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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## SLTTJAC to launch anti-SDF campaign

*“Should have been 5 L-T constituencies, not 5 SDF candidates”*

**SAGAR CHHETRI  
GANGTOK, 14 MAR:**

Sikkim Limboo-Tamang Tribal Joint Action Committee [SLTTJAC] has decided to reach out to all Limboos and Tamangs in the State lobbying them not to cast their votes for Sikkim Democratic Front since it has failed to resolve the Limboo-Tamang Assembly seat reservation issue. SLTTJAC has said that Limboos and Tamangs of Sikkim should not vote for a party that has failed to work in order to protect the rights of Limboo-Tamang communities.

Addressing a press conference here today, SLTTJAC spokesperson, Adeep Tamang expressed that SLTTJAC does not have any faith in the State government now on this issue.

“JAC will reach out to all Limboo and Ta-



mang members across the State with anti-SDF campaigning for failing to resolve Limboo-Tamang seat reservation issue,” he said.

On the same, SLTTJAC president, SB Subba informed that JAC will go to the people to tell them of the SDF government's failure on the Assembly seat reservation issue. He also urged all political parties to first understand the Limboo-Tamang seat reservation issue properly before

using it as a weapon for their political benefits.

Responding to queries on SDF's announcement to give tickets to five candidates from LT communities, Mr Tamang mentioned that just to announce five candidates is not enough as there is no guarantee of their victory. On the same, he asserted that instead of making such an announcement the ruling party can call an all-party meeting to fix five constituencies for Limboos

and Tamangs to ensure five LT representatives in the State.

Limboos and Tamangs of Sikkim are not only deprived of their seats but of their rights as well despite being tribals. He also urged the Chief Minister not to give any more false assurances and information to the people.

The SLTTJAC president also condemned allegations of Sikkim Limboo-Tamang Apex Committee against SIBLAC and the Centre on the

seat reservation issue. He stated that no mistake was made by the Centre or SIBLAC on the seat reservation issue but it is the State government and its LT legislators who are responsible for not working according to the law on this issue.

He added that the Centre listens to the government and legislators rather than an organisation. He also lashed out against LT legislators of SDF for not speaking out on the issue.

## Unhappy with SKM alliance bypassing Sikkim unit, 3 BJP office bearers resign

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 14 MAR:**

Three office-bearers of Bharatiya Janata Party's Sikkim unit resigned from the party today unhappy with the manner in which the electoral alliance with SKM was struck by the party bypassing the State functionaries and in contradiction with the BJP's expressed position against corruption.

BJP state-unit's vice-president JB Darnal, who was also the party spokesperson, vice-president Madan Karki and general secretary DR Khativada of East District Committee have resigned from primary membership and all posts and responsibilities in the party.

Addressing a press conference this afternoon, Mr Darnal expressed deep dissatisfaction over the alliance process between BJP and SKM.

He mentioned that many leaders and workers of the state-unit were neither happy nor satisfied with the alliance.

“We are not pleased with the SKM for having



gone directly to the central committee of BJP in Delhi bypassing the Sikkim unit. We worked very hard to bring BJP to its current position in the State but we were not even informed about negotiations leading to the alliance,” he stated.

Mr Darnal added that BJP's stand against corruption has also been brought into question with the party allying with SKM which is headed by a person who has only recently completed a jail term on a corruption conviction.

He stressed that this alliance has exposed the double standards of the

BJP. The zero-tolerance of corruption stand carries no meaning now, he suggested.

He also alleged that SKM has never followed the dharma of the alliance. He informed that SKM had alliance with BJP in the 2014 bye-election and then again in the Municipal elections but always betrayed BJP soon after the elections.

He also expressed his dissatisfaction with the Sikkim-BJP president for not taking officer-bearers here into confidence.

Responding to media queries, Mr Darnal said that he has no plans to join any other political party at present.

## RB Subba condemns posters claiming misunderstanding with his namesake

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 14 MAR:**

Former Minister Ran Bahadur Subba [Lee-wang], who had recently returned to the SDF fold, has registered his strong condemnation of the posterage reported from Soreng-Chakung constituency last night claiming misunderstandings between him and the HRDD Minister, his namesake, RB Subba [Khewa].

He alleged that the posters were the handwork of SKM which

was indulging in politics of misinformation, rumours and propaganda. Photographs of these posters were also mischievously circulated on social media platforms today, he says.

In a press release, the former Minister mentioned that Limboo people of West Sikkim have always been living in the unity.

“We may have had some political differences earlier, but now we both are together under the flag of the same

party. I would also like to inform the people of Sikkim that we have a joint commitment to ensure the victory of SDF in the elections to safeguard the future of Sikkim and its people,” Mr Subba adds in his press communiqué while addressing the claims made in the posters.

The release adds that except for a few, all opposition parties are being managed by masters from outside and feudal remnants in the State.

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## 108 economists, social scientists concerned over political interference in data estimation

**NEW DELHI, MAR 14 (PTI):**

Expressing concerns over “political interference” in influencing statistical data in India, as many as 108 economists and social scientists Thursday called for restoration of “institutional independence” and integrity to the statistical organisations.

Their joint statement comes in the backdrop of controversy over revision of gross domestic product (GDP) numbers and withholding employment data by the NSSO.

They said that for decades, India's statistical machinery enjoyed a high-level of reputation for the integrity of the data it produced on a range of economic and social parameters.

“It (statistical machinery) was often criticised for the quality of

its estimates, but never were allegations made of political interference influencing decisions and the estimates themselves,” they said in an appeal.

They have appealed to all professional economists, statisticians and independent researchers to come together to raise their voice against the tendency “to suppress uncomfortable data” and impress upon the government to restore access and integrity to public statistics and re-establish institutional independence.

The signatories include Rakesh Basant (IIM-A), James Boyce (University of Massachusetts at Amherst, US), Emily Breza (Harvard University, US), Satish Deshpande (Delhi University), Patrick Francois

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## TES builds house for underprivileged family



**ARPAN PRADHAN  
GANGTOK, 14 MAR:**

Tara Educational Society (TES), a Non-Governmental-Organization based in Gangtok, has come up with a new initiative to help the underprivileged by donating land and constructing houses for them.

The Society had donated a piece of land to one Nar Bahadur Darjee two months back and

to start the construction work, a small programme was organized on Wednesday. Mr Darjee is a resident of Lower Chisopani under Singtam-Khamdong Constituency in East Sikkim. He belongs to an underprivileged family and was in need of a house.

A team of TES headed by its president, Uday Gurung met Mr Darjee and his family to complete

the formalities and officially start the construction work of the house.

During the meeting, local residents, family members of the beneficiary and members of the society were also present. It may be mentioned here that the TES is involved in various social work and has helped in the construction of religious institutions not

*turn to pg02*

## Climate change vulnerability map for 12 Himalayan states developed

**NEW DELHI, MAR 14 (PTI):** Researchers at IIT Guwahati, IIT Mandi and IISc Bengaluru have developed a climate change vulnerability map for 12 Himalayan states in India that will help prioritise resource allocation to address these vulnerabilities.

The exercise is unique because for the first time all the 12 Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) States have used a common framework resulting in the production of comparable state level and within state, district level vulnerability maps, the team said in a statement.

The need for such an exercise is due to the fact that IHR is one of the most sensitive regions to climate change and variability, the project investigators said.

Most parts of the region underwent significant long-term changes in frequencies and intensity of extreme temperature and rainfall events over the last decades, they said.

Such comparable vulnerability assessments are useful for officials, implementers, decision makers, funding agencies and development experts, to have a common understanding on vulnerability.

The maps will enable them to assess which states in IHR are more vulnerable, what has made them vulner-

able and how the government might address these vulnerabilities.

The results were presented here today during a workshop organised by Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati and Indian Institute of Technology Mandi with support from Indian Institute of Science Bengaluru, Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

“Based on the common methodology, we came up with a state level vulnerability assessment for the IHR and organised training workshops for the state level officials to carry out district level assessments in all 12 IHR states,” the investigators of the project said.

“Such a coordinated approach and enhanced cooperation between states in the IHR and the departments within the states are assumed to improve resilience to climate change because several adaptation interventions will require coordinated efforts across administrative boundaries,” they said in a statement.

The 12 states include Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and the hilly districts of West Bengal, and Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir.

## SummitTIMES IN NEPALI



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## 2nd round of training for Presiding and Polling Officers in West



**GYALSHING, 14 MAR (IPR):** The fourth day of the 2nd round of training for the 2nd batch of Presiding and Polling Officers I was successfully concluded at Conference Hall, Zilla Panchayat Bhawan, Gyalshing and Conference Hall, SDM Office Soreng simultaneously today.

The training dealt with an extensive in depth discussion along with the questions and answers session through which trainees cleared their doubts and queries

### TES builds house...

only in Sikkim but also in Darjeeling and some other places. The society has been involved in providing essential items like books, stationery, etc to underprivileged students, financial support to old age homes, to mention a few.

TES president, Uday Gurung handed over documents related to the land to the family of Nar Bahadur Darjee. He assured that the construction work of the house will start soon. He also highlighted various work done by the society in the past. He appealed to everyone and the local society to come forward to help people in need. He also congratulated the family of Mr Darjee.

Nar Bahadur Darjee thanked the members of TES for coming up with such a noble idea and helping people in need.

"It will be a huge blessing bestowed on me by the society and will always be grateful to them," said Mr Darjee.

Rabin Rai, a resident of Lower Chisopani, has appreciated the step taken by the society and has thanked the society on behalf of the whole village. This kind of support will surely benefit and help BPL and underprivileged families of the locality, he added.

He further said that the village is hopeful that the society will continue to support the village in days to come. The village also is hopeful that society will focus more on BPL families, education, health, and help the people of Chisopani village in future.

### RB Subba condemns...

The main intention of these "forces" was to divide SDF and smuggle themselves into power to rule over the people of Sikkim.

Mr Subba has demanded proper police investigation into the incident to find out who uploaded the posters on social media.

### 108 economists...

(University of British Columbia, Canada), R Ramakumar (TISS, Mumbai), Hema Swaminathan (IIM-B) and Rohit Azad (JNU).

The economists and social scientists said it is imperative that the agencies associated with collection and dissemination of statistics like the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) are not subject to political interference and their work, therefore, enjoys total credibility.

"Lately, the Indian statistics and the institutions associated with it have, however, come under a cloud for being influenced and indeed even controlled by political considerations," the statement said.

Citing an instance wherein the CSO revised upward GDP growth estimates for 2016-17 (the year of demonetisation) by 1.1 percentage points to 8.2 per cent, the highest in a decade, they said: "This seems to be at variance with the evidence marshalled by many economists".

The statement also expressed concern over withholding of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) of NSSO and news reports that the PLFS of 2017-18 will be scrapped altogether by the government.

Two members of the National Statistical Commission (NSC), including the acting chairman, subsequently resigned because they felt the NSSO was delaying the release of the report, though the NSC itself had officially cleared it, they added.

The 108 experts, from across the globe, further said that in fact, any statistics that cast an iota of doubt on the achievement of the government seem to get revised or suppressed on the basis of some questionable methodology.

"This is the time for all professional economists, statisticians, independent researchers in policy regardless of their political and ideological leanings to come together to raise their voice against the tendency to suppress uncomfortable data..." they said.

The experts also called for impressing upon the government authorities, current and future, and at all levels, to restore access and integrity to public statistics, and re-establish institutional independence and integrity to the statistical organisations.

The reputation of India's statistical bodies in the country and globally is at stake, they added.

with the master trainers in regards to the EVM and VVPAT sealing, testing, filling of forms, Presiding dairy and other similar topics in relations to the conduction of Polls. An in depth explanation on the procedures to be followed after the successful conduction of the Poll was also done. Further the importance of Mock Poll and the Hand Book of the Presiding Officers were also stressed which need to be followed by the Presiding and Polling Officers.

The Master trainers for the training in Gyalshing were SDM (HQ), Tushar G Nikhare, DE Power, KSC Tongden and Senior Welfare Officer, Santosh Alley.

Similarly for Soreng Master Trainers were SDM, Himmat Rai, Soreng and DCSO (West), Dillip Sharma.

A total of 77 trainees were present at Gyalshing for the training and similarly at Soreng there were 46 trainees.

**NAMCHI, 14 MAR (IPR):** Consequent upon the announcement of General Elections to Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies in the State, a briefing session for Flying Squads, Static Teams, Assistant Expenditure Observers and Video Surveillance Teams on Election Expenditure Monitoring (EEM) was held at DAC, Conference Hall today. The session was chaired by DC cum DEO (South), Ragul K also present were SDM (HQ), Hemant Rai, SDM (Jorethang), Tshering Bhutia and the resource person for the session was nodal officer for Expenditure Monitoring, Sunil Sharma.

Addressing, the session DEO, Ragul K spoke about the importance of this training which



he said was the second round training for the various election teams. He underlined that smooth co-ordination between the different teams is extremely imperative for smooth conduct of the General Elec-

tions, 2019. The DEO also explained about cVigil, an Android-based mobile application designed by the Election Commission of India to help voters to register complaints relating to the violations of Model Code of Conduct

if any, and urged the attendees to download the application. Additionally, the DEO also emphasized the officials to be aware of the guidelines of Model Code of Conduct.

Resource person, Sunil Sharma gave de-

tails on EEM and underscored that the officials should be vigil at monitoring expenses carried by the candidates, political parties and briefed about the different kinds of materials that can be detained by the Election

officials.

He also informed about the ceiling limit given to the candidates and updated that the election teams need to monitor the expenditure of miscellaneous items which will be utilized by candidates during the ensuing elections.

In addition, Mr Sharma cited various examples wherein candidates were disqualified for contesting elections due to non-disclosure of election expenses. Moreover, he emphasized that the teams should keep a strict check on legal, illegal election expenses and brought light to major legal provisions related to EEM, provision of Indian Penal Code, 1860, star campaigners, rally expenses and inspection of accounts.

## DC North holds meeting with political parties

**MANGAN, 14 MAR (IPR):** In connection with General Election 2019 and to promulgate the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) in the district, District Collector-cum-RO, North, Raj K Yadav alongside Superintendent of Police, North, Kunzang Dorjee Shangderpa, SDM, Mangan (HQ), Samdup Bhutia conducted a coordination meeting with representatives of all Political Parties of the district here at DC's chamber today. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Sikkim Democratic Front and Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party.

Briefing on election process, RO, Mr Yadav informed about the process that are applied to the political parties for obtaining the prior permission to use any venue of election campaign. He said that the political parties will have to obtain prior permission from office of the Superintendent of Police for rally and use of Mike system.

School ground will be allowed only after 4 pm on working days and on holiday it will be open for election campaign



from 10am to 4pm. He informed to the representatives that school and public ground can be avail after duly having Bank Receipt of Rs 5000 for standard and Rs 2500 for small ground for election event.

He also briefed in detail about duties of the Sector Magistrate (SM) and Video Surveillance team (VST). Keeping in mind of clean environment he urged representatives of political party for minimum use of plastic during party meeting.

It is to mention here that the Notification for nomination of candidates will issued on 18 March and last date for nomination

will be on 25 March. On 26 March there will be scrutiny of candidature of the candidate and last date for withdrawal of candidature will be on 28 March. Polling will be held on 11 April and counting of vote will be held on 23 May.

Candidates can file their nomination from 11am to 3pm during working days from 18-25 March, he informed. He said that only five persons including candidate will be allowed to enter to the RO Office during the filing of nomination. RO informed that EVM and VVPAT will be kept in strong room with full security under CCTV sur-

veillance. Further, first and second EVM commissioning will be held in the presence of all party representatives.

SP, North, Mr Sangderpa said that during public meeting 10 vehicle will be allowed at a time in one convey. He requested all the party representatives to inform about the route which they used for mobile van for disseminating their programmes to the SP Office and not to engage any open hooded vehicles during election campaign as to avoid any unforeseen incidence. SP requested them to co-operate each other for free, fair and credible election.

## DC East holds meeting with Sector Officer/Magistrates



**GANGTOK, 14 MAR (IPR):** Keeping in view the forthcoming General Election 2019, the District Election Officer/District Collector (East), Kapil Meena held a meeting with Sector Officer/Magistrates of East district today at the Conference hall, DAC.

During the meeting the DEO asked the Sector Magistrates to visit all the respective designate areas of East district so as to ensure proper implementation of Model Code of Conduct (MCC). Mr Meena sought for smooth coordination between Sector Officers, Sector Police Officers, Sub-Sector Police Officers and staffs for proper coordination and cooperation. The officials were also asked to respond instantly to complaints received through phone calls or in written form. The Sector Magistrates are also required to

update assured minimum facilities at Polling stations and work as overall in-charge for all Election activities in the respective sectors.

Earlier, ADC (East), Bharani Kumar spoke in detail about the various roles and responsibilities of Sector Magistrates during pre-poll, poll eve and poll day for the entire election process. In his address he mainly focused on the guidelines laid by the Election Commission of India which includes the duties of Sector Magistrates after the MCC is in place. Mr Bharani explained each and every step of the polling process do's and don'ts and asked all Sector Magistrates to ensure smooth election on April 11 next month.

The meeting was followed by hands on training of EVMs and VVPATs so as to accustom them in preparation for the polling day.

## Training on ICS Group Certification for Timburbung Farmers



### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 14 MAR:**

Mevedir service provider agency organized a ward level training on ICS Grower Group Certification at Ridhang ward under Timburbung GPU, West Sikkim on 13 Mar, 2019. Mevedir Master Trainer, Om Prakash Chettri and Suren Chettri assembled the farmers to provide an orientation on the above topic, a press release informs.

The first session was chaired by Om Prakash Chettri who educated the farmers about the Grower Group certification for production of crops.

In the next session, Suren Chettri highlighted some of the homemade on farm preparation for

pest & disease control. The method of preparing homemade spray, its usage & dosage and how it is helpful for plants and crops was explained to the farmers.

In the concluding session, Om Prakash Chettri informed about the newly opened Organic input Stores at Jorethang where farmers can buy the organic inputs, seeds and agricultural equipments. A similar store has also opened in Gyalshing for the farmers of that sub division.

Participants were informed that presently seeds of Bitter gourd, sweet, Okra, cucumber etc were available in the stores, the release mentions.

## SSP working president joins SDF

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 14 MAR:**

The series of opposition leaders joining the Sikkim Democratic Front continued today with Sikkim Sangram Parishad working president, former MLA Rajendra Uprety, joining the party without any conditions today.

In his joining letter, Mr Uprety has applauded what he sees as the overall development that has taken place in Sikkim during the SDF government, informs an SDF press release issued by

its general secretary [press & publicity], Amber Rai.

The release adds that he decided to join SDF upon seeing the peace, security, progress and development provided by SDF to Sikkim and its people.

The release adds that Mr Uprety also recognized that SDF was the only party which had proposed the right formula for seat reservation in the State Assembly and delivered appropriate policies, programmes and schemes to create jobs.

## ICAR-NOFRI trains Andaman and Nicobar farmers in organic farming

**GANGTOK, 14 MAR (PIB):**ICAR-National Organic Farming Research Institute (ICAR-NOFRI), Tadong successfully organized "3-day Training on Organic Farming for Farmers and Officers of Andaman and Nicobar Islands during 11-13 Mar, 2019. A team of 15 progressive farmers and officers visited ICAR-NOFRI to get acquainted with Organic Farming technologies.

During the program, Joint Director, Dr RK Avasthe, ICAR-NOFRI highlighted the importance of organic farming and motivated the farmers and officers of Andaman and Nicobar Islands to adopt organic farming on large scale.

He said that Andaman and Nicobar is a tourist destination and adoption of organic farming is the best option for promotion of agro-eco tourism. He mentioned that implementation of organic farming will help in protection of environment and conservation of biodiversity.

He also discussed in detail the concept of physico-chemical and microbiological properties of soil and soil health management for organic crop production. Joint Director also distributed certificates and various 'Extension Folders on Organic Production Technologies' to the trainees.

Senior Scientist (Horticulture), Dr Ashish Yadav, welcomed all the trainees and briefed about the vari-

ous skills development activities undertaken by ICAR-NOFRI. Dr Yadav discussed the 'Organic fruit production techniques' and 'Organic high value vegetable production techniques'. He also coordinated the three-day training program.

Assistant Director (Agriculture), PS Prasad, Rangat, Andaman and Nicobar coordinated visit of farmers from Andaman and Nicobar. In his address, he mentioned that Nicobar District is completely organic and farmers are focusing on integration of agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and fisheries. He also appreciated the Scientists efforts in making talks very simple for farmers.

During the training program, all the members also visited the ICAR-NOFRI Research Farm and were briefed about the on-going research and development activities. Giving the feedback of the program, Bishnu Pada Biswas, Abdul Karim, Reepan Nandi, and Seema Baroi, Progressive Farmers of Andaman and Nicobar appreciated ICAR-NOFRI efforts in organizing the training program. Junior Agriculture Assistant, Daniel Antony also mentioned that Neil Island is an important tourist place and farmers are slowly converting into organic. Since organic manures are bulky in nature, they are adopting bio-decomposers to reduce the load of manures.



# DEO East holds meeting on expenditure monitoring



**GANGTOK, 14 MAR (IPR):** Keeping in line with the Model Code of Conduct for the upcoming General Elections, 2019, the District Collector/East District, Kapil Meena who is also the District Election Officer chaired a co-ordination meeting with all the expenditure monitoring related organisations.

Held at the office of the District Collector/East, the meeting was attended by officials from

the state Excise Department, the Income Tax Department and officials and representatives from public and private sector banks.

The core aim of the meeting was to appraise the financial organisations about the various guidelines regarding financial transactions that have come to effect since the implementation of the Model Code of Conduct.

The DEO informed that 1 Expenditure Observer and 12 Assistant Expenditure Observers for all the 12 Constituencies in East District have been appointed for effective vigilance and monitoring of all individual expenditures during the elections. He gave directions to the banks to submit daily transaction reports in a consolidated format and that all unusual and suspicious

activities exceeding Rs 1 lakh are to be reported to the office of the DEO.

Other guidelines in respect to the bank accounts of candidates and political parties, priority assistance in opening up of new election related accounts and delivering of cash in vans by third party agencies, are to be strictly adhered to, informed the DEO. In regards to information

of suspicious or illegal cash, foreign currency and fake Indian currency notes found during the elections, the office of the DEO would be the first point of contact for such instances, it was informed.

The DEO, Mr Meena also briefed the Official from the Excise Department on the use and misuse of liquor during elections, various possible MCC violations and the need to monitor expenditure. He further directed them to appoint Nodal Officers to be attached with Flying Squads and Static Surveillance Teams and also compile daily reports and submit them to the office of the DEO.

In conclusion, the DEO solicited the support and co-operation of the Banks and other financial institutions to ensure that there is no violation of the Model Code of Conduct and the election process is carried out smoothly and successfully.

## Joseph Lepcha receives journalism award from MFI



### Samay Dainik feted as Best Regional Language Newspaper of Sikkim

**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 14 MAR:**

Senior journalist and Press Club of Sikkim president, Joseph Lepcha, was today conferred with the 'Best Journalist of the Year [Sikkim]' by Media Federation of India [MFI]. Likewise, Nepali daily, Samay Dainik,

has been awarded the 'Best Regional Language Newspaper [Sikkim]' award, which was received by Samay Dainik editor, Dilli Ram Dulal.

The awards function was held at Andhra Pradesh Bhawan in New Delhi on Wednesday evening with has Major General [retd] PK Sehgal as the chief guest along with MFI national president Arun Sharma, and senior vice-president, Ashish K Singh, among other dignitaries.

MFI has units in more than 22 States and has more than 15,000 members.

Joseph Lepcha was

born to Manuel and Martha Lepcha on 14 Feb, 1972, at Rabongla in South Sikkim. He started his career in journalism with the Nepali weekly, Swatantra Manch, in 1991 and has also worked at Yugdhara and then in a Hindi daily Janpat, Bharat Darpan, Prajashakti and Samay Dainik and is currently the Sikkim correspondent of Dainik Jagaran.

Apart from journalism, Mr Lepcha is active in social, cultural and literary activities and has already been feted with many awards.

## Meeting with printers and publishers

**GANGTOK, 14 MAR (IPR):** A meeting with printers and publishers was held at the Conference Hall of Zilla Bhawan today.

The District Election Officer/District Collector (East), Kapil Meena spoke in-depth about the rules and regulations which needs to be followed by the concerned printers and publishers. He said

that all political advertisements on social media will require pre-certification from the MCMC. Mr Meena informed that every printed material should have the name of the printer and publisher mentioned compulsory failing which, case can be registered for violation of MCC rules.

DPO (Zilla), Yadav

Krishna Sharma said that we are all governed by the same Act and requested everyone present to follow the rules of ECI and avoid violation of MCC.

At the end the DEO requested for cooperation from everyone present for the smooth and fair conduct of the upcoming General Elections.

### JAP supporters urge Dr HB Chettri to contest Lok Sabha election

**SUMMIT REPORT KALIMPONG, 14 MAR:** On the insistence of Jan Andolan Party cadres, Dr. H.B Chettri has decided to wait for other parties to decide if they will be fielding other candidates for the Lok Sabha seat following which JAP will decide on its own election strategy. It may be recalled that a few days back Dr Chettri had announced that JAP will be staying away from the elections since hill parties had failed to arrive at a consensus candidate.

JAP supporters had assembled at Dr Chettri's residence today and insisted that he contest the MP elections.

"Be it as a consensus candidate or an independent candidate, Harka Sir has to contest this election. We are there to support him and will make sure that he emerges victorious," said one JAP supporter outside Dr. Chettri's residence.

Dr Chettri's attempts at fielding a consensus candidate from the region had failed when GNLF and CPRM decided to field their own candidates.

## Voters Facilitation Centre at MG Marg



**GANGTOK, 14 MAR (IPR):** A Voters Facilitation Centre has been set up at MG Marg, Gangtok in order to sensitize the public regarding any queries related to their respective electoral polls and to provide requisite information.

More than 200 people

have visited the facilitation centre and availed facilities regarding the EVM's, VVPAT's and on-line verification of names in voters list.

The Voter Facilitation Centre is being managed by staff of Office of CEO, Balwakhani and DEO, East.

**BEFORE THE LEARNED OATH COMMISSIONER, EAST SIKKIM AT GANGTOK.**

### AFFIDAVIT

I, Vidisha Tewari, aged about 23 years, daughter of Tilak Singh Tewari, Hindu by faith, by occupation student, resident of Upper Tarku, Near Shiv Mandir, P.O. & P.S. Temi, South Sikkim do hereby solemnly affirm and declare on oath as follows:-

1. That my name and caste has been recorded as "Vidisha Tewari" in my Aadhaar card bearing Aadhar No. 4312 2264 0245, issued by Unique Identification Authority of India.
2. That in my academic testimonial and in my Birth certificate, my name and caste has been recorded as "Vidisha Tiwari" and inadvertently my mother's name has been recorded as H.Tiwari.
3. That this affidavit is made bonafide to declare on oath that the person by the name and caste of "Vidisha Tewari" and "Vidisha Tiwari" refers and denotes to one and the same person i.e. myself. And the correct name of my mother is Hem Kumari Tewari as per her all official documents..

AND I have signed this Affidavit on this the 23rd day of February, 2019 at Gangtok, East Sikkim.

Sd/-  
DEPONENT

### FLAT AVAILABLE FOR RENT

Fully furnished, 3 Bedroom flat available for rent at Church Road, Near Diesel Power House. Conveniently located by the roadside and a 5-minute walk from M.G. Marg. Suitable for Corporate Office and Guest House.

For further details please  
Contact: 9434117687 / 9083826462

**BEFORE THE LEARNED OATH COMMISSIONER, EAST SIKKIM AT GANGTOK.**

### AFFIDAVIT

I, Hem Kumari Tewari, wife of Tilak Singh Tewari, aged about 49 years, Hindu by faith, by occupation Govt. Employee, resident of Upper Tarku, Near Shiv Mandir, P.O. & P.S. Temi, South Sikkim do hereby solemnly affirm and declare on oath as follows:-

1. That in my Certificate of Identification my name and caste has been recorded as Hem Kumari Tewari wife of Tilak Singh Tewari bearing Serial No.362 and volume No. XVIII/, dated 10/7/1993, issued by the District Collector, South.
2. That in my Voter ID Card bearing No.JPX0091397, my name and cast has been recorded as Hem Kri. Tewari, issued by the Election Commission of India.
3. That in my CBSE school certificate, my name and caste has been recorded as Hem Kumari Chettri issued by Controller of Examination, Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi.
4. That Chettri is my maiden name and I adopt my husband's Caste/title as Tewari after marriage.
5. That this affidavit is made bonafide and to declare on oath that the persons by names "Hem Kumari Tewari", Hem Kri. Tewari and "Hem Kumari Chettri" denotes and refers to one and the same identical person i.e. myself. And Chettri is my maiden name and I adopt my husband's Caste/title as Tewari after marriage.

AND I have signed this Affidavit on this the 23rd day of February, 2019 at Gangtok, East Sikkim.

Sd/-  
DEPONENT

### KUTSE SHEGU

The 21 day Shegu of Lt. Sachin Tamang who left for heavenly abode on 25th February 2019 falls on 17th March 2019 (Sunday).

All relatives, family, friends and well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence Barbotey, Tamang Gaon, Soreng, West Sikkim. We also express our sincere gratitude to all those who stood by us during our time of bereavement.



**Mrs. Binu Subba (wife) 9647892791**  
**Ms. Jaikala Tamang, Ms. Sujata Tamang, Ms. Sweta Tamang (sisters)**  
**Mr. Rajen Tamang (brother)**  
**6297875142, 9734142686,**  
**8670576733, 9593388722**

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**MCC IS IN EFFECT**

**WHAT IS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT?**

Model Code of Conduct is a set of guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India for the conduct of political parties and candidates during elections. The Model Code of Conduct comes into force immediately with the announcement of the election schedule by the Commission for ensuring free and fair elections.

Visit the website: [eci.gov.in](http://eci.gov.in)

**FAQ**

**EVM with VVPAT Unit**

Ballot Unit (BU)

Control Unit (CU)

**VVPAT**

**Q3. How can EVMs be used in areas where there is no electricity?**

**Ans. EVMs do not require electricity. EVMs run on an ordinary battery assembled by Bharat Electronics Limited/Electronics Corporation of India Limited.**

**Q4. What is the maximum number of votes which can be cast in EVMs?**

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# SummitTIMES

## Lose Hope and there is Nothing Left

*Nothing worse than pessimism*

Given how desperate things can get in our country, it remains a miracle that it still holds together. And the miracle comes by way of hope, the inexplicable optimism which sees a future despite the travails of the present. Take that away and everything will collapse. And the surest way to kill hope is by infecting the society with pessimism.

As pessimism sinks in, suspicions grow, and before one even realizes, it's misanthropy all around. Not only do people stop trusting, they also start hating. It is then no longer about being pragmatic, but an obsession with remaining defeatist. That is one condition that even democracy cannot assail. Demoralise a people to a nadir from where they can spy no silver lining and from thereon, democracy can be subverted at will. Fear can also help in the subversion, but fear is difficult to instill and even more difficult to sustain whereas pessimism is an instinctive trait in the present times of frequent dejections and thus easier to contaminate with. When the pollution is complete, the people become dejected, see no hope and refuse to get involved. The public domain is then occupied by "vested interests" who feed paranoia with one hand to keep people dispirited and "negotiate" favours for themselves with the other. The people are too distracted by their dejections to notice or even care and when they are so indisposed, surrender power that was theirs. Take away faith, dismember hope and then there are no solutions possible.

A society so disinclined then lives in an environment where there are no meaningful debates, because loaded with pessimism minds speak only to themselves and refuse to engage other voices. There are worrying trends all across the country which suggest that we are a people who are losing hope and hence clinging to straws as weak as projected nationalism and hollow strength, not because things are bad, but because we refuse to see the positives, refuse to engage. This is a worrying trend which has encroached on Sikkim too. There is too much of leader speaking/ arguing with leader and not enough of people speaking to leaders. Because of this there is too much claiming and complaining in the public domain and not enough positivity. This trend has to be stemmed. People have to get involved more. Without involvement, there is no sense of achievement, no sense of belonging; what is democracy then? Perhaps we speak too soon here, both, for India and for Sikkim. But what if we are speaking up too late?

### WRITE US:

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# MPs vote against no-deal Brexit – but what does that actually mean?

CHRISTOPH MEYER  
*theconversation.com*

Parliament has voted against leaving the European Union without "a deal". Having lost a second vote on her withdrawal agreement on March 12, May agreed to let MPs vote on whether they would accept leaving the EU without a deal on March 13. They voted 321 to 278 against no deal under any circumstances.

Some would say this vote is meaningless. Regardless of what the MPs say, the clock keeps ticking down to the UK leaving automatically on March 29. However, the vote is far from meaningless. It signifies that a majority in parliament understands that "no deal" is nothing like walking away from the purchase of a car. It shows that they don't believe that the EU will blink and give Britain what it wants if the UK just lets things go to the wire (as some Brexiters keep asserting).

### WHAT THE VOTE TELLS US

By initially allowing a free vote on this matter rather than whipping her party to support her, the prime minister was also tacitly acknowledging that her slogan "no deal is better than a bad deal" was just that – a slogan and a bluff called. It is also recognition of the political reality of a government ceding control to parliament given the likely scale of rebellion and resignations if whipped towards either outcome.

Still at least 278 were prepared to vote against a motion that not only would have left "no deal" on the table, but could have been interpreted as a positive instruction to the government to rip up the withdrawal agreement negotiated over two years with the European Union if March 29 rolled around without any other option in place.

The UK would then crash out of most legal frameworks that have governed trade and economic life in the country – not just with the EU, but many other trading partners – for decades, without a replacement. Such a decision would have created a major and long-reverberating political crisis, especially if the government refused to settle the £39bn bill it has agreed represents what it owes the EU for outstanding commitments.

The EU has already made clear that without the withdrawal agreement, there will be no transition period. This would have led to a major escalation in rhetoric across the Channel, as the EU would have held the whole of parliament, and indeed the Brit-

ish political class, responsible for a final act of bad faith on the part of country.

In the event of a no-deal Brexit, it is probable that mini deals would be struck in key sectors of importance to the EU. But, at the same time, the EU would apply economic pressure to get the UK to sign up to the essence of the withdrawal agreement – including the backstop. The UK may find it very hard not to give in to this pressure in a final act of humiliation.

Meanwhile, there would be a surge in war rhetoric and polarisation between no-deal enthusiasts, who would invoke the spirit of the Blitz even more fervently, and those who think a no deal is entirely the fault of the UK government, with its unrealistic red lines and delay tactics.

Sometimes, it is helpful to acknowledge the importance of the road not taken.

### WHAT THIS VOTE DOESN'T DO

What the vote against "no deal" does not do is prevent "no deal" from happening. It may still happen. No dealers in parliament might deliberately obstruct alternative outcomes or MPs might simply fail to agree on an alternative solution in the short time remaining before Brexit day.

Unless it agrees to pass May's deal, parliament has only two options under the Article 50 process. It could ask the EU for an extension. That would need to be agreed with unanimity by all 27 members of the EU. Some EU countries, especially France, have already expressed their opposition to granting such an extension just for the purpose of gaining more time to procrastinate further, prepare for "no deal" and thus inflict further uncertainty and political costs on the EU system and businesses. They want a positive resolution, which is in their eyes either the current negotiated withdrawal agreement (plus a tweaked political declaration putting a permanent customs union or Norway-Plus on the table, but not

deciding on it now) or a decision by the country to remain for good – whether confirmed by a general election or a second referendum.

The EU may require a minimum extension of, say, nine months or longer to get over the election of the European Parliament and the new European Commission. The Commons will therefore be under immense pressure to quickly decide whether they



want to hold an election or a referendum and how much time is needed to do either.

If the EU does not grant an extension, either because one or more of the EU member states has had enough of the uncertainty and procrastination and withholds its assent or because time is running out, then revoking article 50 is the only other option. According to the European Court of Justice, this needs to be done in writing, in line with the constitutional requirements of the UK and following a democratic process and it needs to be "unequivocal and unconditional" – the UK really has to stay. It cannot revoke Article 50 just to buy extra time.

Such a decision could be followed by a general election in which parties will be faced with the decision to stand by their vote to revoke or to offer the re-triggering of Article 50 to start Brexit afresh. Needless to say, this scenario is the less likely, but in the current impasse and unusual circumstances, unexpected and unusual things may still happen.

*[the writer is Professor of European and International Politics, King's College London]*



# A cure for HIV? Feasible but not yet realized

ALLISON WEBEL  
*theconversation.com*

This week a team of scientists and physicians from the U.K. published news of a second HIV positive man, in London, who is in long-term (18-month) HIV remission after undergoing treatment for Hodgkins lymphoma. The unexpected success has launched a new round of discussion about a potential cure for HIV.

Since 2008, scientists have been trying to replicate the treatment that cured the "Berlin patient" of HIV. At the time, many in the field of HIV research were excited to learn that this man, who tested positive for the human immunodeficiency virus in Berlin and had recently undergone treatment for acute myeloid leukemia, appeared to have been cured of his HIV. Until now, success in replicating that cure has been limited.

### WHAT IS HIV?

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. Since the virus was first discovered in the 1980s, more than 75 million people worldwide have been infected with HIV. Today, almost 37 million people live with HIV. Of these, about 1.1 million live in the U.S.

Infection with HIV almost always led to AIDS, which in turn was almost always fatal. The field was revolutionized in 1996 with the introduction of HIV anti-retroviral therapy medications. These drugs halt HIV from replicating and allow an infected person to regain a functioning immune system. These medications are so effective that today a person living with HIV has almost the same life expectancy of someone without HIV infection. However, these medications must be taken every day, have multiple distressing side effects, and can cost thousands of dollars each month.

Yet even with this life-extending treatment, a functional HIV cure, defined as when someone with HIV no longer tests positive for the virus and does not need to take these medications, has remained elusive.

### THE 'CURE' TREATMENT

All of that seemed to change when in 2008 at the Conference on Retrovirus and Opportunistic Infections in Boston, Massachusetts, the news broke of the Berlin patient, named Timothy Ray Brown, who seemed to have been cured of his HIV. In order to achieve that serendipitous "cure," Brown had to undergo aggressive treatment for his acute myeloid leukemia that involved two hema-

topoietic stem cell transplantations – in which a patient's bone marrow is damaged – and full body irradiation.

This complex treatment involves destroying a person's own immune system with high doses of chemotherapy or radiation. Then the patient receives a transplant of new stem cells from either themselves or a donor.

This is a difficult treatment that carries a high risk of infection and other complications, such as graft-versus-host disease, blood clots and liver disease.

Researchers learned that Brown and the "London patient" both shared a novel treatment course. In the case of both Brown and now the London patient, the new blood cells transplanted into them were from donors who had two copies of a gene mutation for the CCR5 receptor. This CCR5 receptor mutation – present in about 1 percent of people of European descent – prevents HIV viruses from entering immune cells. This renders them resistant to most HIV infection.

However, it's not just surviving the transplant that confers the HIV "cure" or remission. After receiving treatment, both patients were eventually taken off their anti-retroviral medications and subsequent examination showed that that even with very sensitive blood tests, the team could not detect HIV in their blood. The inability to find HIV in their blood, coupled with the missing CCR5 receptor, constitutes the HIV viral remission of the London patient announced earlier this week.

### WHAT THE NEW CASE SHOWS

Given recent disappointments after hematopoietic stem cell transplantations in people living with HIV, the team reporting on remission of the London patient does not describe their patient as cured. Neither should anyone else.

While a second patient experiencing HIV viral remission with a slightly less toxic cancer treatment is certainly encouraging progress, an 18-month remission does not equal a cure.

Also, while the London patient's cancer treatment was less intense, with just chemotherapy and the stem cell transplant, it was still toxic and is not a course of treatment that otherwise healthy people living with HIV infection should embark upon.

Most importantly, the HIV community learned that Brown's case was not unique. This gives us another, and perhaps greater reason, to hope for future revolutions in the HIV cure scientific agenda.

*[the writer is Assistant Professor of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University]*



# TMC continues to add glitz and glamour to poll arena

AMITAVA ROY

**KOLKATA, MAR 14 (PTI):** Continuing with her penchant for bringing in silver screen personalities to politics, Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee has fielded five film stars, including two greenhorns, for the coming Lok Sabha elections.

In the 2014 general elections, Banerjee had fielded the same number of cinestars and all the five had won.

It was Banerjee who had in 2009 started the practice of fielding people from the glamour world in West Bengal elections, which was considered to be the forte of southern states.

Of the 42 Lok Sabha constituencies in West Bengal, the TMC had won 19 seats in 2009 and 34 in 2014.

The party also adds a dash of colour to major public meetings, where celebrities from the film and television world assemble.

Fielding of Mimi Chakraborty, a popular actress in Bengali cinema and a political greenhorn, from the prestigious Jadavpur constituency for the 2019 elections has come as a surprise to many.

It was from this constituency in the city that Mamata Banerjee had



burst into electoral politics in 1984 as a young Congress candidate, by handing a stunning defeat to incumbent and towering Somnath Chatterjee of the CPI(M).

Sugata Bose, a professor of Oceanic History and Affairs at the Harvard University held the seat as a TMC MP in the outgoing 16th Lok Sabha. Reportedly, he has not been given permission by the university to contest the elections this time.

Another political greenhorn and Bengali film actor Nusrat Jahan has been fielded from Basirhat in North 24 Parganas district, a seat now held by TMC's Idris Ali.

Banerjee has said Ali

will contest in an Assembly by-election.

Apart from these two, actors and sitting MPs Deepak Adhikari, popularly known as Dev, Satabdi Roy and Munnum Sen will also contest.

While Dev and Roy would seek re-election from Ghatal and Birbhum seats respectively, Sen has been shifted from Bankura to Asansol, which was won by singer-turned-politician Babul Supriyo of the BJP.

The TMC has dropped sitting MPs Tapas Pal and Sandhya Roy, well-known film stars of yesteryears.

Pal had been arrested by the CBI in December 2016 in connection with the Rose Valley chitfund

scam and is at present out on bail.

Pal and Satabdi Roy are two-time MPs of the TMC, both having earlier won in the 2009 elections.

The TMC supremo had also made Bollywood star Mithun Chakraborty a Rajya Sabha MP. But he had resigned in December 2016 citing ill health.

The trend of cine stars joining electoral politics has been a regular affair in the southern states, with former Tamil Nadu chief minister MG Ramachandran as the pioneer and Rajnikanth and Kamal Haasan being the latest entrants.

Andhra Pradesh is another state where film

stars enjoy cult status and have made serious forays into politics, with NT Rama Rao having become chief minister of the state. In other parts of the country, film stars like Raj Babbar, Hema Malini, Vinod Khanna have been in politics and even mega star Amitabh Bachchan had a short tryst with it.

Film stars have, however, generally stayed away from electoral politics in West Bengal, where it has traditionally been viewed as a forte of those who grow from the ranks, barring one or two exceptions. The so-called glass ceiling was broken in 2009 when Satabdi Roy and Tapas Pal, both of whom were doing films regularly then, were fielded by the TMC chief and won.

The BJP has also brought in film personalities and those associated with it in West Bengal politics. Babul Supriyo, a playback singer who also dabbled in film acting, was one of the two BJP candidates who won in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections from West Bengal. He was also made a minister of state.

Actor Roopa Ganguly, who achieved national fame for her portrayal of the role of Draupadi in mega teleserial Mahabharat, is a Rajya Sabha MP of the BJP.

## Bengal inks wage agreement with jute industry, CITU stays away



**KOLKATA, MAR 14 (PTI):**

The West Bengal government has signed a wage agreement with the jute industry to ward off an impending strike in the mills, officials said Thursday.

The agreement, which was signed late on Wednesday, came into effect from today, Labour Minister Malay Ghatak said.

As per the fresh agreement, new workers would get a maximum of Rs 385 per day, from the existing Rs 257.

In January this year, the state government had raised the wages for new joiners to Rs 327 a day as interim relief.

A worker is also entitled to get Rs 385 a day if his attendance is at

least 24 days in a month, failing which the wage would be reduced to Rs 370 a day.

The new agreement came in the backdrop of an indefinite strike call from March 15 by trade unions demanding wage revision and implementation of Minimum Wages Act, among others.

As many as 21 trade unions, barring Indian National Trinamool Trade Union Congress, had called the strike.

However, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), stayed away from the fresh wage agreement terming it as "nti worker".

"The state government has budged before the jute mills management and forced an anti-

worker wage agreement which is not acceptable to us. We have not ratified the deal," CITU backed Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union secretary Anadi Sahu said.

Out of 21 trade unions, 6 left Front backed trade unions have not signed the agreement. But other major trade unions including the Congress-backed INTUC, BJP's BMS, and Trinamool congress trade union INTTUC have signed the agreement last night, he said.

"There is merely a Rs 2 hike per day for the 2.5 lakh existing workers which is just not acceptable to us," Sahu said.

He said the CITU will soon announce its next course of action.

## Assam Rifles rescue woman kidnapped by NSCN(IM)

**IMPHAL, MAR 14 (PTI):** The Assam Rifles has rescued a woman kidnapped by NSCN(IM) cadres and apprehended two members of the outlawed extremist outfit, an official said here Thursday.

A quick reaction team of the paramilitary force rescued the woman from a school building in New Wangparal village in Chandel district of Manipur.

She was kidnapped on Tuesday.

On receiving specific information that two armed NSCN(IM) cadres were holding a blindfolded woman in the school building, an Assam Rifles battalion immediately launched a search and rescue operation on Wednesday, the official said. "Taken by surprise, the armed NSCN(IM)

cadres fired on the troops and fled from the site," the official said.

The securitymen chased and captured them. The two cadres were handed over to the Chandel district police.

"An FIR was lodged against the cadres for kidnapping, attempt to murder and under Unlawful Activities Prevention Act for being in possession of restricted-calibre weapon and ammunition," the official said.

The cadres were identified as self-styled Lt Colonel Justin Khapai and self-styled Sergeant Korunghang of NSCN(IM).

Search operations are on to apprehend some other NSCN(IM) cadres involved in the kidnapping of the woman, the official added.

## Mizoram Assembly passes bill for supplying cadavers to medical college



**AIZAWL, MAR 14 (PTI):** Mizoram Assembly Thursday passed a bill to facilitate the supply of cadavers to the medical college in the state.

Health Minister Dr R Lalthangliana introduced the Mizoram Anatomy Bill, 2019, and it was passed unanimously.

Lalthangliana said the bill, after enactment, would facilitate availability of bodies for the Mizoram Institute of Medical Education and Research (MIMER) at

Falkawn, about 20 kilometres from here.

Cadavers are required by medical colleges for the purpose of anatomical examination and dissection.

An MIMER official said it could manage with eight cadavers a year and that would cost the institute Rs 8 lakh.

Classes have started at MIMER from August last year for the academic session 2018-19 with the capacity of 100 students intake annually.

## Senior EC officials to visit West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and Manipur soon



**NEW DELHI, MAR 14 (PTI):** A high-level team of the Election Commission led by a deputy election commissioner will be in West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and Manipur in the coming days to assess poll preparedness, official sources said Thursday. The decision to send Deputy Election Commissioner Sudip Jain comes a day after the BJP urged the poll watchdog to declare West Bengal a "super sensitive state".

Jain will lead the team to West Bengal on Saturday, Tripura on Sunday, Assam on Monday and Manipur on Tuesday to assess election preparedness in the four states.

While Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal are spread across all the seven phases, they will be

held in two phases each in Tripura and Manipur and three in Assam.

The sources in the poll panel said that the chief electoral officer of West Bengal has also been asked to file a report on the actual ground situation. The BJP had on Wednesday also demanded that central forces be deployed at all polling stations in the state.

Briefing the media after meeting EC officials, Law Minister and BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad had said, "We have requested the Election Commission that the state of West Bengal should be declared as super-sensitive. And have also demanded that central forces should be deployed at all polling booths in the state."

He said the party also requested the poll panel to transfer those police officers whose electoral impartiality is questionable as well as the withdrawal of former Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar from election duty. The BJP is trying to make inroads into Trinamool Congress' bastion of West Bengal which has 42 Lok Sabha seats. In 2014, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) won 34 seats, the Congress four, while the BJP and CPI(M) bagged two seats each in the state. Slamming the BJP for moving the poll panel, Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee alleged the saffron party was trying to hide behind central forces as it can't win any seat in the state.

## ZPM & Congress announce Hmar as their common LS candidate

**AIZAWL, MAR 14 (PTI):** Opposition Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) and the Congress Thursday announced that Lalnghingolva Hmar and Lalbuanga Sailo will be their common candidates for the lone Lok Sabha seat in Mizoram and state Assembly bypoll respectively.

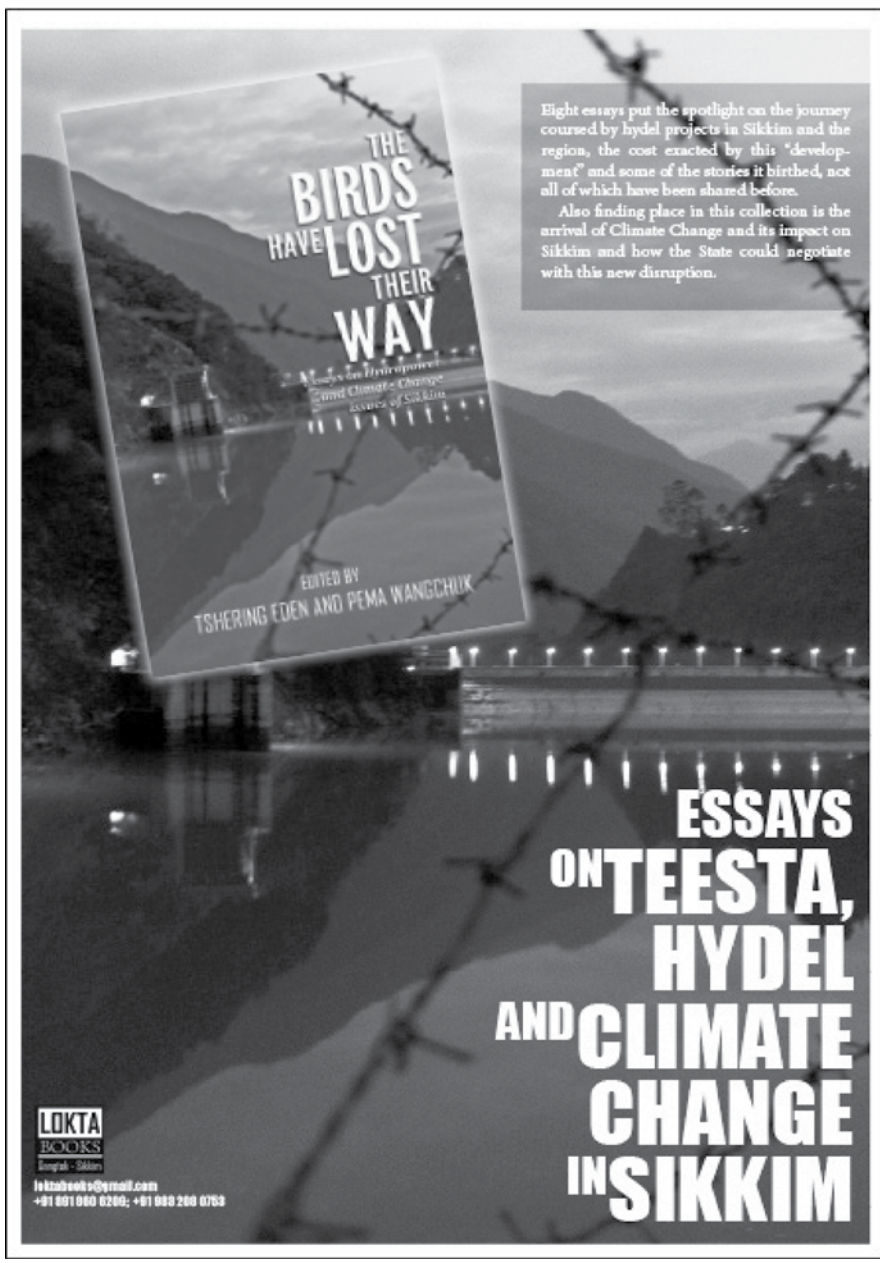
Announcing the names of Hmar and Sailo, ZPM leader K Sapdanga said his party and the Congress party have come together on a common platform to defeat the BJP and its allies in the election.

Lok Sabha election in Mizoram and

the bypoll for the Aizawl West - I seat will be held simultaneously on April 11.

Hmar is a well-known young sports reporter and presently honorary secretary of the Mizoram Football Association (MFA) while Sailo is a retired government official.

The ruling Mizo National Front (MNF) on Wednesday had announced C Lalrosanga, a former director general of Doordarshan, as its candidate for the lone Lok Sabha seat. The MNF also said that Zothantluanga would be the party's nominee for the assembly by-poll.





# Mane double breaks Bayern to send Liverpool through

**MUNICH, MAR 14 (AFP):** Sadio Mane scored twice to steer Liverpool into the Champions League quarter-finals after a superb 3-1 win at Bayern Munich dumped out the German giants.

Having missed the goalless first leg at Anfield three weeks ago through suspension, Virgil van Dijk's long pass led to Mane's excellent first-half goal at the Allianz Arena on Wednesday.

"His first goal was ridiculous, the calmness with how he's finished it off," Liverpool midfielder James Milner told BT Sport.

"He's on fire at the minute and let's hope it continues for the rest of the season."

Dutch centre-back Van Dijk then headed last season's runners-up Liverpool into a 2-1 lead from a Milner corner on 69 minutes after Joel Matip's own goal had handed Bayern a first-half equaliser.

Mane made absolutely sure of Liverpool's place in the quarter-final draw by nodding in six minutes from time.

Liverpool's 3-1 aggregate victory means they join Tottenham Hotspur, Manchester City and Manchester United in the quarter-finals, completing a clean sweep of English sides reaching the last eight for the first time since 2008/09. "It is good for En-



glish football -- that's what you want," added Milner.

"We have good feelings from last year, so hopefully we can carry that on and go as far as we can."

It is a bleaker picture in Germany as Bayern's exit leaves no Bundesliga club in the quarters for the first time since 2005/06, as Borussia Dortmund and Schalke also bowed out in the last 16 -- to

Tottenham and Man City respectively. This is the first time since 2011 that Bayern have failed to make the quarter-finals.

"Both teams were very cautious for a long period, but the second goal took the belief out of us," said Bayern defender Mats Hummels. "Jurgen Klopp is good at neutralising the opponents' strengths and he did that once again.

"We didn't play well enough to create enough clear chances at this level."

**- HENDERSON FORCED OFF -**

Milner was preferred to Fabinho in Liverpool's midfield, but Jurgen Klopp was forced into an early change when captain Jordan Henderson hobbled off on 12 minutes.

Brazilian Fabinho made an early entrance and Milner took the skipper's armband.

Klopp had urged his side to "be brave on the ball" and it was that, combined with an amazing piece of skill by Mane, which gave them the lead.

Van Dijk's pin-point pass over 40 metres found Mane in the Bayern box with goalkeeper Manuel Neuer off his line.

Mane spun away and looped his shot inside the far post to give

the visitors a valuable away goal in the 26th minute.

The bravery Klopp wanted flowed through the Liverpool ranks and Milner, winning the mid-field battle, set Firmino free in the box, but the Brazilian blasted his shot at Neuer.

However, the hosts drew level six minutes before the break when Serge Gnabry slipped his marker Andrew Robertson and hit a cross intended for Robert Lewandowski.

The ball went in off Matip, who was focused on marking the Polish striker, to the despair of the Liverpool centre-back and the delight of the home crowd.

The tempo of the game dropped sharply after the restart, but Bayern wasted a chance on the hour mark when Gnabry fired in a cross, only for Lewandowski to mistime his slide.

Liverpool were heading for the quarter-finals when Milner swung in the second of two corners in quick succession and Van Dijk powered a header past Neuer.

Mane scored his second when Mohamed Salah's chip found him at the far post to head home his sixth goal in four matches, as Liverpool's travelling fans started singing

"You'll Never Walk Alone", while the Bayern supporters began to slip away.

## After BCCI complaint, police files case in Rs 80 lakh fraud over selection in Ranji teams

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 13**

**(PTI):** Three aspiring

Delhi cricketers have allegedly paid Rs 80 lakh on the promise that they would be selected in the Ranji Trophy teams of three states, but were instead given fake selection letters, a case regarding which has been lodged after cricket board BCCI filed a police complaint, officials said Wednesday.

The case of cheating was registered after BCCI's regional integrity manager of its Anti Corruption Unit Anshuman Upadhyay stated that they have received three complaints from Kanishk Gaur and Kishan Attri of Rohini and Shivam Sharma from Gurgaon.

They were allegedly duped of Rs 80 lakh on the pretext of getting them selected in the Ranji Trophy teams of Nagaland, Manipur and

Jharkhand, police said.

Gaur told police that he was approached by a cricket coach last year who offered him to play in the Ranji Trophy team of Nagaland as a guest player, a senior police officer said.

He later called him to meet the official coach of the Nagaland cricket team and some members of their board. He was asked to pay Rs 15 lakh for five matches, the officer said. But after playing two matches for the under-19 team of Nagaland, he was asked not to play and when he inquired, he was told that his selection letter was forged, the officer said.

Around eleven people, including coaches as well as state cricket board members are being questioned in connection with the case, police said.

## World Cup is still far, now it's time to savour this massive win: Khawaja

**NEW DELHI, MAR 14**

**(PTI):** Vanquishing India on their home turf is

huge for this Australian side and it's time to relish the victory than thinking about the World Cup which is still far away, says opener Usman Khawaja. The left-handed opener was one of the main architects of Australia's 3-2 series win over India after going down 0-2. He scored 50, 38, 104, 91, 100 in five matches.

"It's huge. Just winning a series in India is huge. It's a tough place to come and play cricket, against a very good side. They beat us in Australia, so to come back from those first couple of losses and win three in a row to win the series is a great feeling, said Khawaja after being adjudged the man-of-the-series.

"We're playing well right now. We are just going to enjoy this series win at the moment. We've still got another five one-dayers to come against Pakistan, who are also a decent side. For us

now it's not to look too far ahead, we want to enjoy this win first." Asked if the stunning performance makes Australia favourite to defend their World Cup title, Khawaja said, "I'm not sure."

"The World Cup is still pretty far away. We've have played some really good cricket. Moving forward it doesn't matter. There are new games, new teams, new wickets. "After playing cricket for a long time, I know if you look too far ahead you get in trouble. We have got to keep our heads down, keep working hard. Hopefully if we do that, everything else will take care of itself," he added.

Former skipper Steve Smith and David Warner will not be part of the squad for the Pakistan series but are expected to make their way into Australia's World Cup squad.

Asked if the current team members are aware about the competition for slots, Khawaja said, "I don't think anybody is really thinking about that."

## Series Overview: Plan A in place but what about Plan B?

**KUSHAN SARKAR**

**NEW DELHI, MAR 14 (PTI):** India

captain Virat Kohli made it clear that he has his Plan A in place but what also became clear in the just-concluded ODI series against Australia was the lack of an effective Plan B ahead of the World Cup starting May 30.

Who is the No.4? Who is the third opener if Shikhar Dhawan continues to fail? Will there be a fourth specialist pace bowling option? Who is the second wicketkeeper? Has Ravindra Jadeja done enough?

These five questions did not find any answers during the 2-3 series defeat.

However, the format of World Cup (round robin) is such that India will have to be at their worst in order to not qualify for the semi-finals. All they need to do is win six out of nine games and take it forward from there.

Then, it's the matter of two good days in office and hence Kohli has less issues to deal with despite a patchy series for his team.

Save the skipper himself (310 runs with two hundreds) and his deputy Rohit Sharma (202 runs with two fifties), the batting didn't come together on a regular basis.

Shikhar Dhawan, Kedar Jadhav or Vijay Shankar had their moments but lack of consistency hurt the team. Mahendra Singh Dhoni as usual, was rock solid behind



the stumps, something that was highlighted even more by Rishabh Pant's fumbles in the final two games. Dhoni's astute cricket brain was not there to support Kohli in crunch situations in the final two games.

In the bowling department, Kuldeep Yadav (10 wickets) was expensive but got wickets while Jasprit Bumrah (7 wickets) did have his off days.

Ravindra Jadeja will still be wondering whether three wickets from four games is good enough or not. India wanted a few answers going into the World Cup with regards to their fringe players but there were more unanswered questions after the conclusion of the final phase of their World Cup preparations.

According to Kohli though, he knows his "playing XI going into the World Cup" and only one spot requires to be discussed. However,

er, there remains a big question mark over who will be India's No.4 in the World Cup.

Will it be a floating position given that original choice Ambati Rayudu didn't exactly score those tough runs in Australia, New Zealand and now in India barring one game. If the idea was to give KL Rahul enough chances to settle down, it didn't happen as the Bengaluru-player got only one chance during the series.

The flamboyant Pant was also promoted up the order in the final ODI but he couldn't seal the spot.

Kohli himself came down at No.4 to accommodate Rahul in one game without much success.

So, No.4 does remain a concern with Shreyas Iyer and Manish Pandey not being tried at all during this phase. Kohli didn't indicate which is the one spot the team is looking at but it could well be a toss up between Pant and the more experienced Dinesh Karthik.

It is clear that Hardik Pandya is a far better bowler than Vijay Shankar. Siddharth Kaul was included in the squad for the first two games and not played. Umesh Yadav was dumped after two bad overs.

Yuzvendra Chahal, with lesser variation than Kuldeep, was benched often.

So, the questions remained and hopefully the picture will be clearer by April 20, by the time India announce their final 15.

## Argentina, Colombia set to be co-hosts of 2020 Copa America

**MIAMI, MAR 14 (AFP):**

Argentina and Colombia are poised to co-host the 2020 Copa America after South America's ruling body CONMEBOL once again ruled out a US proposal to host the tournament.

CONMEBOL's ruling council met in Miami on Wednesday to discuss the issue ahead of a FIFA Council meeting in the city on Friday.

"Argentina and Colombia are shaping up as joint venues of the Copa America-2020," CONMEBOL said after rejecting the US offer to host the tournament.

CONMEBOL, which comprises the 10 member federations in South America, said in a statement it had accepted "the nomination of Argentina and Colombia as joint venues for the 2020 edition of the Copa America." The decision marks the first time in the modern Copa America era that the tournament will be split between two countries.

A tournament co-hosted by Argentina and Colombia also pres-

ents logistical hurdles, with the two countries separated by some 4,350 miles (7,000 kilometers).

CONMEBOL noted that the co-hosting was "subject to the presentation of a detailed proposal by both member associations on the structure and organization of the tournament."

The 2020 Copa America will take place one year after this year's tournament, which is to be staged in Brazil between June 14 and July 7.

Last month, the United States Soccer Federation had issued a proposal to CONMEBOL offering to stage the 2020 Copa America in the United States in an expanded 16-team competition that would also include six teams from the CONCACAF region.

The event was modelled along the lines of the successful 2016 Copa America Centenario held across the US.

The proposed event guaranteed 200 million to be shared amongst competing teams with USD 11 million to be handed to the winner.

## Wholesale inflation rises to 2.93 pc in Feb

**NEW DELHI, MAR 14 (PTI):** Infla-

tion based on wholesale prices inched up to 2.93 per cent in February over the previous month on account of firming up of prices of food items, including vegetables and cereals, according to government data released Thursday.

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation was 2.76 per cent in January this year and 2.74 per cent in February 2018.

Earlier this week, the Consumer Price Index data also showed that retail inflation, which is factored in by the RBI while deciding key interest rate, rose to 2.57 per cent, which was a four-month-high level, in February due to costlier food articles.

According to the latest WPI data, the inflation in the food basket was 4.28 per cent in February, compared with 2.34



per cent in the previous month.

On a monthly basis, the data showed that inflation was higher in cases of cereals, paddy, wheat, pulses, vegetables, fruits and other protein-rich

kitchen essentials such as egg, meat and fish. However, the rate of price rise in February was slower in the case of milk.

The wholesale inflation in the fuel and power segment

was also higher at 2.23 per cent, compared with 1.85 per cent in January.

Meanwhile, the WPI for December 2018 has been revised downwards at 3.46 per cent as

compared to provisional estimate of 3.8 per cent.

In its analysis of the WPI data, CARE Ratings said inflation in the economy has started moving up from the trough reached last month both at retail and wholesale levels.

"The rise in wholesale inflation can be ascribed to increase in primary articles viz food and non-food articles... The build-up inflation so far (April 2018-Feb 2019) was 2.75 per cent, higher than the 2.56 per cent registered in the corresponding period last year," it said. Now, all eyes are on the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee, which will be meeting in April for the first bi-monthly monetary policy review of the next fiscal, at a time when growth rate of industrial production is slowing and inflation inching up.



## Assault on minister rattles New Zealand lawmakers

**WELLINGTON, MAR 14 (AFP):** A senior New Zealand government minister was assaulted in an early-morning street attack Thursday that left him with a black eye and shook up Wellington's normally laid-back political atmosphere.

Green Party co-leader James Shaw was walking to the parliament building known as the Beehive when a man punched him in the face in what his office described as an unprovoked attack.

While Shaw's office played down any political aspect to the assault, Trade Minister David Parker told reporters the attacker "was said to be shouting things out about the United Nations".

Shaw, who is Climate Change Minister and whose party is part of the ruling centre-left coalition, was not seriously injured.

His office said two members of the public helped him and he continued to parliament, attending a meeting before going to hospital for a precautionary check-up.

He suffered a black eye, telling stuff.co.nz "it looks worse than it is".

Police said a 47-year-old man was arrested and would appear in court Friday charged with injuring with intent.

Political violence is practically unheard of in New Zealand, a nation of about 4.5 million where most government ministers do not have a regular security detail.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said that "in New Zealand, you just don't expect these things to happen".

"We have an environment in New Zealand where politicians are accessible, and that's something we should feel proud of," she told reporters.

"We are after all, here to serve people. But today's events really show we cannot take that for granted." Wellington mayor Justin Lester said it was "a sad day for democracy".

"This is outrageous behaviour and if undertaken by a Wellingtonian, shameful," he tweeted.

"Elected representatives of all hues show courage to represent New Zealanders and we are lucky to have unparalleled access to them."

There was condemnation from across the political spectrum, with the leader of the conservative National Party Simon Bridges tweeting: "Violence is never OK."

Ardern said Shaw had told her he was doing fine" and she had told him to take whatever time off he needed to recover.

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# Defying Trump, Senate votes to end US support for Yemen war



**WASHINGTON, MAR 14 (AFP):** The US Senate has dealt a stinging bipartisan rebuke to Donald Trump's foreign policy and his alliance with Riyadh, voting to end support for the bloody Saudi-led war effort in Yemen.

Lawmakers in the Republican-controlled chamber approved on Wednesday a historic curtailment of presidential war powers that directs Trump "to remove United States Armed Forces from hostilities in or affecting the Republic of Yemen" within 30 days.

The Senate vote was 54 to 46, with seven Republicans defying the president and aligning with Democrats.

The text now heads to the Democrat-led House of Representatives, which approved a similar measure that stalled earlier this year, and which

is likely to pass the latest effort.

The White House has threatened a veto, calling the measure "flawed" and saying it would harm bilateral relationships in the region and hurt Washington's ability to fight extremism.

But its full passage would set a historic marker. It would be the first measure passed by Congress to invoke the 1973 War Powers Resolution to directly curtail a president's use of military powers.

"Today, we begin the process of reclaiming our constitutional power by ending US involvement in a war that has not been authorized by Congress and is clearly unconstitutional," Senator Bernie Sanders, who is running for president in 2020 and is a sponsor of the measure, said on the Senate floor.

Republican Senator Mike Lee concurred, saying Saudi Arabia "is not an ally that deserves our support or our military intervention." The Saudis, he said, "are likely using our own weapons... to commit these atrocities of war. That's not OK."

The war in Yemen is the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with an estimated 14 million people at risk of famine.

The World Health Organisation says about 10,000 people have been killed in the war between forces loyal to the Yemeni government, backed by the Saudi-led coalition, and the Iran-aligned Huthi rebels. Rights groups say the death toll is far higher.

The United States provides weapons and refueling to the Saudi coalition.

The resolution is a reminder that Congress

has the legal ability to compel the removal of US military forces, absent a formal declaration of war.

Should it pass Congress, it could force Trump to issue the first veto of his tenure.

The vote may well be the first of two congressional rebukes of Trump in as many days.

On Thursday, the Senate is expected to vote on a resolution already passed by the House to reverse Trump's emergency declaration on border security, after the president went around Congress in a bid to secure more funding for his wall between the United States and Mexico.

In that case too, he has promised to use his veto.

Wednesday's Yemen vote, and the rare bipartisanship at the heart of it, came as US lawmakers have escalated their op-

position to Saudi Arabia after the October murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul.

Republicans and Democrats alike have bristled over the White House's apparent embrace of the kingdom and its leadership.

Some members of Congress have publicly stated that they suspect that powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was directly responsible for the killing, based on the CIA's conclusions.

Sanders, using unusually blunt language about an American ally, said the United States should not "simply follow the despotic lead of a government in Saudi Arabia." "We will determine our military and foreign policy and not be led around by a murderous regime," he said.

## UK MPs vote against leaving EU without a deal, set to delay Brexit day

London, Mar 14 (PTI): British MPs have voted to reject the possibility of the UK leaving the European Union without a withdrawal agreement in place, raising prospects of delaying the March 29 deadline for the divorce to end months of political deadlock.

After her Brexit deal was heavily voted down for a second time on Tuesday, Prime Minister Theresa May announced a government motion ruling out a no-deal Brexit on March 29.

May promised MPs a free vote, but the motion was carefully worded, with the final sentence stating that, "leaving without a deal remains the default in UK and EU law unless this house and the EU ratify an agreement". The motion said the UK should not leave the EU without a deal specifically on March 29, but with the option of a no-deal Brexit at any other time. The government wanted to keep control of the Brexit process, and keep no-deal on the table.

MPs voted by 312 to 308 to support a backbench amendment which struck out that last phrase so as to rule out a no-deal exit altogether.

In chaotic scenes, the government then rescinded its promise of a free vote; and whipped its MPs to vote against the amended motion.

Several cabinet ministers who have warned about the risks of a no-deal Brexit, including Philip Hammond and Amber Rudd, appeared to abstain, but the government still lost the vote, by 321 votes to 278 a majority of 43.

This would now require the Commons to pass a new vote, expected on Thursday, which will authorise May to go back to the EU and seek an extension to Article 50 the legal mechanism for Britain's exit from the union. May said there was a "clear majority" against a no-deal Brexit but the

"legal default" was that the UK would leave without a deal on March 29 if no deal is reached unless that is legally changed with another vote and EU ratification.

"The legal default in UK and EU law remains that the UK will leave the EU without a deal unless something else is agreed. The onus is now on every one of us in this House to find out what that is," May said in her statement soon after another long Brexit day in the Commons.

She also warned that any extension to the Brexit deadline will be pointless unless the House also set out a plan for the kind of deal it can support.

MPs also voted by 374 to 164 to reject a plan to delay the UK's departure from the EU until May 22, so that there can be what its supporters call a "managed no-deal" Brexit.

Opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said that Parliament must now take control of the Brexit process and his party will work across the House of Commons to seek a compromise solution.

He said: "In the last 24 hours Parliament has decisively rejected both her [May] deal and no deal.

"While an extension of Article 50 is now inevitable, responsibility for that extension lies solely and squarely at the Prime Minister's door."

All eyes will now be on a vote on Thursday, which is most likely expected to seek an extension to the time available for the UK to negotiate a new divorce arrangement with the EU.

This would have to be ratified by the EU and the length of extension will become the next focus on both sides. However, how the EU will react to an extension request remains unclear at this stage, given that it is preparing for its own EU elections towards the end of May.

## China defends blocking Azhar terror listing, says it will help in finding lasting solution

**KJM VARMA**

**BEIJING, MAR 14 (PTI):** China on Thursday sought to defend its fourth technical hold at the UN Security Council to block the designation of Pakistan-based JeM chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist, saying it would help the parties concerned to engage in more talks to find a "lasting solution" acceptable to all.

The proposal to designate Azhar under the 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council was moved by France, the UK and the US on February 27, days after a suicide bomber of the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) killed 40 CRPF soldiers in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama, leading to a flare-up in tensions between India and Pakistan.

The Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee members had 10 working days to raise any objections to the proposal. Just before the deadline ended, China put a "technical hold" on the proposal seeking "more time to examine" it.

The proposal was the fourth such bid at the UN in the last 10 years to list Azhar as a global terrorist.

Asked why China once again resorted to block the move, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu



Kang told a media briefing here that Beijing's decision is in line with the rules of the committee.

China "sincerely hopes that relevant action taken by this committee will help relevant countries to engage in dialogue and consultation and prevent adding more complicated factors into regional peace and stability," he said.

"As to the technical hold at the 1267 Committee our action is to make sure that the committee will have enough time to study the matter so that the relevant sides will have time for dialogue and consultation," Lu said.

"Only a solution that is acceptable to all sides could fundamentally provide a chance for a lasting solution to the issue. China is ready to communicate and coordinate with all sides including India to properly handle this issue," he said.

The Security Council 1267 Committee has clear standards on the

procedures of designating terrorist organisations and individuals, Lu said.

"China conducts thorough and in-depth assessment of these applications and we still need more time, so that is why we put forward the technical hold," he said.

India Wednesday expressed disappointment soon after China put a technical hold on designating Azhar.

The External Affairs Ministry in New Delhi said India will continue to pursue all available avenues to ensure that leaders of terror groups involved in heinous attacks on Indian citizens are brought to justice.

"This has prevented action by the international community to designate the leader of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), a proscribed and active terrorist organization which has claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir on February 14," the MEA said.

Without naming China, it said the UN's 1267 Sanctions Committee was not able to come to a decision on the proposal for listing Azhar on account of a member placing the proposal on hold.

To another question on the Wuhan summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping last year to improve the bilateral relations, Lu said, "Xi and Modi met four times. Particularly Wuhan summit made great progress. China is full of sincerity and ready to work with India to build on the consensus of our leaders for greater progress in the bilateral relations."

On the Kashmir issue, Lu said China's position on it is clear and consistent.

"This is an issue that is left over between India and Pakistan. We hope that the two sides will engage in friendly dialogue consultation and solve this issue and other related issues," he said.

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**THE BACHELOR NO MORE!** Love birds Colton Underwood & Cassie Randolph share a kiss outside of AOL Build in New York City.

## Aamir Khan’s next official adaptation of Tom Hanks’ ‘Forrest Gump’

**MUMBAI, MAR 14 (PTI):** Superstar Aamir Khan on Thursday announced that his next project is an official adaptation of Tom Hanks’ classic “Forrest Gump”.

Aamir shared the news on the occasion of his 54th birthday that the Hindi adaptation will be titled “Lal Singh Chaddha”, which he will co-produce with Viacom18 Motion Pictures.

The film will be directed by “Secret Superstar” helmer Advait Chandan.

“My next film is finalised it is called ‘Lal Singh Chaddha’. It is being made by Viacom18 Motion Pictures and Aamir Khan Productions together. It will be directed by Advait Chandan. It is an adaptation of Hollywood film ‘Forrest Gump’.

“We have bought the rights from Paramount... I am playing the lead role of Lal Singh,” Aamir told reporters here.



“Forrest Gump”, directed by Robert Zemeckis, released in 1994 and went on to win six Oscars, including best picture, best director and best actor for Hanks.

The film, based on Winston Groom’s 1986 novel of the same name, follows Forrest Gump, a dim-witted man from Alabama, who witnesses and unwittingly influences several historical events in 20th century USA.

The actor said the makers are yet to lock the cast for the film.

“We have started the prep work on the film. The shoot will start from October. I will be prepping for six months. I have to lose weight. I will be losing 20 kgs. I have to be lean and slim,” he added.

The makers of the film have not yet decided the release date for the film but are planning a 2020 outing.

“I have always loved ‘Forrest Gump’ as a script. It is a wonderful story about this character. It is a life affirming story. It is a feel good film. It is a film for the whole family,” Aamir said.

The actor also revealed he would be sporting a turban “for some part of the film”.

Aamir was last seen in Yash Raj Films’ “Thugs of Hindostan” alongside megastar Amitabh Bachchan, Katrina Kaif and Fatima Sana Shaikh.

## GOT7’s JB Talks Making Good Music, Biggest Fears and Achievements

Since GOT7’s debut in 2014 under JYP Entertainment, the group has been working non-stop. Four albums and two world tours later, GOT7 is a multi-award winning hip-hop and r&b group that has solidified their name in the K-pop scene.

Leading the group to massive success is none other than JB. This 25-year-old dashing man is an impressive multi hyphenate. He is a singer, producer, songwriter, dancer and even an actor. This man has done it all!

The charismatic leader has graced the cover of Men’s Folio Singapore as part of their anniversary ‘Big’ issue and he also spoke candidly about his hopes, dreams and fears in an intimate interview with the magazine.

When asked what he thinks make good music, JB replied sincerely, saying that till today he is not sure. JB is very passionate when it comes to music, co-producing and writing several tracks on the GOT7 albums. Hence, it was refreshing to hear his humbled reply, saying that there were many songs that he liked and considered to be good, yet are not well-received.

“I think good music is when an idea has been precisely expressed, and the listeners could sympathise and be com-

forted by the music at a certain point of time,” JB said.



When asked about his biggest fears and achievements, JB answered honestly.

“I’m worried that I’m going to stop,” he replied. As with many artists, JB echoed the fears of being stuck or having to stop, not just in terms of his career, but also in his creative process

stop at some point.”

In regards to his biggest achievements so far, JB considers writing GOT7’s title song “You Are” from their ‘7 For 7’ mini album, released in October of 2017, his greatest achievement to date. “In my opinion, my team’s [voice] colour was well aligned with the title song I wrote. However, I’m still working hard for greater achievements.”

## Alia Bhatt joins SS Rajamouli’s ‘RRR’



**MUMBAI, MAR 14 (PTI):** Bollywood star Alia Bhatt has joined the cast of filmmaker SS Rajamouli’s upcoming venture “RRR”.

The 25-year-old actor said she is excited about working with the critically-acclaimed director and south superstars Ram Charan and Jr NTR.

“Working with Rajamouli sir is a big tick off my bucket list. Also to be alongside Ram Charan and Jr NTR is an absolute honour. I am very excited about this experience and also working in the south for the first time,” Alia said in a statement.

The film is set in the 1920s and the actor will soon start filming it.

“I begin the shoot in less than a month. I will be playing role of Sita and the film is set in 1920s backdrop,” the statement further read.

Ajay Devgn, who had earlier given the voice-overs for the Hindi version of Rajamouli’s 2012 Telugu blockbuster “Eega” titled “Makhi”, is also set to play a pivotal role in “RRR”.

## Kalki Koechlin ‘Associated’ With Made In Heaven Character As She ‘Needed Therapy’ After Divorce

Actress Kalki Koechlin told mid-day she can “associate with her character” in newly launched web-series Made In Heaven as she “needed therapy” after her divorce with Anurag Kashyap. Speaking about her new show and the character she plays, Kalki told mid-day: “The character is complex and vulnerable. I may not relate to the elite background that she belongs to, but, in terms of her emotional baggage, I could associate with her. I have been through a divorce, and also needed therapy.” Kalki Koechlin was married to filmmaker Anurag Kashyap from 2011 to 2015. Anurag Kashyap gave Kalki her big break with Dev D in 2009. “It’s important to (be mindful of) your mental health, and get the perspective of one who is not a family member or a friend, sometimes,” Kalki Koechlin added.

In the show, Kalki plays the role of Faiza



Naqvi, who is in therapy. Faiza is romantically involved with her best friend Tara’s husband Adil. Sobhita Dhulipala plays the role of Tara while Jim Sarbh is Adil.

Earlier, Kalki Koechlin told news agency PTI: “It was interesting how throughout the series you get a chance to see this person, through her therapy sessions she undergoes, how she’s crumbling. It was a pretty complex character to play.”



THE DAY AHEAD

**ARIES:** No matter how “magical” something looks or feels, keep a healthy dose of cynicism in place today, Aries. With the Sun and rosy-eyed Jupiter lowering your defenses, you could fall under the spell of a snake-oil salesman. If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is. And if people rush you to sign on any dotted lines or invest a down payment, find a reason to slip away—and feel no pressure to come back.

**TAURUS:** It may be too late to reverse past “mista.Keeping a secret won’t be easy under today’s candid Sun-Jupiter square, but do your best to keep confidential information in the vault. Even if you’re sharing out of concern, your blurts could come back to haunt you. Be careful who you bring into your confidence, and instead of getting wrapped up in other people’s dramas, broaden your horizons with some cultural activities.

**GEMINI:** YOU know that you’ve got what it takes to lead a mission, but are other people aware of your skills? Don’t let your magic live on as a “secret pow-

er,” Gemini. Under today’s galvanizing Sun-Jupiter mashup, seek out opportunities to advance your professional status. It’s not rude to ask people, “So what do you do for a living?” (Okay, maybe make it the third or fourth question instead of your lead.).

**CANCER:** Come on out of that cave, Cancer—no matter how brisk the winter air might be. With the Sun getting a nudge from nomadic Jupiter, you need to breathe some unfiltered oxygen and enjoy the feeling of moving your body. An hour at an ice rink or a snowboarding lesson could be good fun. Can’t deal with the temps? Organize an active hangout for your friends.

**LEO:** FSave the taupe and “greige” for another day, Leo. From your sartorial choices to your political opinions, a dynamic duet of the Sun and Jupiter urges you to make a bold statement. People have always considered you a role model for living out loud, even if lately you’ve been keeping your stronger points of view under wraps in order to keep the peace.

**VIRGO:** You hate to disappoint a friend in

need—or to miss a happening after-work event. But some days, you just have to resist the pressure to come out and play. You may be feeling depleted, and if you don’t get some “me time,” like, now, you could totally crash (not to mention make yourself susceptible for those nasty winter bugs going around).

**LIBRA:** No need to lower the blinds if you want a little shade. Thanks to today’s agitating Sun-Jupiter square, you’ll be throwing some of it yourself. Under this magnifying transit, people’s annoying “quirks” will really get under your skin. Breathe, Libra, breathe. Let this be your signal to deploy some immediate self-care. Book the 90-minute massage or spend the whole day at the spa.

**SCORPIO:** All the glitters may not be gold—but that won’t stop you from pulling out your wallet. With a decadent Sun-Jupiter mashup overhead, you’d be wise to carry a set amount of cash and leave your debit cards locked up at home. If you’re trying to save up, don’t meet friends for “window shopping.” The odds of you heading home

empty-handed are basically zero.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Familiarity can breed contempt today, as your ruler, Jupiter, in Sagittarius catches some shade from the moody Pisces Sun. Yesterday, it was all love with your soul squad and favorite relatives. Today, even their most endearing traits will grate on your nerves. At moments like this, your best course of action is to just take some space. Better than to lash out at them for an innocent “mistake” or, worse, for simply being in your space!

**CAPRICORN:** Peel off that power suit and kick off those pinchy stilettos. Your heart—and the rest of you—wants to hunker down in your home sweet home. Can you swing a remote workday or head home early? Grab that sheepskin throw and make yourself a pillow fort as your “office.” No can do? Do everything in your power to make your cubicle feel cozier. Maybe it’s time to invest in a French press for brewing up loose-leaf tea or a pair of noise-canceling headphones for playing meditative music...and drowning out your coworker’s ultra-annoying voice.

**AQUARIUS:** Shake up your routines under

today’s galvanizing Sun-Jupiter square. Wandering off the beaten path can bring some incredible discoveries—as long as you don’t make plans overly complex! Pick a district that you’d like to explore, then park and wander around. If there’s a wait for a dinner table, put your name on the list, then pop into some of the shops. Apply this philosophy to your work today. Invite a new colleague to join you for a coffee run or try doing your work in a totally different order, being sure to build in ample breaks..

**PISCES:** Keep a major goal in your cross-hairs—and don’t get distracted—as the Sun and Jupiter compose a dynamic duet in the most ambitious parts of your chart. But that doesn’t mean walking a straight and narrow line today. Figure out ways to combine your social needs with your career aspirations. If splurging on event tickets means mingling with the people YOU think of as influencers, consider it an investment in your future. And if you need to take a couple hours to develop one of your bigger ideas, reschedule a lunch date for dinner and hunker down to get those plans on paper!