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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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SHRI D.B. CHAUHAN
Sikkim-BJP
President and
Arithang candidate



**LATEN TSHER-
ING SHERPA**
Lok Sabha candidate

Sikkim ki Janta Bhare Hunkaar
Sabhi Puraney Vyapariyon ko Aaykar Mein Chhoot Dilane
Aa Rahein Hein Chowkidaar



Modi Sarkar in, Casino Sarkar Out

Issued by State BJP, Sikkim

Sikkim Votes today! And the U-40 hold the decisive vote

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 10 APR:

Sikkim votes today. An electorate of 4.32 lakh receives the opportunity to decide who forms the next government in Sikkim and who represents the State in Parliament. The electorate here has always been enthusiastic on voting day and in Election 2014, 80.80% exercised their franchise. There is no reason the statistics will be any different this time around, so expect a traditionally high turn-out. An interesting factor for this election is the youthfulness of the electorate. With 63% of the electorate under forty years of age, this segment now holds a decisive majority for the first time.

As per data collated by the Election office, the 18 to 40 year old voters number 2,74,200 which works out to 63.42% of the total electorate. Of these, the 18-19 year olds number 30,480.

The youth have never been in such a clear majority, and on 23 May, when the verdict locked in the

EVMS is calculated, Sikkim will learn which party appealed most to this segment. It will also be interesting to see whether this bloc votes on issues which matter to their age-band or whether their vote is still decided by the traditional factors of community and family.

In the absence of any scientific data collection, there will be no clear answers the results are announced, but that does not mean some speculation cannot be indulged in.

What the numbers confirm, for instance is that 64% of the electorate of age with the present government already in office. Even the 40 year old was but a teenager when SDF formed its first government twenty-five years back.

Building from that, it is also safe to believe that they have no real experience of previous governments to compare the present government with. Their sup-

port or rejection of the ruling Front is hence based completely on their perception of the current government's performance.

Similarly, their image of the contenders, with SKM being the primary one, is also based solely on how SKM has conducted itself in the last five years.

The youth, one must also bear in mind, does not dwell in the past and looks more to the future. All parties in the electoral fray clearly recognized this much and have devoted much of their manifestos to them. But the present day youth is also better informed and can be expected to also evaluate performance and delivery while deciding on which promises appear convincing and which reek of tokenism.

Principles and ideology also carry more resonance with the youth and the results will also reflect how the youth rate the parties on this parameter.

This age-group will however have to come out and vote in substantial enough numbers to express themselves. Although such data is not available for the State, at the national level, this age-group has been

recalcitrant when it comes to voting.

As for the parties in the fray, Sikkim almost always sees a quasi-presidential form of election with people voting for the party presidents with the hand-picked candidates having only limited contribution to the final result. When it comes to the youth, such absolute submission to the party will be rare and they can be expected to evaluate the candidates as well. This, if it happens, will be new for Sikkim.

That said, Election 2019 is still a Chamling versus Golay contest, which is unique in the sense that the latter cannot even contest the elections. In that sense, the SKM president, PS Tamang [Golay], to his credit, has made a fight of the elections despite his corruption conviction and the law not allowing him to contest for six years.

SKM remains the main opposition this time as well since no other party has fielded candidates for all 32 constituencies. Also, except SKM, all other opposition parties had forfeited their deposits in the 2014 elections.

Man found dead in Tadong

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 10 APR:

A 35-year-old man was found dead on a footpath at Bahai School Road in Gairi Gaon, Tadong in East Sikkim on Wednesday. The deceased has been identified as Panchan and Rai alias Jonah Rai, of Gairi Gaon Tadong.

It is learnt that locals of the area found him dead near his house and later the family members informed the police. As per the police, the victim has sustained a grievous injury on the back of his head.

The police have sent the dead body for post-mortem examination at Central Referral Hospital, Tadong and a case under section 302 of IPC has been registered.

As per the family members, the deceased received a phone call at around 9:30 PM last night after which he had left the house and did not return.

So far, there is no evidence of the attack being politically motivated and investigation is on, DIG [Range], DB Giri has said.

Dalai Lama admitted to Delhi hospital with chest infection, condition stable

NEW DELHI, APR 10 (PTI): Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, has been admitted to a private hospital in Delhi with a chest infection and his condition is stable, hospital sources said Wednesday.

The 83-year-old, a globally revered figure and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, had come down here from Dharamshala for a check-up at the Max Hospital in Saket on Tuesday.

"He was brought to Max Hospital yesterday with a case of chest infection. The Dalai Lama was later admitted and will be under treatment for a couple of days. He is in a stable condition," a source said.

The 14th Dalai Lama was here for the past few days for attending a global learning conference that ended on April 6. He returned to Dharamshala from New Delhi on Monday.

The Dalai Lama had fled to India in early 1959 to escape from Chinese occupation, and lives in exile in the hill town of Dharamshala.

At the event, he had also spoken about ageing and reincarnation, and reiterated that he was the "son of the Nalanda tradition" referring to the rich Buddhist heritage of the Nalanda University in Bihar.

China has said the successor to the Dalai Lama must be chosen according to religious rituals and historical conventions as well as the backing from the ruling Communist Party.



**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SECRETARY
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
GANGTOK**

APPEAL

Ref. No. 152/CS/Sikkim/2019

Dated: 08/04/2019

As we are all aware, simultaneous elections to Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha shall be held from 7.00 am – 5.00 pm on 11th April, 2019.

Not only we are proud of our brilliant record of peace and amity but we have excellent track of peaceful elections all over the State, so far.

Keeping this in mind, may I call upon everyone to maintain the tradition of our small and beautiful State? Not only we should exercise our franchise in a free and fearless manner but we should exercise our support to the State Administration.

Sd/-
(Alok Shrivastava, IAS)
Chief Secretary

SIKKIM को ELECTIONS



GET READY FOR LOK SABHA ELECTION 2019

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East District Election Officer appeals

GANGTOK, 10 APR (IPR): The DEO/East, Kapil Meena has made an appeal to the general voters of east district for coming out of their houses and actively cast their valuable votes and participate in the festival of democracy on the 11 Apr, 2019 within the Poll timings of 7am-5pm.

Several activities were undertaken by the east district to specifically improve the voter turnout in urban areas. In this context, a signature campaign was undertaken at MG Marg over a period of 4 days, i.e from 07 April upto the 10 April in which the public par-

ticipated enthusiastically and more than 450 pledge signatures were collected. Apart from this, 112 Anganwadi workers were deployed with a pledge sheet to visit every household and take their signatures on it. Further, these workers would again be visiting

these households on 11 April, i.e. the Poll day to encourage everyone to cast their votes.

Urban Sikkim saw the least voter turnout in the General Elections of 2014 and hence, all these steps have been taken under SVEEP Policy targeting these voters.

Expenditure Observer visits polling stations in East



GANGTOK, 10 APR (IPR): Devesh Gupta, Expenditure Observer visited polling stations at Upper Tadong, Arithang, Shyari, Upper Burtuk and Gangtok Constituency today.

During his visit he interacted with the concerned Sector Magistrates, VST, SST, Flying Squad Teams and Booth Level Officers. He looked into the basic necessary facilities available at the

polling stations for the convenience of the voters.

The Observer stated for compulsory casting of votes according to strict guidelines by the Election Commission of India and articulated that the election officials need to be vigilant in order to conduct a free, fair, transparent and inclusive election in the district.

Astronomers unveil the first photo of a black hole



PARIS, APR 10 (AFP): Astronomers on Wednesday unveiled the first photo of a black hole, one of the star-devouring monsters scattered across the Universe and obscured by impenetrable shields of gravity.

The image of a dark core with a flame-orange halo of gas and plasma shows a super-massive black hole 50

million lightyears away in a galaxy known as M87, they announced during simultaneous press conferences in Brussels, Shanghai, Tokyo, Washington, Santiago and Taipei.

Data needed to construct the picture was gathered in April 2017 by the Event Horizon Telescope, a joined-up network of eight radio telescopes spread across the globe.

Development overshadows Gorkhaland demand in Darjeeling

PRADIPTA TAPADAR DARJEELING (WB), APR 10 (PTI): The picturesque Darjeeling hills in West Bengal is gearing for a pitched battle between two Gorkhas in the Lok Sabha elections, as development and restoration of democracy top the poll planks, relegating the long-standing demand for a separate Gorkhaland to the background.

For the first time in three decades, the call for a separate Gorkhaland state is not a poll issue in the hills, with parties, including the indigenous GJM and GNLF, stressing on minimum wages for tea workers, potable water, electricity, education and employment.

The Darjeeling Lok Sabha constituency, which goes to polls on April 18, is set to witness a keenly-fought battle between the two warring factions of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) -- one led by its supremo Bimal Gurung and his one-time protege Binay Tamang.

Gurung is supporting BJP's Raju Singh Bisht, while Tamang is in favour of TMC's Amar Singh Rai.

The saffron party also has the support of another prominent hill party, the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF).

"The polls will establish who between Gurung and Tamang is the supreme leader of the hills. The people of the hills are with Gurung. Tamang has compromised with the TMC in order to serve his own vested interests," Loksang Lama, the working president of the Bimal Gurung faction of the GJM, said.

Lama's view were echoed by leaders of the Tamang camp, who felt whoever loses will no longer be accepted as a leader of the Gorkhas.

The ruling TMC in West Bengal is yet to win the Darjeeling seat even once since its inception in 1998, while the BJP has emerged victorious twice.

"We are stressing on the overall development of the hills, which it has been deprived of for the last 10 years.

Our agenda is development. The BJP MPs have done nothing for the people of the hills," said Rai.

The TMC is against the separate state of Gorkhaland.

The BJP and Gurung's faction of the GJM feels restoration of democracy, which has been "missing" following the 104-day long strike in the hills over the demand of Gorkhaland in 2017, is

the most important aspect in the polls.

"People here will vote for restoration of democracy in the hills. They haven't forgotten the atrocities committed by the TMC during the agitation," Bisht told PTI.

He said a "permanent political solution" is the need of the hour in Darjeeling, but remained non-committal on the demand for a separate statehood.

Darjeeling, dominated by the Gorkha community, besides the Lepchas, the Sherpas and the Bhutias, has a total of 16 candidates in fray, including TMC's Rai, BJP's Bisht, CPI(M)'s Saman Pathak and Congress's Shankar Malakar.

Apart from three hill assembly segments -- Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong, which are held by the GJM -- the constituency also includes four other assembly segments in the foothills and plains -- Matigara-Naxalbari, Siliguri, Phansideoa and Chopra.

Two are held by the Congress and one each by the CPI(M) and the TMC.

The Darjeeling seat, located between the Indo-Bangla border and the Indo-Bhutan border with Sikkim as neighbour, is

of immense strategic importance as the Siliguri Corridor is considered to be a lifeline or "chicken's neck" to the entire north east.

The constituency has a total of 15,98,863 voters out of which 8,06,298 are male and 7,92,543 female.

Darjeeling was represented by BJP leaders Jaswant Singh and Surinder Singh Ahluwalia in Parliament in 2009 and 2014, respectively, with support of the GJM.

In 2014, the BJP had won the seat by securing 42.73 per cent votes, whereas the TMC bagged 25.47 percent votes.

The statehood demand and implementation of the sixth schedule of the Constitution had been major poll planks in the hills at various times, since the beginning of the protracted Gorkhaland movement in 1986.

The BJP, which is eyeing a third term in the constituency, has made no mention of Gorkhaland in its manifesto. It has, however, promised Scheduled Tribe tags for 11 Gorka sub-communities.

Meanwhile, CPI(M)'s Pathak hoped that people would vote for the party as both the TMC and the BJP "failed" the people of the constituency.

oe and Independent Dr M M Thromwa Konyak. The by-poll to Aonglenden Assembly segment is a straight contest between the Congress nominee Alemjongshi Longkumer and Sharngain Longkumer of ruling NDPP. Aonglenden seat has a total of 12,436 electorates including 6,146 male and 6,290 female voters. Voting will be held on Thursday from 7 am to 4 pm.

EVMs and VVPATs dispatched to polling stations in North



WANGCHUK BHUTIA MANGAN, 10 APR:

All the polling parties of North District left today from DAC Mangan with the Electronic Voting Machines and the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trial (VVPAT).

There are total of 52 polling stations which have been set up for the general

election on 11 April. Out of 52 polling stations, 13 polling stations are female polling stations.

The election in North Sikkim will be held for three constituencies viz, Kabi-Lungchok, Dzongu and Lachen-Mangan along with Sangha under four sub-divisions.

The dispatching process was carried out here at the Confer-

ence Hall of New Strong Room of the District Administrative Centre (DAC). The whole process was held under the guidance of District Election Officer (DEO) cum Returning Officer (RO), Raj Yadav, in the presence of the General Observer (GO), Dr Pratibha Singh.

The machines were taken to the respective

counters from the Strong Room. For the smooth and proper management of EVMs/VVPATs dispatch process, nine separate counters were set up in the conference hall of New DAC building.

The farthest Polling Station of North district is 29/10-BO Office, Forest Office, Kyongnosla, Gnathang-C.

EVMs for South district dispatched

NAMCHI, 10 APR (IPR):

The sealed Strong Rooms belonging to eight Assembly Constituencies and Assembly segments of Parliamentary Constituencies and Sangha was opened by the Returning Officer (South), Ragul K, Assistant Returning Officer, Satyen Pradhan, Sector Magistrates, and election agents of contesting candidates today.

After the opening of strong room, the commissioned Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPATs) was dispatched from 7:30am onwards at Namchi Senior Secondary School auditorium.

The whole process was held under the guidance of RO South in the presence of General Observer of Assembly constituency, Shrish Chandra Verma and General Observer of Parliamentary Constituency (South/West), Pankaj Agarwal.

RO (South), Ragul K informed that out of 160 Polling Stations (PS), 30 have been identified as Critical Polling Station in the district. Additionally, the RO stated that adequate security measures with additional CRPF and IRBn have been deployed in the Polling Stations identified as Critical. Furthermore, Flying Squads, Static Surveillance Teams, Video Surveillance and Video Viewing Teams are functional in the field to monitor



the various kinds of activities. The RO also informed that online and offline webcast will be done at the identified Critical Polling Stations.

The Polling Stations located at the district is also equipped with basic minimum facilities like wheel chairs, ramps and other necessary equipments for PwD voters and senior citizens.

Additionally, Braille signage for the differently-abled voters to exercise their franchise is also provided in order to promote and fully utilize the concept of inclusivity which has been the main focus of Election Commission of India. The administration on the poll day has made vehicular arrangements to pick and drop PwD voters across the district to ensure that no voters irrespective of their age and physical infirmities are left behind.

There shall also be a real time tracking and monitoring of the movement of EVMs and VVPATs

through GPS-enabled vehicles.

It was also informed that eight Sector Police Officers and sixteen Sector Magistrates are on duty for peaceful arrangement of law and order during the day of the polls i.e. on 11 April. The RO also updated that the mock polls will be conducted at 5:30am at all Polling Stations in the presence of Polling Agents of different parties.

He informed that voting will commence from 7am to 5pm and thereafter, the polling teams will be received at the auditorium in Namchi Senior Secondary School upon their arrival and the polled EVMs and VVPATs will be kept in the Strong Room in the presence of General Observers, Political Representatives and Election Agents. The RO has also informed that the EVMs and VVPATs will only be taken out from the Strong Room on the day of counting i.e. on 23 May, 2019.

Hospital built with Indian assistance inaugurated in Nepal

SHIRISH B. PRADHAN

KATHMANDU, APR 10 (PTI): A 25-bed hospital built with Indian assistance was inaugurated in Nepal's Siraha district on Wednesday.

The Chandra Narayan Yadav Memorial Maternity Hospi-

tal, equipped with all modern medical technologies, was inaugurated by the India's Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri in the presence of several political leaders from the Himalayan nation. "The hospital aims

to boost access to maternity and child health care services for the people from 50 village committees in and around the Siraha district," a statement issued by the Indian

Embassy said

"The new facilities will provide improved maternal and child care health service to the people of Siraha and surrounding districts and help in bringing down the maternal and child mortality rate," the statement added.

Sikkim Votes today!

Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, meanwhile, has consistently dodged the anti-incumbency factor and few things prove this more effectively that the party's performance in 2014. Faced with the strongest challenge to his leadership, Mr Chamling led SDF back to office with 55% of the votes. This was impressive because in 1994, when SDF rode a strong anti-incumbency wave itself to get elected into government for the first time, it had received only 42% the popular votes. In twenty years then, Mr Chamling had managed to increase his party's vote share by 13% despite a very strong anti-incumbency sentiment among the electorate.

The electorate meanwhile has nearly doubled in Sikkim since 1994. Where there were 2,17,430 voters in Sikkim in 1994, now there are 4,32,306.

Here's to hoping that weather is conducive to a day out at the polling stations on Thursday and Sikkim enjoys a peaceful election.

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All arrangements made for smooth conduct of polls in Nagaland

KOHIMA, APR 10 (PTI): The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Nagaland, Abhijit Sinha Wednesday said all arrangements have been made for the smooth conduct of election to the lone Lok Sabha seat in the state on Thursday.

The CEO appealed to the electorate to exercise their franchise for the Lok Sabha election and byelection to the Aonglenden Assembly seat without any fear and ensure ethical and informed voting. Sinha also urged the

12,13,777 electorates, including over 16,000 first time voters, not to be influenced by any inducement but to consciously use their franchise.

Everything has been put in place for the conduct of peaceful polls for the lone Lok Sabha seat in Nagaland and the by-election to 26-Aonglenden Assembly constituency, he said.

The CEO said all polling parties have left for their respective polling stations and are

expected to reach the 2,227 polling stations spread over 12 election districts in the state. He said 75 companies of security forces including Central Armed Police Force, IR and State Police and Home Guards supplemented by over a 1000 village guards have been deployed in the polling stations.

The candidates for parliamentary poll are Congress nominee K L Chishi, NDPP candidate Tokheho Yephthomi, NPPs Hayithung Tung-

RO East casts vote through postal ballot

GANGTOK, 10 APR (IPR): The District Election Officer (DEO) cum Returning Officer/ East District, Kapil Meena today cast his postal ballot papers for the Assembly and Parliamentary Constituencies at the facilitation centre set up at the Strong Room premises at Brihaspati Parsai Senior Second-



ary School, Ranipool. After casting his vote, the DEO appealed to the general public of the

district to come forward and cast their valuable votes on the 11 April for their respective Assembly Constituencies, Parliamentary Constituency and Sangha Constituency. DEO appealed to the public to come forward and participate in the “Desh ka Maha Tyohaar - the largest festival of democracy”.

Police Observer inspects polling stations in East

GANGTOK, 10 APR (IPR): The Police Observer for Sikkim, Naveen Arora inspected many Polling stations in the East District today. He visited three polling booths in TNHS, White Hall complex, another three booths in Modern SSS, Rongyek JHS and four booths in Burtuk JHS.



Upon arrival, Mr Arora was updated with the arrival of all the polling parties in their respec-

tive polling booths and ready for the big polling day tomorrow. Mr Arora took stock of the Poll Day preparations and arrangements in place. He also discussed in details about the security arrangements and expressed satisfaction at the progress achieved.

Flanked by family, Rahul files nomination from Amethi

AMETHI (UP), APR 10 (PTI): Congress president Rahul Gandhi Wednesday filed his nomination for the Amethi Lok Sabha seat, flanked by family members during a road show and at the local collectorate in an event meant to show that the Gandhis cared for their bastion. The three-time Amethi MP was accompanied by UPA chairperson and mother Sonia Gandhi, sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and brother-in-law Robert Vadra as he filed his papers.

The two Vadra children were also part of the road show, through streets lined with Congress supporters, which ended at the collectorate. Local leaders said the presence of the three generations of Gandhis was meant to convey the message that the constituency was important to the family.

In a tweet, Priyanka Gandhi, who is the Congress in-charge for eastern Uttar Pradesh, recalled her father and former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi’s association with Amethi. “Some relationships are from the heart. Today, the whole family was present for my brother’s nomination. This was my father’s ‘karmabhoomi’, it is sacred land for us,” she tweeted.

Rahul Gandhi came to Amethi buoyed by a Supreme Court order on the Rafale deal earlier in the day. The court has allowed leaked documents to be taken into account when it hears a review petition on a judgment that had given the government a clean chit in the Rafale deal.

Speaking to reporters, he claimed the apex court order had made it clear that there was corruption in the fighter jet deal and challenged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to a debate on it. Less than a week earlier, the Congress president had filed his papers from a second constituency Wayanad in Kerala prompting the BJP to charge that he was fleeing from home turf Amethi.

The Gandhis and other party leaders travelled three kilometres in an open vehicle, and were showered with rose petals and

marigold flowers. Congress workers surged around the truck, some of them wearing shirts which promoted Nyay’ the promised minimum income scheme that the party hopes will help propel it to power.

Rahul Gandhi is expected to face a tough fight in Amethi from Union Minister and BJP nominee Smriti Irani.

In 2014, he defeated her by a shrunken margin of about one lakh votes, and the BJP leader has been nursing the constituency since then. It is virtually a Gandhi versus Irani fight as the SP-BSP-RLD opposition alliance in Uttar Pradesh has decided not to field a candidate on the seat.

The procession made its way to the collectorate through Munshiganj, Darpipur and Gauriganj, as supporters braved the heat to get a glimpse of Congress leaders.

People lined both sides of the road, cheering Rahul Gandhi who waved back. The route was lined with Congress flags and hoardings with pictures of Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi.

Some banners read ‘Vikas ki aandhi, Priyanka Gandhi’ and ‘Amethi ka saansad, desh ka PM’.

Party workers raised slogans and sometimes broke into an impromptu dance to the beat of drums. Enthusiastic youngsters on motorcycles moved around making videos of the event on their mobile phones. Outside the collectorate, even Priyanka Gandhi was seen taking selfies’ with her children.

UPA chairperson Sonia, who was not part of the road show, reached the collectorate separately to back her son.

She will file her own nomination papers from neighbouring Rae Bareilly Lok Sabha constituency on Thursday.

BJP’s Smriti Irani will file her papers on Thursday, when Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is scheduled to hold a road show on the same route and address a public meeting in her support.

Amethi goes to polls on May 6 in the fifth phase of the Lok Sabha

elections.

The BJP has accused Rahul Gandhi of not doing enough for the constituency’s development, claiming their own candidate was always there for the people there.

“Amethi is all set to write history this time and people are all set to bid goodbye to Rahul Gandhi,” local BJP Rajesh Agrahari claimed.

BJP leader Bindeshwari Dubey told PTI, “As Smriti Irani has remained connected with the constituency, the jittery Congress MP has been forced to contest from Kerala.”

But Congress leader Dipak Singh rejected the charge.

“Smriti Irani’s arithmetic is all wrong, he said, claiming that Smriti Irani has come to Amethi only 15 times, spending just hours here.

But Rahul Gandhi, according to him came to the constituency 35 times during the last five years, spending two or three days each time.

Congress district unit spokesman, Anil Singh has claimed that Irani comes to the constituency only for time pass and has laid false claims to the work done by the Congress.

Opinion is divided on whether the Congress has done enough for the constituency which elected Sanjay Gandhi in 1980.

After his death in an air crash, Rajiv Gandhi was elected from here. Sonia Gandhi represented the constituency from 1999 to 2004. Rahul Gandhi first won an election from Amethi in 2004.

Does this look like a VVIP constituency,” said Sabharaj of Tiwaripur village said, pointing at the lack of development.

But farmer Ravindra Misra criticised the BJP government over fertiliser prices and electricity charges. He was also upset with the damage to his crops by stray cattle.

In the 2017 assembly polls, the BJP won four of the five seats under the Amethi Lok Sabha constituency. The fifth went to the Samajwadi Party.

Guinness record created for largest traditional Konyak dance

KOHIMA, APR 10 (PTI): An organisation of the Konyak Naga tribe has set a Guinness World Record for the “Largest Traditional Konyak Dance”.

The official communication in this regard was received from the Guinness World Records authorities on Tuesday night, Manlip Konyak, president of the Konyak Union, said Wednesday.

A total of 4,687 Konyak Naga women in their colourful traditional attire had come together on April 5 in an attempt to create the record for the “Largest Traditional Konyak Dance”.

In their attempt, the Konyak women danced to the beats of traditional instruments and sang a ceremonial song for five minutes and one second, the organ-

isers had said here.

Konyak is one of the 16 Naga tribes and people of this community live mainly in the Mon district of Nagaland.

The programme was organised at Mon during the Ao-leang Monyu, an annual festival of the Konyak tribe to welcome the spring.

The declaration on the record was delayed as official adjudicators of the Guinness World Records could not come to judge the attempt on the day of the event. However, their representatives from the North East Zone Cultural Centre under the

Ministry of Culture were present.

The representatives had sent evidences of the programme to the Guinness authorities.

Venezuela, Saudi oil output slumps: OPEC



PARIS, APR 10 (AFP): OPEC’s oil output dropped sharply last month as a result of steep production cuts in Venezuela and kingpin Saudi Arabia, the cartel said on Wednesday.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries’ combined oil production plunged by 534,000 barrels per day in March, it said in a report citing secondary sources.

OPEC does not release its own production data.

Venezuela, in the throes of political troubles, sanctions and repeated power blackouts, pumped 289,000 fewer barrels per day than the previous month, taking production to 732,000 bpd.

This compares to the more than a million bar-

rels per day Venezuela was pumping at the start of the year, and its production capacity of nearly two mbpd in 2017.

Kingpin Saudi Arabia’s production, meanwhile, fell by 324,000 bpd, according to OPEC’s sources, the report said.

This, analysts say, is a result of the kingdom’s determination to support oil prices in line with a production cut deal between OPEC countries and non-member Russia that is to run until June.

These efforts appear to be paying off. Oil prices rose at their fastest pace in 14 years over the first quarter of the year.

On Wednesday the WTI futures contract, the benchmark for US production, stood at 64.42 and its European counterpart, Brent, at 70.95.

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Ministry of Culture were present.

The representatives had sent evidences of the programme to the Guinness authorities.

EVMs dispatched in East



Magistrates and were dispatched by 1:30pm from the dispatch centre.

DEO (East), Kapil Meena reiterated that the official casting of vote is tomorrow (11 April) and the timings for casting of votes will start from 7am till 5pm tomorrow.

The Presiding Officer will conduct mock poll at 5:30am in their respective Polling Stations which he stressed is a mandatory procedure

on Poll day. He also added that the candidates/ their election agents and polling agents are also allowed to be present for the Mock Poll in their respective Polling Stations.

He also informed that the total police strength deployed for the elections all over the state is 3430 police personnel excluding 3 companies of the para-military forces (SSB). The official casting

of Vote is from 8am till 4pm tomorrow.

The poll day (11 Apr, 2019) has been declared as a public holiday throughout the State. The State government offices, educational institutions and public undertakings shall remain closed throughout the State on 11 Apr, 2019.

Dry days have been declared w.e.f 09 April, 5pm till 7am of 12 April. There won’t be any sale of liquor. All polling parties have reached their respective polling stations including the most remote ones like Gnathang and Kupup by 6pm today. Sector Magistrates and Zonal Magistrates have been provided with BEL engineers and Reserve Machines to take care of any problems in the Poll process.

Mehbooba asks people to defy highway ban, warns Centre of ‘Palestine-like situation’

SRINAGAR, APR 10 (PTI): Asking people to defy the highway ban, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday stepped up her tirade against the Centre, warning it against turning relations with Jammu and Kashmir into an Israel-Palestine type confrontation.

I think this (J-K’s relation with the Union of India) is not an Israel-Palestine relation. If the government of India wants to convert our relation like the Palestine-Israel, then they will have to be ready for Palestine-like situation as well, Mehbooba told reporters here.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister asked the people of the state to defy the highway ban and alleged it was another attempt to “subjugate” them.

This ban is another attempt to suppress the people of Jammu and Kashmir and is an attack on the state’s economy and the fundamental rights of the people.

“I have said this earlier as well and say it again that the people should defy this ban. People should drive their vehicles on the highway. We will see what they will

do. We have taken this issue to the court and a decision will come soon, she said.

According to an order issued on April 3 by state Home Secretary Shaleen Kabra, no civilian traffic will be allowed to move from Baramulla in north Kashmir to Udhampur in Jammu region on Sundays and Wednesdays till May 31.

Defending the move, the Union Home Ministry said Wednesday that the step has been taken to ensure safe movement of forces and that reasonable restrictions have been imposed for 12 hours only on two days in a week.

The ministry said an impression is being created by some individuals that the national highway has been closed for civilians which is “farthest from the truth”. During this period of 12 hours, alternative routes like old national highway and other internal roads are available for commutation of civilians without any hassle.

Asked about a PIL seeking ban against her and National Conference leaders Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah from

contesting Lok Sabha polls, Mehbooba Mufti said, If the BJP abrogates Article 370, then the Constitution of India will not apply here and so, we will automatically be debarred from contesting the polls and in that case, they will not have to work hard.

The PDP president while reacting to Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan’s remarks that he thinks there may be a better chance of peace talks with India if BJP wins the general election due to begin on Thursday, Mehbooba Mufti said her father and former chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed held the same view when he formed an alliance with the BJP in 2015.

That is what Mufti thought. He knew that a BJP prime minister, who has support of Jan Sangh, the RSS and Shiv Sena, if he wants to make use of the opportunity, then he can talk to Pakistan like (former prime minister Atal Bihari) Vajpayee, she said.

However, Mehbooba said Modi lost a golden opportunity by not making use of it to start a dialogue with Pakistan.

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Monitor, Evaluate and Hold Accountable

There will be fewer complaints then, and less resentment

Monitoring & Evaluation have always been part of governance. The least paid-attention-to part, but a part nevertheless. Its presence is token and piecemeal, extended by pick and choose when it should have been institutionalized and extended to all levels. Occasionally, one hears of moves underway to elevate this aspect of administration to the hierarchal dominance it deserves – right at the top – but nothing really moves beyond the talk of such things. M&E should be prioritised. It is high time, especially now when those who control the release of funds and opportunities are demanding achievement records in black & white.

Too many doles, projects, funding and sponsorship have been invested in Sikkim without a scientific, unbiased or transparent appraisal of how far the buck travels in the State.

Frankly speaking, monitoring & evaluation is a simple science. Projects get drafted, funds get allocated, the release of payment requires numerous NOCs and clearance certificates to endorse that the work was done – that's monitoring. People look at roads carpeted a few months ago disintegrate with the first showers – that's evaluation.

So, when the government spends precious funds training its officers on monitoring and evaluation, it is expected that they bring something more to the table than the thumb rule that has the people monitoring and evaluating already. What is it that 'training' can deliver that one does not already know? Definitely the science to be able to monitor and evaluate so well that when things go wrong, the figures align themselves in a way that a shortlist of who is to be blamed how much is ready even before the Vigilance Police wakes up.

Monitoring and evaluation exercises can be carried out endlessly without delivering any results unless the most important follow-up to the M&E process is codified – accountability. And one does not speak of fixing criminal culpability and corruption charges on failed projects here. The M&E exercise should lead to pulling up lethargic officials who contributed to failed projects, those who compromise the impact of good initiatives with their poor delivery and those who routinely fail to see the larger picture. These can be departmental exercises leading to a red inked ACR or a compulsory admission to re-learning school so long as action is seen to be taken after the 'culprit' has been correctly identified. That would be true monitoring and evaluation because it would be delivering accountability. Such follow-up will also ensure that people do not have a reason to grow too resentful, because that is a common condition among the lay people who see expansive promises get processed with shallow intentions, and then tall claims being made without even a token gesture to evaluate or hold agencies to account.

Islamic State: the 'caliphate' is off the map for now, but will evolve in dangerous ways

HAROUT AKDEDIAN
theconversation.com

The so-called Islamic State (IS) recently lost its last remnant of territory in Syria, but observers were quick to remind the world that the war against the organisation is far from over. What then does this loss of territorial control actually mean for IS?

At its height, the self-proclaimed "caliphate" controlled an estimated 34,000 square miles across Syria and Iraq, so its defeat on the ground is clearly a severe blow for it. Nevertheless, IS is now expected to evolve. Its networks will disperse into virtual, online spaces and become largely invisible. It will focus on insurgency tactics and terror attacks with a wider reach.

In the face of this evolution, it may seem like maintaining IS in a contained geographic pocket would have been better than eradicating its primary territorial base altogether. With its defeat on the ground in Syria and Iraq, however, IS and its offshoots will have a more limited capacity for recruitment, indoctrination and growth.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TERRITORY

The success of rebel groups to survive protracted armed conflicts is dependent on their ability to maintain territorial control. They require it to extract resources and enlist local recruits.

Territorial control allows armed groups to force local populations into compliance and conformity with their ideological outlook. Since its inception, IS understood that its radical "Islamic" community does not locally exist. Instead, the organisation set about creating it, reshaping communities under its control in its own image.

Comparative evidence from civil wars around the world demonstrates how territorial control does not depend on a local population's ideological agreement with the forces in place. Instead, in his book *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Stathis Kalyvas argues that a combination of coercive measures and local administrative bodies allows a force to maintain order, stability and compliance.

For example, during the Liberian civil war in the early 1990s, NPFL (The National Patriotic Front of Liberia) rebels, led by Charles Taylor, used administrative bodies and courts in the territory they controlled to create an alternative order backed up by displays of brutality and violence. This led to an intricate system of patronage and loyalty that created new dependencies between local communities and the new regime.

These Taylor-era Liberian courts are comparable to IS's religious courts which controlled the issuing of permits for cross border activities, defined the educational content of local schools, distributed social services – and carried out extreme public punishments.

In enduring armed conflict, these administrative bodies, social services and displays of order encourage the cooperation of the local population. In other words, territorial control allows the occupier to manage the behaviour and, potentially, the ideology of the people under its control.



INSTRUMENTS OF CONTROL

Under IS, spectacles of brutality and violence were a key part of this. Public executions involved people being incinerated, stoned, decapitated, and thrown off towers. Staged in front of local people, these executions were carefully choreographed, and meticulously documented and disseminated – both locally and internationally.

IS explicitly claimed that these acts of brutality were intended to create a vacuum by disrupting local societal structures that could then be "filled" and "managed" by them. Essentially, displays of violence were used as an instrument of social organisation.

Data personally collected between 2012 and 2014 shows that many living under the rule of radicalised groups such as IS judge these groups based on their own immediate day-to-day conditions rather than the organisation's overall performance or outlook.

If administrative structures function and people have access to food and basic services, for example, local populations may overlook – or even adhere to – the occupying force's ideology (albeit under duress). And those that don't are severely and publicly punished as an "example" to others.

The 2014 executions of members of the Sunni Arab al-Shaitaat tribe, in Deir el-Zor, Syria, are a case in point. IS took the lives of more than 700 of its members for revoking a pledge of allegiance.

In addition, IS incessantly targeted other Jihadi or predominantly Sunni rebel formations. Indeed, the tally of those killed continues to increase as more mass graves are discovered.

VIOLENT CONSOLIDATION

Such atrocities were examples of IS consolidating its power through the elimination of rivals and the suppression of potential or real dissent within its area of control. Faced with this, local populations had no choice but to imitate expressions of religiosity as defined by IS and to demonstrate compliance. For local people, this was a method of adaptation and survival – but IS's loss of territorial control now greatly reduces its capacity to control and indoctrinate local residents in this way.

The question of how IS's methods impacted local populations in the long run is yet to be answered. A lot will depend on what happens next in its former territory and to those living there now.

Either way, while IS is badly incapacitated, it certainly is not finished. It will most likely splinter into new organisations which might try to establish territorial control elsewhere. Parts of North Africa and the Maghreb are particularly susceptible, where control over vast swathes of land remain contested. In the meantime, IS will continue to try to nurture its virtual communities and seek new audiences online.

[the writer is Carnegie SFM Postdoctoral fellow, Central European University]

#MeToo in Mexico: women finding their voice as campaign gathers force

DEBORAH SHAW
theconversation.com

The global #MeToo campaign seemed to have largely bypassed Mexico – until recently. There had been some activity through hashtags such as #MiPrimerAcoso ("My First Assault"), and individual cases such as actress Karla Souza's accusations of rape against an unnamed Mexican director. But this created cultural ripples rather than waves – and did not reach the scale of #MeToo and its transnational offshoots, such as the French #BalanceTonPorc, the Italian #QuellaVoltaChe, the Arab world's #AnaKaman, and #MeTooIndia.

That is not to say that harassment, abuse and violence against women is any less serious in Mexico. Sexual harassment at work is widespread throughout the country, as a recent poll released by the group Periodistas Unidas Mexicanas (Mexican Women Journalists United) demonstrated. The poll revealed that of 392 women journalists, 73% had experienced sexual harassment, with 63% of incidents carried out by male colleagues.

The earlier failure to establish a Mexican #MeToo movement was largely due to potential accusers fearing retaliatory action in a country that has tended to protect abusers over victims. Luis Miguel González of *The Economist* attributes this to concerns about financial cost, reputational damage, or indifference to the suffering of victims. But this all changed recently with a tidal wave of activity, via Twitter campaigns, across cultural sectors.

The origins of this Mexican #MeToo campaign began with a tweet on March 21 by political commentator Ana G. González (@anag-g), alleging abusive and violent behaviour against many women by a powerful literary figure. A Twitter account – @MeTooEscritoresMexicanos (#MeToo Mexican Writers) – soon followed, headed by the words "No estás sola" (You are not alone) and "Yo te creo" (I believe you).

This led to a proliferation of profession-specific #MeToo Mexican Twitter accounts in the fields of film, literature, journalism, academia, sport, music, theatre, law and politics – and a movement of women in the publishing industry using the hashtag #MujeresJuntasMarabunta made demands for more specific actions for equal rights.

Mexico now holds its breath as allegations against powerful men emerge with each new tweet – and heads have already rolled. The director of operations of the important Mexico City newspaper *Reforma* was fired following accusations of sexual harassment against him. Three employees of the Mexico City news outlets *Chilango* and *Máspormás* have also been suspended while investigations are taking place.

ACCUSERS ANONYMOUS

Mexico was clearly in need of its own #MeToo movement, but it had to find a way to protect women for it to take root. What is unique about



the Mexican #MeToo phenomenon is that these are industry-focused accounts that offer fearful accusers protection through anonymity. For instance, the account of the #MeTooEscritoresMexicanos features the words (my translation): "If you are afraid to identify your abuser, send an anonymous message with your story and the name of your abuser."

This anonymity has empowered women to speak out, while protecting their identities. But it has drawn criticism for protecting accusers, but not the accused, and any lack of judicial oversight.

The criticisms gathered pace, for example, following the suicide of the Mexican rock musician Armando Vega Gil on April 1. The author of an anonymous post had accused him of sexually abusing her when she was 13. His suicide note proclaimed that the act was taken as a declaration of his innocence to "clear the path my son will walk in the future".

POWER IMBALANCE

Indeed, the MeTooHombres Twitter account (that uses the English @MeTooMenPower) voices the disquiet among some men about the potentially harmful effects of this flurry of anonymous denunciations. The account administrator, who goes by the name of Dante, has spoken against the anonymity of #MeToo Mexico and has criticised what he sees as the lynch mob mentality of such social media campaigns.

While the pinned tweet at the top of the feed asserts that it is not

a site against women, but a space for men, the use of the English word "power" in the Twitter handle, does suggest that for some men this is a gender war. The assertion of such traditional notions of masculinity will certainly make many women seeking cultural shifts uncomfortable.

Women are turning to Twitter to denounce their abusers precisely because the legal system and other institutions have failed to offer them protection and justice. In an interview with me, for example, the renowned film critic Fernanda Solórzano summarised the debate thus:

"The lack of a legal system that can deal efficiently and judiciously with accusations of assault and abuse has meant that these fora for anonymous accusations are the only spaces for women to find support and a community that backs them. On the other hand, the anonymity polarises a society that should collectively engage with deep-rooted societal and educational problems."

Despite the flaws inherent in anonymous Twitter campaigns, #MeToo Mexico in all its multiple forms is shaking up cultural life in the country. Women and girls have been given a space in which to speak out, and individual men will be more likely to check their behaviour from everyday sexism to violent assaults and rape. This is how cultures change in the digital age.

[the writer is Reader in Film Studies, University of Portsmouth]

Polls in 91 LS seats Thursday; Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and Odisha to also see assembly polls

New Delhi, Apr 10 (PTI): Ninety-one Lok Sabha constituencies spread across 18 states and two UTs, including all in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, will go to polls on Thursday in the first-phase, with Nitin Gadkari, Kiren Rijiju and VK Singh among several Union ministers in the fray.

In Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and Odisha, assembly polls to 175, 32 and 28 seats, respectively, will be held simultaneously in the first phase.

Voting for 543 Lok Sabha seats will be held in seven phases: April 11, April 18, April 23, April 29, May 6, May 12 and May 19. Counting will be done on May 23.

In Andhra Pradesh, strong anti-incumbency, caste and corruption are the major factors that could determine the out-

come of the elections to Lok Sabha and the state assembly as over 3.93 crore voters get to exercise their franchise.

This is the first general election in the state after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014.

Polling for all 25 Lok Sabha and 175 assembly seats will be held simultaneously. There are 2,118 candidates for the state polls and 319 for the Lok Sabha elections.

TDP chief and CM N Chandrababu Naidu will be seeking election from Kuppam, while his son Nara Lokesh is making his electoral debut from Mangalagiri.

YSR Congress chief Y S Jaganmohan Reddy, an aspirant for the CM's post, is fighting from his family's pocketborough Pulivendula.

In 2014, the TDP won 101, YSRC 68, BJP

four, Navodayam Party one and an Independent one in the state polls. In Lok Sabha seats, the TDP bagged 15, YSRC eight and BJP two.

All 17 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana will go to polls in phase-one.

The TRS having swept the December assembly polls is hoping for an encore in the company of AIMIM while the opposition Congress and BJP appear to be focussed on winning select number of seats.

There are 443 candidates in the fray.

The Nizamabad Lok Sabha constituency is a special case as 185 candidates, including over 170 farmers, are in the fray.

Congress leader Renuka Chowdary (Khammam), AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi (Hyderabad), state Congress president N Uttam Kumar Reddy

(Nalgonda) and daughter of TRS president K Chandrasekhar Rao, are among the prominent candidates.

In Uttar Pradesh on eight seats the ruling BJP will clash with the newly-formed SP-BSP-RLD alliance.

In Muzaffarnagar, RLD chief Ajit Singh will take on BJP's Sanjeev Balyan. His son Jayant Chaudhary is fielded against Union minister Satyapal Singh in Bagpat.

Union ministers V K Singh and Mahesh Sharma are BJP candidates in Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar, respectively.

Seven Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra will go to polls, with Union Minister Nitin Gadkari locked in a battle with Congress's Nana Patole, a former BJP MP. Union minister and BJP leader,

Hansaraj Ahir is seeking a fourth term from Chandrapur.

In Bihar, four Lok Sabha seats will see polling on Thursday. LJP leader Chirag Paswan is contesting from Jamui reserved seat. He is the sitting MP and is locked in a virtual straight contest with Bhudeo Chaudhary of RLSP.

In the North East, of the two seats in Arunachal Pradesh Union Minister Kiren Rijiju is seeking re-election from Arunachal West.

Four seats in Assam will go to polls, with former CM Tarun Gogoi's son Gaurav Gogoi testing poll waters from Kaliabor.

In Chhattisgarh where one Lok Sabha seat, Bastar, is going to polls, security has been tightened following a naxal attack in the constituency's Dantewada

area on Tuesday. A BJP leader and four security personnel were killed.

Polls will go as per schedule in the state, the Election Commission has said.

Sixty lakh voters in Odisha will exercise their franchise in the first phase of polls for four Lok Sabha and 28 assembly seats on Thursday.

The first phase of polls will decide the fate of 217 candidates. There are 26 hopefuls in fray for Lok Sabha seats and 191 for assembly seats.

Two seats each in West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir and Meghalaya will see polling in the first phase.

Lone Lok Sabha seats going to polls on April 11 include Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim, Andaman and Nicobar, and Lakshadweep.

Arrangements complete for Arunachal Pradesh polls: Addl CEO



Itanagar, Apr 10 (PTI)

Necessary arrangements, including adequate deployment of security personnel in insurgency-hit districts, have been made for the smooth conduct of elections in two Lok Sabha seats and 57 assembly constituencies in Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday.

The first phase of polls will decide the fate of 217 candidates. There are 26 hopefuls in fray for Lok Sabha seats and 191 for assembly seats.

Two seats each in West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir and Meghalaya will see polling in the first phase. Lone Lok Sabha seats going to polls on April 11 include Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim, Andaman and Nicobar, and Lakshadweep.

The polling teams will reach the remaining booths on Wednesday evening, he said.

On the security arrangements for the polls, Inspector General of Police Sunil Garg said, "We have deployed 45 companies of Central Armed Paramilitary Forces (CAPF) comprising ITBP, CRPF, IRBn, along with over 7,000 state civil police personnel."

Maximum security personnel have been deployed in insurgency-hit Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts, he said.

"New wireless sets have been procured and additional wireless sets have also been arranged from Delhi-based Directorate of Coordination Police Wireless (DCPW) for effective communication," the IGP said.

Mobile phones have been arranged where wireless sets do not function for officials to pass on information through WhatsApp while dak runners would be pressed into service where both systems are not accessible, he said.

Critical polling stations would be guarded by the CAPF besides the state police to ensure peaceful voting, the IGP said.

The flying squads and static surveillance team, appointed by the Election Commission, along with the state police has till now seized cash over Rupees six crore in the state, Garg added.

A total of 181 candidates, including 11 women, are vying for 57 out of the total 60 assembly seats in the state.

Seven candidates, including one woman, are trying their luck in

the Arunachal West parliamentary seat along with five candidates for the Arunachal East Lok Sabha seat.

The ruling BJP had already opened its account in the assembly polls by winning three seats unopposed.

The winners are Ken-to Jini from Along East constituency in West Siang district, Taba Tedir from Yachuli seat in Lower Subansiri district and Phurpa Tsering from Dirang seat in West Kameng district.

Deputy Chief Electoral officer Liken Koyu said 13,262 polling personnel have been engaged for 2,202 polling booths, including 518 polling stations which had to be reached on foot.

Twenty-six general observers, one special expenditure observer, 22 expenditure observers, two police observers, an accessibility observer and 484 micro observers have been deployed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) for the polls, Koyu said.

A total of 7,94,162 voters, including 4,01,601 women, are eligible to exercise their franchise in 2,202 polling stations spread across the state.

There are also 3,000 odd physically challenged voters in the state.

This time, there are also 11 polling stations exclusively for women.

Polling Station no 52 at Naharalagun, under Itanagar Assembly constituency, has the highest number of voters at 1340, while Malogam polling station under Hayuliang constituency in remote Anjaw district bordering China has only one female voter.

Luguthang polling booth under Mukto constituency in Tawang district is the highest polling station located at an altitude of about 13,583 feet.

Eleven polling stations have been set up exclusively for female voters, the sources said.

The state has 281 vulnerable polling booths and 662 critical polling stations.

The BJP has fielded candidates in all the remaining 57 assembly seats while the Congress is contesting in 46 seats, the NPP in 30 seats, JDU in 15 constituencies, JDS (12), PPA (9) and the All India Party (AIP) in one seat.

There are also 11 independents in the fray for the assembly polls in the state.

Rs 5.84 cr unaccounted cash seized in NE in 27 days

GUWAHATI, APR 10 (PTI): The Income Tax authorities have seized a total of Rs 5.84 crore in unaccounted cash in the Northeast in 27 days, an official release said here Wednesday.

This is around 482 per cent higher than Rs 1.21 crore seized during the 2014 general elections by the Directorate of Income Tax (Investigation), North Eastern region.

The amount, Rs 5.84

crore, has been seized between March 12 and April 8 and it is more than 50 per cent of the unaccounted cash seized during the entire financial year of 2017-18.

After the announcement of Lok Sabha elections, a drive was launched to counter the flow of black money during the elections and it will continue till April 23 when the polls will be completed in all the re-

gional states.

Over 160 I-T sleuths were deployed at strategic locations across the region, including 12 airports, resulting in an all-time high cash seizure during any election period in the North East, the release said.

In a first, the Directorate has initiated probe into hundreds of suspicious cash deposits and withdrawals above Rs 10 lakh through banks across the North East.

Poll personnel demand protection by central forces in each booth

COOCH BEHAR (WB), APR 10 (PTI): A section of election personnel in West Bengal's Cooch Behar constituency, which goes to the Lok Sabha polls in the first phase on Thursday along with Alipurdwar, have demanded protection by central forces in each booth, officials said.

Poll personnel holding banners were seen raising slogans to press for their demand in one of the temporary poll material distribution centres here.

Some of them claimed that at least 900 booths will not have any central force protection in Coochbehar.

The special police

observer Vivek Kumar Dubey is slated to hold a meeting Wednesday with the new Cooch-behar superintendent of police Amit Kumar Singh and district magistrate Kaushick Saha to discuss the situation and ensure fair and peaceful voting in the district, officials said.

According to officials, a total 83 companies of central police have been already deployed in the two constituencies in place of the initially planned 79 companies.

Of the 83 companies, 40 would be deployed in booths, they said.

BJP Cooch Behar candidate Nishit Pra-

manik said he will request Dubey to review the number of sensitive booths.

He claimed that booths in Cooch Behar which reported rampant rigging in the 2018 panchayat polls have been kept out of the list of sensitive booths by Abhishek Gupta, the previous superintendent of police who was replaced barely 36 hours before polling.

A total 18,09,598 electorate will decide the fate of 11 contestants in Cooch Behar, while 16,42,285 voters will choose from seven contestants in Alipurdwar, EC sources said.

20 buffaloes die in Nagaland of unknown disease

KOHIMA, APR 10 (PTI): At least 20 buffaloes have died of an unknown disease in Nagaland's Dimapur district, officials said Wednesday.

The buffaloes died at Sheiri Angami village and Sochnoma village in Dimapur district, they said.

An inspection report of veterinary officials led by Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer and Veterinary Field Assistants (VFA) stated that the village council chairman and villagers informed that everyday 3 to 5 buffalo has been dying and till date more than 20 buffaloes have died.

After observing symptomatic sign of the buffalo death and sick



buffaloes, the team in their inspection report said it suspects HS (Hemorrhagic Septicaemia) disease as the cause of death.

"We have treated 2 sick buffalo according to the symptom on the spot and instructed the VFAs to complete the treatment. In the meantime, we also provided them

with antibiotics, vitamins, mineral mixture, anthelmintic," the report said.

The team has recommended immediate blood serum collection from buffaloes of the area, besides provision of antibiotics and immediate ring vaccination to avoid spreading of the disease in other area.

Stage set for polling in 5 Lok Sabha seats in Assam



GUWAHATI, APR 10 (PTI): The stage is set for polling in five Lok Sabha seats in Assam on Thursday to decide the fate of 41 candidates in the fray.

An electorate of 76,03,458, including 38,65,334 male, 37,37,970 female and 154 of the third gender will exercise their franchise in 9,574 polling stations in Tezpur, Kaliabor, Jorhat, Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur Lok Sabha constituencies.

Tight security arrangements have been made across the five constituencies to ensure smooth conduct of polling, Assam Director General of Police Kuladhar Saikia said.

Altogether 40 companies of para-military forces have been deployed in the first phase while the state police force is also engaged in ensuring free and fair polls.

Patrolling along the border with neighbouring states, railway stations, river patrolling by river police and other sensitive areas have been intensified while strict

monitoring of social media and cyber related crimes was being done at the district level.

Altogether 1,300 polling booths have been identified as critical and adequate security arrangements have been made to ensure free and fair polls, Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Sahu said.

Around 45,950 polling personnel have been deployed in the first phase and they have started moving out since Tuesday but most of them have left for their polling booths Wednesday.

Beside buses, the polling personnel are also using boats to reach inaccessible areas along the river banks though no animals are being used this time.

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

Lakhimpur has the highest number of 11 candidates in the fray with the main contest

between sitting BJP MP Pradhan Barua and Congress candidate Anil Borgohain.

In the Dibrugarh constituency eight candidates are in fray but the battle of the ballot is between sitting BJP MP Rameshwar Teli and veteran Congress leader and former Union Minister Paban Singh Ghatowar.

In the neighbouring Jorhat constituency, eight candidates are in fray and the contest is between state Power Minister Tapon Gogoi of the BJP and former Congress MLA Shanta Borgohain.

In Kaliabor, sitting Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi is pitted against AGP's Moni Madhab Mahanta while in Tezpur constituency state Power Minister Pallab Lochan Das of the AGP is fighting it out against retired bureaucrat M G V K Bhanu of the Congress.

There are two women candidates - Ribulya Gogoi of the Trinamool Congress and an Independent Nandita Gogoi, both are contesting from Jorha seat.

NEW DELHI, APR 10 (PTI): The Trinamool Congress Wednesday accused the Election Commission of bias and submitted a memorandum to the poll body against transfers of top police officers in West Bengal just before the first phase of voting in the Lok Sabha elections.

Party leaders Derek O'Brien, Sukhendu Sekhar Ray and Chandan Mitra lodged a nine-point memorandum protesting what they called was "EC bias".

"People are saying Nirvachan Commission has become Nikamma Commission. Enough is enough. Transfers of good, honest senior police officers of Bengal are being decided by a traitor who now works out of the BJP Central office in



Kolkata," said Derek, indicating the hand of former TMC MP Mukul Roy, who is now in the BJP, in the removal of the Cooch Behar Superintendent of Police Abhishek Gupta by the poll body on April 9.

In the memorandum, the TMC has also said the removal of Kolkata Police Commissioner Anuj Sharma along with those of Bidhan Nagar Police Commissioner Gyanwant Singh, Birbhum SP Shyam Singh, Diamond Harbour SP S Selvamurugan and Airport Division DCP Avaru Rabindranath, have been effected "without following proper pro-

cedure".

"In this case, we have observed that the transfers were made soon after complaints were made and instructions issued by BJP leaders who publicly claimed" that such action were taken by the ECI at the initiative of their party, the memorandum alleged.

Earlier, in a letter to the chief election commission on Tuesday, the TMC had alleged that Gupta's transfer was "arbitrary, motivated and biased" and claimed the poll body was taking instructions from BJP leaders.

**Contact Summit TIMES at
03592-208698,
9832556698, 9832369520
news@summittimes.com
advertse@summittimes.com
summittmes16@gmail.com**

My parents didn't have it easy during apartheid but I was blessed: Rabada

KUSHAN SARKAR
NEW DELHI, APR 10 (PTI): Hardships of apartheid era had left indelible scars on Black Africans but Kagiso Rabada considers himself “blessed” to have been a part of the ‘Born-Free generation’ with parents, who endured tough times to create a level-playing field for him.

Rabada hails from a family of accomplished professionals with father Mpho being a doctor and mother Florence working in asset management.

“Yes, support plays a big role. I have been blessed in some sense to get opportunities and be able to thrive in my talent. So I feel fortunate because a lot of kids don't get that kind of support,” Rabada told PTI during an exclusive interview.

Born-Frees are those coming into existence after the fall of apartheid.

Rabada said that his parents, as young Black Africans, had their share of struggles while they tried to settle down in their professional lives but ensured that he got the best of everything.

“I am glad for everything my parents have done for me, because in the apartheid era, they did not have it easy at all,” he said.

It is his desire to make a difference that encouraged him to form a foundation to help the underprivileged children.

“Now I have the opportunity to give back and help the less fortunate through my foundation, it's coming along nicely. It's based around cricket but also branch into other sports and education in the future.”

Opportunities have not been a problem for Rabada, who counts his blessings, perhaps the biggest reason why he considers representing the ‘Rainbow Nation’ paramount at a time when there is always the lure for better financial reward. He can avail the KOLPAK deals like some of his teammates.



Some of the better South African pacers like Kyle Abbott in 2017 and the much recently Duanne Oliver have availed KOLPAK deals in English county cricket.

The deal allows persons from countries sharing free trade with European Union nations to work as professional.

The South African team has been affected by these defections but Rabada termed it an individual choice.

“Kolpak is a touchy issue. I believe people are entitled to their choices of course. For me, playing for the country is a big deal and an opportunity always to give my best,” the South African made his priorities clear.

The 23-year-old Rabada, along with India's Jasprit Bumrah, are touted as pacers who will rule world cricket in the coming years.

“Well, that's a compliment surely,” said the soft-spoken man while refusing to be drawn into the debate as to who is better among the two of them.

“I don't know who is the best because all teams at the moment have good fast bowling units, which is also a big reason why I think the World Cup in England will be an interesting one.”

His yorker in the Super Over to castle Andre Russell is easily the most talked-about delivery in the Indian Premier League.

Asked if Waqar Yousif or Allan Donald has been his inspiration,

Rabada said that he is self-taught.

“I didn't look up to anybody on bowling yorkers when I was just growing up. I just learnt it along the way. It's not like I got inspired. I just thought it was a good ball to bowl.”

Delhi Capitals, as well as the erstwhile Delhi Daredevils, have struggled and Rabada points it to inability of finishing close games.

“I feel that the team is very young. I think it's just the finishing off games that we are lacking in and identifying key moments to make sure we ensure victory. When I came for my first IPL, that was always the case, always so close, yet could not put the final nail in the coffin,” Rabada lamented.

“Much of the same has happened this year in

a couple of years. But the players are getting older, and getting more experience like Shreyas, Rishabh, me. We have all played international cricket too and that helps. So we are slowly getting there, and the important thing is to learn from each game.”

Rabada found the defeat against Kings XI Punjab “extremely frustrating” as Delhi lost seven wickets for eight runs while chasing a modest total.

“It is frustrating, especially this year, because we have been coasting it and then out of nowhere we just lose it. But what can you do? We have to talk the hard truths amongst us and really need to just win. You can talk a lot, but you got to incorporate that stuff when you play.”

Struggling Rajasthan Royals look to turn fortunes against in-form CSK

DINESH SHARMA
JAIPUR, APR 10 (PTI): A struggling Rajasthan Royals will desperately seek to revive their campaign when they host formidable Chennai Super Kings in an Indian Premier League encounter here on Thursday.

Rajasthan are currently lying in the penultimate spot in the eight-team standings with just one win out of five games.

Rajasthan's sole win came against laggards Royal Challengers Bangalore at the Sawai Man Singh Stadium here and they would be banking on home comfort to upset defending champions CSK.

In contrast, CSK are coming off a clinical seven-wicket thrashing of Kolkata Knight Riders and are sitting pretty at the top of the table with five victories from six games.

Under the astute captaincy of Mahendra Singh Dhoni, CSK boasts of a perfectly balanced squad to excel on any surface and all conditions.

The Royals, on the other hand, are still struggling to find their bearings. After losing their last match, they find themselves in a precarious position, and have to win almost all their remaining games to keep their play-off chances alive.

Rajasthan have failed to seize opportunities in their earlier matches and in the previous outing against KKR, they were totally outplayed on home turf.

Sanju Samson, who had cracked the first ton of this IPL, is still recovering from an injury and after a bright start to the season, Jos Butler too has failed in the



last couple of innings.

The biggest positive for Rajasthan will be the return to form of former Australian captain Steve Smith. Smith scored 38 against RCB before anchoring his team to 139 with an unbeaten 73 against KKR.

Skipper Ajinkya Rahane, Rahul Tripathi and Ben Stokes too have been below par with the bat. To add to their woes, Rajasthan don't have

the depth and bench strength to overcome the tough situation.

Rajasthan's bowling too appears to be lacking in ideas and the likes of Stokes, Jofra Archer, Jaidev Unadkat, and Dhawal Kulkarni will have to pull up their socks against an in-form CSK.

However, captain Rahane feels there is no need to hit the panic button yet.

“I think there's no need for us to panic yet.

Out of the five matches that we played, we lost badly in just one game. We played well in our last four matches, out of which we could have won three. It's not too late for us,” he had said after the loss against KKR.

CSK, on the other hand, will be brimming with confidence having defeated the Royals earlier in the season, when Dhoni smashed an unbeaten 75 to clinch an eight-run victory.

Their batting looks solid with Shane Watson and Fau Du Plessis at the top while the middle-order consists of Suresh Raina, Ambati Rayudu, Kedar Jadhav and Dhoni.

CSK's bowling unit, which has an impressive mix of pace and spin, will look to exploit the Sawai Man Singh wicket, which has been playing slow and low.

Minister performs “Nagin dance” to woo voters

BENGALURU, APR 10 (PTI): In a bid to woo voters, Karnataka Housing minister M T B Nagaraj danced to a popular tune from the Hindi movie ‘Nagin’ much to the amusement of people at Hoskote, near here, and the video has gone viral.

Nagaraj, whose name means King Cobra, had gone with his supporters to Katigenahalli village in Hoskote Tuesday evening seeking votes for Congress candidate and former union minister Veerappa Moily who is contesting from the Chikkaballapura Lok Sabha constituency.

A music band that followed the minister's convoy started playing the famous ‘Nagin’ tune to captivate a cobra from the 1954 Hindi movie.



The tune was part of the song ‘Man Dole Mera Tan Dole’ and it charmed Nagaraj too and the 67-year-old congress leader started to gyrate.

Soon his supporters too began dancing with him and the performance went on for about 10 minutes.

The dance video has gone viral.

Those accompanying Nagaraj finally asked him to slow down in view of his age.

This is not the first time

that the minister has exhibited his dance skills in public. He had done it earlier too during religious events in Hoskote.

The minister, popularly known as MTB by his supporters, was ranked the richest MLA in the country by the Association for Democratic Reforms, an NGO, last year which said his assets were valued at over Rs 1,000 crore.

Karnataka goes to the polls in two phases on April 18 and 23.

Warner's ego must be managed - South Africa's Smith

Sydney, Apr 10 (AFP): Former South African captain Graeme Smith has some advice for Australia coach Justin Langer -- make sure David Warner's ego is managed if he starts to “get bigger than everybody else”.

The polarising opener, on the comeback trail after a one-year ban for ball-tampering, has been in red-hot form in the Indian Premier League ahead of his expected recall to the national side for the World Cup in England and Wales.

But some commentators believe Warner's return could be disruptive to the team, which is now resurgent after a run of poor results, and that he needs to be managed carefully.

Smith, who skipped his country for more than a decade, said that while he admired Warner's batting, he had “pissed a lot of people off” throughout his career.

“I don't know,” he told Fox Sports on Tuesday evening when asked if he would have any issue in welcoming Warner back to the Australian team.

“It's difficult to know



what it's like behind the scenes, but he's always been an incredible cricketer,” added Smith, who played 117 Tests before retiring in 2014.

“Especially when he bats, he bats with that driven nature, that intensity, ego to perform. And he's an excellent cricketer.

“I think where David has been throughout his career is that he's pissed a lot of people off. He's just that type of guy. I think at the moment he needs Australian cricket more than they need him.”

Warner is suspected of instigating a plot to use sandpaper to alter the

ball in the now infamous Cape Town Test last year. He has long been a divisive figure.

And Smith believes his behaviour needs to be monitored closely.

“I think he's very driven, I think he wants to do well, he wants to prove his worth again. And I think David Warner in that position is probably a good guy to have in your environment,” he said.

“It's when he starts to get bigger than everybody else then probably management needs to be ready for that.

“Guys like Langer and whoever is captaining the side going forward

need to ensure they stay on top of that and manage that space and that ego well going forward.”

The reintegration of Warner and co-conspirator Steve Smith has already begun with the pair meeting the one-day team after their bans expired late last month.

Australian cricket chief Kevin Roberts recently said team-mates don't always need to be “best mates”.

“In any workplace, you don't need to be best mates with everyone, but there needs to be a foundation of respect and I think there is growing respect there,” he said.

Netanyahu projected to win Israeli election: media

JERUSALEM, APR 10 (AFP): Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was projected to win a fifth term in office on Wednesday after nearly complete results from Israel's general election put him in position to form a rightwing coalition, media reports said.

The victory, despite corruption allegations against the 69-year-old premier, puts him on a path to become Israel's longest-serving prime minister later this year.

His Likud party looked set to finish with a similar number of seats in parliament to his main rival, ex-military chief Benny Gantz's centrist Blue and White alliance.

But with 97 percent of the vote counted, results showed Likud and other rightwing parties allied to him with some 65 seats in the 120-seat parliament, media reports said.

The close race between the two main parties had led to uncertainty after polls closed on Tuesday night and exit surveys were released.

Both Netanyahu and Gantz claimed victory after the initial exit surveys that gave Blue and White the most seats.

But even then Netanyahu appeared best placed to form a coalition, with both parties in any case falling far short of an outright majority.

Netanyahu spoke in the early hours of Wednesday at Likud's post-election party in Tel Aviv and called it a “magnificent victory.” As he walked onto the stage to chanting crowds, he planted a kiss on the lips of his wife Sara before dramatically wiping lipstick from his face.

“It will be a rightwing government, but I will be prime minister for all,” he said.

Earlier while addressing cheering supporters who waived Israeli flags at an event hall in Tel Aviv, Gantz called it an “historic day.” “The president must give us the task of forming the next government since we are the biggest party,” he said after initial exit polls.

The vote had long been expected to be close and lead to frantic negotiations to form a coalition, even with Netanyahu facing potential corruption charges.

“Things can change, but in any case the rightwing bloc won,” Meshi Sivani, 52 and wearing a Likud t-shirt, said at Netanyahu's post-election party.

Shushan Levi, 61, called Gantz's performance an “enormous victory for an alliance so new.” “Once he announced he was entering politics, I followed him,” he said at Blue and

White's party.

“He was my commander in the army 40 years ago,” Gantz, a newcomer to politics, mounted a strong challenge to the veteran prime minister by brandishing his security credentials while pledging to undo damage he says Netanyahu has inflicted on the country with divisive politics.

The election was in many ways a referendum on the 69-year-old premier who has built a reputation as guarantor of the country's security and economic growth, but whose populism and alleged corruption have left many ready for change.

He engaged in populist rhetoric that critics said amounted to the demonisation of Arab Israelis and others.

Netanyahu faced further criticism on election day when members of his Likud party brought small cameras into polling stations in Arab areas.

Arab politicians called it an attempt at intimidation, while Netanyahu said cameras would prevent fraud.

True to form, Netanyahu issued a deeply controversial pledge only three days before the election, saying he planned to annex Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank

should he win.

Extending Israeli sovereignty on a large-scale in the West Bank could be the death knell to already fading hopes for a two-state solution with the Palestinians.

It is a move long-sought by Israel's far-right.

Netanyahu sought to portray himself as Israel's essential statesman in the run-up to the vote and highlighted his bond with US President Donald Trump.

He spoke of Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and of Israel's claim of sovereignty over the annexed Golan Heights.

He also used Trump-like tactics, calling the corruption investigations a “witch hunt” and denouncing journalists covering them.

On Tuesday, he continually warned Likud was at risk of losing over what he said was low turnout among supporters, claims widely seen as a bid to motivate rightwing voters.

By 8:00pm (1700 GMT), overall turnout was 61.3 percent compared to 62.4 percent at the same time in 2015 elections.

Gantz, a 59-year-old former paratrooper, invoked the corruption allegations against the premier to make his case that it is time for him to go.

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China and North Korea open new border crossing



BEIJING, APR 10 (AFP): A Chinese city has opened a new border crossing with North Korea -- fitted with radiation detectors -- even as talks between Washington and Pyongyang have languished over disagreements for nuclear sanctions relief.

The new highway border crossing opened in the northeastern city of Ji'an on Monday, complementing its three existing ports with the North, the city said in a statement published on its website Tuesday.

"After three years of unrelenting efforts, the China-North Korean Ji'an-Manpo Highway Port was officially opened," the city said.

The project cost 280 million yuan (42 million) and the city estimated 500,000 tons of goods and 200,000 people would cross through the new port each year.

But crippling UN sanctions imposed on the North by the UN Security Council in 2016 and 2017 have crimped trade between the two

Cold War-era allies.

China is by far the North's biggest trading partner. While Pyongyang publishes virtually no economic statistics of its own, Chinese Customs figures show exports to China have plummeted by more than 90 percent since 2016, down to 213 million last year -- although some observers question their reliability. Sanctions relief was top of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's agenda for his Hanoi summit with US President Donald Trump in February.

But the meeting broke up without a statement or even a lunch as the two sides disagreed over walking back Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programme in exchange for loosening sanctions.

After the opening ceremony, the first 120 tourists crossed the border. Chinese tourism to the North has picked up as relations between the countries have improved in recent years.

The crossing also

has a nuclear radiation detection gate, the city said. China has long been worried about any fallout from North Korea's nuclear activities and Jilin was rocked by an earthquake after a massive bomb test across the border in September 2017.

The main artery for North Korean trade with China has traditionally been through the Chinese border city of Dandong, to the south.

Ambitious city planners there started work on a Dandong New Zone in 2012, capped by a massive project to open a bridge connecting the city with the North Korean city of Sinuiju on the other side.

Authorities expected billions of dollars in investment to flood into jointly-run free trade zones on both sides of the border.

But after construction on the four-lane, 350-million bridge completed, it never opened, and the concrete runs into fields on the North Korean side.

Imran Khan says better chance of peace with India if BJP wins general elections

BY SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, APR 10 (PTI): Pakistan's Premier Imran Khan has said he believes there may be a better chance of peace talks with India and settle the Kashmir issue if Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party BJP wins the general elections.

India will go to elections in seven phases beginning from Thursday.

"Perhaps if the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party)....wins, some kind of settlement in Kashmir could be reached," Khan told a small group of foreign journalists in an interview.

He said other parties would be afraid of right-wing backlash in case of settlement on the Kashmir issue.

Khan said Kashmir was the central issue between the two countries.



India maintains that the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of the country and Pakistan is in illegal occupation of a part of the state's territory.

Tensions flared up be-

tween India and Pakistan after a suicide bomber of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM) killed 40 CRPF personnel in Kashmir's Pulwama district on February 14.

Amid mounting out-

rage, the Indian Air Force (IAF) carried out a counter-terror operation, hitting the biggest JeM training camp in Balakot, deep inside Pakistan on February 26. The next day, Pakistan Air Force

retaliated and downed a MiG-21 in an aerial combat and captured an IAF pilot, who was handed over to India on March 1.

Khan has said that Pakistan was taking action against all militants groups including the JeM.

Khan said that groups like the JeM were being disarmed under a serious drive to eliminate militancy from Pakistan.

"We have taken the religious schools of these groups under state control. It is first serious effort to disarm the militant outfits, he said.

Khan said action was taken because it was important for the future of Pakistan. He also rejected the impression that Pakistan was compelled by the world to taken such an action.

Harbhajan, Tahir are like old wine; maturing with time: Dhoni

CHENNAI, APR 10 (PTI): Harbhajan Singh and Imran Tahir have proved that age is just a number, feels Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, equating the spinners with fine wine for the way they have matured.

The inspirational CSK skipper, himself 37, was effusive in his praise for the duo after CSK's seven-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders here on Tuesday. The 38-year-old Harbhajan (2/15) and the 40-year-old Tahir (2/21) were the key performers for the home team.

"Age is on their side (Harbhajan and Tahir). They are like old wine and they are maturing," Dhoni said after the win over KKR, their fifth out of six matches so far this season.

"Bhaji (Harbhajan) has done well in whatever games he has played. I have fallen back on Imran (Tahir) whenever needed and he has come up with very good performances.

"Overall, the bowling unit looks good. But once we play on better and flatter wickets with smaller boundaries, we will have to see what is the best combination to play with,"

he added.

Dhoni picked Tahir for special praise, saying the South African is someone on whom he can depend no matter what the situation.

"I have fallen back on Tahir and he has done the job. He has confidence in me. He has got a very good flipper," he said.

Sindhu, Saina sail into second round of Singapore Open

SINGAPORE, APR 10 (PTI): Star Indian shuttlers P V Sindhu and Saina Nehwal sailed into the second round of the Singapore Open with straight-game wins over their respective rivals in the women's singles event here Wednesday.

Taking the court first, Sindhu, seeded fourth, took just 27 minutes to

get the better of Indonesia's Lyanny Alessandra Mainaky 21-9 21-7 in a one-sided match.

The Rio Olympics silver-medallist will next play Mia Blichfeldt of Denmark.

Later, sixth seed Saina too tamed another Indonesian in Yulia Yosephin Susanto 21-16 21-11 to book her place in the next round.

India's Permanent Mission to UN inaugurates giant mural

BY YOSHITA SINGH
NEW YORK, APR 10 (PTI): In an "innovative outreach", an imposing mural on the premises of India's Permanent Mission to the UN depicts a multi-pronged theme of environmentally sustainable green jobs, Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, the International Labour Organisation's centenary celebration and India leading the global greening effort as documented recently by NASA.

The mural, on the sidewall of the Permanent Mission of India to the UN here, was created by French artist, originally from Portugal, Victor Ash to commemorate the centenary celebrations of the International Labour Organization (ILO) as well as Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary. The mural, an innovative collaboration with the ILO and non-profit organization Street Art for Mankind, was inaugurated Tuesday.

The imposing white, black, grey and green mural depicts a gigantic weightless astronaut, floating in space, a green India visible in the astronaut's helmet visor. Gandhi's portrait and the number '150' are on the astronaut's space-suit's left arm while a patch with the ILO logo and the numeric '100' is on the right arm.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin said the ILO worked with the India's Permanent Mis-

sion to promote a global concern - environmentally sustainable green jobs. He said the mural's theme also has other elements of India - green jobs, the NASA report and Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.

"Rare is an occasion that you can get so many themes together," Akbaruddin said as the mural was inaugurated in the presence of ILO Director-General Guy Ryder as well as top UN diplomats.

"We hope that this innovative outreach, which goes beyond diplomatic outreach, reaches out to people on the street in a form that is comprehensible to them."

"We diplomats work on resolutions, outcomes, documents but this is our combined effort to promote green jobs in a much more sustainable manner," he said.

Looking down on Earth, the astronaut in the mural sees that the world is a greener place than it was 20 years ago. India is amongst those contributing in significant measure to this increase in the greening on Earth and the same was corroborated by the recent data from the NASA satellites.

A recent NASA study had said India and China are leading the global greening effort. The NASA study, which observed that the world is a greener place than it was 20 years ago, was based on data received and analysed from its

satellite. The greening in India is mostly from croplands (82 per cent) with minor contribution from forests (4.4 per cent), the NASA study, published on February 11, said.

Akbaruddin voiced appreciation for Ash for being able to "artistically depict the multiple themes in a way that all of us can comprehend."

Ash said he was honoured to participate in the project, which gives a message that it's important for nations to work together for a greener future.

"I painted the astronaut because astronauts are also workers, they carry all the machines and tools when they go up in space. I think the future of workers will also be space," he told PTI.

He added that astronauts often say that when they are in space, they don't see borders when they look down at Earth. There are no borders, it's only in our minds.

Ash, who has been doing street art and murals since the 1980s, finished the mural in one week.

"Big murals like this are a good way to give messages. Very often art is not understood by most people. I use very simple message in what I do so people can understand very easily," he said.

The mural also depicts the ILO's objective of transformation to a greener and low-carbon economy with the potential to create around 24

million new jobs globally by 2030, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

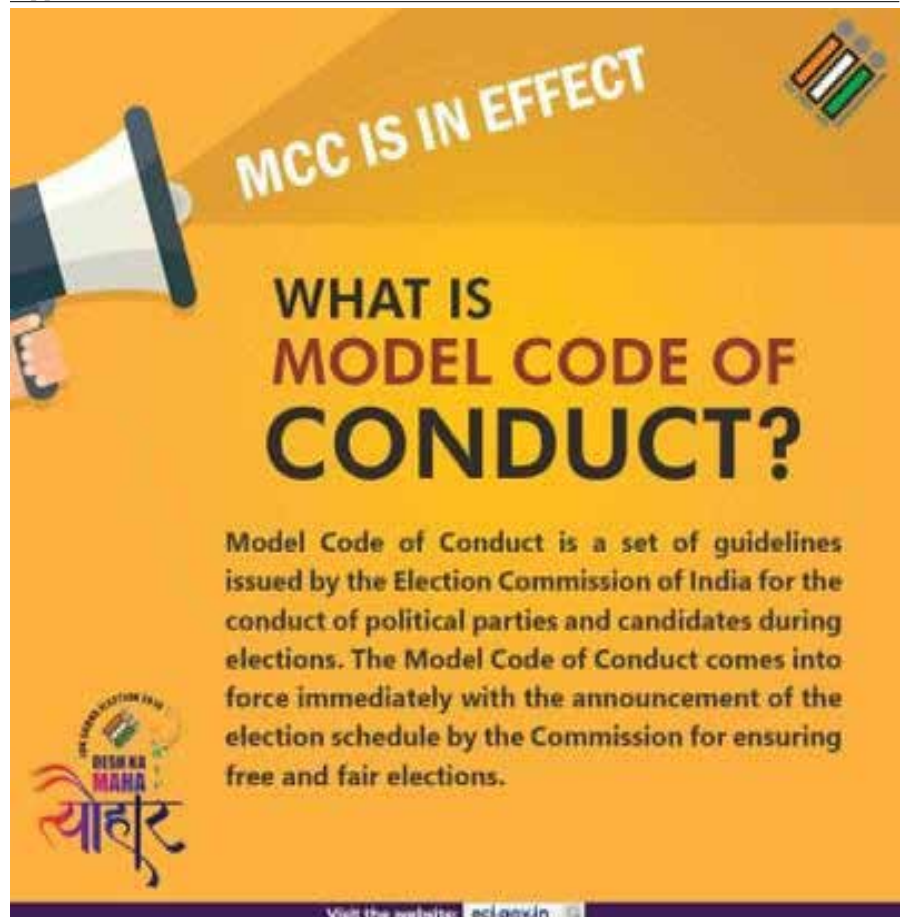
"The Green India in the mural represents the importance of green jobs to sustainable development and responds to the global challenges of environmental protection, economic development and social inclusion, the Permanent Mission of India to the UN said adding that with the Green Jobs Initiative, the ILO and its partners seek to promote economies and enterprises with reduced environmental impact while generating meaningful employment and the regenerating natural resources.

"There is a growing acknowledgement that the strategy of grow first, clean up later' is not sustainable, economically, socially or environmentally. This has led to an awareness and willingness to act," the Indian Mission said.

India was one of the first countries in Asia Pacific to collaborate with the ILO on the Green Jobs Initiative.

"Some may consider this counter intuitive, given our large population. To us, it is no surprise. The leader of India's struggle for independence, Mahatma Gandhi, whose 150th anniversary is being celebrated, always held that 'The earth, air, land and water are not an inheritance from our forefathers but on loan from our children'," it said.

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Ayushmann Khurrana completes 'Article 15' shoot

MUMBAI, APR 9 (PTI): Ayushmann Khurrana on Tuesday wrapped up filming his upcoming movie, "Article 15" and the actor said the Anubhav Sinha directorial will be "the most relevant and important film" in Indian cinema.

Touted as a hard-hitting investigative drama, "Article 15" will see Khurrana play a police officer for the first time.

"Wrapped up a film which will become the most relevant and important film of Indian cinema. Thank you @anubhavsinha sir for giving me this gem and also writing the most real cop role ever. #Article15," the actor wrote on Twitter.

He also shared a 3D mini figure modelled on him in his cop avatar and thanked the cast and crew for it.

The film is being called one of Sinha's most ambitious projects till date and is the director's first collaboration with the actor.

"Article 15" also stars Isha Talwar, Manoj Pahwa, Sayani Gupta, Kumud Mishra, M Naser, Ashish Verma, Sushil Pandey, Subrajyoti Bharat and Zeeshan Ayub.

Produced by Benaras Media Works, the film went on floors from March 1 in Lucknow.



Tiger Shroff nervous about 'Student of the Year 2'

Mumbai, Apr 7 (PTI): Tiger Shroff, who will next be seen in "Student of the Year 2", on Sunday said he is aware of the expectations from the film.

The 2012 hit film "Student of the Year" marked the Bollywood debut of Alia Bhatt, Varun Dhawan and Sidharth Malhotra. It was directed and produced by Karan Johar.

The sequel produced by Johar, features Tiger in the lead and marks the debut of Ananya Pandey, daughter of Chunky Pandey and Tara Sutaria.

"I am both excited and nervous. There is pressure, there are expectations. But I am happy with the product that Karan Johar and director Punit Malhotra have put together for us," Tiger told reporters here at an event.

The actor said the trailer of the film will be out in



four days.

Directed by Punit, "SOTY 2" is slated to be released on May 10.

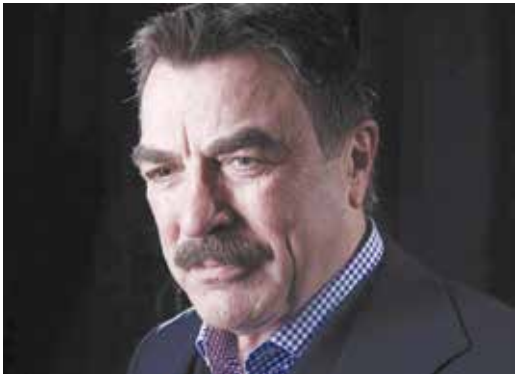
Tiger was talking on the sidelines of the launch of Pepsi's new anthem 'Har Ghoont Mein Swag', featuring him and Disha Patani. The song is composed, written and sung by Badshah. It was released by T-Series and directed by "Baaghi 2" helmer Ahmed Khan.

"It is nostalgic to be working with the 'Baaghi 2' team. It was fun working with all of them," Tiger said.

Disha, who earlier teamed up with Tiger for "Baaghi 2", said she was nervous about working with him.

"I am thankful to Ahmed Khan for making me look confident. I am always nervous while working with Tiger. He dances really well and fast and to match up to him I have to work very hard," she said.

Tom Selleck is writing memoir



LOS ANGELES, APR 9 (PTI): Veteran actor Tom Selleck will soon be coming out with his memoir.

The 74-year-old actor is best known for starring as private investigator in television series "Magnum, P.I.". The Hawaii-based show ran for eight seasons from 1980 to 1988. His other acting credits includes "Three Men and a Baby", "Quigley Down Under", "Mr. Baseball" and "Lassiter".

The book will be released by Dey Street Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

On the company's website, the memoir has been described as "an up-close and inspiring look at America's favourite actor" which will weave a "vivid and incisive portrait that combines heart and head, work and home, hard-fought wisdom and renewable optimism".

The yet-untitled book is expected to be released later this year.

'Shazam!' writer Henry Gayden will return to pen sequel



LOS ANGELES, APR 9 (PTI): Warner Bros studios has reportedly tapped "Shazam!" writer Henry Gayden to pen the DC superhero movie's sequel for DC and New Line.

A source with knowledge of the situation told TheWrap that director David F Sandberg and producer Peter Safran are also expected to return.

The news comes days after the Zachary Levi-fronted film released on April 5.

Gayden is currently adapting "Last Human," a live-action science fiction film from Phil Lord and Christopher Miller based on the forthcoming novel of the same name by Lee Bacon.

With "Shazam!" minting USD 159.1 million worldwide, the studio has scored a third consecutive hit, after "Wonder Woman" (2017) and "Aquaman" (2018).

The film also Jack Dylan Grazer, Michelle Borth and Djimon Hounsou.

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