of Coimbatore edged out high-ranked Railways cuist Dilip Kumar by four frames to three.

Nichani took the first two frames as Dilip Kumar struggled to find fluency. The Railways

player bounced back to grab the third and fourth frames to level the match.

In the decider, Nichani raised his level of play and took it 58-8 to secure a win.

Also advancing to the last 16 were Mustaq (Q-Tricks) and Daksh Reddy.

Results: Round of 32: Vijay Nichani (Coimbatore) bt Dilip Kumar (Railways) 4-3 (77-32, 88-16, 49-57, 28-65, 122 (63)-1, 53-62, 58-8); Yogesh Kumar (Karnataka) bt Uday Kumar (TNBSA) 4-0 (68-09, 84-07, 62-27, 66-10); Mustaq (Q-Tricks) bt Vinay Kothari (SVS Club) 4-3 (15-63, 29-50, 36-58, 63-28, 54-20, 66-26, 60-49); Daksh Reddy (MCC) bt Peter Paul (Railways) 4-1 (43-71, 81(75)-0, 88-44, 61-42, 85(65)-5.

Round of 64: Venkatesham (Railways) bt Saleem (Snook City) 3-0 (75-14, 96-24, 65-9); Shalouf (Kerala) bt Sasi Kumar (Snook City) 3-2 (51-16, 54-48, 35-49, 63-71, 62-55); Abhinav (Buddys) bt Dinesh (Coimbatore) 3-1 (70-35, 53-23, 0-68, 73-38); B C Karthik (Karnataka) bt Sharath (Q-Lounge) 3-1 (77-3, 65-47, 45-51, 62-29).

Aadesh Kothari (Q-Lounge) bt Parthibha Rajendran (Madurai) 3-2 (54-45, 42-71, 55-58, 50-24, 60-29); Sundarraaj (Towers Club) bt Vadivelu (Impact) 3-1 (64-42, 30-61, 57-35, 50-30); Hanish Sharma (Delhi) bt Hassan (TNBSA) 3-0 (72-18, 63-23, 57-25); Sree Deepadarshan (TNBSA) bt Ashwin (Towers Club) 3-1 (65-27 15-66, 32-52, 52-61).



# Trump delays decision on auto tariffs for up to six months

**WASHINGTON, MAY 18 (AFP):** President Donald Trump on Friday announced a six-month delay in imposing steep tariffs on auto imports, seeking to pressure Europe and Japan into bargaining table concessions on trade.

The decision marked a temporary reprieve from what would have been a sizable escalation in Trump's multi-front trade wars.

Trump's threat targets a major chunk of global economic activity with profound disruptions. Hundreds of billions of dollars in autos are manufactured, shipped and sold internationally every year.

In a proclamation, the president directed US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to update him within 180 days on the outcome of negotiations with the EU, Japan and "any other country" Lighthizer deems appropriate.

By leaving the threat of tariffs hanging, Trump's move raises the temperature in European capitals already angered by the imposition of punishing US duties on steel and aluminum last year.

Trump's decision also preserved a truce declared last year with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in which both sides agreed to cease trade hostilities while efforts continued to re-



solve the trade dispute.

Despite the decision, Trump continued his attacks on EU trade policy.

"The European Union treats us, I'd say, worse than China -- they're just smaller," Trump said at an event.

"They don't want our farmers, they don't want our cars... They send Mercedes-Benz here like they're cookies," Trump said, adding that "they take advantage of us on trade." "We all love Europe but it's not fair."

In response to the EU metal tariffs, the EU last year imposed stinging duties on American exports like motorcycles, orange juice, whiskey and blue jeans, and threatened to retaliate further should the auto tariffs be imposed.

European Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom confirmed an existing offer that "the EU

is prepared to negotiate a limited trade agreement including cars." The six-month delay had been expected this week as industry sources confirmed media reports that Trump would hold off -- delighting markets which had feared sharp economic consequences of such a move.

In his proclamation, Trump described the US auto sector as facing decline due to unfair foreign competition.

A report by Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross concluded that America's shrinking share of the auto market jeopardized its research, development and manufacturing -- all "vital to national security," according to Trump.

In a conclusion likely to invite challenges from manufacturers and industry analysts, Trump said America's defense

industrial base relied on the domestic auto sector for technological advances essential to US "military superiority."

Citing Ross's conclusions, Trump pointed to a doubling of US imports over the last 34 years but accused Europe and Japan of raising "significant barriers" to accepting American exports in return.

In that same period, the domestic market share of American-owned manufacturers fell to just 22 percent from 67 percent, he said.

"In light of all of these factors, domestic conditions of competition must be improved by reducing imports," Trump said.

Reacting to the announcement, Dieter Kempf, head of the German industrial federation, said "cars do not threaten the national security of the United States." Japanese auto-

maker Toyota, which has factories and research centers in the United States also strongly rejected the notion.

"Today's proclamation sends a message to Toyota that our investments are not welcomed, and the contributions from each of our employees across America are not valued," a statement read.

"If import quotas are imposed, the biggest losers will be consumers who will pay more and have fewer vehicle choices," Charlie Chesbrough, senior economist at Cox Automotive, said that by jacking up tariffs on 200 billion worth of Chinese merchandise last week Trump had shown Brussels his tariff threats were not idle.

"I think it's a signal to everybody that he means business," Chesbrough told AFP.

"I think in general it's a good news story in that it buys the industry a little more time to try to get the president to change his mind about the tariffs." The United States imported almost 200 billion worth of autos in 2017, according to the proclamation.

But, while foreign-branded cars are popular in the United States, many automakers have championed their US-based manufacturing operations in places like Alabama, Kentucky and South Carolina.

## Trump more cautious than his top advisers on Iran

**WASHINGTON, MAY 17 (AP):** President Donald Trump says he hopes the US is not on a path to war with Iran amid fears that his two most hawkish advisers could be angling for such a conflict with the Islamic Republic.

Asked Thursday if the US was going to war with Iran, the president replied, "I hope not" a day after he repeated a desire for dialogue, tweeting, "I'm sure that Iran will want to talk soon."

The tone contrasted with a series of moves by the US and Iran that have sharply escalated tensions in the Middle East in recent days.

For the past year, national security adviser John Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have been the public face of the administration's "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran.

The friction has rattled lawmakers who are demanding more information on the White House's claims of rising Iranian aggression.

Top leaders in Congress received a classified briefing on Iran Thursday, but many other lawmakers from both parties have criticized the White House for not keeping them informed.

Iran poses a particular challenge for Trump. While he talks tough against foreign adversaries to the delight of his supporters, a military confrontation with Iran could make him appear to be backtracking on a campaign pledge to keep America out of foreign entanglements.

Lawmakers and allies, however, worry that any erratic or miscalculated response from Trump could send the US careening into conflict.

Trump pulled the US out of the Iran nuclear deal last year and reinstated sanctions on Tehran that are crippling its economy.

Tensions rose dramatically May 5, when Bolton announced that the USS Abraham

Lincoln Carrier Strike Group would be rushed from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf ahead of schedule in response to "a number of troubling and escalatory indications and warnings," without going into details.

Since then, four oil tankers, including two belonging to Saudi Arabia, were targeted in an apparent act of sabotage off the coast of the United Arab Emirates, according to officials in the region, and a Saudi pipeline was attacked by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels from Yemen.

The US also ordered non-essential staff out of Iraq and has dispatched additional military assets to the region.

The Senate will receive a classified briefing on Iran on Tuesday, according to Jim Risch of Idaho, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. The House has requested a classified briefing as well.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said briefings are necessary because informing leaders "is no substitute for the full membership of the Congress."

She said a failure to inform lawmakers is "part of a pattern" for the Trump administration "that is not right," because the power to declare war resides with Congress.

"I hope that the president's advisers recognize that they have no authorization to go forward in any way" against Iran, Pelosi said.

Trump has dismissed suggestions that any of his advisers, particularly Bolton, are pushing him into a conflict.

"John has strong views on things, but that's OK. I actually temper John, which is pretty amazing isn't it?" Trump said recently when asked if he was satisfied with Bolton's advice.

"I have different sides. I mean, I have John Bolton, and I have other people that are a little more dovish than him. And ultimately I make the decision."

Mark Dubowitz, an advocate of a hardline policy toward Iran and chief executive of the Federation for Defense of Democracies, said, "Trump is smart to let these advisers play the roles they play and it really does help him lay the table for negotiation, but ultimately, it comes back to his ability to oversee a negotiation and do so wisely and judiciously, and that's an open question."

Tensions started to spiral last year when Trump pulled out of a deal the US and other world powers signed with Iran during the Obama administration.

The deal lifted economic sanctions on Iran in exchange for curbing of its nuclear programme.

Trump agreed with critics of the deal that it didn't address Tehran's work on ballistic missiles or its support of militant groups around the region.

His administration reinstated sanctions that had been lifted under the deal the Europeans and other signatories are still in it and has piled on more.

Trita Parsi, an adjunct associate professor at Georgetown University who advised the Obama administration on Iran, thinks the Iranians are trying to exploit Trump and Bolton's divergence on foreign policy issues.

He cited a recent tweet from Hessamoddin Ashena, an adviser to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, directed squarely at Trump and Bolton, who is easily recognized in public by his white, bushy mustache.

"You wanted a better deal with Iran. Looks like you are going to get a war instead. That's what happens when you listen to the mustache," the Iranian adviser said.

## US approves missile sales to South Korea, Japan

**WASHINGTON, MAY 18 (AFP):** The United States said Friday it had approved more than USD 600 million in sales of air defense missiles to South Korea and Japan as tensions return with North Korea.

The State Department said it had approved 94 SM-2 missiles used by ships against air threats, along with 12 guidance systems for a total cost of USD 313.9 million.

It separately gave the green light to sell 160 anti-air AMRAAM missiles

and related guidance equipment to Japan for USD 317 million.

The sales "will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States" by assisting key allies and "will not alter the basic military balance in the region," a State Department statement said.

North Korea last week tested what the South Korean military said appeared to be two short-range missiles in its second launch in

less than a week.

The tests come amid a standoff in negotiations between North Korea and the United States, where President Donald Trump had boasted of ending Pyongyang's missile tests.

A second summit between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ended in deadlock in February, with the US side refusing demands to ease sanctions until Pyongyang takes major steps to end its nuclear program.

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## US warns airliners flying in Persian Gulf amid Iran tensions

**Dubai, May 18 (AP):** US diplomats warned Saturday that commercial airliners flying over the wider Persian Gulf faced a risk of being "misidentified" amid heightened tensions between the US and Iran.

The warning relayed by U.S. diplomatic posts from the Federal Aviation Administration underlined the risks the current tensions pose to a region crucial to global air travel. It also came as Lloyd's of London warned of increasing risks to maritime shipping in the region.

Concerns about a possible conflict have flared since the White House ordered warships and bombers to the region to counter an alleged, unexplained threat from Iran that has seen America order nonessential diplomatic staff out of Iraq. President Donald Trump since has sought to soften his tone.

Meanwhile, authorities allege that a sabotage operation targeted four



oil tankers off the coast of the United Arab Emirates, and Iran-aligned rebels in Yemen claimed responsibility for a drone attack on a crucial Saudi oil pipeline.

Saudi Arabia directly blamed Iran for the drone assault, and a local newspaper linked to the Al Saud royal family called on Thursday for America to launch "surgical strikes" on Tehran.

This all takes root in Trump's decision last year to withdraw the US from the 2015 nuclear accord between Iran and world powers and impose wide-reaching sanctions.

Iran just announced it would begin backing

away from terms of the deal, setting a 60-day deadline for Europe to come up with new terms or it would begin enriching uranium closer to weapons-grade levels. Tehran long has insisted it does not seek nuclear weapons, though the West fears its program could allow it to build atomic bombs.

The order relayed Saturday by U.S. diplomats in Kuwait and the UAE came from an FAA Notice to Airmen published late Thursday in the US.

It said that all commercial aircraft flying over the waters of Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman needed to be aware of "heightened

military activities and increased political tension."

This presents "an increasing inadvertent risk to U.S. civil aviation operations due to the potential for miscalculation or misidentification," the warning said. It also said aircraft could experience interference with its navigation instruments and communications jamming "with little to no warning."

The Persian Gulf has become a major gateway for East-West travel in the aviation industry. Dubai International Airport in the United Arab Emirates, home to Emirates, is the world's busiest for international travel, while long-haul carriers Etihad and Qatar Airways also operate here.

All three airlines, as well as Oman Air, did not immediately respond to a request for comment Saturday about the warning.

The warning appeared rooted in what happened 30 years ago after Operation Praying Mantis, a daylong naval

battle in the Persian Gulf between American forces and Iran during the country's long 1980s war with Iraq.

On July 3, 1988, the USS Vincennes chased Iranian speedboats that allegedly opened fire on a helicopter into Iranian territorial waters, then mistook an Iran Air heading to Dubai for an Iranian F-14. The Vincennes fired two missiles at the airplane, killing all aboard the flight.

Meanwhile, Lloyd's Market Association Joint War Committee added the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman and the United Arab Emirates on Friday to its list of areas posing higher risk to insurers. It also expanded its list to include the Saudi coast as a risk area.

The USS Abraham Lincoln and its carrier strike group have yet to reach the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a third of all oil traded at sea passes.







**SPOTTED!** The Avengers actress, Elizabeth Olsen was spotted going on a hike while wearing her new engagement ring in the Hollywood Hills.

## Harvey Keitel to star in Meyer Lansky biopic

**LOS ANGELES, MAY 18 (PTI):** Veteran actor Harvey Keitel is set to portray gangster Meyer Lansky in an upcoming biographical drama film.

Lansky, considered a contemporary of Bugsy Siegel, was one of the most notorious gangsters of the American history.

To be directed by Eytan Rockaway, the yet-untitled film will also feature Sam Worthington, Emory Cohen and Austin Stowell.

Actors Alexandra Daddario and Tony Danza are in negotiations to join the cast, reported Variety.

The film follows an aging Lansky living in anonymity in Miami Beach after being investigated and pursued for decades by the FBI. When he enlists a young journalist named David Stone (Worthington) to tell his story, the Feds use him as a pawn to track down the hundreds of millions of dollars that the mobster has been suspected of stashing.

Stone finds himself caught in the middle of a game of cat and mouse, uncovering the hidden truth about the life of the notorious boss of Murder Inc and the National Crime Syndicate.

Rockaway has adapted the film's script from a story by Ido Fluk and Sharon Mashihi, partially based on interviews with the real-life Lansky conducted by the director's



father, history professor Robert Rockaway.

The project, which is set to start shooting in August, will be produced by Robert Ogden Barnum and Jeff Hoffman alongside Rainmaker Films' Russell Geyser and Clay Pecorin.

Nicolas Chartier, Jonathan Deckter, Mark Holder, Christine Holder, Lee Broda and Jeff Rice will be serving as executive producers.

Keitel, 80, is best known for films such "Mean Streets", "Taxi Driver", "The Duellists", "Thelma & Louise", "Reservoir Dogs", "The Piano", "Pulp Fiction" and the "National Treasure" series.

**ARIES:** Goals! Goals! Goals! Today's Aquarius new moon invites you to dream without limits. Where would you like to be in six months' time? What would you like to have accomplished? Get the manifestation ball rolling NOW. This lunar light could also bring a wave of fresh faces into your world. Keep expanding your social network and trying new experiences on for size.

**TAURUS:** You're movin' on up, Taurus, as today's new moon in Aquarius hits your tenth house of ambitions and accelerates your ascent up the ladder. Even if your lofty goals aren't doable in their current form, don't abandon them. It may simply be a case of paring down to a more basic 1.0 plan. Create a solid foundation that you can easily build on later.

**GEMINI:** If you find yourself at a cross-roads with a key relationship on Saturday, Gemini, don't panic. You'll know which way to turn without a GPS. Diplomatic Venus in your partnership house teams up with game-changer Uranus, bringing on a

make-it-or-break-it moment. Suddenly the fog lifts, and you'll have the clarity to decide whether or not to ink the deal, move in together or whatever next step you're deliberating.

**CANCER:** Today's skies feature a new moon in Aquarius and your smoldering eighth house, amping up your magnetic mojo. Are you in a relationship that's been progressively deepening? You could take a concrete step to make it into an official "thing." If you've been struggling with someone who can't make a firm commitment, it's ultimatum time.

**LEO:** It takes two to make a thing go right! And as today's Aquarius new moon sparks your seventh house of partnerships, your desire for a real commitment could heat up. Newer romances might move into "official" territory, and longtime couples get a titillating reboot. In business, a collaborative venture or contract negotiation may pick up speed. Explore all kinds of synergies. Joint missions could reach dynamic duo status over the coming six months!.

**VIRGO:** Today's new moon in Aquarius electrifies your sixth house of healthy living, launching a six-month phase of increased vitality. Take the first steps toward clean eating, regular fitness regimens or forming a positive new habit. Don't try to do this "perfectly." Focus on establishing a sustainable routine that can bring long-lasting results, even if they don't come overnight.

**LIBRA:** Your love life gets a shot of mojo, courtesy of a new moon in Aquarius and your passion sector. Single? Never mind waiting for The One to right-swipe you. Slide into the driver's seat and seek out promising prospects. Your amorous efforts might be rewarded before the corresponding full moon on August 15. Fame could also come knocking under this lunar lift. Be proactive and make sure the world is aware of all the amazing gifts you have to offer.

**SCORPIO:** There's no place like home as today's Aquarius new moon in your domestic fourth house beams into Chateau Scorpio. Besides ensuring you have

## Chitra cinema in Dadar shuts down its operations

**MUMBAI, MAY 18 (PTI):** Curtains came down at the iconic Chitra Cinema in Dadar on Thursday, seven decades after it was opened.

The last show at the theatre was of Tiger Shroff-starrer "Student of the Year 2" at 9.30 pm on May 16.

"We thought after hearing that the last show is on Thursday people might come but it did not turn out that way. The occupancy was very low.

"It is the legacy of my grandfather that I have carried forward. It hurts to see it is closed," owner of the cinema hall, Dara Phiroz Mehta told PTI.

The prime reason to shut down the



single screen theatre was poor business.

"We have shut down because it is not feasible to continue. Single screen theatres are closing down anyways across

the country. Single screens are getting affected because there is competition from the multiplexes.

"The number of people wanting to see a film in single screen is very less today. And we have been watching this trend since past few years," Mehta added.

Recently, Chandan Cinema in Juhu was also shut down.

"There are about nine to ten single screen theatres that have shut down their operations. And this is really a sad situation," Mehta said.

He said he does not have any plans to open the theatre again in near future.

### Directing is first job that isn't entirely dependent on my looks, says Olivia Wilde



**NEW YORK, MAY 18 (PTI):** Olivia Wilde is glad to have turned director as the actor believes that now her work will not be judged by her physical appearance.

Wilde, who has films such as "Tron: Legacy", "Her" and "Rush" to her acting credits, is making her directorial debut with teen drama "Booksmart".

During an interview with The New York Times, the 35-year-old actor admitted that she felt less pressured when she went behind the camera as earlier she always felt obligated to live up to "everyone's version of a perfect woman".

"I don't have to carry that. It is remarkable that I am 35 years old and this is the first job I've ever had that wasn't entirely dependent on and connected to my looks. It grosses me out to acknowledge it, but I've been thinking a lot about it," Wilde said.

The actor star said that although she finds it "exhausting" to be categorised by her looks, she has become "numb" to this type of objectification.

"Have I ever felt exploited? Yeah. Do I realise that I'd become numb to that? Yes. I had become numb to the fact that every meeting I went on - with men and women, by the way - I was going to be judged on my physical appearance. Because that's what actors deal with, and man, it's exhausting," she said.

Wilde said "Booksmart" was the first project where she was present not for her looks but for her "brain and my heart".

"And the sense of fulfilment that comes from that is really massive. It's a profound shift for me," she added.

"Booksmart" is scheduled to be released in the US on May 24.

## New 'Mortal Kombat' movie to release in March, 2021

**LOS ANGELES, MAY 18 (PTI):** Warner Bros has announced that its upcoming reboot of "Mortal Kombat" will hit the theatres worldwide on March 5, 2021.

James Wan is producing the movie, along with Michael Clear, Todd Garner and Jeremy Stein, according to Deadline.

The film, which recently started production in South Australia, will be directed by debutante filmmaker Simon McQuoid.

Lawrence Kasanoff is executive producing. Greg Russo penned the most recent draft.

The movie is based on the classic '90s arcade game.

Paul WS Anderson's 1995 "Mortal Kombat" revolved around some of the game's classic characters, like Liu Kang and Johnny Cage, who were invited to a tournament on a mysterious island only to find out that the fate of the world hung in the balance.

The film was followed by a sequel, "Mortal Kombat Annihilation", which released in 1997.

## Chris Rock to reboot 'Saw' series for Lionsgate

**LOS ANGELES, MAY 18 (PTI):** Actor-comedian Chris Rock is set to reboot Lionsgate's highly-successful "Saw" franchise.

The psychological horror series, which hails from Twisted Pictures, is synonymous for its gory murder sequences. The story follows the "Jigsaw Killer" or simply "Jigsaw", who often traps his victims in situations in order to test their will to live.

The new film's script, written by written by Pete Goldfinger and Josh Stolberg, is based on a story conceived by Rock. He will also executive produce the project, reported Deadline.

The actor said he plans to take the franchise into a "really intense and twisted new place".

"I've been a fan of 'Saw' since the first film in 2004. I am excited by the opportunity to take this to a really intense and twisted new place," Rock said in a statement.

The first film, directed by James Wan, was a major box-office hit in 2004. It spawned seven sequels over the years, grossing more than USD 1 billion worldwide.

The upcoming reboot will release on October 23, 2020.

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