

SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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SC's 5-judge Constitution bench not to sit this week

NEW DELHI, APR 22 (PTI):

A five-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court which was scheduled to hear certain important cases, including the land acquisition matter from Tuesday, will not sit in this week.

According to the notice uploaded on the apex court website, the hearing of cases by the Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi was cancelled.

Other cases included as to whether lawmakers enjoy immunity from prosecution for accepting bribes to vote in Parliament or an Assembly.

"In supersession of earlier notice dated the April 16, 2019 uploaded on the Supreme Court website mentioning that Constitution bench will sit in Chief Justice's court from April 23, 2019, now, take further notice that the Constitution bench will not sit in the week commencing from April 23, 2019," the notice said. As per the earlier notice of April 16, the five-judge bench was scheduled to hear from April 23, two matters pertaining to interpretation of Section 24 of the Land Acquisition Act, 2013.

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Postal ballots exchanged

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 APR [IPR]:

Even as allegations are being traded over postal ballots between parties, the ballots already cast at the facilitation centres established in the districts were exchanged between the districts at Singtam Police Station today in the presence of representatives of the contesting candidates.

Postal Ballots were brought to Singtam Police Station under the supervision of Nodal Officers for Postal Ballots of all four districts.

All exchanged ballot papers of the respective constituencies were taken to designated strong-rooms in the district headquarters where they will be kept under 24x7 security vigil, an official press release informs.

The ballot papers exchanged today were cast till poll day at the facilitation centres and



from thereon, postal ballots will be received only through post till the start of counting on 23 May.

These postal ballots were cast at districts where

the employees in question are currently posted and need to be despatched to constituencies where they are enrolled as voters. After these were

sorted accordingly, the exchange was held today.

Representatives of political parties were allowed to not only witness the exchange, but

also follow the designated vehicles in which the delegated officials arrived for the exchange and returned with the ballot papers.

IRB jawan drowns in Bengal

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 APR:

An IRB jawan from Sikkim who was stationed in West Bengal on election duty drowned in river Bhagirathi on Sunday. The deceased, 28-year-old Mingyur Tshering Lepcha was a resident of Kewzing, South Sikkim and was a constable with the 3rd IRBn.

It is learnt that on Sunday, after election duty, the deceased had gone to the riverside with four of his friends. After a while, the four friends realized that Mingyur was missing. When they could not find him anywhere, they reported the matter to

the local police.

The body of the constable was retrieved from the river today.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Pawan Chamling has condoled the demise of the IRB jawan.

"I am deeply saddened to know about the demise of IRBn jawan Mingyur Tshering Lepcha, who was drowned in the river while deployed for election duty in West Bengal. May his soul rest in peace. I also extend my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and pray that God gives them the strength to bear such a great loss," the CM has said on his Facebook page.

Jet employees stage demo, appeal to govt to bail out airline

BENGALURU, APR 22 (PTI):

Around 100 staff members of the ailing Jet Airways Monday staged a demonstration here, urging the government to intervene and bail out the airline.

Jet Airways had on April 17 announced temporary suspension of operations after it failed to receive emergency funds from lenders, leaving about 23,000 employees to face a bleak future.

This evening, the employees, dressed in their uniforms, staged the demonstration at Town Hall in the heart of the city.

Holding aloft placards, they raised slogans like 'Save our families, save Jet Airways', 'Don't make us cry, give a chance to fly' and 'Humko Tum Na Dhoka Do, Udne ka ek Mauka Do' (Don't ditch us, give a chance to fly).

"We pay loads of tax, Don't get us under the Axe' and 'We have dependents to feed, please don't let our 9W bleed' read the messages in some of the placards.

Milind Paradkar, an engineer with Jet Airways, urged the government to infuse some

funds to keep Jet Airways afloat.

"We want the government to infuse some funds instead of our aeroplanes being taken over by other airlines and being flown over by them," Paradkar told PTI.

He said there were rumours that somebody has shown willingness to take over Jet Airways, but the employees have no information who that is.

"The government has to be transparent. Presently employees are not being informed. They are in the dark," Paradkar said.

Other demonstrators said they had not received salaries for the past three months and had somehow been managing their family needs.

Some among them said they had previously worked with the now defunct Kingfisher Airlines.

On April 20, the employees had written to President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking their intervention to recover outstanding dues as well as to expedite the process of emergency funds for the airline.

Fire safety awareness in North Sikkim



SUMMIT REPORT

MANGAN, 22 APR:

A fire safety awareness and demonstration was held at Mangshila Senior Secondary School ground and at Swayem Eklavya Model Residential school complex today by the Fire Services Department.

An awareness session was followed by a demonstration on rescue and fire fighting methods. ADGP, Fire Services and Checkposts, Akshay Sachadeva, accompanied by ACFO, Mani Kr Pradhan and Bishal Kr Gurung, SFO North were in attendance.



Spelling out love for Kpg

SUMMIT REPORT

KALIMPONG, 22 APR:

The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration has erected a massive signage at the Deolo Tourist Lodge complex here spelling out, "I Love Kalimpong."

Designed in the "Hollywood Sign" style, this 40 feet long and 5 feet tall sign is already attracting a large number of tourist and locals to Deolo for selfies and group photos.

The signage is made of concrete and steel.

Arpita Das, a tourist from West Bengal, taking a selfie in front of the signage, gave it a two thumbs up. The locals are proving to be more adventurous and can be seen climbing and sitting on the alphabets to get their photographs taken.

CJI showed "procedural impropriety" in dealing with allegations against him: SC Advocates on Record Association

NEW DELHI, APR 22 (PTI): The Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association (SCAORA) on Monday expressed its "deep reservation" against the "procedural impropriety" shown by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi in dealing with the sexual harassment allegations against him.

As the apex court reassembled after the weekend recess in the backdrop of the stunning allegations by a former court staffer, the SCAORA said the charges against Justice Gogoi should be dealt with as per established procedure.

The allegations cropped up against Justice Gogoi on Saturday prompting him to convene an urgent extraordinary hearing by a three-member bench headed by him during which he asserted that the charges by a former apex court staffer were "unbelievable".

The allegations by the wom-

an, who had worked at Justice Gogoi's home office in Delhi, dates back to October last year.

"The allegations of the ex-employee of the Supreme Court have to be dealt with as per the established procedure of law and law must be applied in each and every case uniformly," the top court lawyers' body said in a resolution passed on Monday.

The Supreme Court Employees Welfare Association on its part came out in support of Justice Gogoi, claiming that the allegations were "false and fabricated".

The association, in a one-page resolution, said it strongly condemned the "false, fabricated and baseless allegations" against the CJI which is aimed at maligning the institution of judiciary.

"The Supreme Court Employees Welfare Association on behalf of all the employees strongly condemns

the false, fabricated and baseless allegations against Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi," it said.

The SCAORA, which is a body of lawyers comprising advocates empowered by the apex court to file pleadings on behalf of parties in the top court, sought immediate appointment of a committee headed by full court of the apex court to impartially investigate and inquire into the allegations and give an independent finding.

"Supreme Court Advocates On Record Association expresses its deep reservation against procedural impropriety shown by Justice Ranjan Gogoi in the suo motu proceedings held on April 20 in the issue relating to allegations of sexual harassment against Justice Ranjan Gogoi, by an ex-Supreme Court employee," the SCAORA resolution said.

"It is therefore resolved that the SCAORA strongly disapproves the

manner in which the complaint was dealt with and seeks enquiry and action in the above matter..." it added.

Justice Gogoi said during the Saturday hearing that the allegations were part of a conspiracy by some "bigger force" to "deactivate" the CJI's office.

The CJI also said he would not stoop too low even to deny them.

In her affidavit, copies of which were sent to the residences of 22 apex court judges, the woman described two incidents of alleged sexual harassment by Justice Gogoi, days after he was appointed CJI last October and her alleged subsequent persecution.

The woman alleged that she was removed from service after she rebuffed his "sexual advances". She claimed that her husband and brother-in-law, both of whom were head constables,

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Summit Times in **Nepali**

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Do-or-die battle for Left, Congress in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APR 22 (PTI): After a high decibel 40-day-long campaign, Kerala will go to single phase polls Tuesday with Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, Union minister Alphons Kannamtham and sitting MP Shashi Tharoor among those whose fortunes will be decided.

It is a do-or-die battle for both the ruling CPI(M)-led LDF and opposition Congress-headed UDF in most of the 20 Lok Sabha seats this time in the state, known for its decades-long bipolar politics.

The BJP-led NDA is posing a formidable challenge to the two traditional fronts in at least three constituencies -- Thiruvananthapuram, Pathanamthitta and Thrissur.

The saffron party is hoping to capitalise on the Sabarimala women entry issue and ensure the Lotusblooms this time from the state in the Lower House of Parliament.

A key seat will be Wayanad from where Rahul Gandhi is contesting besides his pocket borough Amethi in Uttar Pradesh, Thiruvananthapuram where Tharoor is eyeing a hat-trick and Ernakulam, the coastal city from where Kannamtham is seeking to make his Lok Sabha debut.

The Sabarimala temple issue is a major poll plank of BJP as the party sought to attack the CPI-M led LDF government.

The state witnessed massive protests after the LDF government decided to implement the September 28 Supreme Court verdict allowing women of all age groups to offer prayers at the Lord Ayyappa shrine, setting aside the traditional ban.

Senior BJP leader Kumanam Rajashekhara, who resigned as Mizoram Governor to test electoral waters, is giving a tough fight to former union minister and well-known author Tharoor, who is aiming for a hatrick of wins from the state capital.

The acrimonious **SC's 5-judge...**

The two case were referred to the Constitution bench as two benches of the apex court of same strength had taken a taken a contradictory view on the issue.

The apex court had on April 2 asked the Centre and the parties concerned, who have challenged the validity of various provisions of the Act, to consensually frame the questions of law to be answered by a five-judge Constitution bench.

The hearing in two land-acquisition matter is ongoing. The third case to be taken up by the bench related to the issue whether a lawmaker enjoys immunity under Article 194(2) of the Constitution from prosecution for accepting bribes to vote in Parliament or Assembly.

This crucial question with "wide ramification" and of "substantial public importance", will be dealt by the apex court as it has decided to revisit its 21 year-old verdict in the sensational Jharkhand Mukti Morch (JMM) bribery case earlier this month.

In 1998 five-judge constitution bench had held in the PV Narasimha Rao versus CBI case that lawmakers have immunity under the Constitution against criminal prosecution for their speech or vote given in the house.

CJI showed...

were suspended for a 2012 criminal case that had been mutually resolved.

She was later also made to prostrate before Gogoi's wife and made to rub her nose at her feet in the chief justice's residence, she alleged in her affidavit, adding that her disabled brother-in-law was removed from service at the Supreme Court.

All the 15 benches of the top court, meanwhile, commenced judicial proceedings at 10:45 am, 15 minutes behind the scheduled time, triggering speculation among lawyers about some urgent meetings of the judges.

campaign saw Prime minister Narendra Modi and BJP President Amit Shah going on a blitzkrieg as the saffron party seeks to gain a foothold in the state.

Modi has avoided any direct reference to Sabarimala or Lord Ayyappa, apparently to avoid any violation of election code.

He, however, assured the people of the state that the BJP would do everything from court to the Constitution to protect the traditions and beliefs of the people, if voted to power.

Modi attacked Rahul Gandhi for contesting from Wayanad, saying his choice of the constituency was not to send any message to the people of South India as the latter's party has been claiming, but a "message for appeasement politics".

The Left parties have taken exception to Gandhi's nomination from Wayanad, saying it defeated the goal of forming a formidable alliance against the BJP.

Gandhi and his sister Priyanaka Gandhi Vadra were the star campaigners of the Congress while UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi kept away from the heat and dust of the poll arena in the state.

Wayanad, considered a Congress stronghold, was represented by its late leader M I Shanavas in 2014 and 2009.

Another constituency in limelight -- Vatakara -- where K Muraliedharan of the Congress is pitted against CPI(M) strongman and its former Kanuridistrict secretary, P Jayarajan, is all set for a photo finish.

CPI(M) general secretary, Sitaram Yechury, Polit bureau members Prakash Karat and Brinda Karat, CPI leaders Sudhakar Reddy and D Raja were among those who criss crossed the state canvassing for the LDF, which has a lot at stake in Kerala -- the last Communist bastion.

Nine MLAs, 13 sitting MPs, including Gandhi, Tharoor, who is aiming for a hatrick of wins from the state capital.

The acrimonious

Sikkim SHG wins award at India Food Court event



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 APR:

As part of an effort to improve livelihood of rural masses in Sikkim through The Sikkim Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM) under Rural Management and Development Department, SRLM sponsors SHGs under it to participate in various national level events, a press release informs.

One such event

was organized by Government of Kerala under the banner of Cafe Kudumbashree-India Food Court from 27 Mar to 07 Apr, 2019 which was attended by seven Self Help Group members of Sikkim Rural Livelihood Mission.

Five of the SHG members were from Dzongu and 2 from Ranka Block. The group members

consisting of Dhan Maya

Tamang and Marina Tamang from Saipatiri SHG, Kalpana Chettri and Christina Lepcha from Rongyoung kyong SHG, Kincho Lhamu Lepcha from Nung Hee Lunglhem Gyathang SHG, Phurmit Lepcha from Kabringpar-tam SHG and Donka Lepcha Pashyal Chu SHG won the Best Performing SHG in the event.

During this event, the group earned net prof-

it of over Rs 2 lakh, the release mentions. The SHG group from Sikkim was awarded with a trophy and a certificate. The group got an opportunity to showcase traditional food items along with participants from different states of India.

The Sikkim participants sold traditional food items such as Momo, Phalay, Noodles, Khuri, etc.

Notification for last phase of Lok Sabha polls issued

NEW DELHI, APR 22

(PTI): The Election Commission Monday issued the notification for the seventh and last phase of the Lok Sabha elections in which 59 constituencies spread across eight states and union territories will go for polls.

While the first phase of election was held on April 11, the last phase will be held on May 19.

So far, two phases have taken place, while the third phase of polling is on Tuesday.

All the 13 seats of Punjab, four in Himachal Pradesh and one in Chandigarh will go for polls in a single phase on May 19.

The Election Commission had on last Tuesday postponed polling in the Tripura (East) Lok Sabha seat to the third phase on April 23 (Tuesday) from April 18, saying the prevailing law and order situation there is not conducive for holding free and fair polls.

3 polling staff suspended for entering poll records room in TN

MADURAI, APR 22 (PTI):

Three polling staff who violated the election code by entering a storage room here where polling records are kept, along with a woman Tahsildar, were suspended Monday by Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral Officer Satyabrata Sahoo. The Tahsildar was suspended Sunday by by Sahoo after a detailed inquiry into the incident.

The inquiry was ordered on a complaint by CPI(M) candidate in Madurai Lok Sabha seat, S Venkatesan on Saturday, who had also insisted that CCTV footage be shown to him.

District Collector Natarajan, who acceded to the request, also viewed the footage, which showed the officials entering the room and trying to take xerox copies of documents.

The CEO suspended the officials on the recommendations of the Collector, who had submitted a report to him.

Officials reiterated

With the issuance of the notification, the nomination process has started. April 29 is the last date of filing nominations and the scrutiny of papers will take place on April 30. The last date to withdraw from the electoral battle is May 2.

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal will head for voting in all the seven phases of the general elections.

The election will pit the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance against mostly different opposition groupings in various states, including of Congress, the Left and regional forces which are continuing to work out a grand alliance to minimise a division of votes against the saffron party.

The BJP has worked out a seat-sharing formula with some new allies and several old partners. However, opposition parties are yet to do so in several states.

Hoodas, Chautalas, Bhajan Lals, Bansil Lals slug it out in Haryana

CHANDIGARH, APR 22

(PTI): For decades, Haryana's politics has revolved around four prominent political families--the Hoodas, Chautalas, Bhajan Lals and Bansil Lals. Though none of these families are ruling the state now, they still wield considerable clout.

The three Lals--Devi Lal, Bansil Lal and Bhajan Lal--ruled the northern state by turn for decades, with the Hooda family calling the shots in recent years.

The BJP formed its first government in Haryana in 2014.

The Lals and Hoodas are once again testing their political fortune in the crucial 2019 Lok Sabha elections from Haryana, where polling on all the ten seats is scheduled to be held on May 12. The youngest to enter the fray is Bhavya Bishnoi (26), the third generation leader from the Bhajan Lal family, and Arjun (26), the fourth generation leader from the Chautala clan.

Bhavya is the grandson of former chief minister late Bhajan Lal and son of Congress leader Kuldeep Bishnoi.

Interestingly, he is pitted against sitting MP from Hisar Dushyant Chautala (31), great grandson of former deputy prime minister late Devi Lal.

From Hisar, also in the fray, is Union minister Birender Singh's

bureaucrat son Brijendra. The BJP candidate is great grandson of famous peasant leader Sir Chhottu Ram.

Dushyant Chautala, grandson of former chief minister Om Prakash Chautala and son of ex-MP Ajay Chautala, floated his own outfit Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) last year after a split in INLD following family feud.

The JJP is contesting all the ten seats in alliance with AAP in the state.

Like Dushyant, his cousin Arjun Chautala, younger son of INLD leader Abhay Singh Chautala, is the fourth generation leader of the Chautala clan to have thrown his hat into the poll ring.

Arjun is contesting from Kurukshetra seat as an INLD candidate.

From Rohtak, former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda's son Deepender Singh Hooda is seeking re-election as Congress candidate.

The Hooda senior, who is a sitting MLA, has also jumped into the fray and is contesting from Sonapat.

Shruti Chaudhary, former MP and grand daughter of former chief minister Bansil Lal, is contesting from Bhawan-Mahendergarh parliamentary constituency.

The filing of nomination papers will come to a close in the state on Tuesday.

Rahul rakes up Rafale deal 'corruption' in Amethi

Amethi (UP) Apr 22

(PTI): Raking up his often-repeated poll theme of alleged corruption in the Rafale deal, Congress president Rahul Gandhi Monday exhorted people to ask Prime Minister Narendra Modi what he got in return for benefiting Anil Ambani with Rs 30,000 crore in the fighter jet deal. Mocking at the prime minister's "main bhi chowkidaar campaign" he said, "When his (Modi's) theft was caught in the Rafale deal, he says 'hum sab chowkidar hain'."

Addressing an election rally in his parliamentary constituency here, Rahul said, "When the prime minister comes and makes false claims, just ask him why he gave Rs 30,000 crores to Ambani and what Ambani did for him in return."

Addressing the rally in Tiloi area here, Rahul Gandhi said, "Soon after the Congress comes to power after the Lok Sabha elections, an inquiry would be instituted in the Rafale deal and the truth will be before everyone."

"What the former former (French) President Francois Hollande said and what is in the French defence files will come out. Only two persons' names will come out - first Anil Ambani and second Narendra Modi," he said.

He asked the audience if anyone has seen a "chowkidar" before the house of a farmer or a labourer, Gandhi said for some time now, every farmer has been forced to do 'chowkidari' of his agriculture field.

In Amethi, Rahul Gandhi is pitted against Union Minister Smriti Irani, who, in a rally in the constituency on Sunday, urged voters to bid farewell to their "missing MP" in this election.

The voting for Amethi is scheduled to be held on May 6 in the fifth phase of elections. Dwelling on the Congress poll promise of NYAY - the Nyuntam Aay Yojna or the minimum income scheme which envisages a grant of Rs 6,000 a month to 20 percent of the poorest people in the country, he said there was a thinking behind it.

"Prime Minister imposed Gabbar Singh Tax (GST) and the money that was taken from your pocket went to those thieves abroad. The moment money went out of your pocket, you stopped purchasing and the factories closed down leading to unemployment," he said.

"Twenty-seven thousand youths lose their jobs every 24 hours," he claimed, adding "this is the work of the chowkidar".

Talking of the Congress' promise to create employment opportunities in the country, if voted to power, Rahul Gandhi, went on to say that after 2019, 33 per cent women will be seen in the legislature and also in government jobs.

He made the statement apparently in passing without making any specific promise to bring in the Women Reservation Bill in parliament, if voted to power, to reserve 33 percent of legislatures' seats for women.

Seed treatment training for Lungchok Salangdang farmers



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 APR:

Mevadir in collaboration with ATMA (Agricultural Technology Management Agency) organized a ward level training cum demonstration program on 22 Apr, 2019. The program was conducted at Lower Salangdang ward under Lungchok Salangdang GPU, West Sikkim in the presence of Dawa Tshering Sherpa (BTM from ATMA) along with Mevadir Master Trainers, Ghanendra Sharma and Bhumika Chettri, a press release informs.

Different methods of seed treatment and use of bio fertilizer called

Green SK Azoto were explained in the training. In the next session, farmers were taken to the field and a bed was prepared for sowing the seed and to demonstrate the package of practice of maize cultivation.

Participants were informed about the Organic input stores at Jorethang and Gyalshing where farmers can buy organic inputs, seeds and agricultural equipments.

An agronomist is also stationed in the stores who can be consulted for growing of any commercial crops and who would visit the farms and provide valuable technical backstopping.

Dikchu prepares for second phase of HPV vaccination



SUMMIT REPORT

DIKCHU, 22 APR:

Block Task Force meeting was convened here at the Primary Health Centre today to prepare for the second phase of Human Papilloma Virus vaccination to be held at Dikchu PHC.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Suraj Adhikari along with Dr Shi-

kha Gurung who highlighted the importance of HPV.

It was informed during the meeting that the second phase of HPV vaccination will be done from 23 of April to 04 May.

Also present in the meeting were Zilla and panchayat members, teachers and other health staff.

NIT Sikkim annual fest kicks off



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 22 APR:

NIT Sikkim kicked off their annual fest 'Udgam' with a flash mob at MG Marg on Sunday.

Top shuttlers blame BAI's administrative mess for missing Asian Badminton C'hip

NEW DELHI, APR 22 (PTI): Indian shuttlers H S Prannoy and B Sai Praneeth Monday claimed that administrative goof-ups by the Badminton Association of India have robbed them of participation at the Asia Badminton Championship, an allegation that the BAI refuted.

India will be represented by Kidambi Srikanth and Sameer Verma in men's singles at the USD 400,000 event in Wuhan, China, commencing on Tuesday after the BAI allegedly did not confirm the entries of Prannoy and Praneeth to the organisers.

"According to the process, Badminton Asia confederation sent the allocations informing who are the players who all have qualified from a country. All other countries like Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia have four entries even though Indonesia and Malaysian players are ranked way below me and Praneeth," Prannoy told PTI.

"So I enquired about the rules and came to know BAI didn't reply to the e-mails confirming our entries," added the 26-year-old, who had won a bronze at the last edition.

The BAI, however, said in a statement that Badminton Asia asked for only two entries in men's singles and it sent the names of Srikanth and Verma based on their world rankings.

"Based on the e-mail received from Badminton Asia, we were asked to send names of two players each for Men Singles, Women's Singles; three names each for Men's and Women's doubles and 4 players for mixed doubles. And the draw that was published based on the World Ranking of players dated week of

February 26, 2019, mentioned Kidambi Srikanth (World Ranking 6) and Sameer Verma (World Ranking 11) in the main draw as per the ranking eligibility list published by Badminton Asia and the same was followed to send the players for the Championships," the BAI said in a statement.

Prannoy, who had been battling a gastroesophageal reflux disease since last year, has missed out on a lot of time.

He was looking good in the last few weeks, having reached the quarterfinals at India Open, but now he won't have the chance to defend his semifinal ranking points.

"It happened in 2016 also. ABC was the last event for the Olympic race and me and Ajay Jayaram were also running for the Olympics. Then Kashyap and Srikanth got the entries, so that time also nobody told us. At that time also BAI didn't confirm.

"Last year we all played because the guy who send the entries, Abhijit, was doing everything correctly, now I don't know what is happening, who is missing. The system is entirely messed up," alleged the 26-year-old.

"Next year ABC will come in the Tokyo qualification and if they mess it up again then I won't be able to take it," added a frustrated Prannoy.

According to sources, the BAI did not send the entries of around 10 shuttlers, including top doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, for the New Zealand Open (April 30 to May 5), which starts the Olympic qualification race.

"Almost 10 entries have been missed even though players had sent

their names before the deadline and they are not even apologising for it," Prannoy claimed.

Satwik had been nursing a shoulder injury and was missing in action this season. They had planned to start the year with the New Zealand Open but now they have decided to utilise the time playing international challenger events in Brazil and Denmark.

"After we came to know that our entries were not sent we decided to play at Brazil and Denmark," Chirag said.

Prannoy also alleged that travelling for tournaments too have become difficult as the players mostly come to know about the ticket confirmation at the last moment.

"The guys who are handling our entries, travelling, transporting is messing it up for the last five months since Abhijit quit BAI.

"Ticketing is done at last moment. If we are travelling on Saturday, we are getting to know on that day itself and we are getting worse flights. Why can't they confirm our tickets five days before," asked Prannoy.

He also claimed that they were stranded in Hong Kong during the Asia Mixed team championship, apparently, due to another goof-up by the BAI.

"When we went to Hong Kong for ABC mixed team event, we were stranded at the airport for two hours. There was no transportation for us because BAI didn't send the request to the organisers," he said.

"The BAI official sent in the transportation request for Hong Kong event in the form of Wuhan event (individual event). Can you imagine that?," Prannoy said.

Women body urges Prez to take cognisance of sexual harassment allegations against CJI

NEW DELHI, APR 22 (PTI): President Ram Nath Kovind should take cognisance on his own of the allegations of sexual harassment levelled by a former Supreme Court employee against Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, a women's organisation said on Monday.

Delhi's 'Pragatisheel Mahila Sangathan', which staged a protest outside the apex court premises, said that the "President should also direct the second in command of judges in the hierarchy of judges of the Supreme Court to get the whole episode, as stated by the complainant, investigated in an impartial and

time bound manner".

In a statement, it said: "We as a country must stand up for the protection of life and liberty of the complainant and her family members."

It said the issue of independence of judiciary, raised by the CJI during the Saturday's hearing by a special bench, was important but that cannot be mixed up with the need to fairly verify the veracity of the complaint.

"The higher-ups including the CJI, the police, the Home Minister all have contributed and ganged up to throttle the complainant," it claimed.

It also criticised the Bar Council of India say-

ing that even without hearing the complainant or asking for an enquiry, the apex bar body has declared that the allegations are 'false and cooked up'.

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Ban on TikTok App: SC asks Madras HC to decide plea for lifting ban on April 24

NEW DELHI, APR 22 (PTI): The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Madras High Court to decide on April 24 a plea of Chinese social media app TikTok seeking interim relief of vacating its earlier ban order.

The top court said if the Madurai Bench of Madras High Court does not decide the plea for interim relief on Wednesday, when the matter is listed, then its ban order will stand vacated.

The high court had on April 3 directed the Centre to ban mobile application "TikTok" as it voiced concern over "pornographic and inappropriate content" being made available through such apps. The apex court had refused to stay the Madras High Court order.

A bench of Chief Jus-



tice Ranjan Gogoi and justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna on Monday said that Chinese company ByteDance, which owns TikTok app, can raise its grievances on April 24 before the High Court.

At the outset, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for ByteDance said that they were losing over Rs 4.5 crore a day and safety features of over two million subscribers are at risk.

He said that the order

of the Madurai bench of the high court should be stayed as it was an ex-parte order and they were not heard at all on the issue.

To this, the bench asked Singhvi as to when is the matter coming up for hearing before the high court.

Singhvi replied that the plea for interim relief is coming up for hearing on April 24 and the high court has appointed senior advocate Arvind Datar as amicus curiae to

assist it in the matter.

The bench said that the high court has to decide the plea for interim relief of vacating the ban order on April 24 and if it does not decide the plea, then the ban order would stand vacated.

The bench then disposed of the plea.

The company had earlier told the top court that there were over billion downloads of the mobile app and ex-parte orders were passed by the high court.

The high court had on April 3 directed the media not to telecast video clips made with TikTok. The app allows the users to create short videos and then share them.

It had asked the government if it would enact a statute on the line of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act in the US.

The high court's interim order came on a public interest litigation (PIL) which alleged the app encouraged paedophiles and the content "degraded culture and encouraged pornography".

Even after the havoc caused by Blue whale online game, which reportedly led to suicides by several people, officials have not learnt that they should be alert to these types of problems, the high court said.

Only when officials and policy makers were able to act on problems of society, decision could be taken to prevent these kind of apps, it had said.

The court had said it was evident from media reports that pornography and inappropriate content were made available through such mobile applications.

DTH players violating new norms to face strict action : Trai chief

NEW DELHI, APR 22 (PTI): Telecom regulator Trai on Monday warned of strict action against those cable TV and DTH players who are found violating its new tariff order and regulatory regime.

The watchdog also promised to shortly begin "audit" of subscriber management and other IT systems of errant operators.

Trai Chairman R S Sharma said consumer choice and consumer interest are "non negotiable" and "cannot be compromised" and that companies not adhering to rules will have to face the consequences.

"We have received complaints about inconvenience to customers. These complaints relate to software and systems put in place by distributors not enabling true choice for consumers, which is the aim of the



whole framework. If choice of channels is restricted...then basic intention seems to be to push packs and bouquets and push your own agenda. That is not the spirit of the regulatory framework," Sharma told PTI.

It is okay for consumers to choose packs or bouquets but the choice for TV viewing has to remain with customers, and they should be "enabled" to do so, he

said. "If you disable consumers from exercising their choice then it is a true violation of the framework. We have taken these things seriously, and we have issued show-cause notices to a number of distributors," the Trai chief said.

Trai will come down "heavily" on any entity which comes in the way of true implementation of its tariff order or causes any inconvenience to

consumers, Sharma said, terming consumer choice as the 'central theme' of new norms for cable and broadcasting sector.

"If you somehow try to circumvent that or negate it (consumer choice) then we are going to apply full regulatory strength to ensure that the entities comply," Sharma said.

Trai is in the process of empanelling auditing agencies and will soon begin audit of subscriber

management and other IT systems for companies that are found to be flouting norms.

"We have issued directions to nine companies and issued show-cause to five. Soon we will be auditing systems of various service providers to ensure compliance with the new regulatory framework," he said.

Sharma said Trai's message to stakeholders is that regulatory framework should be implemented in letter and spirit.

"And consumers should really get the power...don't try to play with it (tariff order) or circumvent it," Sharma said.

Last week, Trai said six cable TV players, including GTPL Hathway and Siti Networks, violated several rules, especially those related to new tariff order, and directed them to ensure compliance.

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(ANNEXURE)

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1. President: Delay Namgyal Barfungpa; Tadong Kothi, Tadong, East Sikkim
2. Vice President I: Tek Nath Acharya; Kaputhang, Pakyong, East Sikkim
3. Vice President II: Bal Krishna Pokhrel; Tintek Chisopani, Namchi
4. General Secretary I: Kilp Namgyal Barfungpa; MG Marg, Gangtok
5. General Secretary II: Durga Devi Darjee; Samdur, Ranipool, East Sikkim
6. Spoke Person: Bikash Darjee; Samdur Ranipool, East Sikkim
7. Press & Publicity Secretary I: Damber Chettri; Lower Samdur, East Sikkim
8. Press & Publicity Secretary II: Suman Manger; Lower Samdur, East Sikkim
9. Treasurer: Topden Bhutia; Central Pendam, Sajong, East Sikkim
10. Assistant Treasurer: Tilak Basnett; Upper Samdur, East Sikkim

If anyone has any objection to the registration of Sikkim National Peoples' Party (name of the proposed Party) they may send their Objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party), Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi- 110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Cultures Live

...provided we don't stifle them

Because some things need reiteration from time to time, we return here to arguments that have been tabled often and worries that have been raised frequently because the deliberations continue remain open, and will for some more time.

Turn to any corner of the world and one comes across voices of protest or groans of concern from a culture under threat, a way of life nearing extinction, a lifestyle on the brink. While there are always external elements like the influence of globalisation and the pressure to homogenise which eat away at the edifice of cultural uniqueness, the biggest threat comes from those who refuse to let cultures breathe - those who view it as a relic which needs to be preserved in the purest form as imagined or decided by them. Unfortunately for such groups, cultures are living systems which need to be nurtured, not pickled. But 'preserving' is easier since nurturing would entail allowing a culture to grow and that would go against ill-informed beliefs that cultures are perfect on which any growth is a blemish. Such mindsets refuse to accept that culture is not something that can be pickled and preserved as a museum piece for posterity. Culture, because it is about a people, is vibrant, alive and contemporary. It is spontaneous, almost instinctive, and not something that is learnt; it is imbibed. Since culture forms a part of evolution, it is also subject to fresh interpretations, nuances and relevance.

Because culture is about people, it cannot survive on state patronage alone - that would be relegating it to the status of a museum display. Some years ago, members of the Museums Association of India conferred in Gangtok. The focus of that conference was "Intangible Heritage - Preservation & Portrayal." In layman's terms, they were speaking of ecomuseology, the science, or rather the attempt, to allow cultures to breathe and thrive unencumbered in their natural habitats. But even this comes with its pitfalls. In the Journal of Indian Museums released at the conference, the editorial spoke of the "very amateurish and vulgar commercialisation" of culture that one sees in the tourism sector of Rajasthan. What was true of Rajasthan is true for Sikkim as well. The message - preservation of cultures should not come at the cost of reducing vibrant lifestyles into caricatures. This can happen only if the people to whom the culture belongs want to nurture it. For the same reason, if a people reject their Culture as ripe for extinction, no amount of preservation helps. Yet, a culture should not be dismissed even before one has understood it. It is important that the repository of culture is passed on to the next generation to nurture and craft as it feels right. And yes, people can discard a culture if they want to, but only after they have understood it and decided that it does not serve their purpose any more. What the current holders of culture can do is pass it on to the next generation in an as unadulterated a form as possible. What the younger generation, equipped with its better education, can do is research deeper into their roots. Then, even if the physical form of cultures dwindles away, at least the records will survive for future generations, if it feels so inclined, to revive.

What is required of the establishment is to provide the support which allows these aspirations to manifest.

WRITE US:

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

Mail us at: news@summittimes.com

It's a century since an international civil service came into being. Why it matters

HENNING MELBER
theconversation.com

This year marks a century since a formal international civil service was introduced into the world. The first time this particular breed of professionals came into existence was at the signing of the Versailles Peace Conference during 1919 and the subsequent establishment of the League of Nations in January 1920.

The United Nations (UN) will mark the occasion later this month when it discusses the challenges of multilateralism committed to a rules-based world order.

For global governance, an international civil service matters. Simply because it would be impossible to promote and maintain a rules-based world order without it.

An autonomous civil service is crucial for operations within the global governance system - an idea conceptualised a 100 years ago at the League of Nations. Already then, international civil servants were expected to be loyal to the aspirations of the international community and to remain neutral and independent of any authority outside their organisation.

Eric Drummond a British diplomat involved in the drafting of the League of Nations Covenant and the first Secretary General of the League of Nations (1919-1933), played a crucial and pioneering role in conceptualising an independent international civil service. But it was Dag Hammarskjöld, the UN's second Secretary General (1953-1961), who elaborated the concept. He set lasting standards that survive to this day.

An independent civil service was a huge part of Hammarskjöld's arsenal. As his numerous statements and speeches document, his terms in office were guided by strong and coherent ethics concerning the independence of the international civil service.

At the core of his ethics were integrity, loyalty to the principles of the UN Charter, independence from any national or regional interests and the

courage to uphold these values.

In my new book I pay tribute to Hammarskjöld's commitment to these principles as they applied to self-determination on the African continent.

The main focus is on the interpretation and implementation of the principles adopted by the UN member states through his diplomacy during the Cold War era. I present arguments and evidence why frameworks for governance, their interpretation and implementation matter.

THE UN AND DECOLONISATION

Decolonisation on the African continent gained momentum during the 1950s. The UN became an important forum for the growing demands for self-determination. As Secretary General, Hammarskjöld played a prominent role as events unfolded. These culminated in the Congo crisis of 1960/61. Faced with the secession of the Katanga province and Belgian destabilisation threats soon after independence, the Congolese government requested the UN to intervene. This resulted in one of the biggest UN interventions ever.

Hammarskjöld's role in the process is at the centre of the analysis. It examines the scope and limitations his office provided under the existing unequal power relations of the post-World-War-II order.

His support for the struggles for national sovereignty shows that individuals and their running of office do matter. This is true even though the policy of big powers imposes limitations on them.

When Hammarskjöld and 15 others in his company died in a plane crash near the Northern Rhodesian mining town of Ndola in the night of September 17/18, 1961, the adjacent white settler-minority regimes were visibly relieved. And despite the world-wide recognition and appraisal, the secret services of all big powers had closely followed his attempts to bring the Katanga province back into the Congolese territory.

Reassessing Hammarskjöld's anti-hegemonic stance suggests that there were more than enough parties satisfied that he could not bring his mission to the planned end. After all, the secessionist Ka-

New cholesterol study may lead you to ask: Pass the eggs, or pass on the eggs?

BRENT FOUNTAIN
theconversation.com

The recent news that eating three to four eggs a week is linked to a slight increase in risk for developing heart disease was a bummer for egg lovers. Should you stop eating eggs because of this new finding?

The study, published in March in the Journal of the American Medical Association, examined the association between dietary cholesterol or egg consumption with cardiovascular disease and all causes of mortality.

The analysis pooled the data of over 29,000 participants from six major U.S. studies conducted between 1985 and 2016. The authors reported that when 300 mg of dietary cholesterol were consumed per day (one large egg contains about 180 mg of dietary cholesterol), there was a 17% higher risk of a cardiovascular disease incident, including stroke, heart attack, coronary heart disease or heart failure. There was also an 18% higher risk of mortality from all causes when compared to not consuming dietary cholesterol.

When the most recent version of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans did not include a recommendation to limit consumption of dietary cholesterol, it left many consumers confused. Since the initial release of the Dietary Guidelines in 1980 and in the six following editions, there has always been a recommendation to limit total fat, saturated fat and dietary cholesterol.

The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines' key recommendation instead focused on consuming less than 10% of daily calories from saturated fats with no mention of dietary cholesterol. Many consumers concluded that dietary cholesterol must no longer matter.

I am a registered dietitian nutritionist and will try to explain the study and previous findings.

WHAT IS CHOLESTEROL ANYWAY?

Cholesterol is a waxy, yellowish fat that is produced in our liver and intestines. It is found in every cell of the body. It is a necessary component for many of our bodies' physiological and structural functions, including cell membrane construction, hormone production and other

vital functions. All the cholesterol we need can be produced by our bodies, so it is not essential that we consume dietary sources of cholesterol for our well-being.

While our bodies make cholesterol, we can also consume cholesterol from the foods we eat. These "dietary" sources of cholesterol are found in animal sources that produce cholesterol. So foods, such as beef, pork, lamb, chicken, eggs, fish and shellfish all contain cholesterol in various amounts. Small amounts of dietary cholesterol can also be found in items produced from animals, such as milk.

One reason the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee gave for not focusing on dietary cholesterol is because dietary cholesterol and saturated fats are found in similar foods. So, when one consumes foods with low amounts of saturated fats, they are generally consuming low amounts of dietary cholesterol.

Of course individual animal foods will differ, with some containing high amounts of cholesterol and low amounts of saturated fat, low amounts of cholesterol and high amounts of saturated fat, or anywhere in between. For example, a 2-ounce large egg contains 180 mg of dietary cholesterol and 1.5 g of saturated fat, while a 2-ounce top sirloin contains 60 mg of cholesterol and 3.5 g of saturated fat.

Plant sources, including vegetables, fruits, grains, nuts and seeds do not contain cholesterol. However, some plant sources naturally contain saturated fats, and through processing and preparation can have saturated fats or trans fats added to the final product. The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines recommended limiting saturated fats from all sources to less than 10% of total calories (that would equal about 22 g of saturated fat in a 2,000 kcal/day eating pattern).

IN THE END, THE GUIDELINES FACED FAT, NOT CHOLESTEROL

The 2015-2020 committee decided not to provide a daily limit of dietary cholesterol intake, which had been included in previous versions of the Dietary Guidelines. This was due in part to a lack of evidence regarding just how much of an effect dietary cholesterol had on an indi-

vidual's blood cholesterol level.

The advisory committee also noted that the average daily intake of dietary cholesterol in the United States was already below the 300 mg recommended threshold.

The omission of any definitive recommendation combined with the increasing popularity of low carbohydrate-high fat diets almost seemed an endorsement of dietary cholesterol. However, this was not the 2015-2020 DGA committee's intent.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE WITH HIGH BLOOD CHOLESTEROL?

Less than optimal levels of blood cholesterol continues to be a critical risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

The body produces several types of cholesterol, but two are of primary concern, HDL, "good cholesterol" which removes cholesterol from the body, and LDL, "bad cholesterol," which carries cholesterol to arteries and tissues. Over time high LDL levels of cholesterol can lead to a build-up of cholesterol in the arteries.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 125 million adults have a total cholesterol above the recommended 200 mg/dL.

High blood cholesterol has no symptoms but raises a person's risk for heart disease, the leading cause of death, and for stroke, the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S.

For those where high cholesterol is not a current concern, consuming eggs three to four times per week appears to pose little risk to their overall health, especially if they are following other aspects of a heart-healthy diet.

However, people who have high cholesterol should continue to pay close attention to sources of saturated fat and dietary cholesterol.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS EGG STUDY?

It is always difficult to draw a definitive conclusion based on the result of a single study. In fact, most scientists discourage doing so. It is also very important to consider the study's design.

Regarding the JAMA article, this was not a single study with over 29,000 participants. Instead, it was a collection of six large studies conducted over a long period of time

tanga province was under firm control of Belgian and other Western mining companies. It was the biggest supplier of uranium for the US nuclear arms race. As a mineral-rich resource of global relevance it was of highest geo-strategic interest.

The hitherto unclarified causes for the plane crash remain a matter of renewed investigations. These were triggered by the book of Susan Williams, Who Killed Hammarskjöld?

WHY GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP MATTERS

My book argues that despite all the limitations, values matter for a global governance body seeking to solve - or at least contain - conflicts through multilateral diplomacy. It highlights the battles over the power of definition by different interest groups in the era of decolonisation and the East-West conflict as well as the potential role and influence of an individual in charge of the UN Secretariat.

It recognises Hammarskjöld as an outstanding international civil servant, who believed in the spirit and word of the UN Charter and the virtues of a service guided by loyalty to its values and principles.

Individual leadership is important. But I also emphasise the limitations such an office and its incumbent have. The study also critically reflects on some of the failures and flaws during Hammarskjöld's time as Secretary General. After all, while he set the bar very high and remains widely respected, he was far from unailing.

Nevertheless, I argue, his term ended with his integrity intact. This was evident from the fact that towards the end of his time in office he was portrayed through a lens of suspicion and mistrust in the West and open calls for resignation in the East. Revealingly so, the newly independent states remained to a large extent supportive. For them he was "their" Secretary General.

A hundred years after the creation of an international civil service, Hammarskjöld deserves to be remembered for leading by example.

[the writer is Extraordinary Professor, Department of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria]

and then combined into one study.

Considering methods differed between the studies, it can be difficult to align the studies and participants exactly. While the authors worked hard to correct for this, it will still remain a limitation.

Second, the initial studies used self-reported dietary data which can result in inaccurate data and relied on a single measurement of both egg and dietary cholesterol intake, which may not reflect habitual intake.

Finally, while many additional heart disease risk factors were considered in this study, there is still a risk of "residual confounding," which results when some other variable may actually be responsible for an outcome instead of the main variable investigated.

So, where does such a study combined with our current knowledge of the subject leave the public?

People who have normal blood cholesterol levels can continue to eat foods such as eggs and shellfish, which contain high levels of dietary cholesterol but low levels of saturated fat. These individuals should also consider following the Dietary Guidelines key recommendations. Currently, there isn't sufficient evidence to conclude how much is too much for this segment of the population. And as previously noted, ongoing concern continues to be placed on the effect of saturated fat from all sources.

However, for those with high cholesterol, there remains strong evidence that a heart-healthy eating pattern that focuses on limiting daily intake of saturated fat, trans fatty acids and dietary cholesterol while consuming a variety of fiber-rich vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat and fat-free dairy, nuts, seeds and legumes is still very important.

Since determining to what degree each factor plays in every individual's blood cholesterol is impractical, the prevailing logic for those who have high blood cholesterol is to continue care with their primary health care provider and adopt an eating pattern that supports their cardiovascular health.

[the writer is Associate Extension Professor of Human Nutrition, Mississippi State University]

Assam gears up for third phase of Lok Sabha polls in 4 seats

GUWAHATI, APR 22 (PTI): Preparations are in place for the third and final phase of polling in four Assam Parliamentary constituencies on Tuesday, which will decide the fate of 54 candidates in fray. An electorate of 77,0622, including 38,15,335 male, 36,61,570 women and 157 of the third gender, will exercise their franchise in 9,577 polling booths, Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Sahu told PTI.

Tight security arrangements have been made across the four constituencies -- Dhubri, Kokrajhar (ST), Barpeta and Gauhati, to ensure smooth conduct of polling, he said.

Altogether 200 companies of security forces, both central and state, have been deployed, along with a minimum of one constable in every polling station, Sahu said.

Patrolling along the Indo-Bangla border in Dhubri constituency, borders with neighbouring states, railway stations and other sensitive areas have been intensified, while strict monitoring of social media and cyber-related crimes



is being done at the district level, police said.

A total of 38,308 polling personnel have been deployed in the third phase, Sahu said.

There are 524 remote polling stations in the last phase, with Dhubri having the highest of 314, followed by 140 in Barpeta and 70 in Gauhati. Kokrajhar has no remote polling stations.

Beside buses, the polling personnel are using boats to reach inaccessible areas on the river banks along with bullock carts, officials

said. District election officers have also made special arrangements for people with disabilities and senior citizens, particularly those above the age of 80, Sahu said.

There are 147 all-women polling stations in the four constituencies, with Gauhati having the highest of 79 booths. There are a total of 125 model stations in the four seats.

Prominent candidates in fray are two sitting MPs -- AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal in Dhubri and Indepen-

dent Naba Sarania in Kokrajhar, state social welfare minister Pramila Rani Brahma of BPF from Kokrajhar and Congress MLA Abdul Khaleque.

Gauhati has 17 candidates in fray, including five women, with the contest likely to be direct between two women candidates -- BJP's Queen Oja and Congress's Bobbeeta Sharma.

In Dhubri, there are 15 candidates with the fight likely to be triangular between sitting AIUDF MP Badruddin Ajmal, AGP's Zabeed Islam

and Congress candidate Abu Taher Bepari.

There are 13 candidates in fray in Barpeta, and the contest is also expected to be triangular between Abdul Khaleque of Congress, Kumar Deepak Das of AGP and AIUDF's Rafiqul Islam.

In the Kokrajhar (ST) seat, a quadrangular fight is likely between sitting Independent candidate Naba Sarania, BPF's Pramila Rani Brahma, Congress's Sabda Rabha and United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) nominee U G Brahma.

Five LS seats in West Bengal to go polls in the third phase

KOLKATA, APR 22 (PTI): Five West Bengal Lok Sabha constituencies - Balurghat, Maldaha North, Maldaha South, Jangipur and Murshidabad will go to the polls in the third phase of elections on Tuesday.

The ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, BJP and Congress are the main contenders in the five seats in which the fate of 61 candidates will be decided by a 80,23,852-strong electorate.

Four seats will see four-cornered contests between the three parties and the Left. It will be a three-cornered contest in Maldaha South as no Left party is in the fray in the seat.

The constituencies saw high-octane campaigning by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, BJP president Amit Shah and Congress president Rahul Gandhi who raised a series of issues ranging

from corruption to communalism, NRC to chit-fund scams and development to security, besides infiltration.

The TMC has fielded sitting MP Arpita Ghosh against BJP's Sukanta Majumdar in Balurghat. The Congress has named Sadik Sarkar and RSP, a Left Front constituent, has fielded Ranen Burman.

In Maldaha North, the TMC has named former Congress MP Mausam Benazir Noor against BJP's Khagen Murmu, while Congress has nominated Isha Khan Chowdhury and CPI(M) Biswanath Ghosh.

Maldaha South will see the ruling party's Moazzem Hossain locking horns with BJP's Sreerupa Mitra Choudhury.

Congress's Abu Hasem Khan Chowdhury is also in the fray. The CPI(M) has not fielded any candidate.

In Jangipur, TMC's Khalilur Rehman will

contest against former president and Congress leader Pranab Mukherjee's son Abhijit. The BJP has fielded Mafuja Khatun and the CPI(M) Zulfiqar Ali.

Abu Taher Khan is the TMC candidate from Murshidabad against BJP's Humayun Kabir. The Congress has nominated Abu Hena and the CPI(M) named Badrud-daza Khan for the seat.

The Election Commission will deploy 324 companies of central forces to cover over 92 per cent of the 8528 polling booths in the five Lok Sabha seats to ensure free and fair polling, officials said.

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

In another first, VVPAT will be used in all polling booths along with the EVMs, EC sources said.

EC approves repolling in 12 booths of Inner Manipur LS seat



IMPHAL, APR 22 (PTI): The Election Commission has approved re-polling in 12 booths of Inner Manipur parliamentary constituency, where the voting process was disrupted or stalled during the second phase on April 18.

Noting that the polling undertaken in these 12 booths has been declared "void" by the EC, Chief Electoral Officer PK Singh said Monday fresh elections will be held on April 24 amid enhanced security arrangements.

He asked the polling agents to take necessary measures to ensure free and fair polls.

"There will be ar-

rangements for webcasting and CCTV coverage both outside and inside the polling stations. The police department will provide adequate security arrangements for fresh polls," Singh said in a statement.

Repolling was necessitated in the 12 booths, five of which come under Chief Minister N Biren Singh's home constituency Heingang, after multiple complaints of EVM rigging and booth capture were registered with the state election office.

Violence had broken out in two polling stations of Kiyamgei Muslim

locality in Imphal East district, stalling the voting process.

In one of the stations, a group of miscreants broke EVMs and VVPATs, while in the other, a scuffle broke out between the election agents.

The opposition Congress had demanded re-polling in multiple booths of the Inner Manipur Lok Sabha seat, including the ones in Heingang assembly segment, alleging malpractices and rampant proxy voting. Manipur has two parliamentary seats, one of which went to polls on April 11 and the other on April 18.

CAPF deployed in 85 pc polling booths of East Tripura LS seat

AGARTALA, APR 22 (PTI): Calling upon voters to exercise franchise without fear, Director General of Police A K Shukla said Monday central forces have been deployed in 85 per cent of over 1600 booths in East Tripura (ST) Lok Sabha seat, where polls were postponed in view of the law and order situation.

Addressing a press meet, Shukla said the Election Commission (EC) has sent 42 additional companies of Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) for the second phase, taking the total number of companies deputed in the constituency to 108.

"We have deployed adequate forces in various locations of the constituency and patrolling has been initiated in remote and vulnerable areas.

"Altogether, 90 static surveillance teams (SST) and as many as flying squad teams (FST) will keep a tab on the flow of money and liquor," he said.

The EC deferred elections in East Tripura Lok Sabha seat from April 18 to April 23, stating that the atmosphere in the state was not conducive for holding elections.

The poll panel also shunted Additional Director General of Police Rajiv Singh for his alleged failure to thwart incidents pertaining to law and order in the lead up to the parliamentary polls.

Shukla said the "CAPF personnel will be manning 85 per cent of the 1,645 polling booths".

"We have also ar-

ranged 197 police mobile teams and 113 police barricades in East Tripura constituency. I want to assure the people that tight security measures were taken to stop all malpractices. No miscreant will be spared if found flouting rules," the DGP said.

Both international and interstate borders have been sealed and the BSF activated in vulnerable areas. The Tripura Police have so far registered 107 election-related complaints - 34 cases in the East and 73 in the West, Shukla added.

A total of 12,61,861 electorate - 6,41,515 male, 6,20,342 female and four of the third gender - will decide the fate of 10 candidates in East Tripura seat, spread across six districts, an election official said.

Prominent among those in the fray are BJP candidate Rebati Mohan Tripura, sitting MP Jitendra Chowdhury of the CPI(M) and Pragya Dev Burman of the Congress.

The BJP has promised to implement National Register of Citizens, Citizenship (Amendment) Bill and a pension scheme for farmers, if it is re-elected to power at the Centre.

The Congress, on the other hand, has assured voters that it would scrap the citizenship legislation and empower the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous Territorial Council.

The Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT), an ally of the ruling BJP in the state, is going it alone in the Lok Sabha polls.

Former deputy EC appointed special observer for Tripura

NEW DELHI, APR 22 (PTI): Former deputy election commissioner Vinod Zutshi was on Monday appointed as special observer for Tripura where the Lok Sabha polls to one of the seats was postponed in view of the law and order situation.

On Tuesday last, the Election Commission had postponed polling in the Tripura (East) Lok Sabha seat to the third phase on April 23 (Tuesday) from April 18, saying the prevailing law and order situation there is not conducive for holding free and fair polls.

Official sources said, the Commission has issued orders appointing Zutshi as special observer for Tripura.

Citing reports of the state chief electoral officer and special police observer, the poll panel had said, "The law and order situation prevailing is not conducive to the hold-



ing of free and fair poll." The returning officer had feared that "miscreant elements" may thwart the polling process in the constituency. Based on the ground and intelligence reports, he had requested for additional central police force.

Elections for the first phase were held on April 11, Congress and CPI(M) demanded re-polling in 460 polling stations on the ground of rigging.

Opposition parties had demanded fresh polls in Tripura West Lok Sabha constituency, claiming the April 11 election in the state

was "heavily rigged" by the ruling BJP. Denying the charge, the BJP had said the allegations were "baseless and politically motivated".

Around 77.6 per cent voter turnout was recorded in the first phase of election in West Tripura. Zutshi was one of the special observers appointed by the EC to ascertain when the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir can be held.

The EC had decided against holding assembly elections in the state along with Lok Sabha polls, fearing law and order situation.

EC transfers seven police officers in West Bengal

KOLKATA, APR 22 (PTI): The Election Commission on Monday transferred seven police officers in West Bengal, a day before the third phase of Lok Sabha polls in the state.

According to a notification issued by the EC, three police officers in Murshidabad district, two police officers in Paschim Burdwan district have been removed by the EC, the notification said.

Besides Sukamal Kanti Das, the SDPO of Bishnupur in Bankura district, Krishnendu Ghosh, IC Bijpur in North 24 Parganas district was also transferred by the Commission.

It also requested the West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer Aariz Aftab "to ensure that the officers transferred must be relieved forthright, without waiting for the

reliever, by handing over charge to the officer, whom they report to."

So far, the Commission has transferred nearly 12 police officers, including Kolkata Police Commissioner Anuj Sharma and replaced him by Dr Rajesh Kumar.

It had also transferred Commissioner Bidhannagar city police Gyanwant Singh and removed the Superintendents of Police in Birbhum and Diamond Harbour districts.

The transfer of the senior police officers had drawn the ire of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who had alleged that it was done at the "behest" of the opposition BJP leaders.



Neymar returns as Mbappe flattens Monaco in title party

PARIS, APR 22 (AFP): Neymar joined the Paris Saint-Germain title party on Sunday when he made his first appearance since January as Kylian Mbappe swept aside Monaco with a hat-trick in a 3-1 win for the newly-crowned Ligue 1 champions.

Mbappe took his league tally for the season to 30 following his treble, which came just hours after PSG were crowned champions for the sixth time in seven years when closest challengers Lille dropped points.

Neymar's return at the start of the second half replacing Layvin Kurzawa is the cherry on the cake for Thomas Tuchel's side, who had been without the Brazilian superstar since January 23 with a right foot injury.

Edinson Cavani also returned to action as a second half substitute, having a late strike correctly ruled out for offside, meaning that PSG's famed front three are back together



following months apart.

Mbappe has thrived in the absence of his strike partners, and gave his side a 2-0 first-half lead with two neat finishes, the first coming in the 15th minute and the second seven minutes before the break after a beautiful pass from Dani Alves.

The World Cup win-

ner then put the three points beyond doubt when he tapped in Alves' low cross nine minutes after the break.

Aleksandr Golovin rolled home a consolation for the away side, who remain in trouble in 16th place and are only four points away from the relegation play-off spot. On Sunday after-

noon Lille ended their challenge with a goalless draw at Toulouse that left them 16 points behind PSG with only five games to play and allowed capital club to celebrate the title after missing chances to seal it in their previous matches.

The Parisians have struggled with key injuries in recent weeks

and they lost Italian international midfielder Marco Verratti with what looks like a knock to his left ankle.

PSG took the field wearing a shirt with a large image of Notre Dame replacing the usual sponsor's logo. "Notre-Dame" replaced the player names on the back of the shirts.

The iconic Paris cathedral was damaged in a spectacular blaze last Monday.

The club said that they would put a limited edition of the shirts on sale on line during the match for 100 euros each. The club said the money "will be donated to associations related to firefighters".

The club also posted a "Homage to Notre Dame" video on their web site in which players praised the team-work of the Paris fire brigade and made a gesture that imitates the two famous towers that form part of the cathedral's facade.

The club said it was also using Sunday's game to thank the firefighters.

AIFF signs coaching convention with AFC



NEW DELHI, APR 22 (PTI): All India Football Federation (AIFF) has signed an agreement called Coaching Convention with the Asian Football Confederation to extensively focus on coaching rules and methods.

The Convention is an endorsement tool which will highlight the regulations and guidelines of coach education.

AIFF's Acting Technical Director Savio Medeira said the Coaching Convention will help the coaches to manage their schedule in a better way.

"It will be done in modules and it will also help them to work on their deficiencies during the break. Coaches will also have to undergo assignments which was not there before. Overall it will help coaches to be more confident and efficient in their approach towards coaching," Medeira said.

The licensing system will be refurbished in 2020 and the coaching diplomas will be broken into modules. "Coaching

licenses carry paramount importance with regards to pursuing a professional career which remains valid for three (3) years. Unless a coach does not undergo Continued Professional Development (CPD) courses during the period of three years, the license will be revoked," the AIFF said in a statement.

On the other hand, the License will be renewed for another three years if the candidate acquires his CPD of 21 points. Otherwise, the person will have to repeat the specific diploma course again.

With regards to the 21 CPD points within three years, a coach must gather a minimum of four points but not more than seven points per year. If a particular coach gathers four CPD points every year, he/she will be allowed six months of additional time to complete the minimal 21 CPD points. Should they fail to do so, the coaches will be advised to re-attend the course. "Coaches and as-

sistant coaches assigned with respective responsibilities of professional teams, club academies, accredited academies etc will have to collect 3 CPD points from off-field platforms i.e. seminars, workshops and online courses annually," the statement said.

Medeira said the CPD will "help the coaches who aren't employed to stay connected".

"CPD is one of the criteria of the convention to renew their licenses. It will help coaches who are not employed to stay connected to the latest trends of the game by attending CPD courses. If coaches don't attend refresher courses and collect credit points within 3 years they will have to repeat the entire course again," he said.

The subjects to be considered for CPD credits criteria: match analysis, nutrition, sports science, conditioning and fitness, sports leadership, sports-related management and additional coaching courses.

MS did what he does best, give us a massive scare: Kohli

BENGALURU, APR 22 (PTI): Virat Kohli is more than aware of Mahendra Singh Dhoni's penchant to go for the impossible and was admittedly "scared" with the former India captain's last over pyrotechnics during an IPL encounter between Royal Challengers Bangalore and Chennai Super Kings.

He smashed an unbeaten 84 off 48 balls and nearly got the required 26 runs off the last over bowled by Umesh Yadav before Parthiv Patel's 'Dhoni like calm' behind the stumps ensured RCB's victory by one run.

Understandably skipper Kohli went through a range of emotion as he spoke about Dhoni's exploits and how impressive the bowlers were till 19th over. "Feels good to win a game by a small margin. We've lost a couple by small margins. MS did what he does best and he gave us all a massive scare. Off the last ball, that was the last thing I would have expected to happen. There was a whole lot of emotion," Kohli said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

In fact in the 19th over, Dhoni couldn't hit young Navdeep Saini, who hit the back of length and kept the seasoned campaigner quiet.

Kohli was all praise for Saini, who is one of the five stand-bys for the ODI World Cup in England as well as the designated net bowler.

"They (bowlers) showed a lot of composure playing against a side like CSK. We were outstanding with the ball until the 19th over mark. Defending 160 on that sort of pitch and the amount of dew we had was an outstanding effort. "Especially Saini, playing his first season (he was in the side last season but didn't play). He's shown a lot of heart."

Kavinder Bisht stuns world champ, Panghal beats Dusmatov again to enter Asian C'ship semis

BANGKOK, APR 22 (PTI): Kavinder Singh Bisht (56kg) upstaged reigning world champion Kairat Yerallyev, while Amit Panghal (52kg) edged past familiar foe and Olympic champion Hasanboy Dusmatov, assuring themselves of medals at the Asian Boxing Championships here Monday.

In the women's draw, world silver-medallist Sonia Chahal (57kg) advanced to the last-four stage at the continental showpiece.

Bisht clinched a split verdict over Yerallyev, who hails from Kazakhstan, in a high-intensity contest to assure himself of a maiden Asian championship medal.

Panghal, who claimed a bronze in the 2015 edition of the event, also secured a hard-fought 3-2 triumph over Dusmatov, the former world champion Uzbek he defeated to claim the Asian Games gold just a few months ago. Before that, the two boxers had also clashed in the world championship quarters where Dusmatov had emerged triumphant. Sonia too fetched a similarly close victory over Korea's Jo Son Hwa.

Also making the semis was national champion Deepak Singh (49kg), who did not have to step inside the ring to fight for the spot after Afghanistan's Ramish Rahmani gave him a walkover owing to injury. However, world championship bronze-medallist Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) bowed out of contention after a quarterfinal loss to reigning world champion Chen Nien-Chin of Taiwan.

The highlight of the day was Bisht, who came into the tournament after a gold medal at the Gee-Bee Tournament in Finland. The



boxer from Uttarakhand showed tremendous grit against a tough opponent. Yerallyev succeeded in drawing Bisht into a trap in the opening three minutes of the bout but the Indian fought back hard in the next two rounds.

Bisht fought mostly with a shell guard and managed to thwart Yerallyev's relentless attacks.

By the second round, the Kazakh, who is a two-time bronze-medallist at the event, dropped his guard. Although Yerallyev seemed the quicker of the two, Bisht was managing to outmanoeuvre him quite comfortably.

Yerallyev was also a bronze-medallist from last year's Asian Games. Sonia also endured an exhausting bout against Hwa but came out trumps. The fast-rising boxer from Haryana struck some clean jabs in her thrilling win. In the evening session, Panghal and Dusmatov had the crowd

on its feet with an engrossing showdown. The Armyman from India dominated the opening round with powerful uppercuts and jabs.

Dusmatov came back strongly and was quite impressive in the second round but the resolute effort was not enough to find favour with the judges. However, it was deja vu for Borgohain.

She was up against a rival, who defeated her just months ago in the world semifinals. The stage was different but the result was the same as Chen dominated the bout from start to finish for a 5-0 triumph. In another women's bout, Seema Poonia (+81kg) lost to China's Yang Xiaoli 5-0, ending another disappointing international outing for her. Poonia had got a bye into the quarters.

In the last Indian bout of the day, Rohit Tokas (64kg) fought hard but could not avert a 2-3 loss to Mongolia's Chinzorig Baatarsukh in the quarterfinals.

BCCI shifts IPL final to Hyderabad after TNCA fails to get permission on locked stands

NEW DELHI, APR 22 (PTI): The Indian Premier League final scheduled on May 12 was Monday shifted from Chennai to Hyderabad after the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) failed to get requisite permission from the government to open the three closed stands.

While the Chennai Super Kings still have a chance to play Qualifier 1 at home if they finish among the top two teams in the league but the Eliminator (May 8) and Qualifier 2 (May 10)

has been shifted to Visakhapatnam.

"We had to shift the matches from Chennai to Hyderabad after TNCA intimated us that they have not procured the requisite permission to open the three stands I, J and K," Committee of Administrators (CoA) chief Vinod Rai told PTI on Monday. "Since the gate sales of the knock-out matches is BCCI's prerogative, we had to take a call. We would be having two knock-out matches in Vizag," he added.

The three stands make up for more than 12,000 tickets and BCCI would have lost out on a few crores of gate money.

The stands have remained closed since 2012 save one international match between India and Pakistan when an exception was made.

Asked if all the knock-out matches' ticket sales are BCCI's prerogative, why was Qualifier 1 allotted to Chennai, Rai reasoned: "CSK, by virtue of being defending champions, were allotted the

Qualifier 1 and final. Now if they finish in top two, you cannot take away all the games. They deserve to get at least one of the knock-out games."

Hyderabad only got the final and not the Eliminator or Qualifier because of the general elections in the Cyber city on May 6, 8 and 10.

The first three-team mini women's IPL will be held from May 6-10 in Jaipur with a new team Velocity being added to the existing Trailblazers and Supernovas.

Davies sets top four target for Spurs

London, Apr 22 (AFP): Ben Davies has challenged Tottenham to win their last four Premier League games as they aim to get their top four push back on track against Brighton on Tuesday. Mauricio Pochettino's side suffered a setback in their bid to repeat their league finish for a fifth straight season when they were beaten 1-0 at Manchester City at the weekend.

It was a frustrating end to a memorable week that saw Tottenham reach the Champions League semi-finals with a dramatic away goals success at City.

Aided by Arsenal's surprise loss to Crystal Palace on Sunday, Tottenham remain third, but they will drop to fourth if Chelsea defeat Burnley on Monday.

With the race for qualify for next season's Champions League heating up, Tottenham defender Davies knows his team have no margin for error in their remaining fixtures. Davies believes only four successive victories will be enough to secure Tottenham's place in Europe's elite club competition.

"It's never easy to reflect but look, it's about kicking on and trying to win every game between now and the end of the season," Davies said.

"That's the target and it starts against Brighton on Tuesday." Demanding Tottenham display a more predatory instinct in front of goal after



missing a host of chances in the City defeat, Davies said: "It's always hard to see any positives straight after a defeat.

"We certainly created the chances but unfortunately we didn't take them this time.

"That's the difference between this game and Wednesday night, we were a bit more clinical."

Brighton are desperate for points as they battle to avoid relegation, but Davies hopes the feelgood factor from Tottenham's new stadium will continue to provide a welcome lift.

Pochettino's men have won all three of their matches at the 1 billion arena, scoring seven goals and conceding none.

- SPURS MOMENTUM - "It will be tough, they are fighting for everything and they will go the full 90 minutes to try to get something out of the game. We have to be ready," Davies said.

"We've played well at the new stadium so far and we need to keep that momentum going for the rest of the season." Brighton are just one place

and three points above the relegation zone after Saturday's 0-0 draw at Wolves. Chris Hughton's side haven't won in their last six matches in all competitions.

But Seagulls keeper Mat Ryan is adamant they can still hold off Cardiff in the battle to avoid crashing into the Championship. "The point means a lot in the context of things, it almost feels like we've won the game," Ryan said after the Wolves fixture.

"With our superior goal difference, it could prove to be big come the end of the season - any points are vital at this stage of the campaign.

"Given our recent run it feels good to come here and give a reaction, and the clean sheet is testament to the effort of everyone. "Every game is a final now and we have to leave everything out on the pitch every time we go out there.

"Recently we felt like we haven't been wanting a result as much as our opponents, and that was frustrating because it's what we based ourselves on."

Mudslide kills 17 in Colombia



BOGOTA, APR 22 (AFP): At least 17 people were killed and 13 others were missing after a mudslide that buried eight houses early Sunday in southwestern Colombia, authorities said.

The national risk management

agency gave the updated toll after rescue efforts in Rosas, in the department of Cauca, were halted at nightfall.

Reducing by two an earlier toll of 19 killed that was given by firefighters, it added that five people had also been injured.

Meanwhile, the estimated number of missing was confirmed by an agency official speaking on condition of anonymity.

A search had been underway for people who might be trapped under rubble. The injured were

treated at hospitals near the scene of the disaster, the agency said. It attributed the mudslide to the heavy rains that have battered the country for several weeks. Mudslides are common during Colombia's rainy season.

Small earthquake hits Alaska's Prince William Sound region

VALDEZ (ALASKA), APR 22 (AP): The Alaska Earthquake Center reports that a small earthquake has hit the Prince William Sound region of Alaska.

The Fairbanks-based center says a magnitude 3.0 earthquake struck at 11:48 am Sunday about 24 miles (39 kilometers) northwest of Valdez, which has about 3,900 residents.

The center adds that residents of Valdez felt it.

The earthquake had a depth of 11 miles (18 kilometers.) The center says that at 6:04 pm Sunday, a magnitude 3.1 earthquake hit a spot 26 miles (42 kilometers) east of Knik-Fairview, a town of about 900 people

in the Anchorage metropolitan area.

The earthquake had a depth of 20 miles (33 kilometers).

The center says that at 10:31 pm Saturday, a magnitude 5.1 earthquake hit the Andreanof Islands region of Alaska, which is about 11,200 miles west of Anchorage. This earthquake had a depth of about 8 miles (13 kilometers).

At 7:39 pm Saturday, a magnitude 2.9 earthquake hit a spot 4 miles (79 kilometers) south-west of Sterling, a town of about 5,600 people.

The center says the earthquake had a depth of about 22 miles (35 kilometers) and was felt in Sterling.

Trump decides not to grant waiver to India, 7 others importing Iranian oil

Lalit K Jha Washington, Apr 22 (PTI): In a move that could have implications on India's energy security, US President Donald Trump on Monday decided not to grant sanctions exemptions to any oil customers of Iran, further squeezing Tehran's top export commodity.

"President Donald J. Trump has decided not to reissue Significant Reduction Exceptions (SREs) when they expire in early May. This decision is intended to bring Iran's oil exports to zero, denying the regime its principal source of revenue," White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said. The US re-imposed sanctions on Iran last November, after President Trump pulled out of the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

The US' move which is seen as an escalation of President Trump administration's "maximum pressure" on Iran comes after it last year gave temporary 180-days waiver to eight countries, including India, China, Turkey and Japan among others. As a result of this decision all countries including India would have to bring down its import of oil from Iran by May 2. Greece, Italy, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan have already heavily re-

duced their oil imports from Iran. Iran is India's third-largest oil supplier behind Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Iran supplied 18.4 million tonnes of crude oil during April 2017 and January 2018 (first 10 months of 2017-18 fiscal).

The US, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, three of the world's great energy producers, along with its friends and allies, are committed to ensuring that global oil markets remain adequately supplied, Sanders said.

"We have agreed to take timely action to assure that global demand is met as all Iranian oil is removed from the market," she said. In a statement, Sanders said the Trump Administration and its allies are determined to sustain and expand the maximum economic pressure campaign against Iran to end the regime's destabilising activity threatening the United States, its partners and allies, and security in the Middle East.

"The President's decision to eliminate all SREs follows the designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation, demonstrating the US' commitment to disrupting Iran's terror network and changing the regime's malign behaviour.

Curfew lifted a day after Sri Lanka rocked with multiple blasts



COLOMBO, APR 22 (PTI): Sri Lanka on Monday lifted the curfew which was indefinitely imposed after the island nation was rocked with eight blasts targeting churches and hotels that killed over 215 people.

Sri Lankan government on Sunday imposed curfew with immediate effect after the blasts which was lifted at 6 am Monday morning, police said.

A string of eight powerful blasts, including suicide attacks, struck churches and luxury hotels frequented by foreigners in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, killing 215 people, including three Indians, and shattering a decade of peace in the island nation since the end of the brutal civil war with the LTTE.

According to the Sir

Lankan authorities, 13 people were arrested in connection with the bomb blasts. However, the government said it will not disclose the details of the suspects involved in the attacks to prevent them from getting publicity.

Don't give extremists a voice. Don't help to make them martyrs," State Minister of Defence, Ruwan Wijewardene, told reporters when asked for details of those in custody.

However, police officials privately said the suspects were all from the minority Muslim community.

Police said the van which had carried explosives to carry out bomb attacks at the three hotels was arrested with its Muslim driver.

A safe house where

the bombers had lived for nearly three months leading to the attacks were discovered in the south of Colombo suburb of Panadura.

Sri Lanka Air Force said it found an improvised explosives device along a road leading to the departure terminal at the Colombo international airport Sunday night.

It was a crude six-foot pipe bomb that was found by the roadside, an air force spokesman said.

We have removed it and safely defused it at an air force location, he added. Sri Lankan Airlines said there were disruptions to flights and has asked leaving passengers to report to the check in counters at least four hours prior to departure because of tight security checks at the International airport.

Priest recounts moment bomb went off in Lankan church

COLOMBO, APR 22 (PTI): The assistant parish priest of the St. Sebastian Church, one of the targets of the series of bomb blasts in Sri Lanka, on Monday said that the Easter Sunday service was reduced to people wailing and shouting and nobody knew what was happening. Sanjeeva Appuphamy said that hundreds of people had turned up for the Easter celebrations in the church and it was almost the end of morning's celebrations when the bomb went off.

The series of eight bomb blasts, that targeted Easter worshippers and high end hotels popular with international guests, killed over 290 people and injured more than 500 others.

Police have till now arrested 24 people, reportedly members of a

Muslim radical group, in connection with the country's bloodiest attacks in a decade. "I heard a big noise, Appuhamy told CNN, adding that he did not see the bomb but when the dust cleared, the church looked like a disaster site.

Broken glass, dust, all of a sudden covered all the church. People were shouting, weeping, we didn't know what was happening," the priest added. Appuhamy said, We can build up our church but we cannot build up their lives.

The church, built in 1946, is one of the many churches in Sri Lanka dedicated to St Sebastian who is considered a martyr in the Catholic Church history.

Bishop J D Anthony said that the church's rural location made it an unlikely target. "We nev-

er expected such a thing to happen, especially in a place of religious worship. This church is in a very rural area so we never expected this to happen here, he said.

Father Edmond Tillikeratne, social communications director for the Archdiocese of Colombo, said that the blast took place after Easter Mass, and that there were about 30 bodies lying in the area of the church.

He said three priests had been celebrating the mass at the time of the blast. Two of them were badly injured by flying glass and debris, and one was only lightly injured because he was behind the altar.

He estimated that more than a thousand people had come to the church for Easter Sunday "because it is a special day." Many came from villages, he said.

Possible intel failures to be examined in Sri Lanka blasts

COLOMBO, APR 22 (AP): Police in Sri Lanka said Monday the investigation into the Easter Sunday bombings will examine reports that the intelligence community failed to detect or warn of possible suicide attacks before the violence.

The nine bombings of churches, luxury hotels and other sites was Sri Lanka's deadliest violence since a devastating civil war in the South Asian island nation ended a decade ago.

Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekara said Monday the death toll had risen overnight to 290 dead with more than 500 wounded.

Two government ministers have alluded to intelligence failures.

Telecommunications Minister Harin Fernando tweeted, "Some intelligence officers were aware of this incidence. Therefore there was a delay in action. Serious action needs to be taken as to why this warning was ignored."

He said his father had heard of the possibility of an attack as well and had warned him not to enter popular churches.

And Mano Ganesan, the minister for national integration, said the security officers within his ministry had been warned by their division about the possibility two suicide bombers would target politicians.

Gunasekara said the Criminal Investigation Department investigating the blasts will look into the reports.

Defence Minister Ruwan Wijewardena previously described the blasts as a terrorist attack by religious extremists, and police said 13 suspects were arrested, though there was no immediate claim of responsibility. Wijewardena said most of the bombings were believed to have been suicide attacks.

The explosions mostly in or around Colombo, the capital collapsed ceilings and blew out windows, killing worshippers and hotel guests in one scene after another of smoke, soot, blood, broken glass, screams

and wailing alarms. Victims were carried out of blood-spattered pews.

"People were being dragged out," said Bhanuka Harischandra, of Colombo, a 24-year-old founder of a tech marketing company who was going to the Shangri-La Hotel for a meeting when it was bombed.

"People didn't know what was going on. It was panic mode." He added: "There was blood everywhere." Most of those killed were Sri Lankans. But the three bombed hotels and one of the churches, St. Anthony's Shrine, are frequented by foreign tourists, and Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry said the bodies of at least 27 foreigners from a variety of countries were recovered.

The US said "several" Americans were among the dead, while Britain, India, China, Japan and Portugal said they, too, lost citizens.

The streets were largely deserted Monday morning, with most shops closed and a heavy deployment of soldiers and police. Stunned clergy and on-lookers gathered at St. Anthony's Shrine, looking past the soldiers to the stricken church.

The Sri Lankan government lifted a curfew that had been imposed during the night.

But most social media remained blocked Monday after officials said they needed to curtail the spread of false information and ease tension in the country of about 21 million people.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said he feared the massacre could trigger instability in Sri Lanka, and he vowed to "vest all necessary powers with the defence forces" to take action against those responsible.

The Archbishop of Colombo, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, called on Sri Lanka's government to "mercilessly" punish those responsible "because only animals can behave like that."

The scale of the bloodshed recalled the worst days of Sri Lanka's 26-year civil war, in

which the Tamil Tigers, a rebel group from the ethnic Tamil minority, sought independence from the Buddhist-majority country.

The Tamils are Hindu, Muslim and Christian.

Sri Lanka, off the southern tip of India, is about 70 per cent Buddhist. Scattered incidents of anti-Christian harassment have occurred in recent years, but nothing on the scale of what happened Sunday.

There is also no history of violent Muslim militants in Sri Lanka.

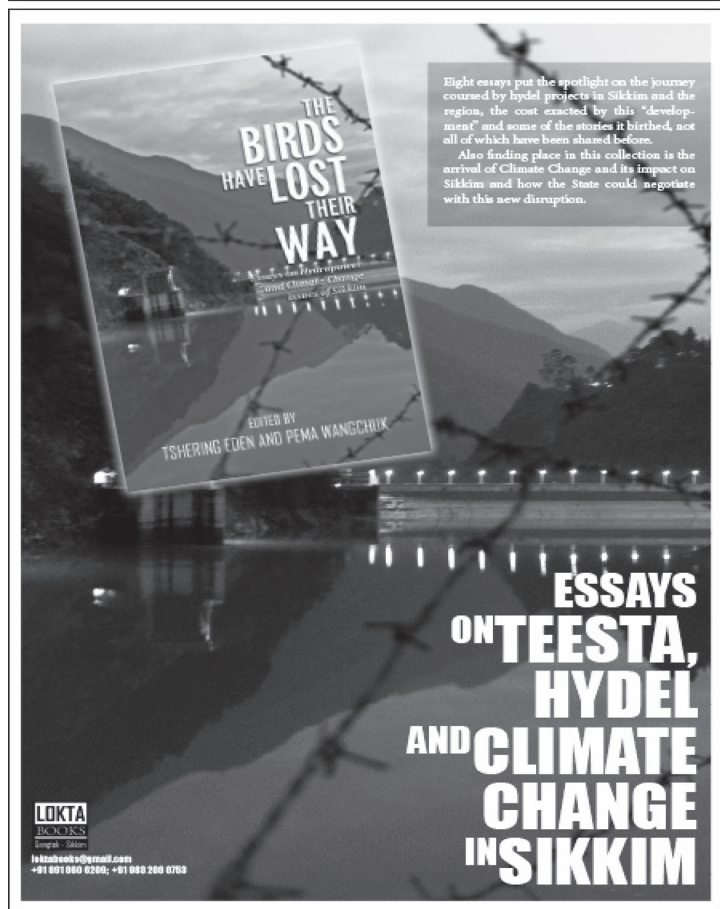
However, tensions have been running high more recently between hard-line Buddhist monks and Muslims. Two Muslim groups in Sri Lanka condemned the church attacks, as did countries around the world, and Pope Francis expressed condolences at the end of his traditional Easter Sunday blessing in Rome.

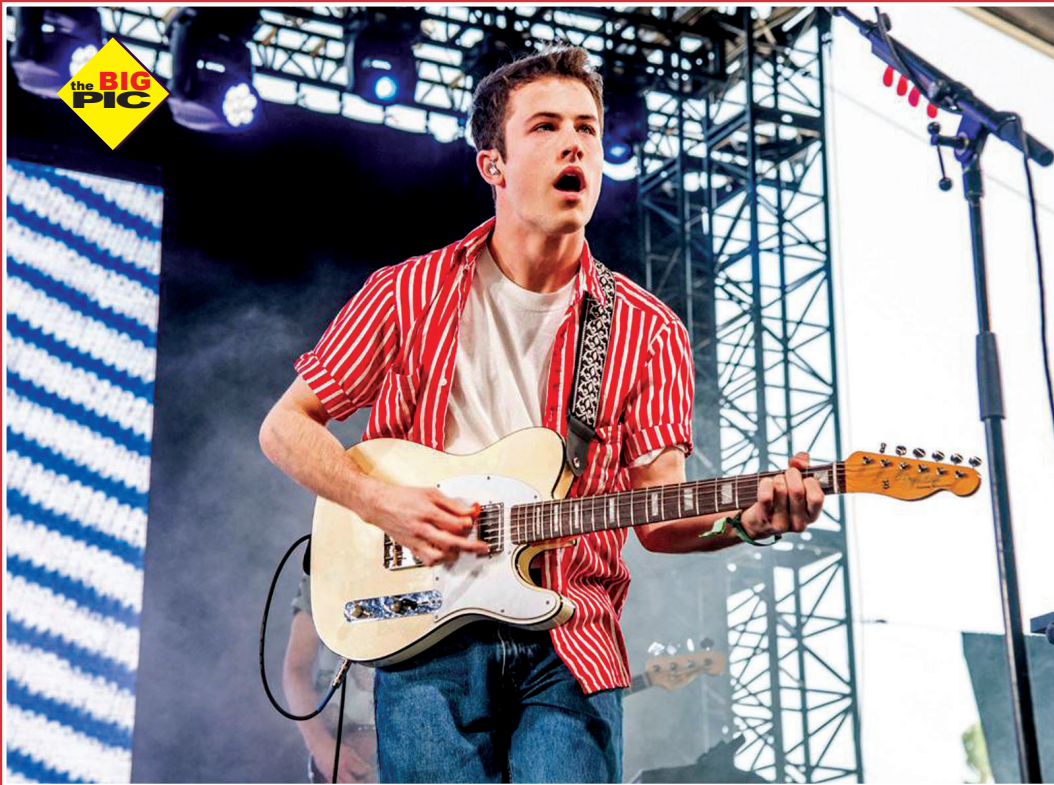
"I want to express my loving closeness to the Christian community, targeted while they were gathered in prayer, and all the victims of such cruel violence," Francis said. Six nearly simultaneous blasts took place in the morning at the shrine and the Cinnamon Grand, Shangri-La and Kingsbury hotels in Colombo, as well as at two churches outside Colombo, according to a Sri Lankan military spokesman, Brig. Sumith Atapattu.

A few hours later, two more blasts occurred just outside Colombo, one of them at a guesthouse, where two people were killed, the other near an overpass, Atapattu said.

Also, three police officers were killed during a search at a suspected safe house on the outskirts of Colombo when its occupants apparently detonated explosives to prevent arrest, authorities said. The Shangri-La's second-floor restaurant was gutted, with the ceiling and windows blown out. Loose wires hung down and tables were overturned in the blackened space.

From outside the police cordon, three bodies could be seen covered in white sheets.





ROCK OUT! The 13 Reasons Why star, Dylan Minnette shows off his guitar skills while performing with his band Wallows during Coachella 2019.

Deepika-Vikrant's kissing scene from 'Chhapaak' sets leaked

MUMBAI, APR 22 (PTI): A video from the sets of "Chhapaak" in New Delhi, which features Deepika Padukone and Vikrant Massey kissing, has been leaked online.

The new video is a part of a series of several leaks from the Delhi shoot schedule of the film. Directed by Meghna Gulzar, the film is based on the life of acid attack survivor Laxmi Agrawal, played by Deepika.

The 20-second-long footage features Deepika and Vikrant paired opposite each other for the first time kissing while seated on the roof of a building. As they kiss, the crowd is heard cheering for the duo. A source close to the film said post the leaks, "Security has been tightened on the sets". When contacted, Massey refrained to comment.

This is not the first leak for "Chhapaak", as several videos featuring Deepika have surfaced on the Internet. Recently, a video featuring the "Padmaavat" star dressed in a school uniform was doing rounds online.

Another video from the sets captured Deepika, in and as her character Malti, filming a sequence on a street without realising that a phone camera is capturing her. "Chhapaak", backed by Fox Star Studios, is scheduled to release on January 10, 2020.

'Andhadhun' crosses Rs 300 cr mark at China box office



MUMBAI, APR 22 (PTI): Thriller drama "Andhadhun" emerged a major box office draw in China raking in a record collection of over Rs 300 crore (USD 43.4 million), the makers announced Monday. The film, featuring Tabu, Ayushmann Khurrana, Radhika Apte and Anil Dhawan in key roles, is a murder drama at the centre of which is a pianist who may or may not be blind.

Produced by Viacom18 Motion Pictures and Matchbox Pictures, "Andhadhun", which released in China as "The Piano Player" is directed by Sriram Raghavan, known for his dark films such as "Ek Hasina Thi" and "Badlapur". "Andhadhun" was one of the best reviewed and best performing films of India last year. The film has now become the third highest ever Hindi language film after "Dangal" and "Secret Superstar", Ajit Andhare, Chief Operating Officer, Viacom18 Motion Pictures said.

"I am delighted that the approach of picking unusual stories stands rewarded not only in India and diaspora market but with a completely new market and audience in China. An Indian film has exceeded Hollywood tentpoles like "Shazam!"

"This success also dispels the belief that

Hindi films need to have a social issue to succeed in China box office. It's a great moment for Indian cinema," Ajit Andhare, COO, Viacom18 Studios told PTI.

Ayushmann said he feels both "overwhelmed" and "humbled" to see "Andhadhun" becoming a Rs 300 crore blockbuster in the neighbouring country. "The people of the country has loved our devilishly clever thriller directed by one of India's finest filmmakers Sriram Raghavan and the credit goes to him for his vision to redefine the thriller genre.

"Andhadhun" is making India proud and I'm delighted to contribute in this huge cinematic moment for India. It feels great to be appreciated for your hard work not just in India but also in China. They have really showered a lot of appreciation for my craft and I just can't thank them enough. I wish I get the chance to travel to China soon and meet as many people as possible and just say thank you," the actor said in a statement.

China has emerged as a huge market for Indian films in recent years, with Aamir Khan's "Dangal", Salman Khan's "Bajrangi Bhaijaan" and Irrfan Khan's "Hindi Medium" doing well.

I don't lose hope

Sonakshi Sinha on failure



MUMBAI, APR 22 (PTI): Sonakshi Sinha considers herself an instinctive performer and someone who looks forward to doing her best even in the face of failure.

The actor says she does not worry about the aspects of films that are out of her control.

"Every film is important to me. I hope, wish and pray every film does well. It is bad luck that the last couple of films did not work out. But I don't lose hope, I always look forward to do my best," Sonakshi told PTI.

"I pick up films very instinctively. Box office is not in my control, as an actor I have control over my performance and acting. I don't stress over what is not in my control. "Every film that I have done, irrespective of

whether they have done well commercially or not, has taught me a lot. I will always cherish that experience," she said.

The actor, whose last cinematic outing was multi-starrer "Kalank", will next be seen in "Mission Mangal" alongside Vidya Balan, Taapsee Pannu and Akshay Kumar. She will also reprise her role in "Dabangg 3" opposite Salman Khan.

"I have also signed 'Bhuj: The Pride of India'. We will hopefully start work in June. It is a fabulous role," Sonakshi said, adding she was approached for a film on the same story in the past.

"I believe I was destined to do this film," she said.

I will be quiet, that's my stand: Alia on attacks by Kangana's sister

MUMBAI, APR 22 (PTI): Alia Bhatt and her family has been at the receiving end of comments by Kangana Ranaut's sister Rangoli Chandel, but the actor has stayed mum throughout and now she says she wants to focus only on positivity.

Recently, Alia, her mother Soni Razdan and actor Mahesh Bhatt were targeted by Rangoli on Twitter.

She wrote, after Kangana refused to do a film for the Bhatt, Mahesh got so upset that he threw a slipper at the actor.

Sharing another tweet about the nationality of Razdan, Rangoli had written people should think about agenda of "these non-Indians who are living off this land, using and abusing its people and its resources..."

On Sunday night, a reporter lauded Alia for being "mature" and asked if comments directed to her family bother her.

To which, Alia told reporters, "If I am like this, then my family is ten times more mature and stronger than I am. I don't want to get into this. I want to be happy, positive, work hard and be a better version of myself everyday."

The 26-year-old actor said she would rather focus on her career.

"I should not pay attention to what people say or don't say. Everybody has



the right to say what they want to. I will be quiet, that's my stand."

In an earlier interview, Kangana had blasted Alia as well as superstar Aamir Khan for not supporting her during the release of "Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi".

Kangana had also called Alia and her "Gully Boy" co-star Ranveer Singh "irresponsible" for their apolitical stance on current affairs.

At the event, Alia was also asked if she has introspected about her latest release "Kalank", which has received a lukewarm response from the audience. "I'm not going to analyse my film because that is something not required. Audience verdict is the biggest proof for a film and if the audience does not accept a film, then it should not do well.

"That's just the way it is. We should accept it, come back, try and make sure they're not disappointed next time.

Ed Sheeran responds to fate reveal of his 'Game of Thrones' character

LONDON, APR 22 (PTI): Ed Sheeran has thanked "Game of Thrones" writers for not killing off his character in the HBO series.

The singer appeared as Eddie, a Lannister soldier, in the seventh season premiere episode of the show on the request of his friend, series star Maisie Williams (who plays Arya Stark).

In the episode, Sheeran's character is seen crooning a song as a part of the chance encounter with Williams' Arya. Eddie was, however, nowhere to be seen or talked about in the series till the eighth season premiere -- where one of the prostitutes says she had heard the character's face was "burned right off" and had no eyelids after he was subjected to one of Daenerys Targaryen's three dragons' fire.

Sheeran took to social media over the weekend to thank the show's screenwriters.

"Thanks @GameOfThrones, I knew I was a survivor," he wrote in his Instagram Story.

The singer faced heavy trolling by fans and followers for his cameo. Sheeran later said although he enjoyed his screen time on the show, he would not want to return as no one wanted to see him again.

ARIES: Take time today to get your finances in order, Aries—even if you're not in a number-crunching mood. No one loves facing the monetary music, but ignoring those bills and impulse-shopping like there's no tomorrow could leave you in the red. No one's telling you to cancel that fancy trip to Tulum or to halt all spring shopping.

TAURUS: Looking to change things up? That big transformation might finally happen, Taurus—though it may not play out exactly as you imagined. Tectonic shifts could cause unexpected aftershocks as the Sun and unpredictable Uranus hold their annual summit, this year in YOUR sign and your first house of identity.

GEMINI: Draw the blinds and hang the Do Not Disturb sLook inward, Gemini. Today marks a rare and potent cosmic concord, but you'll need to be proactive to benefit from it. The ego-driven Sun meets up with radical Uranus in your twelfth house of the unconscious and healing. The stars will support you if you need to confront deep-seated issues or

unhealthy habits. You might want tap a coach, therapist or healer because these types of problems can be complex and difficult to unpack. Keep a journal on your nightstand: Psychic messages may come through in your sleep.

CANCER: You'll be the life of the party, Cancer, as the Sun dances its annual do-si-do with shock, jock Uranus in your eleventh house of group activity. Your charms are irresistible today, as you give everyone in your path a dose of your flattering attention. Whether you're chatting up your boss at work or bantering with a waiter at dinner, no one will be able to resist your allure.

LEO: Set your sights on that brass ring! This Saturday, the Sun enters Taurus and ignites your career zone until May 20. For the next four weeks, lean all the way into your loftiest goals. Flaunt your sign's natural leadership skills and rub elbows with industry leaders and VIPs. Since el Sol will gift you with added charisma, there's no need to downplay your ambitions.

LIBRA: On Saturday, the sizzling Sun slides into Taurus and your sultry eighth house,

cranking up the spring fever. Until May 20, your superpower is drawing sexy admirers like moths to a flame. But adding another notch to your Gucci belt isn't the end goal here since the eighth house is all about playing for keeps. Single Libras are far more interested forming an intense and lasting bond with someone special.

VIRGO: It's good to be cautious, Virgo, but are you playing it a bit TOO safe? As the life-giving Sun forms its annual alignment with irrepressible Uranus, you'll be inspired to explore new frontiers. Your heart is open, and you're ready to dive into the unknown, whether that's a budding friendship, a foreign locale or a life-changing workshop.

SCORPIO: This Saturday, the Sun slides into your seventh house of committed partnerships, activating your urge to merge. But does your highly selective sign need to lower the bar just a little? Nobody will ever meet ALL your criteria. You could do yourself a disservice by dismissing someone over a few petty flaws. For the next four weeks, bring more balance to friendships, romance and business alliances.

SAGITTARIUS: Hang up your hedonist's hat, Archer. After a wild and carefree month of excess, the Sun glides into Taurus and your healthy sixth house from Saturday until May 20. Skip the extra Americano and opt for a matcha latte or fresh smoothie for clean, green energy. Fill your plate with fresh veggies and cut back on animal products, excess salt and sugar. Incorporate more self-care into your regimen: daily movement, massage, acupuncture or even a trip to the spa!

CAPRICORN: Lights, camera, action! This Saturday, the confident Sun blasts into Taurus and your passionate fifth house, setting the stage for romance and fame. But don't expect it to happen while you hide in the shadows, Cap. You're going to have to step out in a big way before May 20, wearing your heart on your sleeve and unabashedly expressing yourself. Work this cosmic charisma to your advantage and turn up the charm dial to maximum. You could find yourself in front of some serious power players during this phase,

and you'll want to be ready for anything!

AQUARIUS: Personal transformation is the name of the game today, as the Sun and your emancipated co-ruler Uranus align in your fourth house of home and family. They say, "There are no secrets that time does not reveal," so why not get a healing head start and divulge them yourself? If you've been longing to get closer to a relative or newish friend, carpe diem. Meet for dinner or schedule a long phone call to-night. Has a negative energy invaded your inner circle?!

PISCES: Incoming breakthroughs! Today, the Sun teams up with transformational Uranus in your third house of ideas and communication. In a surprising plot twist, a life-changing revelation could emerge out of "innocuous" small talk. Don't censor yourself if you know this realization could help others. Share your white-light moment with everyone from your office friends to your social media squad. This is why people consider you a role model and inspiration.