

# SummitTIMES

Vol 04 | Issue 113 | Gangtok | Saturday | 27 April 2019

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5



## GANGTOK FOR AVENGERS

People waiting eagerly to enter Denzong cinema hall for the evening show of the most-awaited movie in recent times, 'Avengers: Endgame'.

### Modi lists Rs 2.5 crore worth assets, MA degree from Gujarat University in election affidavit

**VARANASI, APR 26 (PTI):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assets worth Rs 2.5 crore including a residential plot in Gujarat's Gandhinagar, fixed deposits of Rs 1.27 crore and Rs 38,750 cash in hand, according to his affidavit filed with the Election Commission on Friday.

Modi has named Jashodaben as his wife and declared that he has an M.A. degree from Gujarat University in 1983. The affidavit said he is an arts graduate from Delhi University (1978). He passed SSC exam from Gujarat board in 1967, it said. He has declared movable assets worth Rs 1.41 crore and immovable assets valued at Rs 1.1 crore.

The prime minister has invested Rs 20,000 in tax saving infra bonds, Rs 7.61 lakh in National Saving Certificate (NSC) and another Rs 1.9 lakh in LIC policies. His cash balance in savings bank account is Rs 4,143.

Modi has four gold rings, weighing 45 grams, valued at Rs 1.13 lakh.

The prime minister has declared the property details in the affidavit which is a mandatory requirement for filing nomination papers.

Modi possess about 3,531 sq ft plot in Sector-1, Gandhinagar. The value of the property, which includes a residential unit on the plot, is assessed to be Rs 1.1 crore, according to the affidavit.

While Modi has listed "salary from government" and "interest from bank" as his sources of income, his wife's source of income is mentioned as "not known".

## With ISL season over, Bikash Jairu holidays at home

**REBYNA RANA GANGTOK, 26 APR:** Bikash Jairu, the footballer with Sikkim currently with ISL team Jamshedpur FC, is currently in the State on a two-month break between seasons. With Jamshedpur FC since the 2017-18 season, Mr Jairu will be joining the squad again in August for pre-season training, it is informed.

Speaking with media-persons today, the 29-year-old footballer expressed happiness on being home after a gruelling ISL season which ended recently. He hails from Gyalshing in West Sikkim. Mr Jairu is a product of the State Sports Hostel, Namchi, and State Sports Academy, Gangtok.

He started his football career with ONGC-Mumbai in 2008 after which he played for second division I-League clubs until he rose to prominence when he was signed by East Bengal FC in 2015 for two years.

Mr Jairu was among



the few Sikkimese footballers to play in the ISL debut season in 2014. He was with Pune City FC that time on loan from East Bengal. He then joined ATK in the next ISL season before signing a three-year contract with Jamshedpur FC.

"Am always happy to return home! I spend time with family and friends and don't even notice how fast the holidays pass away. I go tour around, interact with people from my village.

I also plan to visit the Namchi Sports Hostel and come here to the State Sports Academy. Coming here brings back memories from my days here... we talk about our past and our days of fun and practise with friends that time," he shared with media-persons here at Paljor Stadium.

Once all the outstanding players return to Sikkim for their holidays, we come together and train here at Paljor Stadium with our

friends, he added.

Having played football since childhood in Sikkim, Mr Jairu believes that many changes are needed to improve football in Sikkim.

"Many changes are still required to be introduced here. Many things do not happen at the appropriate time here. We did good this time by qualifying to the national round of Santosh Trophy and in the coming days, we can improve even further."

turn to pg02

## Govt employees can now get advance upto Rs 5 lakh for medical treatment

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 26 APR:** Health Care, Human Services and Family Welfare Department has notified the Sikkim Services [Medical Facilities] Amendment Rules 2019 under which government servants can now get advance upto Rs 5 lakh for certain medical conditions. As per an amendment made in the year 2013, maximum advance of Rs 2 lakh was permitted.

In a notification issued on 25 April 2019, the Department informs that advance upto Rs 2 lakh can be "concurrent by the Director, Health Services". Advance of upto Rs 5 lakh can be concurrent subject to an estimate certificate from the referred hospital and for the following ailments namely: Kidney and liver transplant; major cardiac and neurology surgery; therapeutic

cancer treatment; multi organ failure with ICU care and; patient on ventilator support.

Only government servants are entitled to these while dependants of government servants can be granted advance of upto Rs 3 lakh on the basis of an estimate from the referred hospital, Rs 2 lakh can be concurrent by the Director, Health Services for the above mentioned diseases.

## FinMin ratifies 8.65 pc interest on EPF for 2018-19

**KK SHANKAR**

**NEW DELHI, APR 26 (PTI):** The Finance Ministry has approved 8.65 per cent rate of interest on Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) for 2018-19 as decided by retirement fund body EPFO, benefitting more than 6 crore formal sector workers.

"The Department of Financial Services (DFS), a wing of Finance Ministry, has given its concurrence to Employees Provident Fund Organisation's (EPFO) decision to provide 8.65 per cent rate of interest for 2018-19 to its subscribers," a source privy to the development told PTI.

"The DFS has approved the proposal subject to fulfilment of certain conditions related to efficient management of

the retirement fund," the source said further.

Earlier in February, the EPFO's apex decision making body Central Board of Trustees headed by Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar had decided to raise the interest rate on EPF to 8.65 per cent for 2018-19, which was the first increase in the last three years.

The interest rate on EPF was hiked to 8.65 per cent for the last fiscal from 8.55 per cent provided in 2017-18. The EPFO had earlier reduced the interest rate in 2016-17 to 8.65 per cent from 8.8 per cent in 2015-16.

After the Finance Ministry concurrence, the Income Tax Department and the Labour Ministry would notify the

rate of interest for 2018-19. Thereafter the EPFO would give directions to its over 120 field offices to credit the rate of interest into subscribers' account and settle their claims accordingly.

According to the EPFO estimates, there would be a surplus of Rs 151.67 crore after providing 8.65 per cent rate of interest for 2018-19 on EPF. There would have been a deficit of Rs 158 crore on providing 8.7 per cent rate of interest in EPF for last fiscal. That is why the body decided to provide 8.65 per cent rate of interest for 2018-19.

The EPFO had provided a five-year low interest rate of 8.55 per cent to its subscribers for 2017-18.

## Postal stamp in memory of litterateur Shiva Kumar Rai

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 26 APR:**

A postal stamp in memory of renowned and respected Nepali litterateur, Late Shiva Kumar Rai was released by the Governor, Ganga Prasad on the occasion of his birth centenary celebration here at Namgyal Institute of Tibetology [NIT], Deorali on Friday. The celebration was organised by Shiva Kumar Rai Centenary Celebration Committee.

Shiva Kumar Rai, born in Rhenock on 26 April in year 1919, was



a renowned writer and politician. He was awarded with many awards for his works including the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978 for his collection of short stories 'Khaharey'.

On the occasion, the Governor also released

a music album by Shiva Kumar Rai Centenary Celebration Committee president and writer, SD Dhakal.

The Governor spoke about the life and contributions of Shiva Kumar Rai especially in Nepali

turn to pg02

# Facts, not falsehoods should guide people during elections: UN Chief on press freedom

**YOSHITA SINGH**

**UNITED NATIONS, APR 26 (PTI):** UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has underscored the need for free press disseminating reliable information to maintain peace and justice, especially during elections as "facts, not falsehoods" should guide the people while choosing their representatives.

Noting that civic space has been shrinking worldwide at an alarming rate, Guterres said that he is "deeply troubled" by the growing number of attacks against journalists

and the culture of impunity.

A free press is essential for peace, justice, sustainable development and human rights. No democracy is complete without access to transparent and reliable information. It is the cornerstone for building fair and impartial institutions, holding leaders accountable and speaking truth to power, Guterres said in his message for the World Press Freedom Day, observed on May 3.

The main celebration of World Press Freedom Day this year will take place in Ad-

dis Ababa, from May 1-3. The overall theme of the event will be the role of media in elections and democracy. Some 100 national events around the world are expected to complement the main celebration. The day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 following a Recommendation adopted at the twenty-sixth session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1991.

Facts, not falsehoods, should guide people as they choose their representatives. Yet, while technology

has transformed the ways in which we receive and share information, sometimes it is used to mislead public opinion or to fuel violence and hatred, he said, apparently referring to the alarming increase in spread of false and vitriolic information through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp.

And with anti-media rhetoric on the rise, so too are violence and harassment against journalists, including women, he said. According to the United Nations Educational Scien-

tific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), almost 100 journalists were killed in 2018.

Hundreds are imprisoned. When media workers are targeted, societies as a whole pay a price, he said, calling on all to defend the rights of journalists, whose efforts help us to build a better world for all.

The UN chief's statement comes at a time when India is in the middle of general elections. Concerns have been raised over the use of social media platforms such as Whatsapp and Facebook to spread false infor-

mation and spark hatred and incidents of violence. Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, social media platforms and the Internet And Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) had presented a Voluntary Code of Ethics for the General Election 2019 to Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora.

The Election Commission of India had said in a statement that the Code of Ethics has been developed to ensure free, fair and ethical usage of social media platforms to maintain the integrity of the electoral process for the polls.





## Beti Jan Mahatsav at Chungthang

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**CHUNGTHANG, 26 APR:**

Beti Jan Mohatsav, a scheme celebrating the birth of baby girls, was marked here at the Chungthang model AWC with 20 mothers of new

born girls being felicitated.

The mothers were also sensitised on correct breast feeding positions, need for exclusive breast feeding and timely complementary feeding.

The function was also attended by SDM Chungthang, Subash Ghimery, Chairperson BBBP (at Block level ), RO LMRDD Chungthang, mothers, members of SHGs, CDPO and ICDS staff.

## Two scribes attacked in separate incidents in Assam

**NALBARI/GUWAHATI, APR 26 (PTI):** Two journalists, including a woman, have come under attack in separate incidents in Nalbari and Tinsukia districts of Assam, a police officer said on Friday.

Rajen Deka, a correspondent with Assamese daily 'Dainik Asom', was assaulted with sharp weapons Thursday night allegedly by BJP activist Ripul Deka alias Baba at Tegheriattari village of Nalbari, he said.

"Rajen, who was on his way home, sustained serious injuries on his head, chest, wrist and arms. He is currently undergoing treatment at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital," the officer said. The BJP activist, accompanied by some youths, managed to escape in an auto-rickshaw after the attack, he said.

"One of the youths, identified as Jintu Medhi, uploaded a post on social media Friday morning, threatening to kill the journalist. An FIR has been lodged against both Ripul Deka and Jintu Medhi in connection with the case," he said.

Condemning the attack, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal asked Director General of Police Kuladhar Saikia to speed up the investigations and ensure that the culprits were booked at the earliest. In another incident, Tinsukia-based television journalist Upasana Barua Goswami was assaulted by a group of four miscreants in a restaurant. All four of them, identified as Pramod Gogoi, Pragiyoti Das, Dhananjay Dutta and Dwipan Sonowal have been arrested, a senior police officer said.

The journalist, employed with News18 Assam-Northeast, claimed that she visited a restaurant late on Thursday, where the miscreants tried to misbehave with her. "The men, in an inebriated state, tried to misbehave with me, but the owner of the restaurant immediately intervened. One of them suddenly slapped the female manager and others started attacking me and my husband.

## Lal Bazaar youth hold candlelight vigil for Sri Lanka



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 26 APR:**

Lal Bazaar Youth Development Committee organised a candlelight vigil to pay homage to victims of the recent serial bomb blasts in

Sri Lanka here in front of Denzong cinema hall in Lal Bazaar on Friday evening. In the candlelight vigil, which was organised with support of the people of Lal Bazaar, people from different

walks of life paid homage and condolence to family members of the people who lost their lives in the bomb blasts and also offered prayers for the quick recovery of those injured.

## Non-disclosure of info by RBI under RTI will be viewed seriously, says SC

**NEW DELHI, APR 26 (PTI):**

The Supreme Court Friday granted RBI "last opportunity" to withdraw its policy exempting the central bank from disclosing information, like annual inspection report on lenders, under the transparency law and cautioned that future violations would be "viewed seriously". The top court made clear that RBI was "duty bound to furnish all information relating to inspection reports and other material" under the Right to Information (RTI) Act except those which pertained to "matters of national economic interest".

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) undertook before the court that the disclosure policy will be deleted from the web-site. The annual inspection of banks by RBI ascertains compliance of lenders on various parameters including recognition of Non Performing Assets (NPAs) or bad loans, capital framework and risk management. Based on the annual inspection, weaknesses are flagged to the banks for taking corrective action.

A bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao and M R Shah took strong note of the fact that RBI acted in contravention of its December 16, 2015 judgement and issued a new disclosure policy on its web-site on April 12 after it had reserved the verdict on a batch of contempt pleas. Under

the new policy, RBI had directed various departments not to disclose information that was specifically asked to be given by the earlier judgment of the top court.

"The Respondents (RBI), in our opinion, have committed contempt of this court by exempting disclosure of material that was directed to be given by this court," the bench said, while granting the last opportunity to the federal bank to rectify it. "Though we could have taken a serious view of the respondents (RBI) continuing to violate the directions issued by this court, we give them a last opportunity to withdraw the disclosure policy insofar as it contains exemptions which are contrary to the directions issued by this court.

"The Respondents (RBI) are duty bound to furnish all information relating to inspection reports and other material apart from the material that was exempted...of the judgment. Any further violation shall be viewed seriously by this court," the bench held in its verdict.

Taking serious view of the violation of its verdict, the bench said that there was an element of public policy in punishing civil contempt and "the administration of justice would be undermined if the order of any court of law could be disregarded with impunity".

Extensively referring to the 2015 verdict, it said there was no ambig-

uity in the judgment which had held that the RBI cannot deny information on the ground that there was a fiduciary relationship between it and the other banks. "This court stressed the importance of the RTI Act, and held that it is in the interest of the general public that the information sought for by the Respondents therein has to be furnished. There is a specific reference to the inspection reports and the other materials, which were directed to be given ...," it said.

Referring to the earlier verdict, it said that the court was of the opinion that the RBI should act with transparency and not hide information that might embarrass the individual banks and that it is duty bound to comply with the provisions of the RTI Act and disclose the information sought.

"The submission made on behalf of the RBI that the disclosure would hurt the economic interests of the country was found to be totally misconceived," it said. Taking note of the exemptions from disclosure under the RTI, it said, "the matters of national economic interest, disclosure of information about currency or exchange rates, interest rates, taxes, the regulation or supervision of banking, insurance and other financial institutions, proposals for expenditure or borrowing and foreign investments could in some cases harm the national economy, particularly, if released prematurely."

## Counselling for admission in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya

**GYALSHING, 26 APR (IPR):**

A coordination meeting cum counselling for parents and students for admissions in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), Gerethang, West was held at the Conference hall of District Administration Centre (DAC), Rabdentse. The meeting was attended by Tushar G. Nikhare, SDM (HQ); T. Eden Bhutia, Addl. Director HRDD along with Sushma Mohra, Principal, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), Gerethang, West Sikkim.

SDM (HQ), in his address, motivated the students, while advising them on having dignity of labour towards studies and also encouraged them by informing about the learning opportunity that they should take full advantage. He also mentioned the importance of extracurricular activities while keeping academics as their main target.

Further, he urged the parents for their constant support and attention towards school activities. In similar con-



text, he asked them to work cooperatively by engaging themselves in to productive activities in regards to make school and its environment better for the children.

SDM (HQ) asked the students not to indulge in activities like slo-ganeering & concentrate all their efforts in studies in this phase of their life. He also advised the Parents to cultivate habits of newspaper reading so that their wards can emulate them. Also parents were asked to actively participate in SMC fo-

rums & contribute with their ideas & efforts for betterment of school.

Lastly, he concluded his address by advising the students on importance of performing well in academics, to which he informed that, it will fetch them with best opportunities in future.

The Addl. Director, HRDD informed and highlighted the necessary guidelines of the school, in regards to which she formally advised the parents of the students to go through guidelines of the school thoroughly

and also to take good understanding of the norms disclosed in under taking forms without fail.

Further she, strongly advised to disclose the illness of their wards, if they are suffering from any. She than asked parents to submit any kind of complains in written form addressing to Additional Director duly forwarded by the Principal.

After the program, filling of admission forms and relative information was also given by the Principal and the staffs of the school.

## Ex-CJ of Sikkim HC to head panel for probe in MLA's killing

**RAIPUR, APR 26 (PTI):**

Retired Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court Satish Kumar Agnihotri will head the judicial panel constituted to probe the killing of a BJP MLA by Naxals early this month, officials said on Friday.

Agnihotri has given his consent to the Chhattisgarh government for heading the judicial panel to investigate the killing of MLA Bhima

Mandavi and four security personnel in the Naxal attack in Dantewada, a Public Relation Officer

of the state government said here.

Mandavi, who represented Dantewada assembly constituency, was killed along with four security personnel on April 9 after Maoists blew up their vehicle with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in Shyamgiri area of Dantewada.

The next day, the Congress government in the state sought permission from the Election Commission for setting up a judicial inquiry panel into the incident, in view

of the model code of conduct in effect for the Lok Sabha election, the official said.

After getting approval from the EC, the state government took further action into the matter, he added.

The BJP had dubbed as a "political conspiracy" the attack, which had occurred just two days ahead of the voting in Bastar Lok Sabha constituency in the first phase on April 11. The party had also sought a CBI probe into it.

## Meghalaya to augment fish production



**SHILLONG, APR 26 (PTI):**

The Meghalaya government will invest Rs 378 crore in fish production for meeting a supply deficit of 15,000 metric tonnes, a senior official said Thursday.

The state has been able to produce 12,000 MT of fish annually against the demand of over 27,000 MT, Agricultural Production Commissioner K N Kumar said.

An investment of Rs 161 crore was made in the first edition of the Meghalaya State Aqua-

culture Mission (MSAM) that had benefited 21,000 persons in 2012, when fish production was only 4,000 MT, he said.

"We will invest Rs 378 crore in the second phase of the Meghalaya State Aquaculture Mission for reducing the supply deficit," Kumar said.

He was addressing the inaugural function of the State Level Fish Farmers Conclave 2019 here, which was attended by scientists, scholars, bank and credit representatives besides fish farmers from all the 11

districts of the state.

Kumar also highlighted the need to constitute a Meghalaya Fish Farmers Association since there are now 22,000 fish farmers in the state.

In his address, Fisheries Minister Comingone Ymbon said, the MSAM is aimed at maximization of fish production through technological interventions, creation of more water bodies, making available quality fishseeds besides promoting scientific feeding and improved managerial practices.

### Postal stamp...

literature. He also mentioned about his contribution and selfless service to the society. He stated that the works and contributions of Late Rai will never be forgotten.

Likewise, the Celebration Committee president, Mr Dhakal and Sikkim Kalakar Sangh president, Chunnilal Ghimirey, who is also the general secretary of the celebration committee, gave a brief talk on the life, important incidents and contributions of Shiva Kumar Rai.

### With ISL season...

For this, we need to put in hard work. We always tell our local players and upcoming talents to work hard and be competitive," he said.

Jairu also spoke about the vast improvements in Indian football due to ISL. "Indian players are now able to play in a more technical manner and we now also have Indian players scoring goals in the ISL. The salaries have also increased and most importantly, the facilities are world class which has tremendously benefited the Indian footballers. ISL is a gamechanger for Indian football," he details.

## Tale of 2 Ambanis: Dad backs Cong man, son attends Modi rally

**MUMBAI, APR 26 (PTI):**

Days after Mukesh Ambani endorsed Congress candidate from Mumbai South Milind Deora, the industrialist's son Anant was among the audience at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election rally here Friday.

Anant, who was seated in the front row among the audience at the poll rally in suburban Bandra Kurla Complex, told a Marathi news channel that he was there to "listen to Modi and support the nation".

Mukesh Ambani recently endorsed the candidature of Congress leader Milind Deora from the Mumbai South Lok Saba constituency, where polling is slated on April 29.

The backing of Ambani, Reliance Industries Limited chairman, to the Congress leader comes at a time when the party has been unrelenting in attack on his industrialist-brother Anil Ambani over the Rafale deal.

In a video shared by Deora, former Union minister, on his Twitter page, Ambani says "Milind is the man for South Mumbai", while Kotak eulogises the Mumbai Congress chief for "truly representing the Mumbai connection".

**to book  
advertisements  
in  
SummitTimes  
call  
03592-208698  
9734152541  
9647102692  
advertise@  
summittimes.  
com**



## SMIT Asst Prof defends PhD

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 26 APR:**

Akash Kumar Bhoi, working as Assistant Professor at Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology (SMIT) under Sikkim Manipal University (SMU), successfully defended his PhD thesis on 17 Apr on the topic, "Characterization of QT-Complex for Detection of Ischemic Heart Disease



(IHD) and Ventricular Tachyarrhythmia (VT) using Electrocardiogram."

He completed his PhD

under the supervision of Prof Karma Sonam Sherpa, Registrar, SMU, and Prof Bidita Khandelwal, HoD, Gen Medicine, CRH and SMIMS, Sikkim.

He has now been recommended for the award of degree by the Board of Examiners of Sikkim Manipal University. The degree will be awarded to him at the next convocation of SMU, a press release informs.

## Training for Food Business Operators on Food Safety and Hygiene

**GANGTOK, 26 APRIL (IPR):**

The Department of Health Care, Human Service and Family Welfare initiated two days training for Food Business Operators on Food Safety and Hygiene here at local hotel today. The Additional Chief Secretary cum In-charge of Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, S. C. Gupta graced the inaugural session as the chief guest and Commissioner-cum-Secretary of Health Department, Vishal Chauhan was present as the special guest.

Addressing the inaugural session, Additional Chief Secretary, S.C. Gupta said that Food Safety is a very important issue in the country. After the existence of the Food Safety and Standard Act 2006, there has been a paradigm shift whereby many topics have been undertaken and more is to be done for food safety.

Mr Gupta said that the state has been a torchbearer in many fronts, thus time has now come for us to take lead in maintaining Food Safety and Hygiene since Gangtok is known to be one of the cleanest city in the whole of the country.

He said that we must all set targets for ourselves and be in the lead again as far as Food Safety and Standard norms are concerned. Mr Gupta further said that everyone should be aware about the Food Safety and Standard Act and the rules and regulations surrounding it.

He said that self-regulation is the best step and also elaborated on state government's impetus by providing training, awareness and opportunities etc. He also emphasized on maintaining personal hygiene and behavioral practices in respective establishments like; hotel, restaurant, eateries etc. He asked the participants to keep their establishments more hygienic and comply with law.

Earlier, Commissioner-cum-Secretary of Health Department, Vishal Chauhan said awareness and self-certification is very much important to ensure food safety and hygiene. If business operators are in business, it is their legal duty to ensure that food-handlers are suitably trained in food safety as per the Food Safety and Standard Act 2006.

It was also informed that to help food operators in Sikkim, state government has organized training for the first time in capital with the purpose to generate awareness and create a movement among food business operators in the state and to hold food hygiene training certificate as per law.

Secretary, Mr Chauhan stated that any food related establishment which come under the ambit of the Food Safety and Standard Act 2006 in Sikkim like factories, hotel, restaurant, catering, eateries, canteens etc. have to comply with the provision and as per

the Act it is mandatory to have training certification for renewal of licenses and food business operators. Failing to produce training certification their licenses will not be renewed, he said. He also mentioned that such training is to motivate, generate awareness about the procedures that has to be adopted and primary duty of business operators is to train their food handlers to ensure hygienic, healthy food.

Secretary appealed all food business operators to conduct training to all food handlers in their respective establishments. He also informed that Government of India has already sanctioned a food-testing lab for Sikkim.

Earlier, Resource Person from Sadik Masih Medical Social Servant Society (SMMSSS), Vinay K. Stephen briefed about the objective of training for business operators and food handlers. He said that this training would definitely raise the bar for food safety and build a culture of self-compliance for food safety in food businesses in Sikkim.

Sadik Masih Medical Social Servant Society, New Delhi is the training partner for this two days training programme.

The Principal Director of Health Department, Dr. Uttam Pradhan, Joint Food Safety Commissioner, N. R. Gurung, Officials and Food Business Operators were present.

## Mamring school bids farewell to Cl XII students



**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 26 APR:**

Government Senior Secondary School Mamring, East Sikkim, organised a farewell program for the outgoing Class XII students in the school premises today, a press release informs.

Principal, Prahlad Sharma along with Vice Principal of the school offered traditional scarves to all the class XII students of 2018-2019 batch. He wished them luck for a bright future ahead.

The Principal advised

the students not to fall prey to fake advertisements of different educational companies and universities for admissions. He advised them to consult HRDD and Social Welfare department regarding scholarships.

Failing in exams does not mean that the student has failed in his life, the result is just a report of his preparation and dedication of time and energy in that particular exam, said Mr Sharma. Students should always be

positive and look for options and opportunities, he added.

He also said that school is always ready to give all possible support to them. Different colourful cultural items were presented by the students.

Ex-School Captain, Nawaraj Bastola also spoke about his journey in the school and encouraged the students to study well. He also urged his fellow batch mates to contribute something for the school as a tribute.

## Centre sanctions Rs 4,000 cr for women safety projects under Nirbhaya Fund

**NEW DELHI, APR 26 (PTI):**

The Centre has sanctioned nearly Rs 4,000 crore for various women safety projects under the Nirbhaya Fund that include financial assistance to rape and acid attack victims and setting up of special police units for women and children.

According to a Home Ministry document, the highest Rs 2,919.55 crore has been sanctioned under the 'Safe City Project' being implemented in eight cities -- Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad and Lucknow -- to provide safety to women in public places. A total of Rs 200 crore has been released for

the Central Victim Compensation Fund. The key objectives of the project is to support the victims of rape, acid attacks, crime against children, human trafficking etc, it said.

All these projects are being implemented under the central government's 'Nirbhaya Fund', which was named after the 2012 Delhi gang-rape victim, a Home Ministry official said. The ministry has sanctioned Rs 321.69 crore under the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) to provide a pan-India single emergency response number -- 112. The project has already been operationalised in 20 States and Union Territories,

according to the document

A total of Rs 23.53 crore has been sanctioned for setting up of the Special Unit for Women And Children (SPUWAC) and the Special Unit for North East Region (SPUNER) at Nanakpura in Delhi. Both the SPUWAC and the SPUWAC have already become operational, it said. A state-of-the-art DNA laboratory is being set up at the Central Forensic Science Laboratory in Chandigarh at a cost of Rs 99.76, while projects have been sanctioned for setting up or strengthening of the DNA facilities in Forensic Science Laboratories in 12 states at a cost of Rs 131.09 crore, as per the document.

## Heads of 7 political outfits, state units in fray in Punjab

**CHANDIGARH, APR 26**

**(PTI):** The prestige of at least seven heads of regional parties and state units of national outfits are at stake in Punjab as they will slug it out in the high-stakes electoral battle. Prominent among those are Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) chief Sukhbir Singh Badal, Congress state president Sunil Jakhar and his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) counterpart, Bhagwant Mann.

Badal is leading the electoral contest from the front as he jumped into the fray by contesting from Ferozepur parliamentary constituency, considered a stronghold of the Akalis.

The SAD chief's gambit of taking the plunge in the parliamentary elections after a gap of 15 years is expected to boost party's rank and file, political pundits opined. Badal had contested the Lok Sabha polls from Faridkot thrice -- in 1998, 1999 and 2004. The SAD, which claims to be the "only custodian" of Sikh issues, had been facing tough times over the sacrilege of religious scriptures and pardon granted to Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh in a blasphemy case. The rebellion by senior leaders like Ranjit Singh Brahm-pura, Rattan Singh Ajnala and Sewa Singh Sekhwan further added to its woes.

Badal is facing sitting Congress MP Sher Singh Ghubaya, who had won Ferozepur seat twice on an SAD ticket, AAP's Harjinder Singh and Punjab Democratic Alliance (PDA)'s Hans Raj Golden.

In Gurdaspur, the Congress has reposed faith in Jakhar, who had won the seat in the 2017 bypoll by a margin of over 1.90 lakh votes. The by-election was necessitated following the death of actor and then MP Vi-

nod Khanna. It maybe be tough to do an encore as Jakhar is facing Bollywood actor Sunny Deol, who joined the BJP on Monday. Deol, who is a popular figure in Punjab, could pose a formidable challenge to Jakhar.

"His (Jakhar) security (deposit) will be forfeited this time," Badal claimed on Friday.

Mann, meanwhile, is seeking re-election from Sangrur, but winning from the seat may not be easy due to infighting within the party. The stand-up comedian-turned-politician is pitted against Congress nominee Kewal Dhillon, SAD's Parminder Dhindsa, PDA's Jassi Jasraj and Rajdev Singh Khalsa of the SAD (Taksali).

Simranjit Singh Mann, president of the SAD (Amritsar), is also trying his luck from Sangrur.

Sukhpal Singh Khaira, who floated the Punjabi Ekta Party after he was ousted as the leader of Opposition in the assembly last year, is contesting from Bathinda. He is facing sitting SAD MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Congress candidate Amrinder Singh Raja Warring and AAP's Baljinder Kaur. Simarjeet Singh Bains, who heads the Lok Insaaf Party, is contesting from Ludhiana. Congress, SAD and the AAP have fielded Ravneet Bit-tu, Mahesh Inder Singh Grewal and Tejpal Singh, respectively.

Sitting Patiala MP Dharamvira Gandhi, who had parted ways with the AAP, has floated the Nawar Punjab Party, which is part of the PDA. Gandhi is contesting against former Congress MP Preneet Kaur, SAD nominee Surjit Singh Rakhra and AAP's Neena Mittal.

Polling in Punjab for the 13 Lok Sabha seats will take place in the last phase on May 19.

## Mallya's extradition: UK High Court to hear liquor tycoon's plea on July 2

**LONDON, APR 26 (PTI):**

Embattled liquor tycoon Vijay Mallya has been allocated July 2 as the date for a brief hearing to convince a High Court judge that he should be given permission to proceed to a full-blown appeal process against his extradition to India to face alleged fraud and money laundering charges amounting to Rs 9,000 crores.

The 63-year-old former Kingfisher Airlines boss had filed the "renewal application" earlier this month after he failed in his first written attempt seeking leave to appeal in the High Court. The renewal involves a short oral hearing before a High Court judge, now scheduled for July 2, where his lawyers will further plead his case against being extradited to India.

"A date for the oral consideration has been set for July 2," a UK court official said on Friday.

UK home secretary Sajid Javid had signed off on a Westminster Magistrates' Court order for Mallya to be extradited

to face the Indian courts back in February.

Mallya then filed an application for permission to appeal against that decision in the High Court, which was refused by Justice William Davis, giving him a week to apply for oral consideration via a renewal application.

"Once a renewal application is made, it will be listed before a High Court judge and dealt with at a hearing," said a UK Judiciary spokesperson.

On July 2, Mallya's legal team and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) arguing on behalf of the Indian government will go head to head to reiterate factors for and against the businessman's extradition to Arthur Road Jail in Mumbai. A High Court judge must now decide following the oral consideration if Mallya's appeal can proceed to a full hearing.

It will mark one of the final stages of the appeals process in the UK as the chances of permission to appeal to the Supreme Court are

unlikely if permission to appeal is denied at the High Court stage.

Mallya would have the option to approach the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) based in Strasbourg, France, to argue against his extradition to India on human rights grounds by trying to prove a real threat of harm or torture. Meanwhile, the businessman remains on bail on an extradition warrant executed by Scotland Yard in April 2017. At the end of a year-long extradition trial at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London last December, Judge Emma Arbuthnot had ruled that the flashy billionaire had a case to answer in the Indian courts.

The court had also dismissed any bars to extradition on the grounds of the prison conditions under which the businessman would be held, as the judge accepted the Indian government's assurances that he would receive all necessary medical care at Barrack 12 in Mumbai's Arthur Road Jail.

### ~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

#### Required for Summit Times

Two field reporters for Gangtok (East) and one for West District. Should be fluent in english. Have basic knowledge in journalism. Walk in interview:

**Summit Times office**  
**Church Road, Gangtok**  
**03592-208698**

#### URGENTLY REQUIRED:

**Urgent Recruitment for a waiter with atleast 3 years experience and one kitchen helper. Contact: Hotel Paramount, Dentam, West Sikkim- 9735909625 / 8348285444**

#### PLOT FOR SALE:

Vacant plot measuring 0.38 Acres for sale at Amdo Golai, Deorali. Contact: 09717191985/097474651223

#### INTERESTED TO BECOME A YOGA TEACHER?

**CRITERIA** – Academic qualification of minimum higher secondary pass

Complete yoga syllabus will be provided by SYVC Gangtok absolutely free of cost. After one year of basic training and service (karma yoga)/volunteering in the Centre, the candidate would be sent for Yoga Teacher Training Course at Shivananda Yoga Ashram. After TTC, the candidate would be appointed on part time basis at the Yoga Centre in Gangtok. College students can also apply. If required, food and accommodation would be provided.

**Interested candidates may contact**  
**: Deepa Yoga Centre at**

**Mob: +91 7432043719/ +91 8170953919.**



Phone: 03592-281913  
Tele Fax: 03592-281913  
Email: spcbsikkim@gmail.com

### STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD-SIKKIM DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS, ENVIRONMENT & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM DEORALI, GANGTOK - 737102

F.No. /SPCB/

Dated: /2019

## NOTICE

This is for the information of all concerned that, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, GOI has notified the Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules, 2016, which came into effect into effect on 28th March, 2016 and as per the Rule 2 (1), the Provision of the Bio-medical Waste (Management and Handling), Rules, 2016, is applicable to all persons who generate, collect, receive, store, transport, treat, dispose or handle Bio-Medical Waste in any form including hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, dispensaries, veterinary institution, animal house, pathological laboratories, blood banks, ayush camps, medical or surgical camps, vaccination camps, blood donation camps, first aid rooms of schools, forensic laboratories and research labs need to obtain authorization from State Pollution Control Board under Rule 10 of the said Rules.

All Bio-medical waste need to be managed/ treated as per Schedule I and Schedule II of the said rules. Therefore all concerned are hereby informed to comply with the Bio-Medical waste Management Rules, 2016. Further it is informed that all the Health Care Facilities established in the State shall obtain Authorization at the earliest and submit the Annual Report to State Pollution Control Board, Sikkim on or before 31st May 2019.

For further details, please contact State Pollution Control Board-Sikkim, Forests, Environment and Wildlife Management, Government of Sikkim, Deorali, East Sikkim.

Contact No. 03592-281913

Sd/-  
Member Secretary  
State Pollution Control Board-Sikkim,  
Forests, Environment and  
Wildlife Management,  
Government of Sikkim, Deorali, Gangtok.

**R.O. No. 11/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20**

**Date: 26.04.2019**



# SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

## Defeat Insularity, Every Time

*Agent provocateurs can be persistent, but cannot be allowed to win*

Some or the other attempt is always in play to whip up some scare with some high-pitched paranoia, and as elections approach nearer, so will the bluster and pretend shock. ‘Pretend’ because there is nothing really surprising in any of this drama which plays out in a cycle around this time of a term every time. To Sikkim’s credit, the tenacity of the communal scaremongers is matched by the pragmatism of its people. Organisations and individuals have consistently represented the interests of their office-bearers [and/ or silent promoters] and almost never the concerns of the people they claim to [or are supposed to] represent; which is perhaps why they hyperventilate over issues which rarely receive mass, grassroots based endorsement. This disconnect also ensures that Sikkim witnesses no communal flare-ups on the streets even though, if the press releases, press statements or Facebook posts were to be believed, the thread of civility between communities has been frayed very thin.

This condition is of course not unique to Sikkim. The overlapping of religion and identity and politics has handicapped India since its birth in 1947. Intercommunity fault lines were exploited even in Sikkim during the movement for democracy in the 1970’s. One hears of how rumours tried to pit one community against the other through those tumultuous years and although some clashes did occur, these were more class-confrontations and not inter-community. The people did not turn communal even then. Communal issues flared up in 1979 as well with the Nepali seat issue but its promoters did not receive the endorsement of the people and communal politics was played in the open again in 1994, but did not translate too well in the ballot that time either.

The Sikkimese people, it would hence be safe to vouch, have consistently rejected communal postures. Admittedly, there is an inherent communal streak in all people at an individual level, but the Sikkimese have done exceptionally well in ensuring that this does not become a pathological condition of the entire community. Unfortunately, not all community elders and leaders seem to have accepted this fact and continue to try and peddling prejudiced notions. One hopes that Sikkimese empathy is made of stronger stuff than the chisels with which too many are hammering away at the edifice of respectful coexistence that Sikkim has held firm thus far. In the wake of the festival reaffirming brotherhood and propitiating its Guardian Deity, Sikkim and its people should reaffirm their consistent commitment to stand fast in protecting Sikkim’s interests to fend off the shallow belligerence which should continue to fail so that empathy and mutual respect continue to hold sway.

### 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](mailto:news@summittimes.com)

# Central American women fleeing violence experience more trauma after seeking asylum

LAURIE C. HEFFRON  
*theconversation.com*

The number of Central American women who make difficult, often harrowing, journeys to the United States to flee domestic and gang violence is rising.

I’m a social science researcher and a social worker who has interviewed hundreds of women after they were detained by immigration authorities for my research about the relationship between violence against women and migration. I find that most female asylum seekers experience trauma, abuse and violence before they cross the U.S. border seeking asylum.

What these women go through while detained by Customs and Border Protection or Immigration and Customs Enforcement can take an additional physical, social and emotional toll.

### WHAT THEY’RE ESCAPING

Most Central American asylum-seekers come from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. These three countries are among the most dangerous places in the world to be female, with some of the world’s highest murder rates, including for women and girls. There are few repercussions for the perpetrators.

As they make their way north, these women are often subjected to sexual violence or held hostage. They may also fall victim to human trafficking – which could entail being made to cook and clean for other migrants or forced into prostitution – on their journeys.

Amid rising levels of violence, the number of Guatemalans, Salvadorans and Hondurans who have sought asylum here has increased almost eight-fold between 2012 and 2017 to about 107,000 according to the Department of Homeland Security.

The government does not disclose how many women are apprehended. But there are clear signs that the number of female migrants is growing. The roughly 189,000 people who arrived with their families, rather than on their own as adults or minors, whom U.S. immigration officials stopped along the border with Mexico during the six months ending in March 2019 were mostly mothers and their children. In contrast, only 75,622 people arrived with their relatives in all of 2017.

ICE is detaining more than 50,000 immigrants at any given time. Most detainees are men, although the percentage of women and girls, and specifically asylum-seeking women and girls, is rising.

### DETAINING ASYLUM-SEEKERS

The right to seek asylum in the United States due to persecution or fear of persecution back home stems from the 1951 Refugee Convention and U.S. immigration laws. The Trump administration has responded by detaining more asylum-seekers, a policy it casts as a deterrence strategy.

Once apprehended, women may remain detained for months. In some cases they are detained indefinite-

ly as they pursue their claims. New guidance from Attorney General William Barr could lead to more long-term detention for asylum seekers.

In June 2018, former Attorney General Sessions announced that people fleeing domestic violence or gang violence would no longer be eligible for asylum in the U.S. A federal judge struck down that policy change six months later.

According to many studies by scholars like psychologists Katy Robjant and Kalina Brabeck, locking immigrants up can damage their mental health by increasing risks of depression, post-traumatic stress and anxiety. The effects can last years and even a lifetime. For parents, the damage extends beyond detention and may harm children of the detained.

Because detention relies on control, coercion and containment, it inherently makes frightened people more fearful, disrupts sleep and restricts access to medical, legal and social services.

### EXPERIENCING MORE TRAUMA

During the past two years, together with psychologists Gabriela Hurtado and Josephine Serrata, I sought to understand and document what immigrant women who have experienced violence and abuse need while they are detained and once they are released.

Many detained women say they have been abused while being held by U.S. immigration authorities in what appear to be inhumane conditions marked by incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault.

The Department of Homeland Security itself has documented dangers that include the provision of food that isn’t safe to eat, like moldy bread and rotten meat, and delayed medical care.

There are signs of threats and intimidation as well. A woman I’ll call Adelia told my research team that when she asked an immigration official how much money she would have to pay to be released, she was told “stop asking me, or I’ll raise the amount.”

Investigative media outlets, immigrant rights advocates and researchers have documented that ICE detainees often face threats, insults, humiliation and stress brought on by constantly changing rules and expectations.

ICE itself has disclosed that 28 women had miscarriages while in detention during the 2017 and 2018 fiscal years.

I have heard directly and through media reports that these immigration detention centers sometimes isolate detained women, either in response to perceived mental health issues or as punishment, leaving them unable to interact with one another, their own children or the volunteer lawyers who are trying to help them.

These practices echo and exacerbate survivors’ experiences with past abuse and violence. That is, detention settings may resemble control tactics used by

abusers, traffickers or other perpetrators, compounding previous trauma.

A previously detained woman I’ll call Lourdes described what she experienced as dehumanizing. “You feel like an animal, as if you aren’t worth anything,” she explained.

One problem is how these facilities are set up.

Sandra, another former detainee, spent more than a month in the Karnes County Residential Center in Karnes City, Texas. Having heard it would be shelter for families, she and her daughter were surprised by the barbed wire and razor wire surrounding the facility.

“At the entrance, there were nice glass doors that said, ‘Karnes Residential,’ but that was just a facade,” Sandra said. “It is a jail, a jail for families, families like mine that don’t have anyone in the United States, who come just to stay alive and because they want to see their children alive and well, for things to be better in the future.”

### LASTING REPERCUSSIONS

We found that the problems don’t end once women are released from detention.

Rather, survivors face considerable immediate and long-term needs and risks. Right after being released from detention, they may simply be left at a bus station with little or no money, supplies or information about reuniting with relatives. This leaves communities across the country scrambling to fill gaps.

Many of these women, understandably, need help finding medical care, counseling, jobs, lawyers and social services. The rough start they get off to increases their risks of becoming homeless and having trouble making ends meet. It also reduces their ability to pay back the thousands of dollars they borrow to escape violence and to cover their bonds – money the authorities collect upon a detainee’s release that is similar to bail in criminal cases.

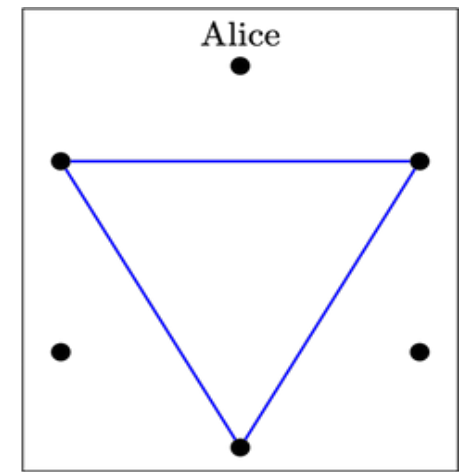
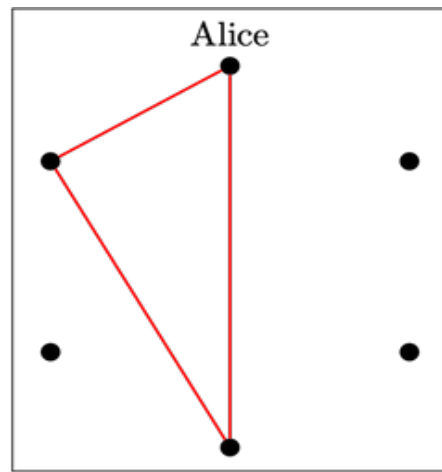
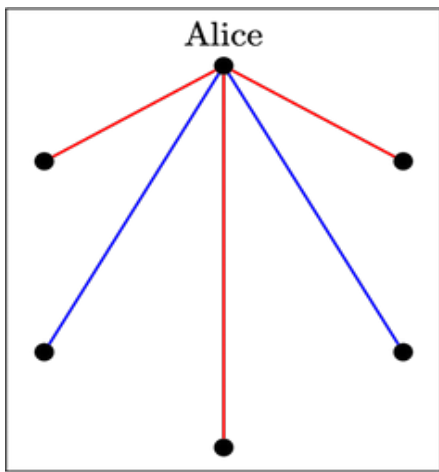
### WHAT MIGHT WORK BETTER?

Federal agencies such as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, as well as advocacy organizations such as National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health and Casa de Esperanza, propose approaches that aid healing.

They oppose the current detainment practices that seclude, isolate and restrict the ability of survivors of sexual violence to move around freely and to make their own decisions.

Immigrant rights advocates and mental health professionals argue that asylum-seekers should not be held in detention centers. Community-based alternatives would cost less and be more humane. They also advocate for training staff to work with people who have experienced trauma as the victims of violence and coercion.

*[the writer is Assistant Professor of Social Work, St. Edward’s University]*



Friends

Strangers

# Why Facebook belongs in the math classroom

JONATHAN HULGAN  
*theconversation.com*

Take a close look at your Facebook friends.

Some of your friends are also friends with each other, while others are not. It’s quite likely that you can find a “clique” who are all friends with each other.

It’s also possible you may have a group of Facebook friends who are all mutual strangers, where nobody is friends with anybody else in the group; let’s call such a group an “anti-clique.”

It wouldn’t take long to find a clique or anti-clique of at least three people. In fact, among any six people, there will be a group of three that forms either a clique or an anti-clique.

This exercise might seem frivolous, but there’s an underlying structure here that serves as an effective illustration of certain advanced mathematics. I use examples like these in the classroom to engage undergraduates in mathematical reasoning without detailed computations.

### GRAPHING CLIQUES

Let’s return to the problem of finding a clique or anti-clique. Consider a girl called Alice who is spending time with five people. Among these five, Alice must see either more friends or more strangers.

If Alice sees more friends than strangers, that means there are at least three people who are all friends with Alice. If any pair within these three people are friends, then they form a clique of

three people with Alice. If none of these three are friends, then we have found an anti-clique of three people.

The same situation would work if you assumed Alice saw more strangers than friends.

This argument is a relatively simple result from the area of pure mathematics known as graph theory.

In mathematics, graphs sometimes refer to the graphical representation of functions, such as lines, parabolas and other curves. Graph theory studies something different. It focuses on the properties of mathematical structures that abstractly model relationships between objects. The objects can be represented by points, called vertices; related objects would have their corresponding vertices connected by a line called an edge.

In the Facebook example, a graph theorist would consider a graph whose vertices represent the collection of friends. An edge would connect each pair of individuals who were Facebook friends with each other.

Precisely speaking, when a graph is defined by a relation on some collection of objects, as is the case here, it is called a “network.” So Facebook truly describes a “social network.”

### ASKING MORE QUESTIONS

Most students I encounter have never studied graph theory; it’s rare for it to appear in high school or a lower-level math course.

This is unfortunate, as I feel that graph theory provides a perfect setting

for practicing mathematical arguments without requiring tedious calculations – just as in the example with Alice and her Facebook friends.

What’s more, graph theory lends itself nicely to the development of questions of real mathematical substance. My simple demonstration of the presence of a three-person clique or anti-clique in any group of six people can motivate further questions from the curious observer: When can you guarantee a four-person clique or anti-clique? If three relationships are possible between individuals – for instance, friends, strangers and acquaintances – when would you be guaranteed to see a three-person clique, anti-clique or “pseudo-clique” of mere acquaintances?

These and similar questions were answered in 1955 by mathematicians Robert Greenwood and Andrew Gleason. The mathematical contributions of Greenwood and Gleason are profound and numerous. However, no mathematical expertise is required to develop such questions, nor is it needed to enjoy the pursuit of a complete solution.

### TEACHING GRAPH THEORY

This August, I will teach a course entitled “Graph Theory: Problems, Proofs and Conjectures,” specifically geared toward incoming first-year students. Using concepts from graph theory, my course will introduce students to the process by which knowledge is developed and discovered in mathematics.

Many math courses focus on de-

veloping the tools for demonstrating the logical truth of mathematical statements. While my seminar will include a healthy dose of this – including fundamentals of writing formal mathematical proof – it will also require students to develop novel mathematical statements for which it is unknown whether its outcome is true or false.

One of the first problems we will examine is the Facebook friends problem described earlier. I will not bring up Greenwood and Gleason’s work, but I expect at least one or two students will pose some variation of the problems they considered.

Just as graph theory is one area among many within the larger field of mathematics, the types of problems presented here represent only one sort of question considered by graph theorists. My seminar will investigate questions from other parts of graph theory, including the famous traveling salesman problem – for which there exist a number of curious applications – and graph coloring problems, which are my particular interest.

In my view, graph theory illuminates an underlying nature of mathematics that can often seem hidden behind the numbers and computations of algebra and calculus. Introducing questions such as these in the classroom can let students see a side of mathematics they might not have considered before.

*[the writer is Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Emory University]*



## Asaram's son Narayan Sai held guilty in rape case



**SURAT, APR 26 (PTI):** A sessions court here Friday convicted Narayan Sai, son of jailed self-styled godman Asaram Bapu, in a rape case filed against him by a former woman devotee in 2013.

The sentence will be pronounced on April 30.

Besides Sai (47), who is lodged at Lajpore Jail here since 2013, the court held four of his aides, including two women, guilty of various offences.

Sai was convicted under IPC sections 376 (rape), 377 (unnatural offences), 323 (assault), 506-2 (criminal intimidation) and 120-B (conspiracy).

Of the 11 accused, six were acquitted.

Additional Sessions Judge P S Gadhvi will pronounce the quantum of punishment on April 30. The minimum punishment for rape is 10 years in jail, while the maximum punishment is life imprisonment.

Sai's aides-- Dharmishtha alia Ganga, Bhavna alias Jamuna and Pavan alias Hanuman--were held guilty for being part of a conspiracy. Sai's driver Rajkumar alias Ramesh Malhotra was held guilty under IPC section 212 (harbouring an offender).

Ganga and Jamuna, also called "sadhika" (women disciples), were accused of putting the victim in illegal confinement and thrashing

her at Sai's behest. They were also accused of trying to brainwash her into agreeing to have a relationship with Sai.

Hanuman, a loyal "sadhak" (disciple) of Sai, was accused of abetment, including taking the victim to Sai's room.

Surat Police had filed a 1,100-page charge sheet against Sai in 2014.

In 2013, after Asaram was arrested for raping a girl in Rajasthan, two Surat-based women accused Asaram and his son of sexual exploitation.

The elder sister accused Asaram of sexual assaults between 1997 and 2006 when she lived at his Ahmedabad ashram.

The younger sister accused the godman's son of sexual assaults when she lived at Asaram's ashram in Jahangirpura area of Surat between 2002 and 2005.

Sai was arrested from Delhi-Haryana border in December 2013.

When he was in jail, Surat Police claimed to have unearthed Sai's plans to bribe police officers, doctors and even judicial officers to weaken the case against him.

Asaram, meanwhile, was convicted by a Jodhpur court for rape. The trial against him in the case filed by the Surat-based woman is going on at a Gandhinagar court.

## Bengal will offer Modi rosogollas made of clay : Mamata

**RANIGANJ/ASANSOL (WB), APR 26 (PTI):** Miffed over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's disclosure that she sends him kurtas and sweets, a vitriolic Mamata Banerjee Friday said that the people of Bengal will offer him 'rosogollas' made of clay with fillings of gravel instead of votes.

The Trinamool Congress supremo had earlier said that the BJP will score a 'big rosogolla', also invoked in the state to mean score zero in examination due to the shape of its famed sweet, in the ongoing general elections from West Bengal, which sends 42 MPs to the Lok Sabha.

"Narendra Modi is coming to Bengal regularly to seek votes. But the people will give him rosogollas made of clay with fillings of gravel; his teeth will break if he tries to take a bite," Banerjee said at a rally at Raniganj. Banerjee had earlier said that Modi has made a "political issue" of the "courtesy" shown by her by making public that she sends sweets to him.

Claiming that Modi does not suit the position of prime minister, she said "I have never seen such a prime minister, making below standard remarks."

Asking BJP not to politicise the name of Lord Ram, she said "Hindus or Muslims do not

indulge in riots, it is RSS which does it."

She alleged that before Modi came to power, there was no communal strife in Asansol or Raniganj and accused BJP of bringing money from neighbouring Jharkhand and creating trouble in West Bengal.

Communal tension gripped the two industrial and mining towns during Ram Navami celebrations in 2018.

On Modi's claim of 'goondagiri' (strong-arm tactics) by her, Banerjee said "He does not even know how to talk about a woman."

She accused that BJP candidate in Asansol, union minister Babul Supriyo of "audacious behaviour" and urged people not to vote for him.

The singer-turned politician, who won the Asansol seat in 2014 and went on to become a union minister of state in the Narendra Modi government, had at one time shared a friendly relationship with the West Bengal chief minister.

He had even raised eyebrows in political circles by having "phuchkas" (panipuris) with Banerjee in front of the Victoria Memorial in Kolkata after being given a lift in her car on way to the Raj Bhavan in May 2015.

# From boardroom fights to poll battle, Mahua Moitra leading TMC's charge in Bengal's Krishnanagar

**SOUMYAJIT MAJUMDER KRISHNANAGAR, APR 26 (PTI):** Run from a two-storey building, the campaign office of Mahua Moitra, the TMC candidate from Krishnanagar constituency, is nothing short of a modern-day electioneering spectacle.

It is helmed by six young Supreme Court lawyers from Delhi and supported by 30 youths from Trinamool Congress's local unit. The team uninterruptedly works the phones and laptops round-the-clock, seeking feedback from party workers and offering immediate solutions to them.

Moitra, a former investment banker, steps in when the matter is serious. "I always do my elections like this," she said.

"We are not a cadre-based party and elections are not won (just) like that. I have names of 20 party workers in all of the nearly 1,900 booths. So reaching out to everyone, training polling agents, handling proce-

dural work, everything is done from here and my brother-in-law is heading all this," she told PTI.

An MLA from Karimpur assembly segment in the parliamentary constituency, Moitra is fighting her maiden Lok Sabha election.

She was fielded from Krishnanagar after Mamata Banerjee's party denied ticket to Tapas Paul, a two-time MP and actor-turned-politician.

Paul was in jail for 13 months in connection with the Rs 17,000-crore Rose Valley chit-fund scam, and had also hogged headlines for his rape comment in July 2014, for which he later apologised.

Moitra had been scouring the dust in rural areas as she tried to blunt the challenge put up by her main rivals BJP's Kalyan Chaubey, a former Indian footballer, and CPI(M)'s Shantanu Jha, a professor of agri-sciences. A Hindutva upsurge in the region has

complicated her road to success.

But she appeared confident about her win from Krishnanagar, saying she is thinking only about how big her winning margin will be.

While Mamata Banerjee has held two rallies and a roadshow in her support, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP chief Amit Shah have held public meetings for the BJP candidate.

The saffron party has identified Krishnanagar as one of the 23 seats they are targeting to win in Bengal this general election.

Let them come, it doesn't matter. It's a very nice place. Let the prime minister fight the election against me from here, he will lose. For me the question was never about winning or losing, the matter is I want a very good margin and I am in race for that, she said.

Moitra took a plunge into politics in 2008. Initially, she joined Congress chief Rahul Gand-

hi's "Aam Aadmi Ka Sipahi" project of which she was the Bengal in-charge. Later, she joined the Trinamool Congress. "I had managed Congress campaign for Bankura Lok Sabha seat in 2009. After that I joined Trinamool and managed campaigns for civic polls, assembly polls, panchayat elections and also fought my own election in 2016 (from Karimpur assembly seat).

"I know how to work on the ground. Once you are an MLA you learn about governance and how you have to work for people. All these things have helped me and obviously gives me an edge," she said.

Did she ever regret or feel disenchanted with politics after leaving a cushy job in the US, where she worked as vice president at JP Morgan?

"I always knew I wanted to join politics. When I turned 30, I knew this was the time. Ob-

viously, my family was vigorously against it. My parents would not talk to me for years. But this was what I wanted to do," she said.

For her, she said, investment banking is no different from fighting polls.

"Both the spheres have basic things in common. You need to have capacity for physical and mental labour and both require enormous amount of self-discipline as you need to deal with the time when you go through lows. Also, you need to be perseverant and tenacious."

Moitra said she is focussing on local issues in Krishnanagar constituency as "the local issues here are the local issues everywhere" that is infrastructure, employment.

"In Karimpur, the arsenic level in water was very high, I got that fixed as an MLA. I also built roads worth nearly Rs 60 crore. "In Krishnanagar, NH-

34 is a big problem. It's owned by central agencies, have to get that done. Also need a bypass road for the town, Moitra said.

On Tapas Paul, she said he was not well and people saw that.

People haven't asked me anything about him. It's only the media which has asked me this. I have come here with my own record and my party has decided that. So I don't think I need to say anything else, she added, as a few Trinamool Congress workers visited her with updates of her ongoing election campaign.

In the 2014 Lok Sabha election, the TMC managed about 35 per cent votes in the constituency, defeating the CPI(M) candidate who bagged around 29 per cent votes. BJP came third with 26 per cent votes.

Krishnanagar in Nadia district will vote in the fourth phase on April 29. The Congress has named Intaj Ali Shah.

## Bengal will offer Modi rosogollas made of clay : Mamata

**RANIGANJ/ASANSOL (WB), APR 26 (PTI):** Miffed over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's disclosure that she sends him kurtas and sweets, a vitriolic Mamata Banerjee Friday said that the people of Bengal will offer him 'rosogollas' made of clay with fillings of gravel instead of votes.

The Trinamool Congress supremo had earlier said that the BJP will score a 'big rosogolla', also invoked in the state to mean score zero in examination due to the shape of its famed sweet, in the ongoing general elections from West Bengal, which sends 42 MPs to the Lok Sabha.

"Narendra Modi is coming to Bengal regularly to seek votes. But the people will give him rosogollas made of clay with fillings of gravel; his teeth will break if he tries to take a bite," Banerjee said at a rally at Raniganj.

Banerjee had earlier said that Modi has made a "political issue" of the "courtesy" shown by her by making public that she sends sweets to him.

Claiming that Modi



does not suit the position of prime minister, she said "I have never seen such a prime minister, making below standard remarks."

Asking BJP not to politicise the name of Lord Ram, she said "Hindus or Muslims do not indulge in riots, it is RSS which does it."

She alleged that before Modi came to power, there was no communal strife in Asansol or Raniganj and accused BJP of bringing money from neighbouring Jharkhand and creating trouble in West Bengal.

Communal tension gripped the two industrial and mining towns during Ram Navami celebrations in 2018.

On Modi's claim of 'goondagiri' (strong-arm

tactics) by her, Banerjee said "He does not even know how to talk about a woman."

She accused that BJP candidate in Asansol, union minister Babul Supriyo of "audacious behaviour" and urged people not to vote for him.

The singer-turned politician, who won the Asansol seat in 2014 and went on to become a union minister of state in the Narendra Modi government, had at one time shared a friendly relationship with the West Bengal chief minister.

He had even raised eyebrows in political circles by having "phuchkas" (panipuris) with Banerjee in front of the Victoria Memorial in Kolkata after being given a lift in her car on way to the Raj Bhavan in May 2015.

## Gauhati HC reinstates Nagaon DSP Sabita Das

**GUWAHATI, APR 26 (PTI):** The Gauhati High Court on Friday set aside the suspension of Nagaon district Deputy Superintendent of Police Sabita Das, as Assam authorities failed to frame charges against her within the stipulated time in an alleged bribery case.

Justice N Kotiswar Singh reinstated the senior police official with her rank and post as the state government did not frame charges against Das within the three-month period. "The court set aside the suspension order. Her salary and other components will remain as earlier. The detailed judgement is being drafted," Additional Senior Government Advocate Dipankar Nath told PTI here.

Das had filed a writ petition on October 10 last year, after she was placed under suspension for an alleged bribery case

in Nagaon district. She had claimed in the petition that she is a victim of departmental rivalry as she had raised questions over the "nexus of some of the police officials with criminals". Iftiquer Rafique, advocate of Das, said the government must serve notice and frame charges of any wrong doing by a public servant, who is facing disciplinary action, within the stipulated time.

"Forget framing of charges, even notice was not served to Das in these months. The government failed to show any step taken in this case. So, the suspension order was set aside by the court," he added.

Earlier, the court had ordered that Das be paid subsistence allowances, but she claimed she had not received it yet.

The complaint was filed against eight parties and the high court had issued notices to the Assam

government, home secretary, home and political secretary, Director General of Police, Additional DGP (Administration), Additional DGP (Law and Order), Nagaon Superintendent of Police and Nagaon Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge.

Das claimed in the petition that "she is a victim of departmental rivalry and the whole alleged complaint is an outcome of the intolerant attitude shown by the petitioner towards illegal activities of some of her subordinate officers, who are the blue-eyed boys of some of her superior officers."

"The petitioner (Das) has every reason to believe that the complaint filed against her and the subsequent departmental inquiry is an outcome of the conspiracy done by some of the officials of her department," the writ petition stated.

## EC bars West Bengal BJP leader for 48 hours over sexually coloured remarks against TMC candidate

**NEW DELHI, APR 26 (PTI):** After a Supreme Court prod, the Election Commission Friday barred BJP's Nadia district president Mahadev Sarkar from campaigning for 48 hours for making sexually coloured remarks against a TMC candidate.

The ban came into force at 4.00 pm on Friday and would remain in force till April 28 evening, an order issued by the commission said.

The EC's decision came a day after the Supreme Court ordered the poll panel to initiate action based on a complaint filed by TMC candidate Mahua

Moitra.

A bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna had on Thursday directed the Election Commission to pass the order "forthwith".

The EC "strongly condemned" and "severely reprimanded" Sarkar for his remarks and said he had violated para 2 of the model code which states that: "Criticism of other political parties, when made, shall be confined to their policies and programme, past record and work. Parties and Candidates shall refrain from criticism of all aspects of private life, not connected with

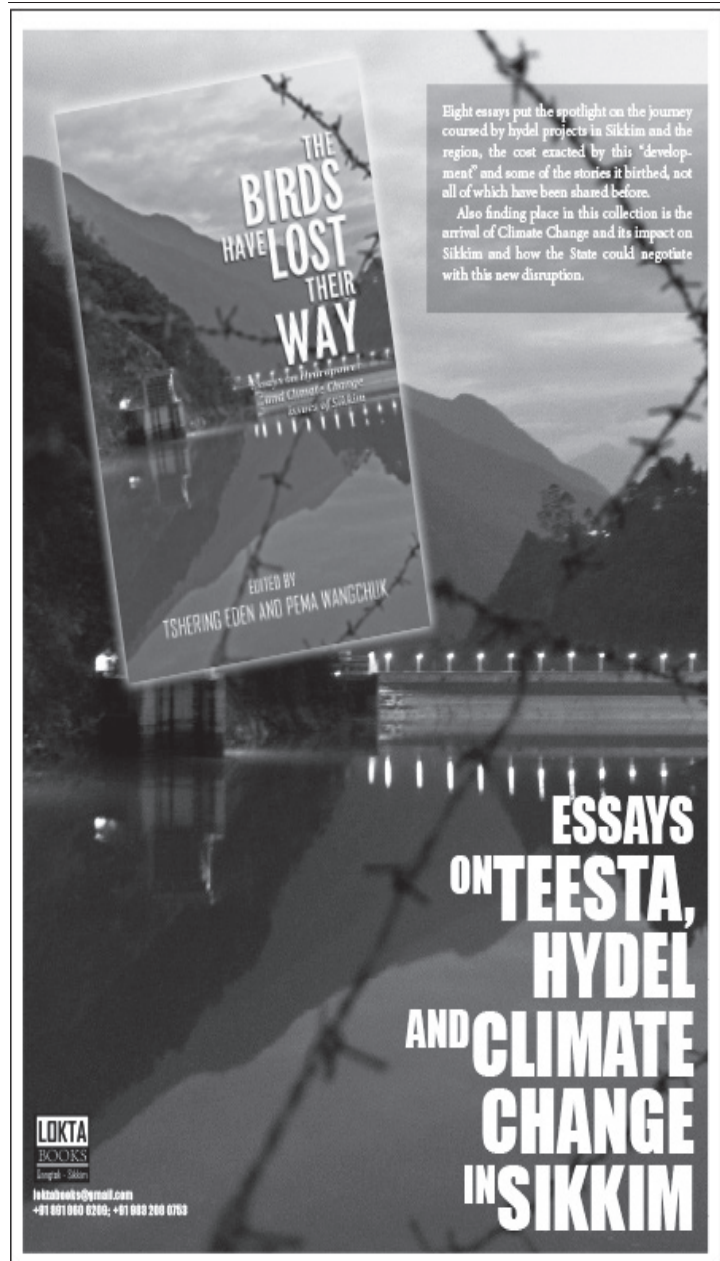
the public activities of the leaders or workers of other parties ..."

Moitra had alleged that Nadia district BJP president Sarkar, in the presence of party candidate Kalyan Chaubey, made sexually coloured remarks against her on April 22.

She said that the poll panel had not taken any action against Sarkar.

In his reply to the commission, Sarkar had not denied making the remarks but had maintained that the issue was not covered under the model code.

The Krishnanagar constituency in Nadia district in West Bengal goes to polls on April 29.





# Guardiola urges caution from City, Man Utd seek Chelsea redemption

**LONDON, APRIL 26 (AFP):** Manchester City and Liverpool are showing no signs of letting up in their thrilling Premier League title race but their flawless form contrasts sharply with the struggles of the teams chasing a top-four finish.

Manchester United host Chelsea on Sunday hoping to arrest an alarming slide of seven defeats in nine games in all competitions. But it is only thanks to the poor form of Maurizio Sarri's men and Arsenal, who have suffered back-to-back defeats against Crystal Palace and Wolves, that United remain in the hunt for Champions League football next season, just three points off the top four.

United's latest defeat to City on Wednesday lifted the defending champions one point ahead of Liverpool with three games left for both sides.

That stretched City's winning streak in the league to 11 games, with the last slip-up by either of the title contenders remarkably now nearly two months ago, when Liverpool were held at Everton.

Liverpool have already surpassed their club-record points tally in the Premier League era, with 88, and Jurgen Klopp's side are expected to retake top spot when already relegated Huddersfield visit Anfield on Friday.

"Now it's clear we are one point behind City and we knew for a long



time if we win our next two games then the decision will be made in the last matchday, and that's quite special," said Klopp on Thursday.

City are not in action until Sunday, when they travel to Burnley, and manager Pep Guardiola is wary of his side getting

too over-excited at clearing what was expected to be the toughest hurdle left at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

"I know people are going to talk about how beautiful we are, how handsome we are," said Guardiola. "But now we have to go to Burnley --

and in my two previous seasons going to Burnley was incredibly tough." City, who amassed a record haul of 100 points last season, still dropped two at Turf Moor in a 1-1 draw.

**- SOLSKJAER SEEKS GOALS -** Behind the top two,

Tottenham look well set to secure a fourth straight season of Champions League football, opening up a four-point gap on fifth-placed Arsenal thanks to a hard-fought 1-0 win over Brighton on Tuesday.

Spurs can widen that lead over their north London rivals even further when West Ham travel to the new Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on Saturday hoping to become the first visiting team to score at the fifth time of asking in the club's new home.

Arsenal could then move into the top four early on Sunday if they can cure their travel sickness and shore up a dismal defensive record at Leicester.

A point would be

enough to edge Unai Emery's men above Chelsea on goal difference before Sarri's team kick off at Old Trafford, where United will aim to end a near nine-hour drought without scoring from open play.

"We need more quality on Sunday," admitted United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

"Of course we want to get into the top four. I haven't been planning on playing on

Thursday nights (in the Europa League) yet. We just have to make sure we give ourselves a chance on Sunday." - Battle for seventh and survival -

The prospect of Europa League football may not be enticing for Solskjaer but Watford, Wolves,

Everton and Leicester are all showing their appetite for European football with seventh enough for Europa League qualification if City beat Watford in the FA Cup final.

Wolves are in pole position and travel to Watford on Saturday seeking revenge for their FA Cup semi-final collapse after blowing a 2-0 lead in the final 11 minutes.

And it is a huge weekend for Cardiff's chances of catching Brighton and avoiding relegation.

The Welsh side, third from bottom, trail Brighton by three points and have an inferior goal difference, but travel to already relegated Fulham before Brighton, who have not scored for seven games, host Newcastle later on Saturday.

## Amit Panghal continues golden run; silver for Bisht at Asian Championships

**BANGKOK, APR 26 (PTI):** Amit Panghal (52kg) picked up his second successive gold medal of the year, while Pooja Rani (81kg) finished on top among the women to bring a fine end to India's phenomenal campaign in the Asian Boxing Championships here Friday.

India ended with 13 medals -- two gold, four silver and seven bronze medals -- in the tournament which was held simultaneously for men and women for the first time.

Panghal, who won the Asian Games gold medal last year, defeated Korea's Kim Inkyu in a unanimous decision. He came into the tournament on the back of a gold at the Strandja Memorial Tournament in February in Bulgaria.

"It all went as I had planned. I am very happy. As for my bouts, I am satisfied with how I performed," Panghal, who is now assured of a berth in the world championships later this year, told PTI.

"It is an amazing performance, I am so proud," added Indian boxing's High Performance Director Santiago Nieva.

The 28-year-old Pooja, a silver-medallist at the event in 2012, struck gold among the women by defeating China's Wang Lina.

The Haryana pugilist took to boxing against the wishes of her father, who relented after six months of pleading by the boxer and her coaches in Bhiwani. She also has an Asian Games



bronze medal, which she claimed in 2014.

However, national champion Deepak Singh (49kg), Kavinder Singh Bisht (56kg) and Ashish Kumar (75kg) signed off with silver medals among the men after contrasting losses. In the women's draw, national champion Simranjit Kaur (64kg) ended with a silver.

The previous best by Indian men at this tournament was in 2009, when the team won a gold, two silver and four bronze and they equalled that performance this year.

Shiva Thapa (60kg), Ashish (69kg) and Satish Kumar (+91kg) claimed bronze medals among the men this time.

This was Panghal's maiden international competition since moving up to 52kg from the 49kg division earlier this year. Panghal had won a bronze in the 2015 edition of the event.

Up against a lanky opponent, who was willing to play the waiting game,

Panghal started in his usual aggressive style.

The strategy of stumping rivals with relentless attacks paid off against Inkyu and the Korean simply had no answer to Panghal's aggression.

The Indian managed to corner his rival quite often and his solid defences thwarted the feeble attempts at connecting by Inkyu.

Earlier, at the end of Deepak's highly contentious split loss to No-dirjon Mirzahmedov of Uzbekistan, the Indian contingent handed the referee the yellow card meant for seeking a review, which was introduced in the tournament on a trial basis this year.

However, Nieva told PTI that the gesture was merely to highlight "how wrong" the decision was. "We cannot get the decision changed. Just a protest here," he said.

"The system will officially start in the world championships," added national coach C A Kuttappa.

Bisht, on the other

hand, also lost to an Uzbek, Mirzazibek Mirzahalilov, in a unanimous decision. The boxer from Uttarakhand fought with a bandage over his right eye but did not back down from going for the offensive.

The aggressive approach resulted in his wound, sustained in the semifinals, opening up just a minute into the third round. This made Bisht slightly defensive and allowed the Uzbek to edge ahead.

Deepak also put up a gutsy performance that failed to find favour with the judges.

It was a bout in which both the boxers were mostly looking to counter-attack. Deepak's focus was getting his straight punches across, while Mirzahmedov looked to connect right hooks occasionally.

The Indian was a clear winner in the opening round but Mirzahmedov came back strongly in the second.

The Uzbek turned a shade defensive in the last three minutes, which

gave Deepak a chance to assert himself. However, the final outcome was in favour of the Uzbek, much to the surprise of the Indian camp.

Later, Ashish went down to Kazakhstan's Tursynbay Kulakhmet in a unanimous decision.

In the women's finals, national champion Simranjit squared off against China's reigning world champion Dou Dan, before Pooja fought it out with Lina.

Kaur took the ring first and lost in a unanimous decision to Dan. The Indian had her moments, especially in the second round, but was no match to Dan's counter-attacks.

Rani was in action in the last Indian bout of the day and was grit personified in her battle against Lina.

She started rather slow but picked up momentum as the bout progressed to fetch a split verdict from the judges.

Settling for bronze medals among the women were veteran former champion L Sarita Devi (60kg), last edition's silver-medallist Manisha (54kg), former junior world champion Nikhat Zareen (51kg) and world silver-medallist Sonia Chahal (57kg).

"It is a brilliant performance but could have been better had some of the close decisions gone our way," national women's coach Mohammed Ali Qamar said.

"At least two more semifinals should have been won by Indians," he added.

## India's junior footballers to play Mexico, USA and Slovenia



**NEW DELHI, APR 26 (PTI):** Keeping an eye on the AFC U-16 Qualifiers, the Indian junior national team departed for an exposure trip to Italy, where they will be playing against USA, Mexico, and Slovenia.

Boys born on or after January 1, 2004 are a part of the group, and are being coached by Bibiano Fernandes, who had guided the U-15 colts to the quarterfinals of the AFC U-16 Championship in Malaysia 2018.

In Italy, the team will be participating in the MU-15 Championship.

They were a match away from a direct qualification into the FIFA U-17 World Cup, but eventually

went down to Korea Republic by a solitary goal.

"We had good success with the previous batch, and are looking to build a similar setup this time too," Bibiano said.

"USA, Mexico, and Slovenia are big teams. It will be good for the boys to play against such developed sides. We conducted trials throughout the country and scouted boys from different parts like Kohlapur, Goa, Kerala, Mizoram, Manipur," he added.

The coach believes that although his team is shaping up well, the boys still need to work on their basics.

"We still have to work on the basics on a few areas. But the boys are

learning quickly," said Bibiano.

"From having the previous team to building a new one, it's been quite a learning curve for me as a coach as well."

Six boys from last season's U-16 team including Rohit Danu, Vikram Partap Singh, Gurkirat Singh were part of Indian Arrows' I-League campaign in the 2018-19 season. Danu went on to score four goals, becoming the youngest-ever goal-scorer in I-League history, while Vikram netted one. Schedule in Italy: April 28: USA vs India April 29: Mexico vs India April 30: Slovenia vs India.

## Inswingers coming off well after county stint: Aaron



**KOLKATA, APR 26 (PTI):** Rajasthan Royals pacer Varun Aaron credited his county stint for his improvement as a bowler, following the team's three-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL here.

In an excellent new-ball spell of 3-1-10-2, Aaron removed both the Kolkata Knight Riders openers -- Chris Lynn (0) and Shubman Gill (14) -- with inswinging deliveries.

"I've always bowled inswing but it's coming off a lot better after my county stint," said Aaron, who was not bought by any team for IPL 2018 and went on to play county cricket with Leicestershire, on Thursday.

Aaron took full advantage of the Eden greentop and delivered a beauty to clean up Gill

with a knuckle-ball that sharply cut back in.

"I used to rely on my outswing a lot before. But last year when I was not playing the IPL, I played county cricket and did work on my inswing which is really handy because on wickets like these you can't get give much of room. So there's no point bowling outswing at my pace," the 29-year-old said.

Aaron said he would be returning to county cricket.

"I'm looking forward to going and playing in county cricket after the IPL because I've some time. I really enjoyed my time last year. I don't really know which team will need a fast bowler since I'm going to join mid-season. It all depends on availability of the current players and their fitness and form."

All-praise for the Eden wicket, Aaron said it was a very good cricketing surface.

"The wicket definitely had something for everybody, not just me. I was looking forward to bowling here because it had more bounce than the other wickets we played on.

"Since we won the toss and chose to bowl, we knew there would be a little seam movement up front. I always love bowling at Eden and it is one of my favourite places to bowl and it has a value-for-shot outfield."

Thais was his only second appearance for Rajasthan Royals this season and the pacer said: "It was more of a team combination thing and management's decision. There was no injury concern at all."

## Will approach all our World Cup games like we do against India: Sarfaraz Ahmed

**KARACHI, APR 26 (PTI):** Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed has said that his team will approach every match of the upcoming World Cup like it does against arch-rivals India.

In an interview to a television channel, the wicketkeeper-batsman was expectedly asked about the June 16 match against India.

"The match against India is very important in many ways but it is one match and we need to play all our remaining matches in the tournament like we are playing against India," he said.

The Pakistan squad is presently camped in Kent county where it is

holding a camp and also play a practice game on April 27.

Pakistan will play a T20 international and five match ODI series against hosts England before the World Cup beginning May 30.

All eyes are on how reserve players Muhammad Aamir and batsman Asif Ali perform against England.

There is also lot of interest around the performances of teenaged fast bowler Muhammad Hasnain who has been named in the World Cup squad.

Chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq has said that if Aamir and Asif produce impressive



performances against England they could be considered for the World Cup as changes can be made in the 15 member squad until May 23.

Sarfaraz said that he was under no pressure as captain before the mega-event.

"Where I bat we will decide as the matches go but there is complete unanimity between me and Mickey Arthur and

the selection committee over the players selected," he said when asked if he had been consulted in the finalisation of the squad.

Sarfaraz said his team had the talent and depth to surprise any team but it was important for players to gain momentum and maintain it in the tournament as every team would have to play nine games to qualify for

the knockout stage.

To a question, he said he was happy that other teams had been given the favourites tag in the World Cup. "It is good for us as it means there will be more pressure on the teams given the favourite tag and it also means that we can play as underdogs that is when we give our best and perform."

Sarfaraz also made it clear he was excited about playing in the World Cup as a captain and player.

He didn't feel having just two survivors from the 2015 World Cup, including himself and batsman Haris Sohail, in the present squad carried any significance.



# China tries to allay fears over BRI, says it's not an exclusive club



BY K J M VARMA

**BEIJING, APR 26 (PTI):** President Xi Jinping on Friday sought to ease global concerns over debt traps and regional hegemony by China using the BRI project, saying his ambitious infrastructure project "is not an exclusive club" and vowed that it will have complete transparency and "zero tolerance" for corruption.

In his inaugural address to the 2nd Belt and Road Forum (BRF) attended by 37 heads of state and governments besides officials from 150 countries and international organisations, Xi said China wants to build its trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) based on "open, green and clean cooperation".

India has been boycotting the BRI to protest over the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) being laid through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is the flagship project of BRI.

This time, the US also joined India in skipping the BRF.

The Trump administration has been extremely critical of the BRI and is of the view that China's "predatory financing" is leaving smaller countries under huge debt endangering their sovereignty.

In an apparent reference to "debt trap" criticism and China using BRI as a geopolitical tool to attain superpower status, Xi said BRI is "not an exclusive club".

"Everything should be done in a transparent way and we should have zero tolerance for corruption," Xi said.

Xi said China will not engage in beggar-thy-neighbour currency devaluation.

China will continue to improve the exchange rate formation mechanism of its currency, the renminbi, and keep the exchange rate generally stable on a reasonable and balanced level, he said.

Xi said the joint building of the Belt and Road has opened up new space for the world's economic growth and it has also created a new platform to boost international trade and investment, expanded new practices to optimise global econom-

ic governance, and made new contributions to improving people's well-being in all countries.

China on Thursday signalled that it is seeking to address the concerns of debt financing with a promise of "sustainable financing" for smaller countries to ease debt burden.

Concerns over BRI financing became vocal after China acquired Sri Lanka's strategic Hambantota port on a 99-year lease as a debt swap in 2017.

The BRI was launched by President Xi when he came to power in 2013. It aims to link Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa and Europe with a network of land and sea routes.

China is doling out huge sums of money for infrastructure projects in countries from Asia to Africa and Europe, enhancing its global influence.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, Nepal President Bidhya Devi Bhandari, Myanmar state councillor Aung San Suu Kyi are among the top leaders taking part in the event. Besides, France, Germa-

ny, the UK, Spain, Japan, South Korea and the EU will send high-level representatives to the forum. Unlike his 2017 speech to the first BRF during which he announced about USD 124 billion additional financing for BRI projects, Xi's address this year has not contained any monetary announcements pledging fresh capital for the projects.

His speech highlighted on co-development focussing more on deflecting criticism and doubts about the multi-billion-dollar initiative.

His speech was delivered just hours after an announcement by President Trump that Xi would visit the White House soon. Some of the measures announced in Xi's speech have been under lengthy discussions during the trade talks with the US, the Hong Kong based South China Morning Post reported.

In his address, Xi vowed to abolish subsidies to firms that impede fair competition -- addressing a major bone of contention in US trade talks.

He promised to prohibit forced technology transfer and said Chi-

na will be protecting legitimate rights and interests of foreign owners of intellectual property rights.

China will create a business environment in which the value of knowledge is respected, he said. China will support 5,000 people from innovation sector in Belt and Road countries in conducting exchanges, training programmes and joint researches in the next five years.

China will work with other participants of the BRI to promote scientific and cultural exchanges, Xi said. China will allow foreign investors to operate businesses in more sectors with controlling or full stake.

China will also negotiate and sign high-standard free trade agreements with more countries, Xi added.

China will work with other parties to promote a coalition of sustainable cities and an international coalition for green development under the BRI, he said.

A total of 10,000 representatives of political parties, think tanks and non-governmental organisations from countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative will be invited to China for exchanges in the next five years, he said.

He said China will increase imports of goods and services on a larger scale.

China will further lower its tariff rates and continuously open up its market and welcome quality products from around the world. He also called on all countries to create a sound investment environment and treat Chinese enterprises, students and scholars abroad as equals, he said.

## 2 injured in explosion at Tata Steel plant in UK



**LONDON, APR 26 (PTI):** Two people suffered minor injuries in a pre-dawn explosion at a Tata Steel plant in Port Talbot in Wales, the UK's largest steelworks, police said on Friday as workers' unions called for a full review before production work is resumed.

The blast occurred around 0335 GMT, with emergency fire crews rushing to battle the blaze. South Wales Police confirmed that all workers had been accounted for after an explosion from a train carrying molten metal into the works caused "small fires".

"Emergency services remain on scene but we have had confirmation that all members of staff are accounted for and there are only two casualties with minor injuries," South Wales Police said in a statement.

"Early indications are that the seat of the explosion was a train which carries molten metal into the works. The explosion caused some small fires which are all under control and damage to some buildings on the site, the statement noted.

The police said that the local South West Fire and Rescue Service confirmed that there is no need for concerns regarding any "hazardous effects" of the smoke from the fire and that the nearby M4 motorway remains open.

Tata Steel confirmed that the fire had been caused by a train carrying molten metal and that an investigation has been launched into the

incident. "We can confirm two of our employees were slightly injured when there was a spillage of liquid iron while it was travelling to the steel plant," according to a company statement on Twitter.

Both have been released following treatment.

"All fires have now been extinguished. A full investigation has begun," it adds.

The steel firm said the site had reopened by 0700 GMT and that it was assessing any "potential damage" but workers expressed their concerns.

"Our union reps have been in urgent meetings at Port Talbot this morning [Friday] to discuss the incident. They have made it clear to the company that it's important that the time and space is taken to understand how this happened before production is resumed," said a spokesperson for the Community workers' union.

"It is important that all appropriate procedures are followed now to ensure lessons are learnt and any necessary changes are implemented," the spokesperson said.

The Unite union added that a full investigation was important to ensure action is taken on all recommendations.

People living in the area near the steelworks reported that their houses shook with the force of a blast at the site in the early hours of Friday.

Sharon Freeguard, a local Port Talbot councillor, said: "I thought I

heard about two to three explosions. It was extremely frightening and very, very scary.

"The house just shook, so it was quite alarming. Once it was over, I did wonder what it was and just did think about the works. We're just all relieved that there are no fatalities."

Images on social media show large flames at the site and plumes of smoke.

"This incident raises real concerns about safety at the works. It could have been a lot worse. Grateful as always to the emergency services for their rapid and effective response. Tata Steel Europe must conduct a full review, to improve safety," said local MP Stephen Kinnock.

The Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns, also called on Tata Steel Europe to address safety concerns that could arise as a result of the incident.

India's multinational steel-manufacturer Tata Steel is one of Europe's leading steel producers, with steelmaking in the Netherlands and the UK, and manufacturing plants across Europe.

The company supplies high-quality steel products to the most demanding markets, including construction and infrastructure, automotive, packaging and engineering.

Port Talbot produces high-quality steel which is processed at Tata Steels steel mills around the UK for manufacturers in Britain, mainland Europe and other countries around the world.

## Facebook sues New Zealand company to thwart fake likes

**SAN FRANCISCO, APR 26 (AFP):** Facebook on Thursday filed a lawsuit in US federal court to bar a New Zealand company from selling fake "likes," views and followers to Instagram users. The company and three people targeted in the lawsuit operated a service to raise the profile of Instagram accounts by bolstering them with bogus followers, views and "likes," Facebook director of platform enforcement and litigation Jessica Romero said in a blog post. "By filing the lawsuit, we are sending a message that this kind of fraudulent activity is not tolerated on our services, and we will act to protect the integrity of our platform," Romero said. Romero did not identify the company or the individuals names in the legal complaint, which accused them of using fake businesses and websites to sell "engagement services" to Instagram users looking to buy status.

Such activity violates terms of service at Facebook-owned Instagram. "We previously suspended accounts associated with the defendants and formally warned them in writing that they were in violation of our Terms of Use, however their activity persisted," Romero said.

## Facts, not falsehoods should guide people during elections: UN Chief on press freedom

BY YOSHITA SINGH

**UNITED NATIONS, APR 26 (PTI):** UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has underscored the need for free press disseminating reliable information to maintain peace and justice, especially during elections as "facts, not falsehoods" should guide the people while choosing their representatives.

Noting that civic space has been shrinking worldwide at an alarming rate, Guterres said that he is "deeply troubled" by the growing number of attacks against journalists and the culture of impunity.

A free press is essential for peace, justice, sustainable development and human rights. No democracy is complete without access to transparent and reliable information. It is the cornerstone for building fair and impartial institutions, holding leaders accountable and speaking truth to power, Guterres said in his message for the World Press Freedom Day, observed on May 3.

The main celebration of World Press Freedom Day this year will take place in Addis Ababa, from May 1-3. The overall theme of the event



will be the role of media in elections and democracy. Some 100 national events around the world are expected to complement the main celebration.

The day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 following a Recommendation adopted at the twenty-sixth session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1991.

Facts, not falsehoods, should guide people as they choose their representatives. Yet, while technology has transformed the ways in which we receive and share information, sometimes it is used to mislead public opinion or to fuel violence and hatred, he said, apparently referring to the alarming increase in

spread of false and vitriolic information through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp. And with anti-media rhetoric on the rise, so too are violence and harassment against journalists, including women, he said.

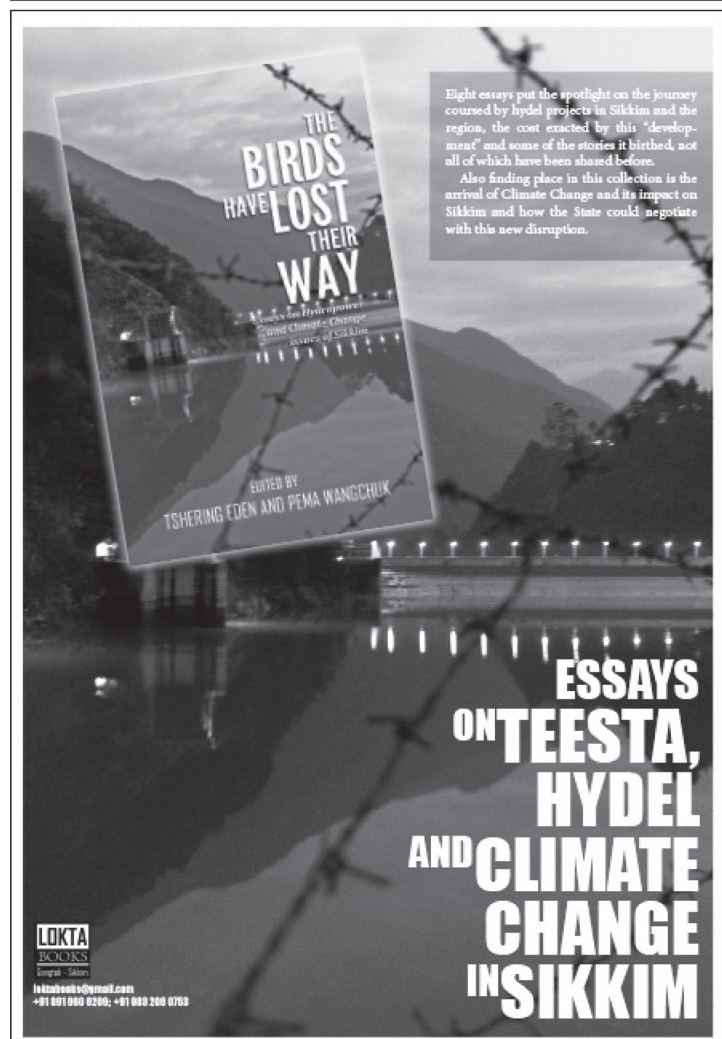
According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), almost 100 journalists were killed in 2018.

Hundreds are imprisoned. When media workers are targeted, societies as a whole pay a price, he said, calling on all to defend the rights of journalists, whose efforts help us to build a better world for all.

The UN chief's statement comes at a time when India is in the mid-

dle of general elections. Concerns have been raised over the use of social media platforms such as Whatsapp and Facebook to spread false information and spark hatred and incidents of violence. Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, social media platforms and the Internet And Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) had presented a Voluntary Code of Ethics for the General Election 2019' to Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora.

The Election Commission of India had said in a statement that the Code of Ethics' has been developed to ensure free, fair and ethical usage of social media platforms to maintain the integrity of the electoral process for the polls.





## In An Era Of Never-Ending Stories, Avengers: Endgame Is Teaching Us How To Say Goodbye

Avengers: Endgame does several things very well, among them achieving an enormously satisfying balance between humor, emotion, narrative clarity and action, and - as has been true with nearly every movie to emerge from this corner of the Marvel Cinematic Universe - leveraging the talents of superb, always-game actors to lend otherwise goofy material both mythic gravitas and welcome irreverence. But perhaps the most important piece of fan service the movie provides isn't a character wink or call-back. It's something that isn't there. For the first time in an Avengers movie, there are no mid-credit extra scenes or final sting to hint what's yet to come in the series. The beauty of Endgame lies in the fact that it's really an ending.

Consider: In the decade-plus since Iron Man blasted the Avengers franchise into the cinematic stratosphere, millions of youngsters and teenagers have come of age never experiencing a film culture that doesn't revolve around Robert Downey Jr.'s snarkily iconic character or Chris Evans' stalwart Captain America or Scarlett Johansson's coolly calculating Black Widow or Chris Hemsworth's self-deprecating Thor or Mark Ruffalo's soulful Hulk. For their forebears, the steady drumbeat of Avengers movies have been a warm bath of nostalgia, a reliable bet for their family entertainment dollar as they sought a reason to tear themselves away from their big-screen TVs. For their kids and grandkids, this isn't just what movies looked like - this is what movies were. And part of that essential DNA was that, even if they stopped, they were never really finished. There was always another installment around the bend.

It might shock them to learn that it wasn't always thus. Movie serials have been around since the era of Flash Gordon and The Perils of Pauline, of course. But some of us also remember a time when Bambi's mother died, and stayed dead: That's life. Butch and Sundance never made it out of Bolivia: End of. Even as formidable an archetype as the Godfather keeled over in his tomato garden and that was it: Basta. And yet: The Godfather was too good - and too successful - to leave it at that. Godfather II managed to be both a prequel and a sequel, an early force in inviting audiences not just to like something and be grateful, but to say - yea, verily demand: More, please. Star Wars changed the game for good five years later, ushering in the era of an ever-accelerating feedback between a corporatized Hollywood hooked on sure things aimed at presold audiences and viewers reluctant to stray beyond a lane narrowed by reassuring familiarity on one side and some-not-too-much novelty on the other.

Still, it bears remembering that fans of the first Star Wars movie had to wait three whole years until they were rewarded with a sequel, an exercise in delayed gratification that looks barbaric in retrospect. Even more than the Trekkers, Potterheads and Twihards who followed, Avengers fans were conditioned to expect not just more please but more right away, rarely going more than a year until their next fix. From the notion of cinema as a self-contained few hours of escapism, movies are now defined, not as discrete aesthetic events but component parts of a seamless, all-enveloping whole: We're all watching One Big Movie now.

The glib explanation for the shift is that it's all the logical result of baby boomers and Gen-Xers unwilling to grow up and incapable of letting go of their most cherished playthings. But it's no surprise that the Avengers movies took hold at precisely the same time that the internet and social media were changing audience behavior and expectations.

Suddenly, it was less important to be substantive than "sticky." Engagement and immersion - which the movies had done best since their inception - became the coin of a realm. In a post-9/11 era of constant shock and cataclysm, we shouldn't wonder that such novelistic plunges as The Sopranos and The Wire so thoroughly captivated their transfixed followers. When contemporary experience seems to be composed of narratively nonsensical shocks to the system, the attraction of coherent, well-constructed alternate realities cannot be underestimated. What better cure for our collective moan to "make it stop" than settling into a comforting

fiction that promises never to stop?

With the Avengers saga and deepest-of-deep-dives Game of Thrones wrapping up this year, the defining poles of early 21st century common culture are forcing their fans to grapple with ideas of closure, absence and interior loss that will



probably leave their youngest fans feeling disoriented at best, disconsolate at worst. ("That movie messed me up," a middle schooler said at an Endgame screening this week.) We might have found that the best way to check out was to check all the way in, all the time, forever - but nothing is forever, as Endgame reminds us with elegiac solemnity and genuine emotion that are sure to ambush even the most skeptical fans.

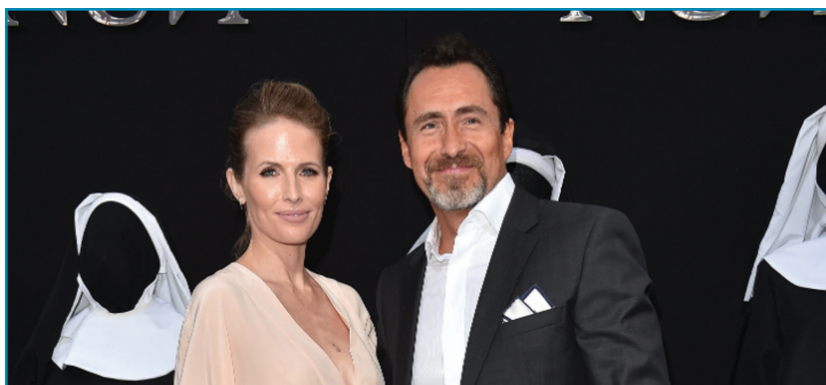
Any movie based on comic book has the right - even the obligation - to play fast and loose with mortality, whether by way of supernatural powers, time travel or the quantum physics of brand extension. Just as the deaths in Avengers: Infinity War might not necessarily have been final final, so a slew of coming films and television shows promise to sustain our most beloved characters or resuscitate their fallen comrades.

Admittedly, Endgame plays at the edges the indeterminacy fans have come to expect, but it's not afraid to do something far more important. Eleven years, 22 films and innumerable characters later - with a few definitive finalities, at least one devastating, full-circle departure and no consoling end-credit caveats - it's doing the difficult, necessary work of teaching a generation raised on never-ending stories how to say goodbye.



**THE SMILE SAYS IT ALL!** The actress, Hailee Steinfeld glows while holding an adorable pooch during WE Day in Inglewood, Calif.

## Actor Demian Bichir's wife Stephanie Sherk dies



**LOS ANGELES, APR 26 (PTI):** Stefanie Sherk, actor-model and wife of Oscar-nominated actor Demian Bichir, has died. She was 43. According to ENews, the Los Angeles County medical examiner has ruled Sherk's death as a suicide.

The causes of her death included anoxic encephalopathy; a condition caused by lack of oxygen to brain tissue, drowning and asphyxia. The actor's body was reportedly found at the bottom of the family's swimming pool. In

an Instagram post on Thursday, Bichir said Sherk died "peacefully" on April 20.

"It has been the saddest and toughest time of our lives and we don't know how much time it will take for us to overcome this pain. Stefanie's beautiful, angelical and talented presence will be immensely missed. We will hold Stefanie in our hearts forever," he wrote.

"We thank everybody beforehand for their prayers and we respectfully ask for

your understanding so we may grieve in peace and privacy in these incredibly difficult times. It is our sincerest hope that our beautiful Stefanie, my angel and love of my life, will rest in eternal peace," he added. The couple began their relationship in 2010. They featured together in Bichir's 2016 film "Un Cuento de Circo & A Love Song".

Sherk is best known for appearing in the TV show "CSI: Cyber" and the movie "Valentine's Day".

ISO 9001:2008 certified Company Unit

**Jettwings**

AIRLINES • HOSPITALITY • TOURISM • MANAGEMENT

**Training Institute**

*fly with the Leader...*

**Admissions Open**

PROGRAMMES OFFERED :

**1 year Dual Diploma**

**in**

**CABIN CREW, HOSPITALITY and TOURISM MANAGEMENT**

**For Free Counselling Contact**

**GANGTOK CENTRE**

**+91 74-777-18181**

**+91 62-955-08797**

**Our Star Recruiters**

**gangtok@jettwings.com**  
**Opp. Kanchan Bhog**  
**Near The Regal Hotel**  
**Tadong-737102**  
**East Sikkim**

**ARIES:** Career coup! As the moon mingles with first Saturn and then power broker Pluto in your ambitious tenth house, you could earn a well-deserved payday or promotion. And not a moment too soon! You've been toiling away with your nose to the grindstone—and not just to earn brownie points, thank you very much.

**TAURUS:** "The whole truth and nothing but" is your agenda at today's penetrating merger between the moon and first Saturn and then Pluto. Stop at nothing, Bull, until you excavate the hidden facts and figures you've been looking for. Don the detective's chapeau and start digging. Check the legitimacy of your sources too, since some people might be telling you what they think you want to hear.

**GEMINI:** Secrets always hurt someone, Gemini. There's a fine line between spilling the beans out of loyalty and opting out of other people's business entirely. So which will it be? On the one hand, you would hate to breach trust, but on the other, someone else's reputation could be at stake. As a rule of thumb, steer

clear of any conversation that drifts into gossip terrain.

**CANCER:** Gather round the negotiation table, Cancer. Deliberations are the name of the game under today's cosmic cabal between the moon and first Saturn and then Pluto in your partnership house. While it may seem like you're hitting a wall with someone who just won't budge, your powers of persuasion are amplified now. It's going to take some give and take, but DO stand firm on your principles.

**LEO:** Easy there, Leo! The stars fire a warning salvo, urging you to slow down. You might be ready to go at it hard, but missing important details in haste could backfire later. Today's intense meetups between the moon and first Saturn and then Pluto advise you not to make ego- or fear-based decisions. Instead, trust your intuition while doing as much research as you need. Sure, it's painstaking to comb through the nitty-gritty and address the minutiae of a project. But later, you'll be thankful you didn't cut corners. Remember,

this is a marathon, not a sprint.

**LIBRA:** Home is where your Libran heart is today. Share the love with your closest companions, nurturing your relationships with random acts of kindness. Channel the domestic vibes at the office, bringing in a batch of gluten-free muffins or little succulents for everyone's desk. If someone dear to you has been struggling, lend them your ear and listen without interrupting or judging.

**VIRGO:** It's showtime, Virgo! Fame-focused meetups of the moon with first masterful Saturn and then potent Pluto puts your name in lights. Keep your inbox organized! You won't want to miss that impromptu VIP invite or media request for an interview. Just make sure you give credit where it's due and show your appreciation to your supporters and fans, ideally in a public forum.

**SCORPIO:** Generosity is a wonderful thing, but are you expecting something in return for your noble act of goodwill? As the moon links up with first Saturn and then Pluto, take a hard look at your magnanimity. If you're placing expectations on other people, you're setting

the stage for resentment. Practice giving without secretly hoping you'll get something in return.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Today's connections between the moon and first serious Saturn and then power broker Pluto in your money zone prompts a deeper look at your financial patterns. Think before you reach for your wallet, especially when it comes to a large expense that maybe just maybe you don't really need. If you're frustrated by a lack of momentum in your career, look back at how much progress you've made since you first began this trajectory!

**CAPRICORN:** Are you suffering needlessly by working yourself to the bone? Sure, your tireless ambition and persistence reaps great success, but it doesn't have to be such a struggle either. Today, the Capricorn moon connects to (first) pragmatic Saturn, your ruler, and then penetrating Pluto, encouraging you to reach for the low-hanging fruit and simplify your goal-setting!

**AQUARIUS:** Pit's hard for you to say no, Aquarius, but will saying yes drain you? Set

firm boundaries with a needy friend or loved one as the moon gets in step with (first) stern Saturn and then moody Pluto. Watch for temptation to dive in for the rescue; save the hero act for another time. You don't have to dismiss this person entirely. Show your support by asking poignant questions to help them draw their own conclusions. There's only so much hand-holding and coddling you can do before resentment ensues. Empower them to figure this out on their own!

**PISCES:** There's nothing wrong with sharing the limelight, Pisces. Invite someone you admire to join you on the stage or hitch your wagon to a rising star's. Today's collaborative cabal of the moon and first Saturn and then Pluto sparks synergy between you and the like-minded trailblazers in your sphere. Organize an epic brainstorming session and let the creative juices flow! You may have to set aside some chemistry to see this one through since romance could distract you from formulating your next big idea. No shame in a little flirting...there's plenty of time to explore that part of your connection later on.