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NEED TO MAKE FEMALE-
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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Portfolios allocated, Govt gets working

Golay retains Sports & Youth Affairs; List of temp employees sought from HoDs

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 30 MAY:**

Portfolios for the new Ministers was announced today, three days after they were sworn in. While Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] has expectedly retained Home and Finance, what has also generated some buzz is that he has also chosen to keep Sports & Youth Affairs. Mr Tamang's stint as a Minister in previous governments, it may be mentioned here, is best remembered for his stint as the Sports & Youth Affairs Minister. One of the more durable initiatives from those years is the "Search for More Bhachu-hungs" initiative which consistently produced ace footballers from Sikkim.

Meanwhile, a notification issued by the Raj Bhavan announces that senior SKM lead-

er, the MLA from Shyari and Gangtok, Kunga Nima Lepcha, will be the Minister for the departments of Human Resource Development, Law & Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs, Land Revenue and Disaster Management.

His colleague in the Cabinet, second time Sangha MLA for SKM, Sonam Lama has been allocated Rural Management and Development, Panchayati Raj and Cooperative and Ecclesiastical departments.

Senior politician, Bedu Singh Panth, elected from Temi Namphing, has been given charge of Tourism & Civil Aviation and Commerce & Industries Departments.

First-time MLA, Dr Mani Kumar Sharma elected from Khamdong-Singtam, is the new Minister for Health and Social Justice departments.

The Arithang MLA Arun Upreti has been allotted Urban Development & Housing Development, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs departments.

MLA from Lachen-Mangan, Samdup Lepcha, has been given the portfolio of Road & Bridges, Cultural Affairs & Heritage departments.

Lok Nath Sharma, elected from Gyalshing-Barnyak, has been allocated Food Security and Agriculture Development & Horticulture Development & Cash Crops Development, Live Stock, Fisheries and Veterinary Services and Information and Public Relations and Printing departments.

Mingma Norbu Sherpa, elected from Daramdin, is the new Minister for Energy & Power and Labour departments.

Kabi-Tingda MLA, Karma Loday Bhutia, holds charge as the new Forest, Environment & Wild Life Management, Mines, Minerals & Geology and Science and Technology Minister.

Yangthang MLA Bhim Hang Limboo has been given Water Supply & Public Health Engineering and Water Resources and River Development departments, while Sanjit Kharel, elected from Namthang-Rateypani has received Building & Housing and Transport departments.

With the portfolio allotted, the new government got down to the business of administration and in a circular issued yesterday, directed that from now onwards "pilots" will be provided

only to the Chief Justice, Governor and Chief Minister in Sikkim.

The circular, issued by the chief secretary, also directs that departmental lunches and dinner will not be held at outside hotels and should be hosted at government guest houses from now on. Even chief minister's banquets will be held at Samman Bhawan, the circular adds.

Meanwhile, the Department of Personnel has also directed all Heads of Departments to submit detailed lists of all temporary employees employed in their respective departments, including those appointed recently under the One Family, One Job scheme.

The HoDs have also been directed to submit lists of all Group C and D employees on deputation from other services and departments and also all officials [Group C and D] on re-employment, and all such employees on extension of service.

The missive underlines that the direction be taken as "most urgent" and that the list, prepared in Microsoft Excel, be submitted latest by 10 June 2019 in soft and hard copies.

CHIEF MINISTER P.S. TAMANG

Home Department, Finance Revenue & Expenditure Department, Development Planning & North East Council Affairs Department,



Excise Department, other Departments no allotted to other Ministers, Government of Sikkim



SHRI KARMA L. BHUTIA

Forest Environment and Wildlife Management, Mines & Geology and Science and Technology Departments, Government of Sikkim.

SHRI ARUN UPRETI

Urban Development & Housing Development and Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Departments, Govt. of Sikkim



SHRI BHIM HANG LIMBOO

Water Security & Public Health Engineering and Water Resources & River Developments Departments, Govt. of Sikkim

SHRI B.S. PANTH

Tourism & Civil Aviation and Commerce & Industries Departments, Government of Sikkim



SHRI SANJIT KHAREL

Sikkim Public Works (Buildings & Housing) and Transport Departments, Government of Sikkim

SHRI SONAM LAMA

Rural Management and Development Department and Panchayati Raj and Cooperative Department & Ecclesiastical Affairs Department, Government of Sikkim



SHRI L.N. SHARMA

Food Security and Agriculture & Horticulture & Cash Crops Dev. and Animal Husbandry, Livestock Fisheries & Veterinary Services, IPR & Printing Departments, Govt. of Sikkim

DR. M.K. SHARMA

Health Care, Human Services and Family Welfare, Social Justice, Empowerment & Welfare Departments, Govt. of Sikkim



SHRI M.N. SHERPA

Energy & Power and Labour Departments, Government of Sikkim

SHRI SAMDUP LEPCHA

Public Works (Roads & Bridges) and Cultural Affairs & Heritage Departments, Govt. of Sikkim



SHRI KUNGA NIMA LEPCHA
Human Resource Development, Law & Legislative and Parliamentary



Affairs and Land Revenue & Disaster Management Departments, Government of Sikkim

Modi takes oath as PM for second term, joined by Rajnath, Shah, others in cabinet



NEW DELHI, MAY 30 (PTI): Narendra Modi took over as the country's Prime Minister for a second term on Thursday after he was sworn in along with other Union ministers, including BJP president Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari and former foreign secretary S Jaishankar, a surprise pick.

Modi, 68, was administered the oath of office and secrecy by President Ram Nath Kovind at a glittering ceremony at the forecourt of majestic Rashtrapati Bhavan.

"Honoured to serve India!" tweeted Modi after taking the oath for the second consecutive term.

Apart from Shah, Singh, Gadkari, the other top leaders who were sworn-in as Union ministers included D V Sadananda Gowda, Nirmala Sitharaman and Ram Vilas Paswan.

While the inclusion of Shah, seen as BJP's key strategist who helped the party to expand its base after taking over the reins of the party in 2014, was much speculated, Jaishankar, considered close to Modi, was a surprise pick.

Some of the key ministers in the previous Modi government, including Sushma Swaraj, Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore and Maneka Gandhi were not part of the new council of ministers.

Top opposition leaders including former prime minister Manmohan Singh, Congress President Rahul Gandhi and UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, corporate honchos, film stars, chief ministers and a galaxy of leaders from BIMSTEC countries were part of the nearly 8,000 guests at the ceremony.

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DC LEADS EACH FRIDAY, FIELD DAY VISIT TO UPPER DZONGU On-the-spot directions issued for urgent works

MANGAN, 30 MAY [IPR]: The Each Friday, Field Day initiative was led to Upper Dzongu today by District Collector, Raj Yadav, accompanied SDM-Dzongu, DFO-Forest, Addl. Director-SSDMA, Joint Director-Mines & Geology, DPO-North, BDO-Djongu, AE Roads, CDDO Djongu and other field Officers and Staffs.

During the visit, the following decisions were taken by the team-

1. The Road condition between Sanklang bridge to CWC is found in very bad condition therefore one meeting was conducted with GRE,



As per Assurance work will be taken up tomorrow onwards for making it jeepable and issue of Ringh khola bridge was also taken up in this meeting.

2. PASSINGDONG SDM & BAC OFFICE

a) Approach road from main road to SDM office (Djongu) and BDO office (Djongu) is in very bad condition due mud

& debris, therefore same will be made cemented as per decision taken on spot in convergence with DLRC & MGNERGA.

b) One computer set, tables and chairs were

already given to SDM office, Djongu for staff as per need.

c) Nearby Ground of SDM office found very dirty So staff have been directed to clean immediately. Repair of approach road from SDM office, Djongu to play ground was also sanctioned on spot So that same ground can be used for parking of vehicles.

e) The stretch of Passingdong main road was found damaged due to landslide near the SDM office Djongu, and repairs will be started in the coming week as informed by A.E Road.

turn to pg02

Sikkim Mountaineering Association announces Gurudongmar Marathon

**SHRAVAN CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 30 MAY:**

Sikkim Mountaineering Association has announced plans to organize an exciting marathon, The Gurudongmar Marathon, pegged as "the highest marathon" stretched out at an altitude of 17,800sqft from 03 to 06 June.

The first leg of the marathon will be from Gurudongmar to Samdung.

Runners participating in the event include professional long-distance runners from West Bengal and Maharashtra and also some international runners and volunteers from Sikkim.

This marathon will commemorate International World Runners day, which falls on 05 June this year.

"Global Running Day celebrates the sport of running. Participants of all ages



and abilities pledge to take part in some type of running activity," informs SMA president, Kunzang Gyatsho.

He also mentioned that the event will witness the participation of runners from variety of age groups from 14-60 years

which will help create awareness about this sport among the people.

He added that 70 runners have already registered for the marathon. Registrations, it is learnt, are still open.

The marathon, he believes, will also help expand tourism and adventure sports in the state.

Accommodation for the runners and volunteers will be taken care of by the SMA but the registration fees are not exempted. Medical support will also be provided as the Health Department and the Indian army are also collaborating in the event, says Mr Gyatsho.

He adds, "The primary motive of this marathon is to encourage fitness, both mentally and physically, and also to bring goodwill among different age groups. This marathon will empower runners of every age and ability."

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Golay attends Modi's swearing-in



NEW DELHI, 30 MAY [IPR]: Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang (Golay) attended the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi, this evening. He was accompanied by Sikkim's Lok Sabha MP, Indra Hang Subba. The Chief Minister

congratulated the PM and extended warm greetings and best wishes.

He stated that India has achieved greater success under Mr Modi's leadership and that he extends his full cooperation towards building a brighter and stronger nation.

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Modi takes...

Others who took oath of office, included Narendra Singh Tomar, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Thanwar Chand Gehlot, Ramesh Pokhriyal, Arjun Munda, Smriti Irani, Harsh Vardhan, Prakash Javadekar, Piyush Goyal, Dharmendra Pradhan, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Prahlad Joshi, Mahendra nath pandey and Giriraj Singh.

This is the second time Modi took the oath at the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan. Modi was sworn in by the then President Pranab Mukherjee in 2014 in the presence of over 3,500 guests including the heads of SAARC countries.

Earlier, Chandra Shekhar in 1990 and Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1999 were sworn in at the sprawling forecourt.

Leaders of BIMSTEC countries including President of Bangladesh Abdul Hamid, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli, President of Myanmar U Win Myint and Bhutanese Prime Minister Lotay Tshering also attended the gala event.

From Thailand, its Special Envoy Grisada Boonrach represented the country. Besides India, BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) comprises Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan as members.

Kyrgyz President and current chair of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Kyrgyz President Sooronbay Jeenbekov, and Mauritius PM Pravind Kumar Jugnauth also attended the event.

On-the-spot...

3. PASSINGDONG PHC

a) Due to heavy rainfall there was landslide happened at Passingdong PHC therefore protection wall was sanctioned on spot in convergence with MGN-ERGA & DLRC.

b) Issue of drainage at Passingdong PHC will also be solved by coming week as informed by A.E Road.

c) There was water supply issue at Passingdong PHC, therefore 5 coils of poly pipes were sanctioned for temporary water supply.

4. Newly constructed Lingtem road was found damaged, therefore AE Road has been directed to stop the final bill till the completion of work in satisfactory manner.

5. Due to heavy rainfall near Passingdong Sec School (Passingdong bazar) public are facing problem with drainage system therefore one culvert has been sanctioned on spot to ensure proper drainage system. Work will be started on 10 June, as informed by A.E Roads.

6. Upper Passingdong ICDS was damaged due to natural calamity therefore a protection wall sanctioned in convergence with MGN-ERGA and DLRC on spot.

7. MANTAM BRIDGE

a). It should be noted that Tingvong GPU is cut off therefore during the visit alternate site was verified by all the engineers and public of the area to construct an approach road and bridge. The site was found feasible and concerned department will provide estimate within a week. The work will be started as soon as possible by the team.

b). During the visit it was found that the river's current was hitting the base of suspension foot bridge therefore it was decided that the stream be diverted to stop future damage. Work will be started by Roads & Bridges Dept within a week. All works will be followed up in coming week and next visit.

Darj celebrates Everest Day; releases Special Cover on Tenzing Sherpa

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 30 MAY:

A Special Cover featuring Everest Tenzing Norgay was released from the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling today commemorating the 105th birth anniversary of the mountaineering legend.

The cover was released at a function organized by the HMI celebrating the 105th Birth Anniversary of Tenzing Norgay. After conquering the highest mountain peak – Mount Everest in 1953 with Sir Edmund Hillary, Tenzing Norgay was always associated with the HMI, Darjeeling ever since its establishment in the year 1954.

He was the first Director of Field Training of the HMI and an advisor till his death.

A special cover is



a cover (an envelope) that is released for a special person, occasion, monument or a place. It has to be approved by the Postal Department of India. They are released in limited quantities and so they hold philatelic values and are sought by Philatelists and collectors all around.

lectors all around.

The special cover and the special cancellation for the event were designed by Vivek Yonzone, a national award winning Philatelist from Darjeeling who is also the Secretary of Alpine Philatelic and Numismatic Society Darjeeling.

He said that it was an

honour to work on the cover of such an Icon, a Legend, the First Man on Top of Mt. Everest and thanked the Principal of HMI, Capt. Jai Kishan for entrusting him with this responsibility and opportunity.

Darjeeling last witnessed a Special Cover release in the year 2014.



CM visits IRBn camp in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 30 MAY (IPR): Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay], who was in Delhi today to attend the swearing-in of the Prime Minister and the Union Cabinet, visited the Sikkim IRBn camp based at Wazirabad, Delhi today.

The CM was accorded a very warm welcome and was received with a guard of honour.

He then interacted with the Jawans and enquired about their well being assuring them total

support and full cooperation.

This was a historic visit in that this was the first time that a Chief Minister has visited the Sikkim IRBn camp in Delhi.

The jawans expressed their happiness and thanked the Chief Minister for visiting them and for listening to their grievances.

The CM also met the Commanding Officer who placed forward demands of the force and

assured that these would be addressed at the earliest.

The Chief Minister thanked the Jawans for their extraordinary service to the state and the nation and assured to extend all possible support from his end.

He also stated that they had set an exemplary example and that IRBn and Sikkim Police should continue to be the smartest police force in the country.

All lit up, Rashtrapati Bhavan hosts 8,000 guests for Modi's swearing-in ceremony

NEW DELHI, MAY 30 (PTI): As the sun set over the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Thursday, Narendra Modi and his council of ministers were sworn in for a second successive term with 8,000 people packing into the forecourt of the historic British-era presidential palace.

In a grand ceremony with overtones of a US presidential inauguration, heads of state and government, India Inc honchos, opposition leaders, BJP members and showbiz stars rubbed shoulders as they watched President Ram Nath Kovind administer the oath of office to India's 58 new ministers.

The two-hour swearing-in ceremony of Modi government 2.0 -- which created a splash, with the prime minister powering his party to a 303 victory in the 543-member Lok Sabha, and also a spectacle -- is the largest event to be held in Rashtrapati Bhavan, officials said.

It was India's Kodak moment for the political times with grandeur and pomp, ritual and glimpses of realpolitik and

some history too.

The ceremony started at 7 pm, right on time, but the crowds had started filing in much earlier, taking their allotted seats and making conversation while millions watching the proceedings on TV and other screens speculated about who was who, who was there and who was not.

Soon, as minister after minister took oath with the president sometimes the strict teacher correcting some of them when they slipped up, dusk slipped into night and the lights came on over the panoramic Lutyenscape with the Rashtrapati Bhavan dome lit up in the tricolour.

Among those present were former prime minister Manmohan Singh, former president Pratibha Patil, veteran BJP leader L K Advani and even spiritual guru Jaggi Vasudev.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi, who is adamant on his decision to quit office after his party's debacle in the hustings and hasn't been seen for some days,

created a buzz when he walked in with his mother, UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi. NDA ally Janata Dal-United chief Nitish Kumar was there too, making an entry shortly after his party announced it would not be part of the government.

The BJP was offering one cabinet berth to the JD(U) and sources said the regional party was also unhappy with the portfolio offered to it.

Leaders of BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) countries, including Bangladesh President Abdul Hamid, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli, President of Myanmar U Win Myint and Bhutanese Prime Minister Lotay Tshering also attended the gala event.

Kyrgyz President and current chair of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Kyrgyz President Sooronbay Jeenbekov, and Mauritius PM Pravind Kumar Jugnauth also attended the event From India Inc, Reli-

ance Industry's Mukesh Ambani, veteran industry leader Ratan Tata, steel baron L N Mittal and Adani Group head Gautam Adani were among the who's who of corporate India present.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, Essar Director Prashant Ruia, Tata Group Chairman N Chandrasekaran, Vedanta Chairman Anil Aggarwal and HDFC's Deepak Parekh were there as well. Making a starry splash were showbiz stars, including those who were voted into power like Hema Malini and her stepson Sunny Deol. Others like cine star Rajinikanth, filmmaker Karan Johar, Shahid Kapoor, Boney Kapoor and Kangana Ranaut added a touch of glamour.

Sidharth Roy Kapur, president of the Film and Television Producers Guild of India, Vivek Oberoi, Anupam Kher, Madhur Bhandarkar and Boney Kapoor were also a part of the event.

"The kind of victory they have had, It is almost like a celebration. It is celebration of democracy," Boney told PTI.

Patnaik announces Rs 1,330 crore package for Bijepur

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 30 (PTI): Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday announced a Rs 1,330 crore package, including plans to provide pucca houses to 34,000 households in Bijepur Assembly constituency, from where he was elected in the recently held polls.

Apart from his home turf Hinjili in Ganjam district, Patnaik had also contested from Bijepur Assembly constituency in Bargarh district. He won both the seats.

"About 34,000 eligible households having kutchra houses in Bijepur Assembly constituency will be provided with pucca houses," an official in Chief Minister's Office said.

As part of the package, two mega pipe water schemes will be executed at an estimated cost of Rs 1,120 crore covering 8 lakh population of 505 villages of Bargarh district where Bijepur is located.

"All villages of Bijepur constituency will be provided with piped water supply with household connection in next two years," the official said.

A new mega lift irrigation project under Parbatigiri Mega Lift Scheme will be taken up in Buro-munda gram panchayat with water source from river Ong at an estimated cost of Rs 48 crore. This will provide irrigation to 3,000 acres of agriculture land, he said.

Similarly, 29 river lift projects and about 3000 deep borewell irrigation projects will be taken up in Bijepur Assembly constituency.

Infrastructure works

including water supply, street lighting, roads, drainage, town hall, community centres, kalyan mandap, stadium, market complex, park, office buildings will be taken up in Bijepur and Barpalli notified area council areas.

Package for each town will cost Rs 40 crore and the works will be completed within two years, sources said.

In order to provide quality power to the farmers, separate agriculture feeders totalling 60 km of 33 KV line and 125 kms of 11 KV line will be constructed. Besides, 50 new distribution transformers will also be set up to improve the voltage level.

While three RI circles will be set up at Guderpali, Talpal and Dangabahal under Gaisilet Tehsil, a new primary health centre (PHC) will be opened at Talpadar in Bijepur block, they said adding adequate number of doctors will be posted in existing health institutions in a week.

A government ITI will be set up at Bijepur and two skill development centres at Gaisilet and Barpalli.

Four new road development projects covering a length of about 80 km and a bridge project will be sanctioned to strengthen the road network in the area at a cost of about Rs 82 crore, they said. The chief minister will review the implementation of the package every two months, an official said adding Part-2 of the package including livelihood and other sectors will be announced soon.

Lachen Mangan lays out grand welcome for new MLA



WANGCHUK BHUTIA MANGAN, 30 MAY:

A grand welcome awaited the new MLA of Lachen-Mangan, Roads & Bridges Minister Samdup Lepcha, here at Zero Point, Mangan Lall complex point, by North Sikkim Academy with the principal accompanied by the students and the school's pipe band, party supporters, youth and members of the business community.

Former chairperson NT Lepcha delivered the

welcome address and the Minister, in his address, expressed gratitude and announced that the first order of business for him in constituency would be to develop all roads in Mangan Bazaar.

Tourism will receive impetus, he said, and issues of the unemployed youth and the business community looked into.

Senior citizen, Sonam Bhutia, also thanked the people of Mangan bazaar for their support for the MLA.

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Assam Rifles ex-servicemen briefed and conferred with



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 30 MAY:

A special outreach rally for ex-servicemen of the Assam Rifles was held at the Defence Auditorium Hall here today with over 200 ex-servicemen, Veer Naris [widows of ex-servicemen] and others.

The event was presided over by Commanding Office, SP Yadav, Assam Rifles HQ, along with Sub Divisional Magistrate RB Bhandari.

In his address, the Commanding General mentioned that ex-servicemen of Assam Rifles

have proved to be essential ingredients of the society and have the potential to make positive contributions towards nation-building.

He also emphasised that the ESM are a fabricating components in themselves as they are

a disciplined and well trained work force with rich experience in aid to civil authority, disaster management, intelligence gathering etc.

He urged them to contribute towards reinforcing civil defence arrangements, societal

strengthening and other nation building activities.

The Commanding General assured that Assam Rifles will continue to redress the grievances of war veterans, veer naris and ESM.

Subsequently, he felicitated gallantry awardees, war veterans; Veer Naris, other ladies and disabled ESM.

Issues related to healthcare, re-employment and pensions and other matters were taken up at the event.

The mega rally had a Pension Anomalies Cell wherein the ex-servicemen, veer Naris, other ladies and dependents could register their grievances. A total of 100 cases pertaining to pension were resolved on the spot. A medical camp was also held in the sidelines.

NKKN dance academy foundation day on 01 June



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 30 MAY:

Nataraj Kala Kendra and Nrityaanjali (NKKN) Dance Academy will be celebrating its first foundation day here at Manan Kendra on 01 June. The celebration will feature performances by prominent classical dancers Sandeep Malik from Kolkata, Sumi Rai and Anjali Rai along with other artists from Sikkim, informed Sumi Rai at a conference held here at the Press club of Sikkim today.

kim today.

She said, "There are students who have the potential to make it big but are not given the proper platform to present their talent. There are boundaries everywhere to be crossed, and we as artists ourselves have faced similar situations and now we have come up as organizers to encourage these students and artists showcase their talent."

Apart from the dancers, this event will also

showcase musicians from Kolkata and Sikkim.

The headlining act for the event will be a classical Kathak performance with live music.

Ms Rai informs more than 60 students will be participating in the combined-event of the two academies.

This event will also serve as an initiative towards shaping the future of students from Sikkim who want to have a career in classical dance forms.

Paswan: Master political craftsman who has worked under 6 PMs

NEW DELHI/PATNA, MAY 30 (PTI): A politician with an uncanny knack for sensing which way the wind is blowing, Lok Jan-shakti Party chief Ram Vilas Paswan has a rare distinction of serving as a minister in the cabinets of six prime ministers.

Paswan Thursday took oath as Cabinet minister.

The septuagenarian had started off as a member of the Bihar legislative assembly in the 1960s and shot to fame in the 1977 post-Emergency Lok Sabha polls when he won Hajipur seat by over four lakh votes, then a record margin.

Another emphatic victory in 1989 earned him his first stint in the cabinet of V P Singh, who appointed him as labour minister.

Less than a decade later, he was back as railway minister in successive governments headed by H D Deve Gowda and I K Gujral which together lasted for a couple of years.

The Janata Dal faction, with which he was associated in the 1990s, sided with the BJP-led NDA and Paswan was made the minister for communications, and later coal in the government headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Later, he floated his own party with a view to exploring the possibilities as the foremost Dalit leader in Bihar after Babu Jagjivan Ram.

The Gujarat riots of 2002 saw him quit

the NDA in protest and gravitate towards the Congress-led UPA, which came to power two years later. He was appointed the minister for chemicals and fertilizers and steel under Manmohan Singh.

His relations with the Congress got strained during the UPA-2 when he was denied a ministerial berth following his party's debacle in the 2009 Lok Sabha polls. Paswan himself was defeated at his own citadel of Hajipur.

Ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha polls the BJP, which was looking for allies in Bihar so they could help it make up for the loss of Chief Minister Nitish Kumars JD(U), welcomed him with open arms and offered him seven seats to contest. The LJP won six, including Paswan, his son Chirag and brother Ram Chandra.

As the minister for food and public distribution and consumer affairs under Narendra Modi, Paswan made his mark as a stout votary of the government whenever it came under attack on issues of social justice. He handled efficiently the pulses and sugar sector crisis besides bringing reforms in the Public Distribution System.

He did not contest the recent Lok Sabha polls. His younger brother and Bihar minister Pashupati Kumar Paras won from Hajipur. Paswan is now set to enter the Rajya Sabha, most likely from Bihar.

Raj govt bans ads, sale of e-cigarettes

JAIPUR, MAY 30 (PTI): The Rajasthan government has decided to ban production, distribution, advertisement and sale of e-cigarette in the state.

The decision, which comes a day before the World No Tobacco Day, will be an important step to curb addiction among youths, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said in a statement.

Gehlot said the Congress had promised to

take steps to curb use of tobacco among youths in its election manifesto and the step will prove effective.

Health minister Raghuvir Sharma said the youths are being misled by advertisements of e-cigarettes as a better alternative.

He said that a committee was constituted to do a detailed study on the rising use of e-cigarettes.

Intensified Diarrhea Control Fortnight launched



MANGAN, 30 MAY (IPR): The District Hospital Mangan, Government of Sikkim launched an Intensified Diarrhea Control Fortnight Programme under National Health Mission here at DAC conference hall, Mangan, today.

Diarrhea is the leading cause of illness and death in children, therefore launching of Intensified Diarrhea Control Fortnight aims to create awareness to achieve zero child deaths due to diarrhea. The main purpose of the programme was also to spread awareness about diarrhea caused by Rota virus, Rubella, Measles.

The programme which began on 28 May will continue till June 8. During the fortnight programme Aaganwadi workers and ASHA workers will make door to door visit to distribute ORS, zinc tablets and impart lesson on hand wash techniques to the general public.

Chief Medical Officer, North, Dr DC Shar-

ma, DRCHO/N, Dr PK Basnett, Joint Director, HRDD/N, Mrs Deelak Pradhan, SDM, Mangan, Mr Samdup Bhutia, Dr Roshan Chettri (Pediatrician), HE/N, Mr Rinchen Namgyal Bhutia, CDPOs and Accredited Social Health Activists, Aaganwadi workers, ANMs and health workers of district hospital attended the Launching event.

The programme also demonstrated the preparation of ORS and six point hand wash technique by members of the Aaganwadi and ASHA workers.

During the orientation session, Dr Basnett instructed all ASHA and Aaganwadi worker to establish ORS and Zinc corner at Schools and their respective centre and called all the stakeholders to put collective effort on cleaning the community water tanks as to eradicate water born diseases.

Further, she talked about a mild disease like Measles & Rubella (MR). She informed

that MR vaccine will be launched shortly.

She stated that women who get infected by MR during pregnancy have a greater chance of having serious health problem with their new born baby. All young women must be aware of this disease and get the vaccine as soon as possible, she added.

Dr Roshan Chettri talked about Rota virus which causes diarrhea and leads high mortality rate in children under the age of 2 years old.

He informed that the state health department is all set to introduce Rota vaccine shortly across the state which will cure the diarrhea caused by rotavirus in children.

Rotavirus vaccine currently being supplied under universal immunization programme is five drops given orally. Rotavirus vaccine will be administered to infants in three dose schedule at six, ten and fourteen weeks along with others universal immunization programme.

SKF-India announces Board and leadership appointments

SUMMIT REPORT KOLKATA, 30 MAY:

The Board of SKF India Ltd has approved the appointment of Gopal Subramanyam and Anu Wakhlu as independent directors and Werner Hoffmann and Aldo Cedrone as non-independent directors.

Mr Subramanyam, who will also be the Chairman of the Com-

pany, is the former CEO of L&T-Komatsu and has over four decades of experience in the manufacturing sector, including various leadership roles with the L&T Group.

Ms Wakhlu is the Co-founder and Chairperson of Pragati Leadership, a leading consulting company focused on organization-

al transformation and leadership development across many sectors and is a certified coach and an acclaimed author.

Mr Hoffmann and Mr Cedrone work within the SKF Group as CFO Asia and Global Operations Director respectively.

All the above appointments are subject to shareholder approval at the coming AGM.

Irani among six women ministers in Modi's new govt

NEW DELHI, MAY 30 (PTI): Amethi MP Smriti Irani was among the six women ministers to take oath in the newly-formed government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday.

The number of women ministers in this government is lower than the last time, even though the number of women elected in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls is the highest ever. There were eight women ministers in the last government.

Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal and Nirmala Sitharaman also took oath as Union ministers, besides Irani.

The 43-year-old Amethi MP, who was the "giant slayer" in the Lok Sabha polls as she scripted a historic win over Congress chief Rahul Gandhi in the latter's family bastion, took oath as Union minister along with 57 others. Badal (52), from BJP ally Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), won the polls from Bathinda.

Sitharaman (59), who was the first woman to be appointed a full-time defence minister of the country, also took oath as Union minister.

Fatehpur MP Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti (52) took oath as minister of state, along with new entrants Renuka Singh Saruta (55), the MP from Chhattisgarh's Sarguja, and Debashree Chaudhuri (48), the MP from Raiganj in West Bengal. Their portfolios are yet to be announced.

Among the women ministers in the previous government, Sushma Swaraj (external affairs), Uma Bharti (drinking water and sanitation), Maneka Gandhi (women and child development) and Anupriya Patel (MoS, health and family welfare) are not part of the new council of ministers.

The average age of women MPs this time is 51 years with Irani being the youngest woman minister and Sitharaman the oldest.

YA drama 'The Wilds' receives series order from Amazon

LOS ANGELES, MAY 29 (PTI): Amazon Studios has given a series order to young adult drama "The Wilds".

The show, which hails from Sarah Streicher, follows a group of teenage girls from radically different backgrounds after an airplane crash strands them on a deserted island, reported Variety.

Streicher, who has Marvel-Netflix series "Daredevil" to her writing credits, will serve as the writer and executive producer on the new show.

Amy B Harris will

be the showrunner and she will also executive produce alongside Jamie Tarses' Fanfare and Dylan Clark and Brian Williams of Dylan Clark Productions.

"We are thrilled to share this exciting original vision with our global audience," said Jennifer Salke, head of Amazon Studios.

"We are proud to be the home for this authentically voiced, high stakes show brought to life by the talented Sarah Streicher, Amy Harris and our ABC Signature Studios partners," she added.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

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Wildlife Worries

The wildlife numbers might be healthy, but what about their actual health

So, a tiger has been snapped at heights hitherto thought unlikely, not because it is unheard of, but because the contiguous tracks of forest have been lost for too long. While that is good news, what is not so is the fact that deer stumble into villages along the edge of forests diseased and suffering from open sores. Sometimes, dogs set upon the sick animal and bring her down and at other times people try to care for the animal and make its final hours as comfortable as possible. Elsewhere, farmers are reporting raids by wild boars even in North Sikkim. Even the wilds along Tsomgo now have wild boar populations competing with the wildlife there for the scarce resources. Parts of West and South Sikkim have been grappling with increased incidence of wild boar raids for a while now and these packs are clearly now expanding to new terrains.

These incidents are playing out due to half-cock policy interventions. It is “proper” to ban hunting, but even the half-educated know that forest dwellers and traditional hunting are allowed even when a strict hunting ban is in place. Not so in Sikkim. What should actually have been a strictly enforced ban on recreational hunting has instead banned this traditional activity altogether from Sikkim. Traditional hunting, apart from providing the much-needed protein supplement for communities living along forest belts, also played the important role of culling the sick and the weak from animal herds before they infected the rest. Accept it, no matter how good a hunter someone is, they are only good enough to bring down the weakest of the pack. Rural pragmatism also ensured that such hunting was also regulated and almost honorable in the manner it was carried out and had worked a fine arrangement to maintain the balance. But then Gangtok banned it for all of Sikkim (except the privileged for whom the laws don’t apply equally). What this has resulted in is an unbalanced growth. And nature does not like that. Also, in the case of wild boars, it is not just farms that are being dug up, but even bigger, but solitary, animals like the bears being chased out of their traditional haunts. Okay, this last one is speculative, but it is not as far out as some might argue. The point being made is that while it is wonderful that Sikkim’s wildlife population is supposedly growing, it is important now to find out whether it is also healthier and whether some informed decisions need to be made to ensure that better health returns to the wildlife.

About hunting... Has anyone ever heard of anyone reasonably well-heeled ever get picked up for poaching in Sikkim. And yes, since even traditional hunting practices are no longer allowed in Sikkim, all hunting is poaching irrespective of those with big caliber guns and searchlights on their vehicles might say. For far too long, Sikkim has heard of only lay villagers getting rounded up for wildlife offences and the only confiscations have been primitive guns and even more primitive traps. Hunting by the well-connected was an open secret and conveniently ignored much to Sikkim’s disadvantage.

And now, let’s return to the wildlife and even turn the initial observation on its head. Even though few people like to admit it, with hardly any predators around, and given the fact that nearly 50% of the land in Sikkim is officially recorded as being under forest cover, the wildlife density, or at least its visibility, is not half teeming as the laws and maps would lead one to believe. The biodiversity hotspot that Sikkim is introduced as, should manifest itself in more obvious displays, on would expect. While the loss of contiguous forest belts to human encroachment could have resulted in some depletion in wildlife numbers, it is unfortunate that even areas where wildlife was abundant even till recent times, have fewer animals left. These numbers, as mentioned earlier, should have multiplied given the anti-hunting laws and absence of predators. It is also possible that the animals have been driven deeper into the forests, but even that needs to be authenticated because Sikkim is a very small state and the forests here run only so deep before they start touching a habitation on the other side. By a lay thumb rule, sightings should have been much more frequent.

And, to end with the argument this piece began with - let us have a proper wildlife census commissioned for Sikkim and along with it, also a proper, scientific study on how well the wildlife is keeping.

WRITE US:

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

Mail us at: news@summittimes.com



Female military peacekeepers left feeling overwhelmed after inadequate training

GEORGINA HOLMES
theconversation.com

Female military peacekeepers deployed to complex UN missions often feel overwhelmed and ill-prepared when providing assistance to local women and girls who’ve been the victims of violence.

The UN expects female peacekeepers around the world to improve the effectiveness of missions by gaining access to members of local communities that male peacekeepers cannot reach. But my recent research in Rwanda showed that women peacekeepers need more support.

I looked at whether the kind of training women from the Rwanda Defence Force received before their deployment in mixed-gender battalions to the UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was sufficient for the challenges they would face on their mission. I asked 24 Rwandan women from the military awaiting deployment and 22 who had returned from missions about their perceptions of the training they received, and how it related to the expectations and realities of working in UN and African Union (AU) peace operations.

INSUFFICIENTLY PREPARED

Women waiting to deploy felt confident that the training equipped them for all protection of civilian tasks they would be assigned. But women who’d returned from dangerous peace operations felt the pre-deployment training didn’t adequately equip them. They found it especially challenging to handle complex cases where women and girls had experienced sexual violence related to conflict, were extremely traumatised, or required urgent assistance. These challenges were exacerbated by the difficulty of communicating with local women through an interpreter – a skill that had to be learnt on the job in difficult circumstances.

A 27-year-old liaison officer, who was critical of the military training’s emphasis on processes and procedures, suggested that “more information on the psychological impact violence has on

survivors” was required. She said encountering gender-based violence in camps for internally displaced people (IDP) “was not easy” and the training hadn’t prepared her for sustained engagement with survivors. She added:

“When I was on the ground and reached the [IDP] camp, you find this person who was raped for two or three hours and the people around her don’t want to communicate, they don’t care about what happened. You get this person, you put her in touch with the NGOs, you take her to hospital, but you need to spend three or four hours with her.”

The women I interviewed also felt overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the assistance local communities required in Darfur and South Sudan. One 30-year-old major who deployed as a mechanic in UNAMID said there weren’t enough female peacekeepers to make a real impact.

GENDER BIASED TRAINING

While gender advisers and military observers receive specialist community engagement training, most tactical-level female peacekeepers, like their male colleagues, receive military-led training two to three months prior to deployment. Typically, the programme comprises a mixture of training sessions in the classroom and field exercises designed by both the UN and local military.

These sessions introduce theoretical concepts but don’t provide practical knowledge about how people behave directly after experiencing violence, forms of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder, and what to do during contact with survivors. Nor does the training desensitise peacekeepers in preparation for the distressing situations they’re likely to witness. One 32-year-old second lieutenant reflected on what was missing:

“We study gender issues theoretically, but in the mission area, when we start putting theory into practice, there are challenges. In training, my mate acts as a refugee and I act as I’m going to help her. But that is like theatre – you can’t grasp the reality well.”

Gender biases also play a role. In Rwanda,

senior leaders and trainers told me that female peacekeepers naturally knew how to respond to local women’s needs by dint of being the same sex. They believed women inherently possessed the required skill set, incorporating the traditional feminine traits of empathy, compassion, communication and the ability to care for vulnerable people.

There was also an assumption circulating that Rwandan women were good at providing victim assistance because of the country’s own history of conflict, where some 350,000 to 500,000 women were raped during the civil war and genocide in 1994. Women awaiting deployment on peacekeeping missions appeared to have internalised this stereotype, even though more than half of those I interviewed were between 18- and 23-years-old and born after 1994. This self-stereotyping resulted in a false confidence among the trainee peacekeepers that they were equipped to counsel and support traumatised women and girls.

TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS

Rwandan female police peacekeepers I spoke to who had worked in UN missions in Darfur, South Sudan and Haiti, hadn’t felt as ill-prepared as their military colleagues. According to one senior female police peacekeeper, community engagement was a big part of their day-to-day job in Rwanda and they had significant experience helping those affected by violence. Yet currently, the Rwanda National Police and the Rwanda Defence Force run separate training programmes.

To help mitigate some of the issues I’ve found in my research, the police and military could share good practice and develop joint pre-deployment training sessions on the implementation of the UN’s protection of civilians mandate, including providing assistance to victims. At the same time, the UN, regional organisations and those countries that contribute troops to peacekeeping missions should continue to work together to strengthen their training.

[the writer is Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow, University of Reading]

What to expect from biggest ever Africa Cup of Nations tournament

JO CLARKE

theconversation.com

The 2019 Africa Cup of Nations, popularly known as Afcon, is the biennial championship in which Africa’s top men’s teams compete for the gold-plated African Nation Cup trophy. The winner will hoist that trophy after the final on Friday 19 July at the Cairo International Stadium.

This tournament, organised by the Confederation of African Football (CAF), will be the 32nd edition of the competition and the first in which the format has been expanded from 16 to 24 teams. All 24 teams have now confirmed their places.

According to a recent report by Nielsen Sports, Africa is one of the most engaged football markets globally. It matches even regions like Europe and South America. This supports the CAF’s decision to increase the competitiveness of the tournament.

KEY THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Current title holders Cameroon were stripped of hosting rights last year due to delays with preparations and security concerns. Egypt was then selected as the host nation.

The timing of the competition is good news for fans of European teams. For the first time in the tournament’s history it’s being held during the European summer. This means African players who play for European clubs such as Liverpool’s Sadio Mané (Senegal) and Mohamed Salah (Egypt), or Manchester City’s Riyad Mahrez (Algeria) will not be withdrawn from club duty mid-season to participate in the tournament.

The 24 qualifying teams have been drawn into six groups of four

teams each:

Group A: DR Congo - Egypt - Uganda - Zimbabwe

Group B: Burundi - Guinea - Madagascar - Nigeria

Group C: Algeria - Kenya - Senegal - Tanzania

Group D: Ivory Coast - Morocco - Namibia - South Africa

Group E: Angola - Mali - Mauritania - Tunisia

Group F: Benin - Cameroon - Ghana - Guinea Bissau.

The teams in each group will play in a single round robin format. After the group stage, the top two teams and the four best third teams will advance to the round of 16. The winners will advance to the quarterfinals stage, and from then on, progress to the semifinals. The semifinal losers will contest a third-place match, while semifinal winners will advance to the final.

The full schedule of fixtures can be found on the CAF website.

Egypt is being tipped as the tournament favourite going into the competition. They have been champions of Africa more times than any other nation, and have lost only twice in their last 25 home games against African opponents. And of course they have the prolific goal-scoring machine, Mohamed Salah, who is rated as being one of the best players in the world, both on club level for Liverpool and for Egypt.

TOP 10 FACTS

1. Only three countries (Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia) took part in the first tournament in February 1957 and there was no qualifying competition. Egypt won.
2. 2019 will be the first time the tournament features 24

teams, after CAF decided to expand the tournament to enhance competitiveness.

3. Egypt will be hosts for a record fifth time. They previously staged the Cup of Nations in 1959, 1974, 1986 and 2006, winning three of those four tournaments and finishing third in the other.
4. Egypt has been the most successful nation, with seven titles, followed by Cameroon (five), Ghana (four), Nigeria (three) and the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Ivory Coast (two each).
5. Madagascar, Burundi and Mauritania will be making their debuts at the tournament in 2019. Madagascar was a surprise qualifier and was among the first to qualify in October 2018, while Mauritania secured their ticket a month later with a game still to play. Burundi was definitely the biggest surprise. It currently occupies 138th spot out of 211 in the FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking. Twelve teams are yet to qualify for Africa’s biggest football tournament, including the Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Eswatini, Gambia, Lesotho, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Somalia and South Sudan.
6. Cameroonian striker Samuel Eto’o is the leading overall Cup of Nations scorer, notching 18 goals in six tournaments between 2000 and 2010.
7. Egypt goalkeeper Essam

El-Hadary became the oldest player at 44 years and 21 days to feature in the tournament when he faced Cameroon in the 2017 final in Libreville.

8. Shiva N’zigou of Gabon is the youngest player to feature and score at the tournament. He was 16 years and 93 days old when he played at Afcon in 2000, scoring for his team in a 1-3 defeat against South Africa.
9. The tournament has been switched to being held in odd-numbered years so as not to clash with the FIFA World Cup. Afcon will also, for the first time, be held mid-year, away from the traditional January – February window. This will alleviate the club-versus-country battles that have marred previous editions.
10. Three different trophies have been awarded during the tournament’s history. This is the third trophy, with the first and second awarded to Ghana and Cameroon in 1978 and 1984 respectively. Both won the trophy three times and therefore earned the right to keep it.

The current trophy was first awarded in 2002, and Egypt won it indefinitely after completing their historic treble of titles in 2010. Unlike Ghana and Cameroon, Egypt were presented with a replica, albeit a special full size one that they were allowed to keep.

[the writer is Lecturer in Sport Business Management, Sheffield Hallam University]

SC says media report on NRC procedure disturbing

NEW DELHI, MAY 30 (PTI): In the backdrop of reports that a decorated former army officer has been declared a foreigner by a tribunal in Assam, the Supreme Court on Thursday asked the NRC state coordinator to ensure that fair procedure is adopted in dealing with the claims and objections on inclusion of citizens in the draft National Register of Citizens (NRC).

A vacation bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Aniruddha Bose, without referring to any specific matter, said “disturbing” reports have emerged in the media regarding procedure to deal with claims and objections.

According to Assam police, Mohammad Sanaullah, a former army officer who had won a President's medal, was apprehended on Wednesday and sent to a detention camp in after a foreigners' tribunal declared him a 'foreigner'.

Family members of Sanaullah, a resident of Kolohikash village in Kamrup district,



have said they will approach the Gauhati High Court against the tribunal's order.

“There are very disturbing reports in the media. The media is not always correct but sometimes media is right also,” the apex court bench told state NRC coordinator

Prateek Hajela.

The apex court observed this while hearing the Assam NRC matter.

Sanaullah is now serving as assistant sub-inspector (ASI) in border police.

A case was registered in 2008 after Sanaullah's name was listed as a 'D'

(doubtful) voter in the voters list, according to Kamrup district Additional Superintendent of Police Sanjib Saikia.

After the verdict of the tribunal, Saikia said police according to laid down procedure, picked up Sanaullah and took him to the detention

camp in Goalpara district to be lodged there.

Before proceeding to the camp, Sanaullah told waiting journalists that he is an Indian citizen and has all the necessary documents of his citizenship.

He said he served the country's interests for 30 years (1987-2017), joining the force as an official of Electronic and Mechanical Engineering department and was also awarded with President's Medal in 2014.

The Congress on Thursday hit out at the BJP government over the issue, saying it shows the “high-handedness and flawed manner” in which the NRC exercise is being implemented in the northeastern state.

The draft Assam National Register of Citizens (NRC) was published on July 30, 2018 in which the names of 2.89 crore of the 3.29 crore people were included. The names of 40,70,707 people did not figure in the list. Of these, 37,59,630 names have been rejected and the remaining 2,48,077 are on hold.

BJP trying to create divide between Bengalis and non-Bengalis: Mamata



NAIHATI (WB), MAY 30 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Thursday urged the people of the country to raise their voice against the “torture of BJP” and accused the saffron party of trying to create a divide between Bengalis and non-Bengalis in the state.

“The BJP is trying to create a Bengali, non-Bengali divide in the state. They want to destroy the communal harmony in the state. I hate a party like BJP. I would urge the people of this country to raise their voice against communal divide,” Banerjee said in her first political programme after her party's

debacle in the Lok Sabha elections.

Banerjee took part in a sit-in organised by her party outside the Naihati Municipality on Thursday to protest against the alleged violence perpetrated by BJP after the announcement of poll results.

“More than 400 Bengali families have been rendered homeless by goons of the BJP. I will not spare the goons,” she said.

Alleging that some police officials are acting on directions from BJP leaders, she said, “We will not tolerate it. We will take action against them.”

Banerjee asked par-

ty cadres to form ‘Banga Janani Bahini’ and ‘Jai Hind Bahini’ to counter the march of the BJP-RSS in the state. “These two outfits will work in all the blocks of the state and will counter the BJP and the RSS.”

The TMC supremo claimed that some BJP workers had verbally abused her when she was on her way to attend the rally.

“Is this democracy?” Banerjee asked.

The BJP won 18 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in Bengal, only four less than the TMC's 22. The remaining two seats were bagged by the Congress, while the Left Front drew a blank.

Mamata loses cool yet again over 'Jai Shri Ram' slogans

KOLKATA, MAY 30 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee lost her cool on Thursday when a group of men shouted “Jai Shri Ram” as her motorcade was passing through the troubled Bhatpara area of North 24 Parganas district.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo was on her way to Naihati to participate in a sit-in against violence on her party workers after the Lok Sabha poll results.

In a video, which has gone viral on the social media, some men are seen shouting “Jai Shri Ram” as Banerjee's motorcade was passing through the Bhatpara area, a scene of violence between the BJP and the TMC since the declaration of the poll results.

The area is the stronghold of the newly-elected BJP MP Arjun Singh, who had defected to the saffron party from the TMC weeks before the Lok Sabha election. Singh defeated TMC's Dinesh Trivedi in the polls.

An infuriated Banerjee came out of her car and asked her security officials to note down the name of the men.

“What do you think of yourself? You will come from other states, stay here and abuse us? I will not tolerate this. How dare you all abuse me? All of your names and details will be noted down,” she was heard saying.

After the chief minister got into her car, the men chanted “Jai Shri Ram” again, prompting her to disembark from the vehicle once more.

Later, addressing the protest programme at Naihati, Banerjee said some BJP workers came in front of her car and abused her verbally.

“Is this democracy?” she asked.

Saradha chit fund case: Cal HC grants protection from arrest to Rajeev Kumar

KOLKATA, MAY 30 (PTI): The Calcutta High Court Thursday granted protection from arrest and any coercive action till July 10 to West Bengal CID Additional Director General Rajeev Kumar in the Saradha chit fund scam case.

The vacation bench of the court granted him a month's protection from June 10, when the court will reopen after summer break, and directed Kumar to deposit his passport within 24 hours of the passing of the order.

The former Kolkata police commissioner has also been asked to cooperate with the CBI investigation into the multi-crore chit fund case.

The court ordered the probe agency to send a designated officer to Kumar's residence every day at 4 pm to record his attendance.

Justice Pratik Prakash Banerjee ruled that the petition will appear before a regular bench on June 12 after the court reopens following a summer vacation.

Kumar moved the Calcutta High Court Thursday, seeking quashing of the CBI notice served on him over alleged suppression of facts in the Saradha chit fund scam case.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had served a notice on Kumar asking him to appear before it for assisting the investigation into the case.

The former Kolkata top cop's counsel Sudipto Moitra submitted that the CBI was seeking to put him behind bars in connection with the chit fund case, without taking recourse to proper legal procedure.

Submitting that Kumar was interrogated by the CBI for 39 hours and 45 minutes in Shillong, Moitra said the probe agency was now seeking



to take him in custody out of “vendetta”.

He maintained that Kumar has neither been named as an accused nor as a witness in the seven charge sheets the probe agency has filed in the case so far.

CBI lawyer Y J Dastur submitted before the court that Kumar has prevaricating answers to the questions posed by the agency in connection with the seizure of documents by a Special Investigation Team (SIT), set up by the state government.

Dastur also said that Kumar, who was then the commissioner of Bidhannagar Police, was entrusted with day-to-day functioning of the SIT probing the Saradha scam.

The CBI counsel insisted that the agency cannot be accused of malafide since he was given ample time to appear before it for assisting the probe.

Kumar, a former commissioner of the Kolkata Police, was appointed ADG, CID, by the Mamata Banerjee-led government before the Lok Sabha election.

He was, however, removed by the Election Commission during the

poll process and was attached to the Home Ministry in New Delhi.

The state government reinstated him following the withdrawal of the model code of conduct.

On May 17, the Supreme Court had withdrawn protection from arrest to Kumar, which it had granted earlier.

The apex court last week dismissed a plea of Kumar seeking extension of protection from arrest.

A vacation bench of the apex court, headed by Justice Arun Mishra, said Kumar can approach the Calcutta High Court or a trial court here for seeking relief in the case.

In January, the Centre and the state government had faced an unprecedented standoff after a CBI team, which reached the residence of Kumar for questioning, had to retreat following intervention by the Kolkata Police, of which he was the commissioner then.

Chief Minister Banerjee came out in Kumar's defence and launched a sit-in to protest in the city against the Centre's move.

On February 5, the Supreme Court had prevented the agency from any coercive action

against Kumar, while directing the former police commissioner to appear and co-operate in CBI questioning at a “neutral place”. He was questioned by the CBI for nearly five days in Shillong from February 9.

Kumar, who was appointed Commissioner of Police at Bidhan Nagar Police Commissionerate in 2012, had served as the head of the state-appointed SIT, which probed the ponzi scams before the CBI took over.

Last month, the CBI had told the Supreme Court that Kumar's custodial interrogation was necessary as he was not cooperating in the probe and was “evasive” and “arrogant” in answering the queries put to him.

As part of the Rs 2,500-crore scam, the Saradha group of companies duped lakhs of customers, promising higher rates of returns on their investment, the agency said.

Similar modus operandi was adopted by other ponzi companies like Rose Valley operating in West Bengal, Odisha and northeastern states where gullible investors were duped, it added.

Critical social media post against WB CM: SC grants 7-day protection to activist

NEW DELHI, MAY 30 (PTI): The Supreme Court Thursday granted seven-day protection from arrest to social activist Anirban Das against whom a case has been lodged for publishing a social media post critical of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

A vacation bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Anirud-

dha Bose, while granting seven-days protection from arrest, said that Das can move the concerned court for relief.

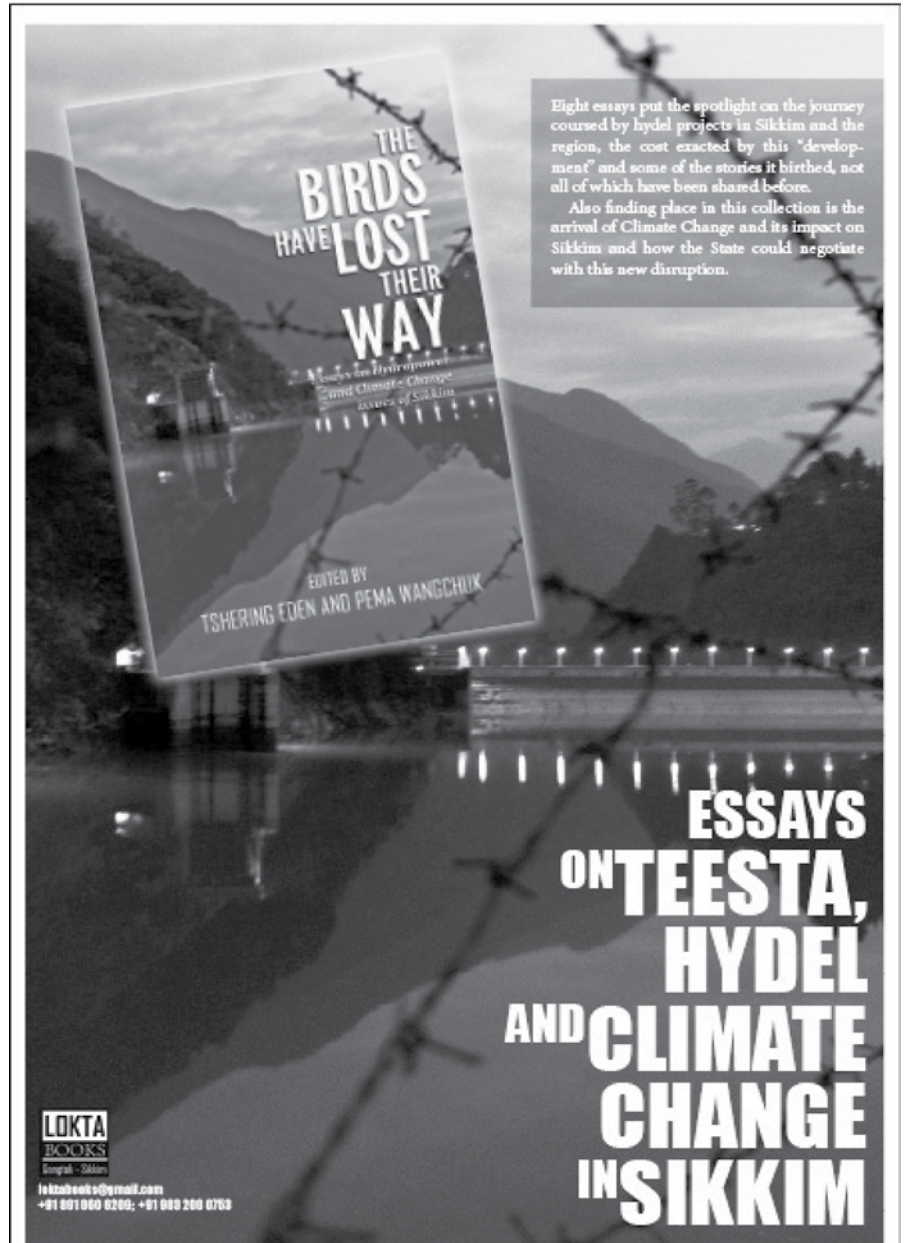
Advocate Dipak Jena, appearing for Das, said there was a lawyers strike in West Bengal and he may be arrested by the police for writing the post on social media.

The bench told him that there was no

strike at present in the courts in West Bengal and he can approach the appropriate courts for the relief.

Jena said that police has lodged an FIR against him at Alipurduar police station and Das had already tendered an unconditional apology to a local Trinamool Congress leader, who made the complaint against him.

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From village cricket to World Cup for Pakistan’s Shadab

ISLAMABAD, MAY 30 (AFP): A relentless training routine and “unparalleled” commitment have taken Pakistan leg-spinner Shadab Khan from club cricket in his remote village to the World Cup in just a few short years.

The 20-year-old, already third in the world Twenty20 bowling rankings, has caught the eye of none other than Pakistan’s Prime Minister Imran Khan -- who led Pakistan to their only World Cup win in 1992.

But when the prime minister singled out Shadab during a meeting with the team before they flew to England, it came as no surprise to the coaches and players who know him.

They credit his heady rise to a tireless work ethic including pre-dawn starts to fit in maximum practice.

“Shadab’s commitment to cricket is unparalleled,” said his former club coach Sajjad Ahmed.

“He sleeps around 9:00 pm and reaches the ground before sunrise. That’s been his routine for years so that he can practise as much as possible.” Shadab grew up playing cricket on the rough pitches of Mianwali district -- a farming community near the banks of the Indus River in Punjab province -- which is also home to Prime Minister Khan and fellow Pakistan Test player Misbah-ul-Haq.

In between swimming in the myriad canals bisecting the fertile fields in his hometown,



Shadab spent hours on the cricket pitch daily, where he developed his signature leg-breaks and love for batting.

“Shadab was so interested in batting that at one time he quit bowling,” said Ahmed.

“But I advised him to consider becoming an all-rounder, then he would have a better chance to play top-level cricket and he complied.”

The decision proved prescient. After playing for Pakistan’s Under-16s, Shadab was selected for the Under-19 World Cup in Bangladesh in 2016, where he finished as Pakistan’s joint-highest wicket-taker with 11.

A few months later he made his first-class debut for Pakistan A during

their tour of England, taking five wickets and scoring a valuable 48 in their win over Sri Lanka A in an unofficial Test.

Later that year, he made headlines again with a match-changing 132 and figures of 4-84 and 5-82 for Pakistan A against Zimbabwe A.

After playing for Islamabad United in the 2017 Pakistan Super League, the leg-spinner enjoyed a dream international debut when he was man-of-the-match in Pakistan’s T20 win over reigning world champions the West Indies in Bridgetown.

- ‘NOT FORGOTTEN HIS ROOTS’ -

But despite his success, friends and close associates said Shadab

has maintained his long hours on the practice pitch to keep his skills sharp. “I remember once we went on a tour to Lahore for a tournament and after the match all the boys would go sight-seeing, but Shadab used to sleep early and would only concentrate on cricket,” said long-time friend Raja Falak Sher, Shadab’s first captain at club level.

“To this day his routine is the same and that has helped him rise to where he is today.”

Perhaps one of Shadab’s finest moments so far came at the Champions Trophy in 2017 in a showdown against arch-rivals India, where he trapped Yuvraj Singh in front of the wicket.

English umpire Richard Kettleborough was unmoved but Shadab convinced skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed to review -- and was proved correct, making Shadab a hero of Pakistan’s win. Gradually Shadab has also begun to make an impression in the longer format of the game, scoring three half-centuries in as many Tests in England and Ireland last year.

“Shadab has talent, passion and commitment and those traits will take him places,” his former coach told AFP.

“But he has not forgotten his roots. Siddique Akbar club was his first team. He visits us when he is in the city and now he runs the club out of his own pocket.

Pradhan, Urwashi top seeds in NSCI squash tournament

MUMBAI, MAY 30 (PTI): Maharashtra’s Abhishek Pradhan and Urwashi Joshi have been given the top billing in the mens and womens events, respectively, in the 4th NSCI All India Open (Junior and Senior) Squash Tournament commencing here on June 1.

India No. 6 Pradhan is followed by Abhishek Agarwal, also of Maharashtra, as the second seed. Naveen Jangra of Services and Rahul Baitha, from the host state, are the joint third and fourth seeds.

In the women’s draw, Indias second ranked Urwashi tops the seeding list ahead of sixth ranked Sachika Balvani, also from Maharashtra.

Madhya Pradeshs Radhika Rathore and Sanika Choudhari of Maharashtra are jointly seeded third and fourth.

The five-day tournament, carrying a total prize fund of Rs 5.5 lakh, is being organised by NSCI with LIC of India as

the co-partner and will be conducted under the auspices of SRFI, said a media release Thursday.

Competitions will also be conducted for boys and girls in the U-11, U-13, U-15, U-17 and U-19 age categories.

Matches will be played on four indoor courts of the National Sports Club of India and one outdoor court.

Seedings: Girls Under-19: 1.

Navmi Sharma (MH), 2. Tanaya M Parakh (WB), 3/4 Bhavna Goyal (MH), Sparshi Mattas (GA).

Boys Under-19: 1. Utkarsh Bahe-ti (RJ), 2. Rahul Baitha (MH), 3/4 Veer Chotrani (MH), Yash Fadte (GA).

Women: 1. Urwashi Joshi (MH), 2. Sachika Balvani (MH), 3/4 Radhika Rathore (MP), Sanika Choudhari (MH).

Men: 1. Abhishek Pradhan (MH), 2. Abhishek Agarwal (MH), 3/4 Naveen Jangra (SE), Rahul Baitha (MH).

Strong 6.6 magnitude earthquake rocks El Salvador: USGS



SAN SALVADOR, MAY 30 (AFP): A 6.6 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of El Salvador on Thursday near the capital San Salvador, the US Geological Survey said.

There were no initial reports of casualties or major damage, Salvadoran authorities said.

The quake struck around 25 miles (40 kilometers) south of San Salvador at a depth of 40 miles, according to USGS

data. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center did not issue an alert for the quake but the Salvadoran environment ministry issued one of its own, predicting sea level variations of up to 12 inches.

Coastal residents should avoid entering the water for four hours after the quake, the ministry said on Twitter.

President-elect Nayib Bukele said on Twitter that the earthquake was

felt “throughout 100 per cent of the country.” No casualties or damage have been reported so far but police and firemen are fanning out across the country to evaluate the situation, said Civil Protection chief Jorge Melendez. The Education Ministry canceled classes in coastal areas.

The quake was so strong it was likely felt throughout Central America, officials said.

ZPM snaps ties with Cong in Mizoram

AIZAWL, MAY 30 (PTI): The Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM), which had forged an alliance with the Congress for the election to the lone Lok Sabha seat in Mizoram and the by-poll to the Aizawl West-I Assembly seat, Thursday said it has snapped ties with the party.

ZPM chairman Lalliansawta said the pre-electoral tie-up with the Congress was issue-based to form an anti-NDA alliance against the proposed legislation of the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB).

“Our common candidate Lalnghinglova Hmar did not make it to Parliament,” Lalliansawta told newsmen, adding that there was no written condition for forging the alliance except that the common candidate would sit among the non-NDA parties.

Replying to queries, ZPM leader Lalthansanga claimed that the main reason for the defeat of the common candidate was that the people had rejected the Congress.

“The Congress could not muster votes in the Chakma-dominated area

while Chakmas were the main vote bank of the party,” Lalthansanga said.

Ruling Mizo National Front (MNF) party nominee C Lalrosanga defeated the ZPM-Congress combine candidate Hmar by a margin of over 8,000 votes.

The MNF has 27 legislators in the 40-member state assembly, while the ZPM and the Congress have seven and five members respectively. The BJP opened its account in the north-eastern state by bagging a single seat in the state Assembly election held on November 28 last year.

The Jonas Brothers to release memoir, ‘Blood’

LOS ANGELES, MAY 30 (PTI): The Jonas Brothers are set to release a tell-all memoir, “Blood”, which will hit the shelves on November 12.

The book is the first stint of the band, comprising Kevin, Joe and Nick, writing, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

It was announced Tuesday that the Grammy-nominated trio have signed a book deal with Macmillan imprint Feiwel and Friends.

They will write the memoir with author Neil Strauss of “The Dirt” fame.

The book will shine a light on their origins as a music group, their rise to stardom, the secrets be-

hind their breakup and their recent return to the music scene.

“We’re three brothers from New Jersey, and we were not supposed to be successful. From record labels dropping us to our dad losing his job over us, this shouldn’t have happened or lasted as long as it did.

“Yet here we are, more excited than ever, and we’re so grateful and ready to tell the full story of the journey we’ve had as individuals, as artists, and as family,” said Joe Jonas.

World English rights for the upcoming memoir were acquired by Jon Yaged, president and publisher of MCPG, to be

published in the United States by Jean Feiwel, publisher of Feiwel & Friends.

The Jonas Brothers made their highly anticipated comeback single, “Sucker” in February. They have gone on to celebrate their return with a series of appearances, including Billboard Music Awards 2019.

Apart from a memoir, the band will also release an Amazon documentary film, “Chasing Happiness”, which premieres on June 4. Their new album of the same name is set to be released on June 7.

Exactly a month later, the brothers’ North American tour will kick off in Miami.

Coach Spalletti leaves Inter Milan

MILAN, MAY 30 (AFP): Coach Luciano Spalletti has left Inter Milan, the Italian Serie A club announced on Thursday.

“Luciano Spalletti is no longer head coach of the first team,” Inter said in a statement.

“The club wishes to thank Spalletti for his work and the results achieved together.”

Veteran actor Tanuja undergoes operation for diverticulitis

MUMBAI, MAY 30 (PTI): Veteran Bollywood actor Tanuja has undergone operation for diverticulitis and is doing fine, says a source from the hospital. Tanuja, 75, was admitted to city-based Lilavati Hospital on Wednesday.

An insider told PTI that she would remain hospitalised for “at least a week”.

Diverticulitis, a condition which results in the inflammation or infection of small pouches

Spalletti sealed Inter’s Champions League berth for a second consecutive year on the final day of the Serie A season Sunday.

Former Italy and Chelsea coach Antonio Conte is reported to have already agreed a three-year deal to replace the 60-year-old Spalletti, who moved to the San Siro mid-2017.

called diverticula that develop along the walls of the intestines.

Actor Kajol, Tanuja’s daughter, was also spotted visiting her at the hospital.

The news of the actor’s hospitalisation came two days after Kajol’s father-in-law, action director Veeru Devgan’s death.

Tanuja has appeared in prominent films like “Jewel Thief”, “Haathi Mere Saathi”, “Do Chor” among others.

Smith, Warner need to have thick skin to shine at WC: Lee



LONDON, MAY 30 (PTI): Steve Smith and David Warner have nothing to prove but the duo will need to have “thick skin” to counter sledging and hostile crowd in the World Cup, said former Australia pacer Brett Lee.

Smith and Warner, who are returning after serving suspensions for their involvement in the infamous ball-tampering episode in South Africa in 2018, have already witnessed hostile crowd during Australia’s two World Cup warm-up games.

“I don’t think they have got a point to prove, they will just be happy to be back playing for Australia,” Lee said.

“We saw what happened with David Warner during the IPL, the

leading run scorer and the Orange Cap holder, Steven Smith got a big hundred in his first game. They have been welcomed back to the Australian cricket team with open arms and I reckon they have a shot at winning.

“(But) you have got the Barmy Army, you have got guys like Kevin Pietersen chirping at me already. They are going to cop some sledging but you need thick skin,” he added. Lee said Australia are peaking just at the right time and Aaron Finch’s men have it in them to win the title for the sixth time.

“We need a couple of good games back-to-back, it will be phenomenal if Australia can win a sixth title, I know what

it means to win a World Cup and it is the best feeling in the world,” Lee said at the official tournament opening ceremony here on Wednesday.

“I think they can (win it), I am quietly confident with the Aussies, they have got a great team, a great squad, they tick every box, they bowl pretty well at the death and they field pretty well. I would never back against the Aussies, put it that way.

“It’s also about peaking at the right time when you go into a World Cup. I think Australia are doing that, although we haven’t played a lot of great cricket back-to-back in the last 12 months.”

Australia will open their campaign against Afghanistan at Bristol on June 1.

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Gas project critic Marape elected Papua New Guinea PM

PORT MORESBY, MAY 30 (AFP): Papua New Guinea lawmakers overwhelmingly elected James Marape as prime minister on Thursday -- a former finance minister who resigned in protest against a massive ExxonMobil and Total gas project.

Marape won the landslide backing of members of parliament after weeks of political manoeuvring that saw eight-year prime minister Peter O'Neill resign.

"Honourable members, I now declare that the member for Tari Pori James Marape has been elected as prime minister-elect of the independent state of Papua New Guinea," said parliament speaker Job Pomat, announcing Marape's 101-8 victory.

In a Facebook post early on Thursday Marape vowed to make Papua New Guinea "the 'richest black Christian nation' on earth" and to put the "national interest ahead of personal and corporate interest." His victory is likely to spell continuity in many fields, but it could bring changes to energy policy and relations with



neighbouring Australia. One of Asia's most impoverished nations, Papua New Guinea is rich in natural resources, including large gas fields. The ExxonMobil and Total Papua LNG project, signed in April, would almost double Papua New Guinea's gas exports.

Marape -- who comes from energy-rich Hela province -- has indicated he would like to redistribute the spoils of the contract.

Resigning in April, Marape's cited difference

with O'Neill on "work and policy related matters" as well as the lack of local "participation in our gas, oil sector" and mining industry.

He has also been critical of "corrupt contracts" with Australia to settle asylum seekers on tropical island camps and demanded an investigation.

"Since we put our hands up to assist Australia in 2013 ... we sacrificed Manus' reputation as one of the world's safest tropical islands" he was quoted as saying in

February. Lowy Institute analyst Jonathan Pryke said Marape's appointment signals continuity, but key policies could be revisited. "Of all of the likely outcomes from today, this one actually signals the most continuity," he told AFP.

"We will likely see, however, recent agreements signed with Total energy over a new LNG project reviewed and renegotiated.

"I don't think Marape is hostile towards the natural resource sector,

but he is eager to see the benefits going to the highlands, to landowners and to the PNG people to be maximised." Much may hinge on who Marape appoints to his cabinet and how much delay the policy rethink takes.

Energy analysts have warned that any delay to the LNG project could make it less attractive, with similar projects in Africa and Latin America competing to meet the same projected market shortfall in the mid-2020s.

Indian man dies after setting himself ablaze near White House

WASHINGTON, MAY 30 (PTI): A 33-year-old Indian man has died after reportedly setting himself ablaze near the White House, police said on Thursday.

Arnav Gupta from Bethesda in Maryland died of his burn injuries after he set himself ablaze on Wednesday at the Ellipse, a tourist-filled 52-acre public park near the White House.

Once the flames were extinguished, Gupta was rushed to a local hospital for treatment but died on Thursday morning, the United States Park Police said in a statement.

"At approximately 12:20 pm a man lit himself on fire on the Ellipse near 15th and Constitution Ave., Secret Service personnel are on scene assisting @NatlParkService and @usparkpolicepio in rendering first aid," according to a tweet by the US Secret Service.

Police said Gupta was reported missing by his family since Wednesday morning. The authorities then put out a notice asking for the public's help in finding him.

He was last seen by his family around 9:20 am Wednesday when he left his home on Cindy Lane, about 16 kms northwest of the White House, the Washington



Post reported. Montgomery County Police said the family was concerned for Gupta's physical and emotional welfare.

Authorities are trying to identify the accelerant that was used and determine whether a car belonging to Gupta was parked in the area.

The Washington D.C. police have taken over the investigation.

A 17-year-old girl from Alexandria, who was sightseeing with a cousin visiting from Bolivia, saw part of the incident and captured it on video. She sent it to her father, who post-

ed it on Twitter, the paper reported.

The video shows smoke billowing from the lawn near a guard shack and some flames visible above parked cars.

The girl's father, Krishan Berzins, said that his daughter saw Secret Service agents running toward him trying to extinguish the fire.

In April, authorities said a man riding a motorised wheelchair set his jacket on fire outside the White House.

He was not critically injured and was involuntarily committed for psychiatric help.

Six dead in suicide blast at Kabul military academy

KABUL, MAY 30 (AFP): At least six people were killed and six more wounded in a suicide blast outside a military academy in the Afghan capital on Thursday, an official said. The attack outside the Marshal Fahim National Defense University in western Kabul took place at the road entrance to the war college. Kabul police spokesman Firdaws Faramarz said the suicide bomber had been on foot. He blew himself up when a soldier challenged him.

"Based on initial information, six people killed, six wounded, police have reached the scene," Faramarz said.

The attacker "detonated himself before reaching his target", Faramarz added, without providing further details.

The attack happened around noon (0730 GMT), a time when students typically leave school early during the month of Ramadan. No group immediately claimed responsibility. Police and security forces in and around Kabul have come under frequent attack in recent weeks, even as the US and the Taliban have held talks about a possible peace agreement.

Opened in 2005 and named after former vice president Mohammed Fahim, the Marshal Fahim academy is modelled after US and British war colleges and trains cadets destined to become officers in Afghanistan's army. A large annexe to the university is home to dozens of NATO troops who mentor the Afghan cadets. The explosion was not believed to have affected operations at that centre, which lies behind multiple layers of tight security.

Israel to hold fresh election as Prime Minister Netanyahu fails to form coalition govt



BY HARINDER MISHRA

JERUSALEM, MAY 30 (PTI): Israeli lawmakers Thursday voted to dissolve Parliament and hold fresh elections after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed to form a coalition before a midnight deadline, becoming the first prime minister-designate in the country's history who was unable to form a government.

In little more than six weeks since they were elected, Israeli lawmakers voted 74-45 in favour of dissolving the 21st Knesset (Israeli Parliament) and hold an unprecedented repeat general elections on September 17.

Netanyahu's remarkable victory in the April 9 polls securing him a record fifth term proved temporary in the face of a logjam between potential coalition partners over a military conscription bill governing exemptions for ultra-Orthodox Jewish seminary students.

Ahead of the vote - taken just after the Wednesday midnight deadline, Netanyahu told the Likud faction that he had not succeeded in reaching a compromise with nationalist Yisrael Beytenu leader Avigdor Liberman on the controversial haredi (ultra-Orthodox) conscription bill, and that he had also tried unsuccessfully to woo MKs from the opposition to join his government. Liberman, a former defence minister, had made it a condition of allying with ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties that they adopt a law aimed at having ultra-Orthodox Jews serve in the military like their secular counterparts.

The bill, which the Defense Ministry drafted under Liberman's

leadership, sets rising annual targets for haredi conscription in the Israeli Defence Forces.

Ultra-Orthodox Jews studying in religious seminaries are currently exempt from mandatory military service, a practice many Israelis view as unfair.

Lieberman told reporters just before the vote that Israel was going to the polls because of the "complete surrender of the Likud (ruling party) to the haredim (ultra-orthodox)".

Without Yisrael Beitenu, Netanyahu could muster support of only 60 lawmakers in the 120 member house, falling short of a majority by just one.

Netanyahu launched a diatribe against Liberman whom he blamed for "dragging the country to unnecessary elections".

"Liberman is now part of the left. He brings down right-wing governments. Don't believe him again. I will tell you about it tomorrow. Maybe I will tell you some things you don't know," the prime minister told reporters immediately after the Knesset voted to dissolve itself.

"We'll run a sharp, clear election campaign which will bring us victory. We'll win, we'll win and the public will win," he said. "The public in Israel made a clear decision. It decided that I will be Prime Minister, that the Likud will lead the government, a right-wing government," Netanyahu said.

According to several political analysts, the impasse leading to the political crisis was borne out of personal ego clash between the two leaders and does not really

have a sound ideological ground.

Netanyahu and Liberman's association in politics goes back some 31 years when the latter assisted the former during his tenure as the deputy foreign minister in an unofficial capacity.

The move by Netanyahu's ruling Likud party to dissolve the Knesset ensured that President Reuven Rivlin would not be able to call some other lawmaker to try to form a new government.

Rivlin had asked Netanyahu to form the next government after 65 lawmakers, including five of Liberman's Yisrael Beitenu party, submitted letters of support for him.

Netanyahu asked for an additional two weeks time to form the government after failing to cobble up one together during the mandated 28 days period. The extended time period was to expire at midnight on Wednesday.

Likud party had won 35 seats in the April 9 elections and the right-wing parties had together won 65 seats in the 120 member Knesset, making everyone believe that a right wing government was inevitable and easy to form. Netanyahu declared victory and started coalition negotiations immediately after the results came out, but contrary to expectations, the jubilation in the right-wing bloc proved momentary with no resolution on the military conscription bill.

He will now remain in power until September's vote.

Netanyahu, who has been premier for a total of more than 13 years, faces charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust in connection with three cases.

Pak extends closure of airspace along India till border till June 15

ISLAMABAD, MAY 30 (PTI): Pakistan has further extended the closure of its airspace along its eastern border with India until June 15, according to the country's civil aviation authority. Pakistan fully closed its airspace in February after an Indian Air Force strike on a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror camp in Balakot. The country opened its airspace for all flights except for New Delhi, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur on March 27.

On May 15, Pakistan extended its airspace ban for flights to India till May 30.

According to a notice issued to airmen (NOTAM) by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the

country's airspace along the eastern border with India will remain closed until 5 am (local time) on June 15. As per a separate NOTAM issued by the CAA, the Panjgor air-space would remain open for overflying transit flights from the western side as Air India had already been using that airspace.

Pakistan had given a special permission to India for External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to fly directly through Pakistani airspace to attend the SCO meet in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on May 21. However, the airspace for other commercial airliners remained closed.

As a result of the ban, foreign carriers using Indian airspace have

been forced to take costly detours because they cannot fly over Pakistan. The closure mainly affects flights from Europe to Southeast Asia. The flights from US and Europe flying in and out of New Delhi were worst hit. Thousands of travellers suffer flight cancellations, delays and soaring ticket prices due to Pakistan's decision to close its airspace for flights to and from India.

Aviation Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan said that due to closure of eastern side airspace, Pakistan was suffering from less loss compared to India as Indian commercial flights had to take longer routes for Europe, the Dawn reported.



Big commercial directors need to make female-centric films: Katrina Kaif

BY KOMAL PANCHAMATIA

MUMBAI, MAY 30 (PTI): It is about finding the balance between commerce and content for actor Katrina Kaif, who believes big filmmakers need to make films that have strong women characters at the centre. Katrina says she is at a point in her career where she is drawn to challenging roles rather than the styling or glamour aspect of cinema. "To grow as an actor and further myself in my career, I have to learn and experiment more and try out different roles. I have to pick up roles that challenge me. The idea is to work with directors who will bring out these aspects of me that I would like to see on the screen," Katrina told PTI in an interview.

"It is about finding a right balance. The year I did 'Rajneeti', I also had a glamorous film ('Tees Maar Khan')," she added. The 35-year-old actor, who has been part of the film industry for 16 years, said more women should be a part of commercial cinema space. "We need big commercial filmmakers to make a female lead or female-centric films. I want that to happen. I have said this to Zoya Akhtar and other friends. I would like to see that happen," she said.

The actor is now gearing up for the release of "Bharat", a role that was earlier slated to be done by Priyanka Chopra but came her way after the "Quantico" star pulled out of the project ahead of her wedding. Katrina believes she was

destined to do "Bharat", a period drama that reunites her with frequent collaborators Salman Khan and director Ali Abbas Zafar. "It came to me out of the blue. I was on the treadmill and the call came and I told Ali, 'are you joking?' Because they were leaving in a few days to shoot the film.

"Ali said, 'there is a little bit of change

es. In this industry, you end up working together for years. I read every script. It is just coincidence that these films have appealed to me.

"For me, the joy comes from my work, from the characters that I am playing than this (co-stars). (But) It is good to be working in a friendly environment and there is a sense of trust," Katrina said Ali initial-



for some reason'. He sent me the script and I loved it. It was something that I wanted to take as a challenge. I felt there was a lot for me to do in the film. It was a fantastic experience."

Asked about reuniting with Salman and then Akshay Kumar in "Sooryavanshi", Katrina said it is merely a coincidence. "From what I am offered, I choose the best one. (It is) not on the basis of who is the actor in the film or whether it has Akshay or Salman. These are just the coincidenc-

ly had a concern about the UP dialect that her character Kumud Raina speaks. So she worked with a dialect coach to capture the nuance. The actor believes it is important to feel satisfied about the choices one makes.

"I take my work seriously. I want to enjoy every film and role that I take up. I have never wavered from my choices. I am clear about my reasons to do a film. With time, you change as a person and what you get drawn to also changes. I am at peace with my choices.

'The Godfather' actor Carmine Caridi dies at 85



LOS ANGELES, MAY 30 (PTI): Carmine Caridi, who is best remembered for playing Carmine Rosato in "The Godfather: Part II," has passed away. He was 85.

His representatives told Variety the actor died on Tuesday after being in a coma at Cedars-Sinai hospital here.

"From Broadway, to film and television, Carmine spent over six decades entertaining audiences, and nothing made him happier. His talent, wit, warmth, and charm will be missed. Carmine passed peacefully, surrounded by friends and family, yesterday afternoon at Cedars Sinai Hospital," they said in a statement. Caridi's character in "The Godfather: Part II" played a key role in the territorial feud with Frank Pentangeli (Michael V Gazzo).

The veteran actor also appeared in the final part of "The Godfather" trilogy in a different role - Albert Volpe, an investor in Michael Corleone's casinos who is killed in an attack at a hotel in Atlantic City.

Studio executive Robert Evans said in his 1994 memoir "The Kid Stays in the Picture" that Caridi was director Francis Ford Coppola's first choice for the role of Sonny Corleone in "The Godfather". However, Evans he said in the book that he overruled Coppola because he thought Caridi was too tall for the role, which instead went to James Caan.

Besides "The Godfather" series, he also starred in TV shows including Phyllis, Starsky and Hutch, Taxi, NYPD Blue as Detective Vince Gotelli and Fame as Angelo Martelli.

Interestingly, in 2004, Caridi became the first person to be expelled from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS). He was booted out for passing on screeners of movies vying for Oscar attention. He along with Russell Sprague were sued by Sony and Time Warner on civil charges of copyright infringement. Caridi was cleared of wrongdoing.



SO FLY! The Godzilla: King of Monsters actress, Millie Bobby Brown is out in London in a trendy plaid tweed outfit with matching doc martens.

Cine stars land in capital for Modi's swearing-in

NEW DELHI, MAY 30 (PTI): The A-listers of Indian film industry such as Karan Johar, Rajinikanth, Boney Kapoor and Kangana Ranaut are expected to attend Prime Minister Narendra Modi's swearing-in ceremony

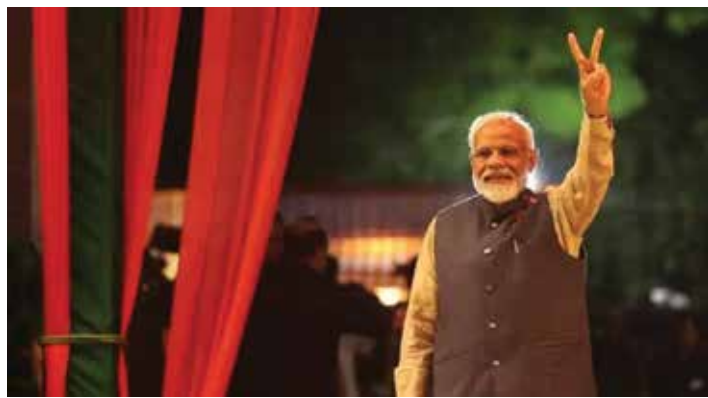
Before she flew in from Mumbai, Ranaut told reporters she wished Modi all the best for his future endeavours.

"The PM has set some goals and we all heard that in his speech. All our best wishes with him, that he is able to do what is best for the country and be able to fulfil all his goals. He is an extremely loved Prime Minister. He is here because of his hard work, we all can only appreciate him," she said.

Last year, the prime minister twice met a Bollywood delegation to discuss ways the entertainment industry can contribute towards nation building.

Producer Mahavir Jain, one of the organisers behind the two meetings, told PTI that the likes of Rajkumar Hirani, Rajinikanth, Aanand L Rai, Karan Johar, Sushant Singh Rajput, Divya Khosla Kumar, Kajal Aggarwal, Mangesh Hadawale and Abhishek Kapoor are attending the ceremony.

"It is an honour to be part of the swearing in ceremony. We are with the vision of our PM in nation building and it would be a privilege to contribute in our own way," he added.



on Thursday.

Sidharth Roy Kapur, President of the Film and Television Producers Guild of India, and actor Shahid Kapoor confirmed to PTI that they will be present for the event.

Filmmaker Boney Kapoor said he feels "happy and fortunate" to be a part of the ceremony.

"The kind of victory they have had, It is almost like a celebration. It is celebration of democracy. Something good has happened and it will continue to happen," Kapoor told PTI.

ARIES: You may feel untethered by a highly opinionated person today, Aries, but everyone's entitled to their own point of view. And just like them, you've got a few staunch beliefs of your own! With Mercury and Jupiter clashing in your expressive and philosophical zones, there may be some lively debates today.

TAURUS: Pump the brakes, Taurus—if only to make sure they're in proper working order. Today's starmap may spur you to put the pedal to the metal and not let up! With Mercury in your sensual second house, you're a sucker for anything that feels romantic or luxurious. But the buzzy planet is locked in an opposition with spontaneous Jupiter in your intense eighth house, so you might not have the best self-control. (Limits? What are those?) In romance and business, take the long view.

GEMINI: Interpersonal dynamics might be a little dodgy today, thanks to an opposition of Mercury in your sign and magnifier Jupiter in your relationship zone. Some people may not know where to draw

the line in terms of demands and expectations, and the minute you give them an inch, they want 26.2 miles. Before you point the finger, check in with yourself and your willingness to go along.

CANCER: Ask, believe, receive. Today, the soulful moon unites with intuitive Neptune in Pisces and your broad-minded ninth house. This is the day to imagine what you want, because you can magnetize your dreams to you through creative visualization. The ninth house is all about expansion, so don't just aim for the "safe," low-hanging fruit. Go bigger, Cancer! Feeling out of touch with your power to manifest? Try writing up a gratitude list. When you recall all the things you're thankful for, you'll begin to attract more abundance.

LEO: You SAY that you want happiness, love and freedom, but do you actually believe that your desires are possible, Leo? Today's moon-Neptune conjunction in your mystical eighth house encourages you to examine your own limiting beliefs. Since you

may need tangible proof to REALLY change your mind, hunt for people who are living the life you want for yourself.

VIRGO: Relationships can be hard work, we know, we know. But they can also be a haven from stress and struggle so stop telling yourself that you don't need people. Today, the moon and compassionate Neptune align in Pisces and your partnership house. The tranquilizing effect can be beneficial to your bonds with the ones who matter most. Soften your stance with your partner, and be gentler in your interactions with close friends.

LIBRA: Pampering and self-care are hi-pri items on your agenda and today's stars give you a free pass to luxuriate as only a Libra can. With the moon and sensual Neptune aligned in Pisces and your sixth house of wellbeing, look for healthy ways to indulge. Dip into the steam room after your workout or spend the evening getting soaked and scrubbed at a traditional Korean spa.

SCORPIO: Still musing over the weekend's romantic escapades? Don't rush to

"back to business" mode. Today, the moon and quixotic Neptune embrace in your fifth house of passion, adding a sensual spin to your agenda. An attraction could spark, or you could be feeling especially amorous. Nobody to sidle up to (yet)? Get glamorous for yourself, Scorpio.

SAGITTARIUS: Home is where your heart is today, as the moon conjoins with sensual Neptune in your domestic fourth house. If you must trek into the office, bring the cozy vibes with you. Keep an open-door policy so coworkers can plop down and share tales of their weekends. (That expense report can wait).

CAPRICORN: Straight to the point? Not today, Capricorn. The reflective moon and compassionate Neptune meet in Pisces, your communication house. Doling out tough love and stern reprimands will get you nowhere. Validating the other person's emotions and experience? That will help you feel connected. Sometimes, a person just needs to be heard before you rush them into problem-solving mode. Instead of being emphatic, be empathetic. Catch yourself if you're being too

hardcore, and dial back the intensity.

AQUARIUS: Today, as expressive Jupiter and Mercury oppose in your sectors of group activity, playfulness and theatrics, stack the deck with more grounded people than bad actors. You're not obligated to invite someone to join your group—or to go along with their crew. If you're going to suffer silently as they dominate every conversation and pontificate, it's better to leave them OFF the guest list. While you're at it, check yourself to make sure you're not the one hogging the mic. Flex your connectivity muscles instead of waging a battle of wits.

PISCES: You hate to follow the rules just for the sake of protocol, but sometimes, Pisces, there's a method to the "madness." For one thing, there could be factors that you're not aware of, and rushing ahead could backfire. And today, with swaggering Jupiter in your public sector opposing big-mouthed Mercury, talking smack could cost you dearly. To protect your reputation and your colleagues, stay humble and get the facts before you fling any accusations or even spill the wrong pot of tea behind closed doors.

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