

SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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CHANGE ARRIVES

YOKSAM-TASHIDING SKM 5686 SDF 5607 OTH 427 SANGAY LEPCHA (SKM) WON BY 79 VOTES	YANGTHANG SKM 5184 SDF 5136 OTH 375 BHIM HANG LIMBOO (SKM) WON BY 48 VOTES	MANEYBONG DENTAM SDF 7134 SKM 5630 NOTA 172 N.K. SUBBA (SDF) WON BY 1054 VOTES	GYALSHING BARNYAK SKM 5862 SDF 4048 OTH 363 LOK NATH SHARMA (SKM) WON BY 1054 VOTES	RINCHENPONG SDF 6582 SKM 5513 OTH 1069 K. SONAM LEPCHA (SDF) WON BY 504 VOTES
DARAMDIN SKM 6219 SDF 5883 OTH 570 M.N. SHERPA (SKM) WON BY 906 VOTES	SORENG-CHAKUNG SKM 6580 SDF 6372 OTH 188 ADITYA GOLAY (SKM) WON BY 208 VOTES	SALGHARI-ZOOM SKM 4400 SDF 4307 OTH 224 SUNITA GAJMER (SKM) WON BY 93 VOTES	BARFUNG SDF 5936 SKM 5839 OTH 308 TASHI T. BHUTIA (SDF) WON BY 97 VOTES	POKLOK-KAMRANG SDF 7731 SKM 4832 OTH 520 PAWAN CHAMLING (SDF) WON BY 2899 VOTES
NAMCHI-SINGHITHANG SDF 5054 SKM 4677 OTH 315 PAWAN CHAMLING (SDF) WON BY 377 VOTES	MELLI SDF 6354 SKM 5489 OTH 802 FARWANTI TAMANG (SDF) WON BY 865 VOTES	NAMTHANG-RATEYPANI SKM 6848 SDF 5543 OTH 388 SANJEET KHAREL (SKM) WON BY 1305 VOTES	TEMI-NAMPHING SKM 6084 SDF 5314 OTH 370 B.S. PANTH (SKM) WON BY 770 VOTES	RANGANG-YANGANG SDF 6416 SKM 4621 OTH 728 RAJ KUMARI THAPA (SDF) WON BY 1795 VOTES
TUMIN-LINGEE SDF 6615 SKM 6295 OTH 350 UGEN GYATSO BHUTIA (SDF) WON BY 321 VOTES	KHAMDONG-SINGTAM SKM 5347 SDF 4474 OTH 790 M.K. SHARMA (SKM) WON BY 827 VOTES	WEST PENDAM SKM 5799 SDF 4901 OTH 983 I.B. DAS (SKM) WON BY 898 VOTES	RHENOCK SKM 8039 SDF 4953 OTH 1252 B.K. SHARMA (SKM) WON BY 3086 VOTES	CHUJACHEN SDF 6141 SKM 5170 OTH 1089 K.B. RAI (SDF) WON BY 971 VOTES
GNATHANG-MACHONG SDF 6380 SKM 3460 OTH 292 D.T. LEPCHA (SDF) WON BY 2920 VOTES	NAMCHEYBONG SDF 6141 SKM 5170 OTH 1089 EM PRASAD SHARMA (SDF) WON BY 971 VOTES	SHYARI SKM 6638 SDF 5282 OTH 302 KUNGA N. LEPCHA (SKM) WON BY 1356 VOTES	MARTAM-RUMTEK SDF 6244 SKM 6171 OTH 1138 D.T. LEPCHA (SDF) WON BY 73 VOTES	UPPER TADONG SDF 3844 SKM 3428 OTH 264 G.T. DHUNGEL (SDF) WON BY 416 VOTES
ARITHANG SKM 3150 SDF 1545 IND 2676 ARUN KR UPRETI (SKM) WON BY 834 VOTES	GANGTOK SKM 3838 SDF 2950 OTH 639 KUNGA N. LEPCHA (SKM) WON BY 888 VOTES	UPPER-BURTUK SDF 6107 SKM 5350 OTH 342 D.R. THAPA (SDF) WON BY 757 VOTES	KABI-LUNGCHUK SKM 5705 SDF 4268 OTH 387 KARMA LODAY (SKM) WON BY 1437 VOTES	DZONGU SDF 5613 SKM 2612 OTH 258 PINTSO N. LEPCHA (SDF) WON BY 3001 VOTES
LACHEN-MANGAN SKM 3615 SDF 3031 OTH 73 SAMDUP LEPCHA (SKM) WON BY 584 VOTES	SANGHA SKM 1488 SDF 858 OTH 30 SONAM LAMA (SDF) WON BY 630 VOTES	LOK SABHA INC 3922 SDF 149158 SKM 161143 BJP 16062 HSP 1943 SRP 1479 SUF 607 AIP 392 JMBP 377 IND 593 IND 1947 NOTA 2257 INDRA HANG SUBBA (SKM) leading by 11985 votes		

Sikkim votes 17/15 in favor of SKM

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 23 MAY:

The voters in Sikkim elected Sikkim Krantikari Morcha into office in the State with a razor thin margin today, giving the PS Tamang [Go-] led party 17 seats, one more than the half-way mark. With this, the 25-year-old Sikkim Democratic Front ends its

tenure in office losing an election was a nail-biter right till the last constituency was called. The results could have easily ended 17/15 in favour of SDF had the NOTA votes not been as voluminous or if the projected candidates had been given the party tickets instead of the last-minute surprises that the SDF se-

lection committee pulled on the people. Take the case of Arithang where SDF came in third. The final vote-count bears out that if Ashish Rai had been picked for the SDF ticket as was implied for a while, SDF would have sailed to an easy win. This seat alone would have tied the results at 16/16 which would

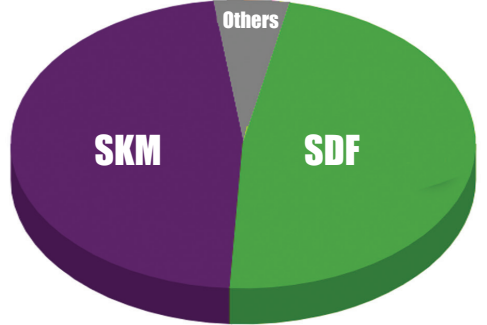
have thrown up another historic moment for Sikkim with the potential of re-elections. But these are at best speculations, and as far as facts on ground stand, SKM has been elevated into office by inroads it made into SDF's bastion of West and South Sikkim. SKM snatched West

from SDF by rolling up six of the eight constituencies there and then also cracked the stronghold of South district where it took two of the eight seats there. While the margins were slim in most of these constituencies, at the end of the day, it was SKM which ended up bagging eight of the 16 seats in

the two districts.

This was big setback for SDF and then 2/3 in North Sikkim and 6/12 in East Sikkim along with the Sangha victory gave SKM 17, a simple majority. Chief Minister Pawan Chamling won from both, Poklok Kamrang and Namchi-Singithang, the latter narrowly, as did SDF's

turn to pg02



BREAKING NEWS

Post-Poll violence fear comes true

BIKASH CHETTRI

NAMCHI, 24 MAY:

The possibility of post-poll that had been feared all along came true here tonight with three properties of SDF-affiliated families vandalized and a vehicle belonging to an SDF supporter targeted with arson. Ironically, these acts of violence were reported

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SKM debuts in South, SDF holds on to 6 of 8 constituencies

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 23 MAY:

Sikkim Democratic Front managed to hold on to a majority of the constituencies in South Sikkim while Sikkim Krantikari Morcha made its way into the district for the first time winning two of the eight constituencies. In Temi Namphing, SKM's Bedu Singh Panth, who had only switched over to the party from SDF days before the

candidates list was announced, won with 6084 votes against SDF sitting MLA, Garja Man Gurung who received 5314 votes. SKM's Sanjit Kharel won Namthang Rateypani with 6848 votes against the 5543 votes secured by SDF's Birjan Tamang. For SDF, Chief Minister Pawan Chamling retained Poklok Kamrang and Namchi Singithang.

turn to pg02

SKM reverses North Sikkim in its favour



Summit Report

Gangtok, 23 May:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha won two of the three constituencies in North Sikkim with only Dzongu being retained by Sikkim Democratic Front. For SDF, Pintso

Namgyal Lepcha won Dzongu with a comfortable 5613 votes against SKM's Chung Kipu Lepcha who polled 2612 votes. SKM's Karma Loday Bhutia won Kabi Lungchok securing 5705 votes against the 4268 votes

polled by SDF's Ugen Nedup Bhutia. Ugen Nedup Bhutia, who was an SKM candidate in 2014, had won Kabi Lungchok with 4615 votes against 4489 polled by SDF's TT Bhutia.

turn to pg02

SKM's Indra Hang Subba to represent Sikkim in Lok Sabha

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 24 MAY:

A last-minute arrival in the SKM camp, Indra Hang Subba, who came over from Hamro Sikkim Party days before the candidates list was drawn up, has won the Parliamentary seat for the party.

Although the final count for the Lok Sabha election in Sikkim was not posted by the Election Commission of India till way past midnight, probably owing to the server crashes which plagued the ECI website through the day, he had secured an unassailable lead till the last update.

Of the 3,39,880 counted till the last update, Mr Subba had secured 47.41% of the votes with 1,61,143 in his kitty, comfortably ahead of SDF's DB Katuwal who polled 1,49,158 votes, 43.89% of the votes counted. With only the final round of



counting left along with the postal ballots, the Lok Sabha was safely in the SKM bag at the time of going to print.

The Parliamentary

election had attracted a crowd of 11 candidates, but the contest was essentially between SDF and SKM and all stand to lose their deposits having polled less than

6% of the votes.

Coming third was Laten Tshering Sherpa for BJP with 16,062 votes [4.73%], followed by Bharat Basnet of Con-

gress with 3,922 votes [1.15%], with the NOTA option coming fifth with 2,257 votes [0.66%], Pas-sang Sherpa 1,947 votes [0.57%], Biraj Adhikari

of HSP polling 1,943 votes [0.57%], Dhiraj Kumar Rai of SRP 1,479 votes [0.44%], SUF's Narendra Adhikari 607 votes [0.18%] etc.

SKM sweeps West Sikkim, SDF retains only 2

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 MAY:

This election Sikkim Krantikari Morcha finally entered West Sikkim winning six of the eight constituencies.

Sikkim Democratic Front retained Maneybong Dentam and Rinchenpong. NK Subba won Maneybong Dentam for SDF with 7134 votes against 5630 votes received by Purna Hang Subba of SKM. Karma Sonam Lepcha of SDF won Rinchenpong with 6582 votes against the 5513 votes polled by Phurba Tshering Bhutia of SKM.

The first results to come were from Yoksam Tashiding which was won by SKM's Sangay Lepcha with 5686 votes

against the 5607 polled by SDF's Dechen Ongmu Bhutia. SKM's Bhim Hang Limboo won Yangthang with 5184 votes against 5136 polled by SDF's DB Subba. SKM's Lok Nath Sharma won Gyalshing Bermiok with 5862 votes against 4048 votes polled by SDF's LM Sharma.

In Daramdin, the deciding constituency, SKM's Mingma Norbu Sherpa won with 6219 votes against 5883 polled by Pem Norbu Sherpa of SDF. SKM's Aditya Golay won Soreong Chakhung with 6580 votes against 6372 polled by Sancha Raj Subba of SDF.

SKM's Sunita Gajmer won Salghari Zoom with 4400 votes against the 4307 polled by Dhan Kumari Kami.

Gowda family suffers blow in LS polls

BENGALURU, MAY 23 (PTI): The Lok Sabha results were a double whammy for the Gowda dynasty in Karnataka where not only former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda lost the election from Tumkur constituency but his grandson and chief minister H D Kumaraswamy's son Nikhil Kumaraswamy too was routed badly.

The only face saver for the Gowda family was Deve Gowda's another grandson Prajwal Revanna, son of PWD minister H D Revanna, who won from Hassan seat.

At the ripe old age of 87, Gowda contested the election from Tumkur only to be defeated at the hands of BJP's G S Basavaraj by a thin margin of 13,339 votes.

Gowda had shifted from his traditional bastion of Hassan making way for his grandson, but it did not pay off for him.

Nikhil, a greenhorn in the electoral politics, lost from Mandya against independent candidate Sumalatha Ambareesh, a film actress and widow of popular Kannada film actor-turned-politician Ambareesh, who died last year. While Gowda's defeat has almost signalled his retirement from the electoral politics, Nikhil Kumaraswamy's defeat would make the JD(S) leadership introspect.

The Opposition BJP often accuses JD(S) of being a familyenterprise as chief minister H D Kumaraswamy and PWD minister H D Revanna are the sons of Deve Gowda while Ramanagar MLA Anitha Kumaraswamy is the wife of the Karnataka chief minister.

Had Deve Gowda and his grandsons won the election, the number of the Gowda dynasty in politics would have swelled to six.

Intervention on Menstrual Hygiene by Ravangla BAC

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 MAY:

A day-long sensitization program was organized by Ravangla BAC in association with ESS India on 20 and 21 May at VCGL Senior Secondary School, Jar-rong Secondary School, Kewzing Senior Secondary School and Dap-lep Junior High School, a press release informs.

During the program, both male and female students were educated on Menstrual Hygiene and encouraged to talk about it. They were explained the need to break the taboo on the subject along with health tips



that they can follow to avoid various health issues that can occur by the continuous usage of sanitary pads and which will also help to reduce

the waste so generated.

The awareness program was well received by the audience which included students of both the genders and the

teaching faculty. BAC-Ravangla gave away incinerators to the schools in order to manage the disposal of sanitary pads generated in schools.

Pragya Thakur, Azam Khan among controversial candidates who won in this election

NEW DELHI, MAY 23 (PTI): From BJP's Pragya Singh Thakur to SP's Azam Khan, candidates who courted controversies in the run-up to the 2019 general election have put up an impressive performance on their respective seats.

These candidates stoked controversy during the high-voltage campaign spread over two months, at times forcing the Election Commission to bar some of them from campaigning or inviting scrutiny from their own party's leadership.

Thakur, an accused in the 2008 Malegaon blasts, won by a margin of 3,64,822 votes from Madhya Pradesh's Bhopal constituency, according to the results declared by the Election Commission.

She was recently in the red for lauding Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse as a "patriot".

Thakur got 8,66,482 votes in the constituency, considered a stronghold of BJP, against her nearest rival Digvijaya Singh of the Congress. Singh got 5,01,279 votes. Thakur had to apologise for her remarks on 26/11 attack martyr Hemant Karkare, an IPS officer, that she had "cursed" him for torturing her and falsely implicating her in the Malegaon case.

She was temporarily banned from campaigning for her hate remarks by the Election Commission. In 2014, BJP's Alok Sanjar had won the seat by a margin of 3,70,696 votes.

Congress's Digvijaya Singh is not new to controversies either.

In March this year, just as the country was gearing up for elections, he said the Pulwama terror

attack was an accident.

In Uttar Pradesh, Azam Khan has won from Rampur constituency by over one lakh votes. He had attracted widespread ire for his sexist jibes against his one-time colleague and actor-politician Jaya Prada, his rival on the seat who joined the BJP before the election.

People of Rampur, people of Uttar Pradesh and people of India, it took you 17 years to understand her reality. But I could recognise in 17 days that she wears khaki underwear," he said, without naming her. Khan is facing an FIR for the remark, got 5,59,177 votes against Jaya Prada's 4,49,180 votes.

BJP's Nepal Singh had won the seat by a margin of 23,435 votes in 2014 elections.

In Bihar, BJP's Giriraj Singh won from Begusarai by a margin of 4,22,217 votes.

His main rival was CPI's Kanhaiya Kumar, who got 2,69,976 (including postal ballots) votes against Singh's 6,92,193 that include 4,616 postal ballots.

Giriraj Singh has been stoking controversies.

In March, the veteran BJP leader was reported as saying those not attending the rally of the prime minister, to be held that month, would be deemed anti-national.

He, however, himself remained absent from that very rally.

Begusarai seat was won by BJP's Bhola Singh by a margin of 58,335 votes in 2014 polls.

In the South, BJP's Nalin Kumar Kateel won from Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada.

The BJP candidate and sitting

MP from Dakshina Kannada dove into the Godse controversy by comparing the assassin with with Rajiv Gandhi.

"Godse killed one, Kasab killed 72, Rajiv Gandhi killed 17,000. You judge who is more cruel in this?" Kateel tweeted, equating Godse, 26/11 convict Ajmal Kasab and Rajiv Gandhi. He later retracted his remarks.

Kateel won the constituency by a margin of 2,74,621 votes. His main rival Mithun M Rai of Congress got 4,99,664 votes whereas the winning candidates Kateel got 7,74,285 votes that include 1,531 postal ballots.

The BJP reprimanded him as well as Union minister Anant Kumar Hegde, its candidate in Uttara Kannada in Karnataka, who also tweeted on Godse but later deleted it.

Hegde, who is also the sitting Lok Sabha member from the constituency, won the seat by getting 7,86,042 votes and defeated Janata Dal (Secular) Anand Asnotikar.

BJP's young leader Tejasvi Surya, contesting from Karnataka's Bangalore South constituency, has also been declared a winner. Surya made several controversial statements over the last one year, retracting some and deleting some.

Oh Hindus! When will you understand that a vote to today's Congress is a vote for yesterday's Muslim League? It's sad that this country treats a patriot like Veer Savarkar, who endured the greatest of pains for the motherland, in this manner. 2019 has so much at stake! he tweeted recently.

Kunga Nima Lepcha and DT Lepcha win two each

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 MAY:

It is even Stevens in East Sikkim with SKM and SDF both winning six constituencies each. Khamdong Singtam was the first to go to SKM where Mani Kumar Sharma won with 5347 votes against 4474 polled by SDF's GM Gurung [Jr].

Kunga Nima Lepcha won both Shyari and Gangtok. He polled 6638 votes in Shyari defeating SDF's Karma Ongdi Bhutia who polled 5282 votes. In Gangtok, Kunga Nima Lepcha polled 3838 votes to prevail over sitting MLA, Pintso Chopel Lepcha who polled 2950 votes.

Interestingly, SDF sitting MLA, DT Lepcha also won two seats; Gnathang Machong and Martam Rumtek. He polled 6380 votes in Gnathang Machong defeating SKM's Tshering Bhutia who polled 3460 votes. In Martam Rumtek, he polled 6244 votes beating SKM's Sonam Tshering Venchungpa who polled 6171 votes.

LB Das of SKM won West Pendam, was one of the most contested con-

stituencies with 8 candidates, with 5799 votes against 4901 polled by SDF's Gopal Baraily. In Rhenock, SKM's Bishnu Kumar Sharma polled 8039 trouncing SDF's sitting MLA, Hemendra Adhikari, formerly SKM, who polled 4953 votes.

Hemendra Adhikari and Pintso Chopel Lepcha had won their seats in 2014 on SKM tickets.

SKM's Arun Kr Upreti won Arithang with 3150 votes against the 2676 votes polled by Independent candidate, Asish Rai.

SDF's Krishna Bahadur Rai won Chujachen with 6141 votes against the 5170 votes polled by SKM's Damber Kumar Pradhan. GT Dhungel retained Upper Tadong for SDF securing 3844 votes against the 3428 votes polled by SKM's Anand Lama. SDF's Em Prasad Sharma won Namcheybong with 6141 votes against the 5170 votes polled by SKM's Dennis Rai.

SDF's DR Thapa won Upper Burtuk with 6107 votes against the 5350 votes polled by SKM's NB Gurung.

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Post-Poll...

from Namchi-Singithang, a constituency from where Chief Minister Pawan Chamling has won.

The properties targeted belonged to SDF leaders Chandra Khaling, Passang Sherpa and a relative of the Chief Minister. A Gypsy with SDF insignia on it, clearly used for campaigning purposes was also vandalized.

Earlier in the day, some vehicles were also vandalized in Namchi soon after the result was announced for the constituency. Eye-witness accounts suggest that when some vehicles of SDF supporters were targeted, some officers engaged in polling duty also got caught in the stoning incident and found their vehicles damaged as well.

SKM debuts...

However, it was a tough contest for Mr Chamling in Namchi Singithang where he polled 5054 votes against the 4677 polled by Ganesh Rai of SKM.

In Poklok Kamrang, Mr Chamling won with 7731 votes against the 4832 polled by SKM's KB Rai.

Sitting MLA, Ugen T Gyatso won Tumin-Lingee for SDF with 6615 votes defeating SKM's Samdup Tshering Bhutia who polled 6295 votes.

Apart from the CM and Mr Gyatso, the rest of the SDF winners are all new faces in the Assembly.

Tashi Thendup Bhutia won Barfung for SDF with 5936 votes against 5839 votes polled by SKM's Lob-sang Bhutia.

Farwanti Tamang won Melli for SDF with 6354 votes against 5489 polled by Tilak Basnett of SKM. SDF's Raj Kumari Thapa won Rangang Yangang with 6416 votes against the 4621 votes received by Raj Kumar Basnett of SKM.

Sikkim votes...

DT Lepcha who secured both Gnathang Machong and Rumtek-Martam, the latter in this case too with a sliver of a margin.

SKM's sitting MLA, Kunga Nima Lepcha, also won two constituencies for his party in Shyari and Gangtok.

With bye-elections required in three constituencies, the final tally could still change over the next six months and should SKM form the government as expected, it will be a far from smooth next six months [within which bye-elections need to be held].

The political developments that unfold from here-on will be interesting to watch.

Meanwhile, since the election ended up being all about SDF and SKM everyone else in the fray, from national parties like BJP and Congress and regional outfits like HSP, SRP and opposition alliances were all trounced resoundingly. As things stand, the only candidate apart from those belonging to SDF or SKM not lose her/his security deposit [securing less than 6% votes] was Independent candidate Ashish Rai from Arithang.

SKM reverses...

In Lachen Mangan, SKM's Samdup Lepcha won with 3615 votes against 3031 votes received by SDF's Tshering Wangdi Lepcha. Interestingly, in 2014 it was the other way round wherein SKM's Samdup Lepcha had secured 2570 votes [44%] and lost to SDF's Tshering Wangdi Lepcha who had received 3127 votes.

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BJP bags three LS seats in Assam, Cong ahead in as many

GUWAHATI, MAR 23 (PTI): The BJP clinched three seats and was leading in six others, while the Congress was ahead in three out of the 14 parliamentary constituencies in Assam.

The AIUDF and an Independent were leading in one seat each.

The saffron party retained the Jorhat and Dibrugarh parliamentary constituencies and wrested the Karimganj

(SC) from the AIUDF.

In Jorhat, state power minister Topon Kumar Gogoi defeated former Congress MLA Sushanta Borgohain by 82,653 votes.

Dibrugarh's sitting BJP MP Rameswar Teli won by a high margin of 3,64,566 votes over former Union minister of the Congress, Paban Singh Ghatowar.

In the Karimganj (SC) seat, BJP MLA and Dep-

uty Speaker Kripanath Mallah defeated sitting AIUDF MP Radheshyam Biswas by 38,389 votes.

The BJP is leading in Lakhimpur, Tezpur, Silchar, Gauhati, Mangaldoi and Autonomous District seats, while the Congress is ahead in Kaliabor, Nowgong and Barpeta. The AIUDF is leading in Dhubri and the sitting Independent MP in Kokrajhar (ST) parliamentary constituencies.

CS chairs first meeting of State Convergence Committee of POSHAN Abhiyaan

GANGTOK, 23 MAY (IPR): The Chief Secretary, A. K. Shrivastava chaired the first meeting of State Convergence Committee (SCC) of POSHAN (PM's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment) Abhiyaan, at the conference hall of Tashiling Secretariat today.

Poshan Abhiyaan is India's flagship programme of Ministry of Women and Child Development to improve nutritional outcomes for children, adolescents, pregnant women and lactating mothers by leveraging technology, a targeted approach and convergence.

During the Meeting on Convergence Action Plan (CAP) 2019-20, the Chief Secretary launched the first phase roll out of ICDS - CAS (Common Application Software) and Sikkim became the third state in North East India to initiate this digital intervention under Poshan Abhiyaan.

It may be mentioned here that the CAS has been installed in smart phone devices and will be useful to track the beneficiary and provide required services accordingly. AWWs have been provided training to get acquainted with procedure of handling devices and updating data by the Social Justice, Empowerment and Welfare Department, Govt. of Sikkim.

After interacting with Heads of the Departments on various aspects and components of Poshan Abhiyan the Chief Secretary called for active participation of line departments and urged to



make Abhiyan, effective and successful. He added, Poshan has been an area of concern not only for SJEWD Deptt. but Health Care, Human Service and Family Welfare and Human Resource Development Department as well where they are equally responsible to ensure benefits to the targeted beneficiaries.

While interacting, he was gratified with the achieved parameters at state level and also advised to sought out indicators of autism amongst 0-5 years of children. He also took stock on the position of infrastructure of ICDS centre and wished for concrete building in near future. He also came out with invaluable advice to provide proper nutrition, portable water supply and maintenance of sanitation in the centers.

During the inter-

action, Commissioner-cum-Secretary Health, Vishal Chauhan marked the convergence efforts as very significant. Further he drew lights on objectives of Proud Mother Scheme and said that Iron - Folic Acid have been provided to mother and children through ASHAs and AWWs, hence active coordination and convergence is highly important under Poshan Abhiyaan.

Secretary, Rural Management Development Department, C S Rao informed that, presently, Sixty one ICDS Centres in the state are being constructed and also anticipated efforts from Panchayats to improve quality of water in respective Centers.

Secretary Information and Public Relations, Sherap Shenga assured to provide all support for wide publicity to gener-

ate massive awareness and advised to provide content on Poshan Abhiyan to publish the special edition of Sikkim Today.

PCE-cum- Secretary, Water Resources and River Development Department, S. Dadul said that the department has left no stone unturned to ensure essential service of portable water supply in all the urban areas and assured to ensure service to ICDS centre as well.

Secretary Development, Planning, Economic Reforms, Sonam Y. Lepcha and Controller Accounts, B K Pradhan expressed about the financial positions and urged to utilize the fund on stipulated time.

Secretary, Social Justice, Empowerment and Welfare Deptt., Dhan Jyoti Mukhia, also briefed on Poshan Abhiyaan with her welcome address. Earlier, Principal

Director, SJEWD gave an overview on various components of Poshan Abhiyan and elaborated on area of convergence, administrative structure and infrastructure, Human resource and organizational structure at state, district and block level, State Project Management Unit, District Level Help Desk, Block Level Help Desk, Nutrition and Health Profile, Child feeding practices and nutritional status of children, convergence committee at state, district and block level, procurement (Growth Monitoring Devices), ICDS-CAS Roll Out Devices and other activities.

The meeting was also attended by the Mission Director NHM, Dr. ML Lepcha, officials from HRDD, Food and Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and other departments.



SHIMLA, MAY 23 (PTI): The ruling BJP Thursday made clean sweep in Himachal Pradesh with its candidates winning all the four Lok Sabha seats -- Shimla, Kangra, Mandi and Hamirpur -- in the hill state with record margins in the range of over three lakh votes each and securing up to 72 percent of the polled vote share.

The four victorious BJP candidates included sitting MPs, Anurag Thakur and Ram Swaroop Sharma, who won Hamirpur and Mandi Lok Sabha seats respectively.

The two other victorious candidates included two party MLAs Suresh Kashyap and Kishan Kapoor, who bagged Shimla and Kangra seats respectively.

All four won their respective seats with record margins in the range of three lakh votes each, making their victories historical.

The three-term MP and son of former state Chief Minister Prem Kumar Dhumal, Anurag Thakur retained his Hamirpur seat, defeating his nearest rival Ram Lal Thakur of Congress with a record margin of 3,99,572 votes.

Anurag Thakur, also a former president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) polled 6,82,692 votes against 2,83,120, secured by his rival Ram Lal Thakur.

The polled vote share of the BJP in Hamirpur reached 69.04 per cent against the Congress' 28.63 per cent.

The BJP's sitting Mandi MP Ram Swaroop Sharma too retained his seat, defeating his nearest rival Aashray Sharma of Congress by a margin of 4,05,459 votes.

Ram Swaroop Sharma, who had won from Mandi in 2014 by defeating former Chief Minister Virbhada Singh's wife Pratibha Singh by 39,856 votes, retained the seat this time by defeating

former Union Minister Sukh Ram's grandson Aashray Sharma, who could get only 2,41,730 votes against 6,47,189 votes secured by the sitting MP.

The polled vote share of the BJP in Mandi reached 68.75 per cent against the Congress' 25.68 percent.

BJP MLA Suresh Kashyap from Pachhad won the Shimla seat defeating Dhani Ram Shandil by a margin of 3,27,515 votes. While Kashyap polled 6,06,183 votes, Shandil managed to secure only 2,78,668. All other four candidates of the Shimla seat lost their deposits.

The Shimla seat had been won by Virender Kashyap of the BJP in 2014, when he had defeated Mohan Lal Brakata of the Congress by 84,198 votes. The BJP, however, dropped him this time to field Suresh Kashyap.

The polled vote share of the BJP in Shimla reached 66.35 per cent against the Congress' 28.63 per cent.

BJP's Dharamshala MLA Kishan Kapoor won the Kangra seat defeating Pawan Kajal of Congress by a margin of 4,77,623 votes. Kapoor polled 7,25,218 votes, while Kajal managed to get 2,47,595 votes.

In 2014, former Chief Minister Shanta Kumar had won Kangra seat, defeating Chander Kumar of the Congress by a margin of 1,70,072 votes.

But the BJP had chosen to field HP's Cabinet minister Kishan Kapoor this time.

The polled vote share of the BJP in Kangra touched 72.02 per cent against the Congress' 24.59 per cent. Incidentally, a total of 33,008 electors in the state pressed the EVM's NOTA (none of the above) button, casting their votes in favour of the none of the candidates.

In numbers of electors who pressed NOTA

buttons stood at 5,298 in mandi, 8,026 in Hamirpur, 11,327 in Kangra and 8,357 in Shimla.

Elated over the BJP's clean sweep in the state, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party president Amit Shah for the massive mandate in the Lok Sabha elections.

"It is for the first time in the history of the state that BJP candidates have won with such a huge margin in all the parliamentary seats," said Chief Minister Thakur in a statement.

The chief minister also expressed gratitude to the voters of the state for reposing their faith in the party and Prime Minister Modi.

He also thanked them for giving the BJP lead for the first time in all the 68 assembly segments in the state.

The elections result is a referendum on the policies and programmes of the BJP governments at the Centre and the state, he added.

In his congratulatory message to Narendra Modi and Amit Shah, CM Thakur said, "It is a mandate for a strong and vibrant India which is only possible under the dynamic leadership of Narendra Modi."

In the wake of the worst ever performance by the Congress in Lok Sabha polls in Himachal Pradesh with each of four its candidates having been defeated by huge margins of over 3.25 lakh votes, Himachal Congress president Kuldeep Singh Rathore, however, accused the the BJP of raking up emotional issue of national security to win the Lok Sabha elections.

The state, meanwhile is headed for an assembly bypoll within six months due to the two vacancies arising in the state assembly due to elevation of two BJP MLAs, Kashyap and Kapoor, to the Lok Sabha.

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Dated: 20/05/2019

Missing you always, Daddy!



**Kamal Psd. Alley
(16/07/1938 - 22/05/2014)**

There's a special kind of feeling when we think about you, Dad it's a pleasure to remember all the happy times we've had. There's a special kind of caring that is meant for you alone. There's a place somewhere within our heart that only you can own. Missing you always Daddy.

Your ever loving
Roma, Annapurna, Puran, Ahaan and Jed.

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Congratulations, Sikkim!

Verdict 2019 presents exciting possibilities

Election 2019 is done and dusted, well sort of because the next six months are bound to see some frenetic politics and desperate campaigning. That said, the Sikkimese voters have made history this time by actually voting a government out of office, something it had not done despite the two occasions in the past when new governments have been voted into office. In 1979, when Nar Bahadur Bhandari's Sikkim Janta Parishad was elected, there was President's Rule in Sikkim and in 1994, when SDF won, there was a minority government in place with Mr Bhandari's Sikkim Sangram Parishad having already been toppled. Election 2019, hence, needs to be looked at as a first for Sikkim. It is another matter that the mandate is not as expressive as could have been because if one looks at how the results have fallen, the potential candidate here and fewer NOTA votes there and the final tally could easily have reflected a different overall winner.

This is not to take away anything from the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha's victory because the party deserves to celebrate the sweat of its workers who kept the party and their hunger alive through the years when the party hierarchy appeared rudderless. Its success in side-stepping not only the conviction of its president in a corruption and his disqualification from contesting the elections despite being the face of the party deserves kudos. It can also be argued that SDF ended up helping the SKM cause by spending the initial years of its last term sulking and then making mistakes in its candidate selection which in the end could have cost it its government. The role of young voters cannot be discounted either and that is a topic for deeper analysis by all parties in Sikkim because most of the under 30 year old voters have no fixed party affinity and look more towards inspiration and vision than leaders and family leanings.

There will be more time in the coming days to discuss the results in better detail, but for now, it is time for congratulations - to the victors and the impressively strong runners-up. The congratulations for the voters need to be slightly less celebratory because the final verdict is borderline indecisive. And that need not necessarily be a bad thing because there need to be bye-elections held in three constituencies within the next six months and in a mandate so hesitant, both SDF and SKM will need to work extra hard to retain and win their favour. This, if the party leaders realize, will require them to hold the hands of their more excitable supporters and ensure that there is no post-poll violence because that could end up being the decisive factor in whether SDF remains at 15 or increases its tally to 16 or SKM improves its strength in Assembly to 19 or sees its razor-thin majority even out to a 16-16 tie. One hopes that the parties and its leaders realize this and work extra hard to keep Sikkim safe.

Be that as it may, as things stand, the people have voted SKM into office and one hopes that the party realizes how significant its achievement has been. It was never easy to beat an incumbent in Sikkim and SKM had learned that the hard way when it came up second in 2014. It needs to nurture this mandate because what it has itself proven is that a comeback is possible in Sikkim. Most people had written off the SKM after 2014 and even more so after PS Tamang was convicted and jailed. And yet it bounced back. This is something that SDF also needs to re-learn and work extra hard to re-connect stronger with the people. Five years is not a very long time in politics but is also enough, as SKM has proven, to rework its image and make inroads into areas hitherto thought to be impregnable. In that sense, there is hope for even a politics genuinely about the people to be birthed from the 2019 results. Here's to hoping that this will be the direction Sikkim takes and does not collapse into the traditional response of personal score-settling and short-sighted squabbling.

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India Election: How Narendra Modi won with an even bigger majority

KATHARINE ADENEY
theconversation.com

The stunning majority for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2019 Indian election is a massive political achievement for its leadership: the prime minister, Narendra Modi, and the party's president, Amit Shah. Early results from the world's biggest democratic exercise show the BJP is likely to win more than 300 seats in India's parliament, the Lok Sabha, more than the 282 it won in 2014 and the 272 needed for a majority.

In early 2019, such a result had looked uncertain in the wake of state election defeats in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan – part of the Hindi heartland that had helped Modi to victory in 2014. Opponents of the BJP dared to think that the Congress Party – the former “Grand Old Party of India” which had been reduced to only 44 seats in 2014 – was sufficiently revitalised to mount a credible challenge in 2019.

As the early months of 2019 dawned, scandals about the allocation of a defence contract as well as rising unemployment figures – and the suppression of these figures – made a bad start to the campaign. The Mood of the Nation survey conducted in December 2018 and January 2019 concluded that the National Democratic Alliance, the coalition the BJP heads, would not win a majority in the general elections.

SECURITY

We will have to wait for results from post-election surveys to get detailed analysis of the segments of society that voted for the BJP, but several points are clear about Modi's victory.

Modi benefited tremendously from the fallout from a suicide attack in Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir that killed 40 Indian soldiers in February 2019. Although responsibility for the attack was claimed by a Pakistani terrorist group, it was carried out by a local Kashmiri. One reading of this

could have been that Modi's policies in the Kashmir valley, such as the increase in the use of pellet guns, blinding hundreds and killing at least 14, had led to the attack. But Modi swiftly turned it to his advantage.

Not only did he pursue an aggressive course of action with airstrikes against militants on Pakistani territory, he also successfully sold it as a huge success, despite some evidence that the fighters had missed their target. The national security narrative took centre stage in the 2019 election, something that the opposition parties were unable to counter.

OPPOSITION FAILINGS

The second factor was the Congress campaign. The party's leader, Rahul Gandhi, has come a long way since his debut in a national election in 2014. But the Congress campaign failed on two fronts. The first was the messaging: it was a mistake to try and attack Modi on allegations of corruption rather than focusing on the economic failures of his first term. Focusing on corruption only served to remind the electorate of the Congress party's involvement in previous (very large) corruption scandals.

Yet, even had Congress focused solely on the economy, this may not have led to a very different result. The BJP swept the board in the 2017 Uttar Pradesh state elections, held only a few months after Modi's disastrous demonetisation policy which saw the withdrawal of 86% of India's currency. The second failure was the high-handedness with which Congress approached the formation of its own political alliances. The BJP was extremely accommodating of its alliance partners in states such as Bihar and Maharashtra, but Congress did not manage to agree a deal with its potential partners in Delhi and in Uttar Pradesh.

NaMo APPEAL

The third factor was the presidential nature of the campaign.



Modi successfully portrayed the campaign as Modi v Rahul. Such a framing benefited Modi – a fantastic campaigner. He built on the national security narrative by framing himself as a Chowkidar, or watchman, who would protect India. This built on his reputation as someone who would make India great – something that played extremely well in the campaign.

Modi's profile in India is huge – he takes personal credit for all initiatives, and his picture appears multiple times in the same editions of the daily newspapers when government initiatives are flagged.

But curiously, for such an effective campaigner, he held his first press conference as prime minister in the final weeks of the 2019 campaign. And even then it was dominated by Shah – and Modi didn't answer a single question.

The BJP has had extraordinary control of the political narrative during this election, aided by its extremely large war chest which has helped it penetrate even deeper into traditional and social media. While only a quarter of Indians use WhatsApp – still 300m people – the creation of promotional material specifically targeted at different segments of society has played a huge role in advancing a particular political narrative.

In addition, the Election Commission has been criticised for clearing BJP leaders of many alleged election code violations, and only belatedly banning the showing of a biopic about Modi

on the eve of the elections. It also allowed the BJP's TV channel, NaMo TV, to run without challenge throughout the campaign. It has now gone off air.

CONCERNS FOR MINORITIES

The final point to make relates to the opinions of voters. The BJP ran a very polarising campaign. In 2014, 51% of those who responded to India's National Election Studies said they believed that democracy meant that the will of the majority community should prevail – a steep rise from 2009. This demonstrates a move towards the right and an acceptance of Hindu majoritarianism in Indian politics – a position that questions whether religious minorities, particularly Muslims, should have special rights within India. This trend of Hindu majoritarianism is higher among the young – a growing demographic within India – who have grown up in an era in which the BJP has been a national player.

This does not bode well for religious minorities in the world's largest democracy, 20% of whom are non-Hindu. Although Modi tweeted after the results that “together we will build a strong and inclusive India”, the attacks on Muslims, both political and actual during his first term cast doubt over the second part of this promise.

[the writer is Professor of Politics and Director of the Asia Research Institute, University of Nottingham]

Lunar gold rush is about to start – and we could exhaust the solar system in fewer than 500 years

GARETH DORRIAN

theconversation.com

The US president, Donald Trump, has stuck to his plan to send humans back to the moon in the next five years, recently giving the project a US\$1.6 billion shot in the arm. Whether he succeeds or not, the first successful landing on the lunar far side by China, the European Space Agency's recent “lunar village” concept and a myriad of private companies all gearing up for commercial human spaceflight indicate that a human return to the moon may be about to begin in earnest.

But is it a good idea? A new study suggests that, to avoid material exhaustion of the solar system, humans ought to limit ourselves to developing just one-eighth of the available resources. As we may be witnessing the start of a new lunar gold rush of sorts, this new proposal may be put to the test sooner than we think – and the moon will serve as an early test bed.

The reason for this has to do with something called the “doubling time” – how long it takes for a quantity to double. For example, an economy which grows at 10% per annum would double in value in 7.3 years. When it comes to space, only three doubling times are necessary to go from one-eighth to 100%.

In other words, once we reach a point where we have consumed one-eighth of the solar system's resources, it would take only three doubling times to consume the rest. At a modest rate of 3.5% growth per year in material consumption of space resources, the one-eighth point would be reached after 400 years. However, at this point it would take less than 60 years to use up all the remaining resources in the solar system, creating an enormous problem for any future space economy – and leaving very little time to find a solution.

The paper therefore suggests keeping the remaining seven-eighths of the solar system as a “wilderness”. Such areas would be free for humans to explore, but not exploit.

LUNAR RESOURCES

The potential for resource and scientific exploitation on the moon is high. However, resources are not uniformly distributed. For example, water is going to be a much-valued commodity, given that it can be used for grow-

ing crops, to produce rocket fuel, provide air for breathing and, of course, be consumed directly by people.

Lunar water is believed to exist as ice mixed in with lunar regolith (soil) primarily in permanently shadowed craters in the polar regions, making it a finite and non-renewable resource. Certain areas of the moon are also particularly rich in titanium – again valuable ores are not present in the same quantities everywhere.

To process the resources, we will need energy. The most abundant form of energy on the lunar surface is sunlight, and generating solar energy is particularly suited to a few choice locations. On a handful of mountain peaks near the poles the orientation of the moon's rotation is such that the sun never sets – offering an uninterrupted source of energy.

From a scientific perspective, the lunar far side presents an excellent site for radio astronomy observatories – particularly of the early universe. The Earth's ionosphere tends to block the lowest frequency radio transmissions and create noise, even at higher frequencies.

LEGAL VAGUENESS

It is likely that there are going to be competing future demands from different players for different areas of the lunar surface. So who owns what? Well, as it happens, no one country can – at present – claim ownership of anywhere in space under the Outer Space Treaty. In particular the treaty states “outer space is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty”, and that “the exploration and use of outer space shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries and shall be the province of all mankind”.

It is worth noting that not every country has signed the treaty. In 2015, the United States passed the Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act of 2015 which, among other things, allows US citizens to “engage in the commercial exploration and exploitation of ‘space resources’ (including ... water and minerals)”. While the act does make it clear that the US recognises that outer space is not sovereign territory, it seems a bit vague as to precisely whether a commercial private company exploiting resources in space is really acting “for the benefit and in the

interests of all countries”.

If outer space, or at least one-eighth of it, really is the preserve of all mankind then does this imply that resources out there really should belong collectively to all humanity?

Let us suppose that there is some international agreement to limit our development of outer space, as the new paper suggests. Clearly it is likely to be the case that wealthy countries and/or powerful corporations will get to the moon and exploit its resources first. This scenario is not without precedent.

Deep-sea mining in international waters on Earth promises a potential mineral windfall for those who are able to exploit it, but the potential environmental impact is already causing concern. Likewise, the actions of a number of countries in the South China Sea demonstrates how easy it is for sufficiently powerful nation states to ignore international agreements or arbitration when the potential for resource wealth is present. This, presumably, could apply just as easily to private corporations or countries operating on the moon.

Does this all seem a bit far-fetched? Well, as the paper argues, we humans are not great at appreciating the impact of long-term exponential growth. In 2018 the global space sector was valued at \$360 billion and is forecast to grow at 5.6% per annum. By 2026 – two years after Trump plans to return to the moon – it will be worth \$558 billion. If we assume annual growth of 5% continues, then in a century the space sector would be worth 130 times its present value. In two centuries, it would be worth 17,300 times its present value and might even exceed the total wealth of the terrestrial economy.

Much of this future wealth could come from resource extraction, particularly from asteroid and lunar mining. These are timescales comparable with just a few generations of humans. Whether such a growth rate will be maintained over a century I am uncertain – but I would not bet against it.

It is often said that possession is nine-tenths of the law. As we tentatively embark upon a new human chapter in outer space, we should reflect carefully before repeating the same mistakes we've already made on Earth.

[the writer is Post Doctoral Research Fellow in Space Science, University of Birmingham]

All but one Left Front candidates set to lose their security deposit in West Bengal

ANANYA SENGUPTA

NEW DELHI, MAY 23 (PTI): All but one Left Front candidates are facing the ignominy of losing their security deposit in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls in West Bengal, a state which it had ruled continuously for 34 years till 2011.

Except CPI(M)'s Bishakh Ranjan Bhattacharya who got 21.04 per cent of the votes polled in Jadavpur, no other Left Front candidate is likely to be able to achieve the required 16.6 per cent of the votes to retain their deposit money of Rs 25,000 each, according to the latest data from the Election Commission.

In India, candidates for election to the Lok Sabha pay a security deposit of Rs 25,000. For Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates, the amounts are Rs 12,500 and Rs 5,000



respectively. Any candidate who fails to secure more than one-sixth (16.6 per cent) of the total valid votes cast would have to forfeit his or her deposit.

Candidates of the CPI(M)-led Left Front, which ruled the state for 34 years from 1977 to 2011, have been deci-

mated to third and fourth spots in the seats it contested.

There were some candidates who managed to get close -- CPI(M) leaders Mohammed Salim with 14.25 per cent votes in Raiganj, Nepaldeb Bhattacharya with 13.91 per cent in Dum Dum, sitting Mur-

shidabad MP Badarudozza Khan with 11.63 per cent votes, Nandini Mukherjee with 11.63 per cent votes in South Kolkata came close, but their efforts were not enough.

In most seats, the Left Front candidates have failed to reach double digits as far as vote per-

centage is concerned.

Registering its worst poll performance in over six decades, the Left Front was virtually wiped off its bastions in the Lok Sabha poll trends showing that it was headed towards a debacle.

The Left Front appears to bag five seats in this election -- four in Tamil Nadu and one in Kerala, where it rules. In Tamil Nadu, the CPI(M) and the CPI bagged two seats each in alliance with the DMK.

This is the first time since 1952 that the Left Front will not end up with double digits in the general election. Till now, while it had put up its most dismal show in 2014, winning only 12 seats -- 12 less than what it had won in 2009 -- its highest ever tally of 59 seats had come in 2004.

Amid fear of clashes, Kolkata streets empty out by evening

Kolkata, May 23 (PTI): Streets in the metropolis emptied by early Thursday evening amid fear of clashes as election trends poured in with the ruling Trinamool Congress and the surging BJP locked in a neck and neck battle for the 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal.

People reached to the safety of their homes before the formal declaration of results, fearing a violent fallout of the poll outcome amid a bitter election battle between the two parties, leaders of which were involved in a no-holds barred attack in a grueling two-month long campaign.

"In a state where political clashes are the norm during election season, we thought it is better to go back home early to avoid being caught up in some untoward incident," Moloy

Banik, an employee of a private firm at Dalhousie in the heart of the city, said.

His colleague Raju Basu nodded in agreement as they hurried towards a bus stop near their office.

Small crowds gathered at tea shops and local clubs in various localities of the city, discussing the incoming trends and possible results in a hushed voice.

"We are not venturing far from our homes after sundown so that we can get back fast in case of any incident," said Manoj Roy, as he sipped tea with his friends at Lake Market area in the southern part of the city.

Stunned at the impending outcome of the elections, Trinamool Congress supporters were subdued in their celebrations though its

candidates attained comfortable leads in the two Lok Sabha seats in the city - Kolkata South and Kolkata North.

Party supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's residence at Kalighat and the TMC headquarter at Eastern Metropolitan Bypass also wore deserted looks.

In contrast, the BJP state headquarter in central Kolkata saw jubilant supporters distributing sweets and smearing each other with orange-coloured "gula". An official of Kolkata Police said there was no report of any incident or commotion with regard to the election results till evening.

Additional forces have been deployed in many parts of the city to prevent any incident, he said.

BJP sweeps Kalimpong Lok Sabha polls

SUMMIT REPORT

KALIMPONG, 23 MAY:

Raju Bista from BJP secured a clear win in Kalimpong with a total of 96,877 votes while Amar Singh Rai from TMC got a total of 34,302 votes here in Kalimpong district. Out of 261 booths, BJP swept 242 and TMC only 19.

Counting was done for all three blocks of Kalimpong which had 15 rounds and 18 tables. The total votes polled was 1,45,550 with 1409 being NOTA votes.

Bista beat Rai by a margin of 62,575 votes. Meanwhile, Dr. Harka



Chettri of Jan Andolan Party, from Kalimpong got a total of 3409 votes. The counting here

started at around 8:30 am and wound up by 5:30 pm at St Augustine School. There was a total of

2,03,332 voters in the district out of which 71.21% had cast their vote on 18 April.

Contact Summit TIMES at 9832556698, 9832369520 news@summittimes.com advertse@summittimes.com summittimes16@gmail.com

Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu wins from Mukto



ITANAGAR, MAY 23 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu won from the Mukto assembly constituency for the third consecutive time, defeating his lone rival Thuphen Kunphen of the Congress by a margin of 2,602 votes.

Khandu won the seat in 2011 bye-election and

was re-elected unopposed in 2014.

His political journey began after his father and former chief minister Dorjee Khandu died in a helicopter crash near Luguthang in Tawang district in April 2011.

The ruling BJP in the state has so far won 25

seats, including three unopposed, out of 35 seats.

While Janata Dal United (JDU) made its debut in the state with six seats, the opposition Congress has won three.

Independent candidates have won two seats, the NPP and the PPA one each.

Smriti Irani, Pragya Thakur to win big; 28 sitting women MPs set to retain seats

NEW DELHI, MAY 23

(PTI): As many as 28 out of 41 sitting women MPs, including Sonia Gandhi, Hema Malini and Kirron Kher, are set to retain their seats in Lok Sabha polls, but the likes of Smriti Irani and Pragya Thakur are likely to steal the show with the extent of their victories over their more renowned rivals.

Among prominent faces who are expected to be re-elected to Lok Sabha are Rae Bareilly Congress MP Sonia Gandhi, Sultanpur candidate Maneka Gandhi who is a sitting BJP MP from Pilibhit, Mathura BJP MP Malini, Chandigarh BJP candidate Kher, Kanauj SP MP Dimple Yadav and New Delhi MP Meenakshi Lekhi.

Bankura TMC MP Moon Moon Sen who contested from Asansol, Congress Silchar MP Sushmita Dev, Supaul MP from Congress Ranjeet Ranjan, Bardhaman-Durgapur candidate Mamtaz Sanghamita from TMC, Hoogly MP Ratna De from TMC and Lalganj MP Neelam Sonkar are among those trailing.

Irani emerged as a giant-killer -- this time scripting a historic win by dethroning Rahul Gandhi in the Congress's home turf Amethi. Controversial BJP candidate from Bhopal and terror-accused Thakur is leading against Congress' bigwig Digvijay Singh.

Other prominent names who are set to enter



Parliament are DMK candidate from Thoothukku- di Kanimozhi Karunanidhi and BJP's Rita Bahuguna, who is leading from Uttar Pradesh's Allahabad constituency.

Locket Chatterjee, Bengali actress-turned-politician from the Trinamool Congress, is also leading in the Hoogly constituency.

Sixteen women MPs re-contesting from their seat and leading are from the BJP, while Sonia Gandhi is the only sitting MP from the Congress who is leading.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday led his Bharatiya Janata Party towards what is certain to be a spectacular victory for a second term in office, as his message of nationalism, security, Hindu pride and a New India was wholeheartedly embraced by voters across large swathes of the country.

With the elections establishing 68-year-old Modi as the most popular leader in decades, the partial vote count released by the Election Commission showed that the BJP will surpass its 2014 performance.

The Congress had fielded 54 women candidates. It was closely followed by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which had fielded 53 women.

Among the other national parties, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) fielded 24 women candidates, the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) 23, the CPI(M) 10, the CPI four, while the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) fielded one woman candidate.

As many as 222 women contested the polls independently.

A total of 8,049 candidates were in the fray in the parliamentary polls. Four transgender candidates contested the elections independently, while the AAP was the only party to field a transgender nominee. But all transgender candidates lost in the polls.

The highest number of candidates were fielded from Uttar Pradesh at 104, followed by Maharashtra. Sixty-four women candidates have been fielded from Tamil Nadu, 55 from Bihar and 54 from West Bengal.

Bihar leads tally for NOTA votes

NEW DELHI, MAY 23

(PTI): Bihar was leading the tally of voters opting for the None of The Above (NOTA) option while exercising their franchise in the 17th Lok Sabha polls.

As per election commission data at midnight, the NOTA vote share stood at about 2 per cent of the total votes polled in the state, where results of almost all the 40 seats had been declared.

In the states of UP, Gujarat and West Bengal, 0.84 per cent, 1.38 per cent, 0.96 per cent votes were cast in favour of NOTA. The counting was still on for a few seats in each of these states.

NOTA, which was introduced in India following a 2013 Supreme Court directive, allows voters to express their dissent by pressing a button saying none of the contestants are worthy of their vote.

In 2014 Lok Sabha polls, where it was introduced for the first time in any parliamentary

election, around 60 lakh voters had opted for the NOTA option equalling about 1.1 per cent of the total votes polled during those elections across 543 seats.

In 2019 elections, in the key constituency of Varanasi the seat from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi contested the elections and won saw 4,037 voters (0.38 per cent) opting for NOTA.

The constituencies of Kerala's Wayanad where Congress scion Rahul Gandhi won from saw 2,155 voters (0.2 per cent) pressing the NOTA button.

Amongst other key constituencies where results had been declared, Amit Shah's Gandhinagar constituency saw 14214 (1.11 per cent) NOTA votes, Ravi Shankar Prasad's Patna Sahib constituency saw 5076 (0.52 per cent), and Gautam Gambhir's East Delhi constituency had 4920 (0.39 per cent) such votes.

Contact Summit TIMES at 03592-208698, 9832556698, 9832369520 news@summittimes.com advertse@summittimes.com summittimes16@gmail.com

TAFE signs on Akshay Kumar as brand ambassador



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 23 MAY:

TAFE - Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited, the third largest tractor manufacturer in the world and second largest in India (by volumes), has announced a brand association with actor Akshay Kumar for Massey Ferguson tractors, a press release informs.

"The globally renowned Massey Ferguson brand is one of the most iconic tractor brands, especially in India. Reputed for its superior and futuristic technology, international styling and ergonomics, the Massey Ferguson range offers robust performance and uncompromising quality with over 125 products and variants," the release states.

Acclaimed actor Ak-

shay Kumar's acting style is a fine blend of sensitivity and heroic boldness so this association between India's iconic Massey Ferguson tractors and Akshay Kumar resonates well with their brand personalities, as per the release.

Speaking on the association, TR Kesavan, President & COO - Product Strategy and Corporate Relations, TAFE said: "Massey Ferguson tractors with its superior performance and modern engineering is an industry leader in agriculture, haulage, infrastructure and industrial applications. We believe a dynamic, powerful and accomplished brand ambassador like Akshay will help build a strong connect with our customers."

On his association with the Massey Ferguson brand, Bollywood

Superstar Akshay Kumar said, "I look forward to my association with the legendary Massey Ferguson tractors from TAFE, one of the pioneers in agriculture mechanization. Driving a Massey Ferguson with a loaded trailer, I could truly understand what makes it India's most loved tractor. It was evident why it enjoys such tremendous loyalty and pride of ownership by our farmers."

TAFE's association with Akshay Kumar for Massey Ferguson tractors will feature power-packed high visibility campaigns covering a series of television commercials, advertisements and digital promotions that will spotlight India's favorite Massey Ferguson tractors and the world-renowned actor Akshay Kumar, embarking on a new journey together, the release adds.

Zampa confident of posing dual spin threat with Lyon in World Cup

LONDON, MAY 21 (PTI): Adam Zampa believes his attacking leg-spin and Nathan Lyon's precise off-spin can play a huge role as Australia look to defend their title at the ICC World Cup beginning May 30.

Zampa and Lyon shared 12 wickets between them in the five-match ODI series win over Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates.

"I think it was a few months ago where we actually spoke to each other and said, 'I reckon we can play a huge role coming up in the World Cup together so let's do everything we can to make sure we're both there,'" Zampa told reporters.

"We play two different roles. (Lyon) is so accurate, a beautiful off-spinner, bowls to his field really well and bowls really tight. That means I can attack from the other end."

Zampa, who has played in English conditions following a spell at Essex last summer, said communication is the key to their success.

"We've communicated really well over

the last few months. We speak a lot in the nets, we speak a lot in the field, just about whatever - anything - spin bowling, field settings or how the ball's going to come out. Just anything," he said.

"I think it's going to play a huge role for us sometime throughout the World Cup. I don't know if it will be every game but I definitely see us playing a huge role together."

Zampa reckons taking wickets in the middle over will be key and said skipper Aaron Finch has backed them to go for wickets.

"That is something we have spoken about, and Finchy is big on trying to take wickets. If you are bowling to the middle and lower order in the last 10 overs it makes it so much easier for the fast bowlers at the death," he said.

"If you are bowling to in-form batsmen like Virat Kohli or Jos Buttler, for example, if they are in it makes it a lot harder, so wickets in the middle are so important in one-day cricket."

Federer, Nadal threaten Djokovic bid for historic Slam

PARIS, MAY 23 (AFP): Novak Djokovic can become only the second man in history to have twice held all four Grand Slam titles at the same time with victory at the French Open.

However, a returning Roger Federer and rejuvenated Rafael Nadal will once again stand in his way.

World number one Djokovic completed his first private stranglehold of all four Slams with victory at Roland Garros in 2016.

Having clinched the 2018 Wimbledon and US Open titles and then a seventh Australian Open crown in January this year, the Serb is tantalisingly close to another 'Djoko Slam'.

Federer and Nadal, with 20 and 17 career Grand Slam titles each respectively, may be ahead of 15-time major winner Djokovic in total hauls and have also completed career Slams.

However, not even Federer or Nadal have managed to hold all four of the sport's greatest prizes at the same time.



It is such a rare feat that only Don Budge (1938) and Rod Laver (1962 and 1969) -- all calendar Grand Slams -- have pulled off the sweep in the sport's history.

Djokovic, who turned 32 on Wednesday, is playing down his potential date with destiny even if it would put him halfway to a 2019 calendar Slam of his own.

After losing to Nadal in the Italian Open final last weekend, the Serb was in no doubt that it

was the Spaniard who would likely be celebrating a 12th Roland Garros title in a little over two weeks' time.

"Nadal, number one favourite, without a doubt -- then everyone else," he said.

Djokovic, who will be top seed in Thursday's draw, could be forgiven his caution.

At Roland Garros in 2018, he was shocked by Italian journeyman Marco Cecchinato in the quarter-finals, a defeat which was such a crush-

ing bodyblow that he even contemplated skipping Wimbledon.

Federer is returning to Roland Garros for the first time since 2015 having turned his back on clay court tennis to focus on Wimbledon.

- 10TH ANNIVERSARY -
This year marks the 10th anniversary of his one and only Paris triumph and should the 37-year-old defy the odds and clinch the 2019 title he would become the oldest Grand Slam champion of all time.

Age hasn't dimmed his ability with Federer saving match points to beat Gael Monfils in Madrid and in Rome against Borna Coric as he found his feet again on European red clay.

"It's been interesting and fun, but not so challenging, to be honest," said Federer despite his Rome campaign being cut short by a leg injury.

Nadal, whose record at Roland Garros stands at a staggering 11 titles and a win-loss record of 86-2, claimed a ninth Italian Open title and a record 34th Masters on Sunday.

His three-set win over Djokovic was timely as it was his first title of 2019 and had followed three successive semi-final losses at Monte Carlo, Barcelona and Madrid.

The last two of those were against Dominic Thiem and Stefanos Tsitsipas, both of whom play with a one-handed backhand, just like Federer.

Thiem, the 2018 runner-up to Nadal at Roland Garros, has defeated the Spaniard four

times on clay.

"There is a new wave coming through with the one-handed backhand that can counter some of Rafa's spins and lefty play," said Federer, a four-time runner-up in Paris.

Outside of Djokovic and Federer, world number four Thiem and sixth-ranked Tsitsipas are the most likely candidates to dethrone Nadal.

The same cannot be said for Germany's Alexander Zverev, for so long touted as the brightest star of the so-called 'Next Gen'.

The German's run to the quarter-finals last year remains his best Slam performance while he has yet to get beyond the last eight at any of the European clay events in the run-up to Paris.

"He has lost his self-confidence, he gets very angry, gets down and destroys himself," said compatriot Tommy Haas, a former world number two.

"What he urgently needs is a success.

IOA and FIH chief Batra set to be elected IOC member

NEW DELHI, MAY 23 (PTI): Indian Olympic Association president Narinder Batra is all set to become a member of the International Olympic Committee after his name was proposed for the prestigious seat by the executive board of the world sport's apex body.

The proposal to elect Batra and 9 other new members was submitted on Wednesday by the Executive Board of the IOC to IOC Session that will meet in June in Lausanne, a statement from the world body said.

"Seven of the 10 proposed new members are individual members, while there are three candidatures linked to a function within a National Olympic Committee (NOC) or a Continental Association of NOCs," the IOC statement added.

The vote for the prestigious seat is due to be held on June 26.

Batra is among the three names proposed to be elected from among persons linked to his or her function in a NOC, chosen in close consultation with the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC).

All the proposed members have been vetted by the IOC Ethics Commission, which has conducted integrity checks.

Mary Kom enters final; all-Indian final in seven men's categories

TAPAN MOHANTA GUWAHATI, MAY 23 (PTI): Six-time world champion Mary Kom overcame some stiff resistance to beat promising Nikhat Zareen in a split decision to enter the women's 51kg category final, while the men pugilists dominated the ring by making it an all-Indian gold-medal clash in seven categories in the India Open here Thursday.

In the most-anticipated bout of the day, 22-year-old former world junior champion Nikhat of Telangana was at her aggressive best against her 'idol' Mary Kom who was happy to play the waiting game before taking the upper hand in the third round to win 4-1.

The 36-year-old Mary Kom, who was making her competitive debut at home in 51kg, took some blows initially but was quick to make amends as Nikhat was not able to connect her punches as the bout progressed.

Using her vast experience, Mary Kom regained her composure and dealt a few telling blows on the Strandja Memorial gold winner Nikhat and that seemed to have clinched the issue in favour of the London Olympics bronze medallist Manipuri in the third round.

Mary Kom will face Vanlal Duati of Mizoram in the gold-medal bout on Friday.

In the men's section, 17 Indians stormed into the final in 10 weight categories.

Continuing his dream run, former world youth champion Sachin Sivach registered an upset win over reigning Commonwealth Games champion Gaurav Solanki in a unanimous decision to set up a 51kg gold medal clash against Asian Games gold medalist Amit Panghal.

A day after he eliminated World Championship bronze medalist Rogan Ladon in a well-calculated bout, the 20-year-old from Haryana had his task cut out against his sparring partner but he again emerged victorious.

Panghal, who had clinched a gold in his new weight category in the Asian Championship, defeated national champion P L Prasad in the second 52kg semifinal. Panghal had won the Asian Games gold in Jakarta last year in 49kg.

"Amit has improved a lot of late but this is my big chance to show my prowess at a major competition. I hope to give my best and return winner," Sivach, who won a bronze at the GeeBee Boxing tournament in Finland in March, said.

Shiva Thapa also remained on course to clinching a gold at the same venue where he was crowned national champion three years ago as he fended off a

strong challenge from his Polish opponent D Krystian Szczepanski to emerge 5-0 winner.

Szczepanski was at his aggressive best and kept hurling punches but Shiva cleverly kept frustrating his opponent by going out of his range.

"It made him tired at the end of every round. I was playing my style, did not give my 100 per cent. I was just trying to be tactical with him and let his punches go in the air and miss it so that he loses his control and confidence," Shiva said.

He will face Manish Kaushik in the 60kg final on Friday.

There was also a setback in store for India in the men's 75kg category, when Manjeet Panghal twisted his knee in the first round to be knocked out by his Filipino opponent Eumir Felix Delos Santos.

Santosh will face Ashish Kumar in the final.

Former Asian champion Chatchai Decha Butdee of Thailand also created an upset in the men's 56kg by ousting former World Championship bronze medalist Gaurav Bidhuri in a unanimous decision. The Thai will take on Kavinder Singh Bisht in the final.

The 64kg category will also see a non-Indian in the final with Rohit Tokas taking on Colin Louis Richarno of Mauritius.

Greenhouse effect: Roland Garros unveils new look after years of legal wrangles

Paris, May 23 (AFP): After years of legal battles and threats to quit its historic home, Roland Garros will show off its new look next week, with a nod to the Eiffel Tower and a Second World War resistance fighter while boasting enough plants and greenery to make even the most demanding environmentalist drool.

Ninety years after it was built, the French Open's showpiece Court Philippe Chatrier was demolished soon after the 2018 event finished.

Fast forward 12 months and it has been almost completely rebuilt to accommodate the necessary strengthening required to support the retractable roof which will be in place for the 2020 edition of the sport's only clay court Grand Slam.

The metal superstructure weighs half that of the Eiffel Tower, around 3,700 tonnes, said the French Tennis Federation's director-general Jean-Francois Vilotte.

The roof will eventually allow for night sessions to be played even if Roland Garros still lags behind similar developments at the other three Slams.

The Australian Open has three covered courts already while Wimble-



don and the US Open boast two retractable roofs apiece.

The 15,000-capacity Chatrier has expanded its shape and size, adding wooden seats to replace its ageing green plastic.

Only the famous red clay of the court itself -- where the likes of Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, Serena Williams, Naomi Osaka and Simona Halep will star from this weekend -- has remained unchanged.

"We protected it, we put a concrete slab on it all the winter during the work," said Gilles Jourdan, the head of the modernisation project which is believed to cost an overall 350 million euros.

"But the sweat of Mr Lacoste is still there," he added in reference to one of France's greatest

tennis icons, a three-time winner in Paris during the 1920s.

This year's tournament will also see the debut of Court Simonne-Mathieu, a 5,000-seat arena named in honour of a WWII resistance hero and a former Roland Garros champion.

The semi-sunken arena was a controversial development inside the nearby Jardin des Serres d'Auteuil, one of the capital's most beloved green spaces.

It was only last May that the French federation emerged successful after five bruising years of bitter legal battles with environmentalists and well-connected local residents worried over the impact such construction would have over the gardens' 19th century greenhouses.

At one stage, exasperated Roland Garros chiefs toyed with the idea of upping sticks out of Paris to start afresh in the suburbs.

But the court has been built, enclosed by four greenhouses housing "the only plant ecosystem of its kind," say organisers of hosting collections from South America, Africa, South-East Asia and Australia.

The 10,000-seater Court Suzanne Lenglen remains although Roland Garros' Court One 'bullring' is earmarked for demolition once the 2019 tournament ends.

In other changes this year, the west of Suzanne Lenglen has also undergone a radical transformation with six new courts built to supplement Court 14 which was a fresh addition in 2018.

Uncertainty over Serena fitness, Osaka form at Roland Garros

Paris, May 23 (AFP): Serena Williams heads into this year's French Open as an outsider for a Grand Slam title for possibly the first time in 20 years, with questions surrounding her fitness after a poor start to the season, while Naomi Osaka needs to rediscover her best form to solidify her position at the top of the women's game with a third straight major crown.

The 37-year-old Williams is still waiting for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam triumph, with

her last victory coming at the 2017 Australian Open shortly before taking a break from the sport due to pregnancy.

She impressed initially after returning, but last year twice fell just short of drawing level with Margaret Court's mark, losing in the Wimbledon final to Angelique Kerber before her infamous meltdown en route to another final defeat by Osaka at Flushing Meadows.

Williams' 2019 campaign has not gone to plan so far, with a series of injuries seeing her

manage just four matches since her Australian Open quarter-final exit to Karolina Pliskova.

But she is confident her work off the court can help her find her best game in the biggest tournaments.

"I actually haven't been able to train or practice a lot. I was out much longer than I expected," admitted the three-time French Open champion last week in Rome, before pulling out of the tournament ahead of a second-round tie with sister Venus.

Take Afghanistan lightly at your own peril

BHARAT SHARMA NEW DELHI, MAY 23 (PTI): A side which has made massive strides in international cricket since its World Cup debut in 2015, it will not be a surprise if a spirited Afghan-

istan humbles one or two leading sides at the mega event, beginning next week.

Now known for its prowess on the field rather than an also-ran from a troubled nation, all top teams will be wary of the threat they pose despite an 11th hour change in leadership.

Afghanistan won only one game in the 2015

edition but that was the time when they did not boast match-winners like Rashid Khan.

None other than India skipper Virat Kohli acknowledged Afghanistan's rapid rise in the last four years.

"If you look at Afghanistan from 2015 to now, they are a completely different side. Any team can upset anyone on its day (in this World Cup)," Kohli said ahead of his team's departure to England.

The overall squad too is much richer in experience and go into the tournament as winners of the

ICC World Cup Qualifier in which it outplayed the West Indies twice including in the final.

Afghanistan trained in South Africa before the final leg of preparations in the UK where it played ODIs against Scotland and Ireland. Off the field, their build-up for the World Cup was far from ideal due to the sudden sacking of long-time captain Asghar Afghan from all three formats though he remains part of the ODI squad.

Senior players Mohammad Nabi and Rashid took to social me-

dia to question the need for a captaincy change less than two months before the quadrennial competition. They were eventually pacified by the selectors and the cricket board.

Even head coach Phil Simmons was not kept in the loop as the selectors opted for split captaincy with the unassuming Gulbadin Naib chosen to lead the 50-over side.

In a recent chat with PTI, Afghanistan chief selector Dawlat Khan Ahmadzai insisted that all is well with the team now but it remains to be seen

how Naib shoulders the leadership responsibility in on a big stage like the World Cup.

He led from the front in an ODI against Ireland in Belfast on Tuesday, taking a career-best six for 43 in the team's 126-run victory.

Afghanistan are most dangerous in the T20 format but have also shown their competitiveness in 50-over cricket. Their biggest strength is the world-class spin trio of Rashid, Nabi and Mujeeb Zadran while Hamid Hassan and Dawlat Zadran form a potent pace combination.

Indian-American judge orders Trump accounting firm to hand over records to Congress

WASHINGTON, MAY 22 (PTI): An Indian-American judge has rejected President Donald Trump's attempt to block House Democrats from getting his financial records, dealing an early setback to his administration in its legal battle with Congress.

Judge Amit Mehta of the DC District Court on Monday decisively ruled in favour of the House Oversight Committee, whose chair, Elijah Cummings had subpoenaed 10 years' worth of Trump's financial records from accounting firm Mazars USA back in April.

He told the accounting firm that it will need to turn over Trump's accounting records from before he was president to the Democratic-controlled House Oversight Committee, CNN reported.

In a 41-page opinion, Mehta of the DC District Court dealt a significant blow to the White House as he rejected Trump's attempt to block the committee's subpoena, asserting that Congress is well within its authority to investigate the president.

Mehta's ruling is narrow in that it only deals



with the House Oversight Committee's Mazars subpoena. But it's a key development in the larger, ongoing subpoena battle between Trump and Congress, because it gives Democrats legal ammunition when they go to court to enforce other outstanding subpoena requests.

The Trump administration recently issued a blanket denial of all Democrats' subpoena requests, saying the information they seek is politically motivated. Democrats, on the other hand, say the administration's actions amount to an unprecedented attempt to block Congress from its constitutionally mandated oversight.

The House of Representatives has flagged the ruling to a judge in New York, where another court is considering

challenges to House subpoenas to Deutsche Bank and Capitol One for more Trump records, CNN said.

Congress specifically can probe the president for conflicts of interest and ethical questions, Mehta wrote. He cited everything from the presidency of James Buchanan, to the Teapot Dome scandal, to Watergate and Whitewater to back up his ruling.

Mehta noted that in the past 50 years, Congress had twice investigated a sitting president for alleged criminal activity before starting impeachment proceedings: Richard Nixon during the Watergate scandal, and Bill Clinton during the Whitewater scandal.

"History has shown that congressionally-exposed criminal conduct by the president or a

high-ranking Executive Branch official can lead to legislation," Mehta wrote.

"It is simply not fathomable that a Constitution that grants Congress the power to remove a president for reasons including criminal behavior would deny Congress the power to investigate him for unlawful conduct -- past or present -- even without formally opening an impeachment inquiry," he added.

Trump's legal team plans to appeal, a person familiar with the case said Monday.

Mehta's opinion, coming not even a week after a hearing in the case, will kickstart a race to appeals courts.

Mazars won't have to turn over the subpoena for another seven days, according to the judge, but other courts will

have to step in to stop the accounting firm from complying with Congress after that.

The House Oversight Committee subpoena of Mazars seeks a vast amount of communications and financial records related to the firm's work for Trump himself, as well as his businesses and foundation from 2011 through 2018.

Mazars became a target in the House investigation after former Trump personal attorney Michael Cohen accused the President of fudging his wealth in an unsuccessful attempt to buy the Buffalo Bills football team and reduce his real estate tax burden.

Cummings called the ruling a "resounding victory for the rule of law and our Constitutional system of checks and balances."

Trump immediately called the ruling "crazy."

"We disagree with that ruling, it's crazy," Trump told reporters, noting that Mehta was appointed by President Barack Obama. "This never happened to any other president," he added, saying that Democrats are trying to "get a redo" on the investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election.

Indian among 18 people arrested in Nigeria for illegal bunkering

ABUJA, MAY 23 (PTI): An Indian national is among 18 sailors arrested in Nigeria for allegedly attempting to illegally export stolen crude oil to Ghana, according to media reports.

The arrested sailors were planning to move stolen crude oil from Nigeria with two foreign vessels, MT Apecus and MT Invictus, believed to be owned by Petrogress Incorporation, which has offices in Nigeria, Greece and the US, the Nigerian Navy said.

Capt Adegoke Ebo, Executive Officer Nigerian Navy Ship (NNS) Pathfinder Port Harcourt, Capt. Adegoke Ebo made this disclosure on Wednesday while handing over the suspects and vessels to the police at the naval base in Port Harcourt.

According to him, the suspects were on the verge of moving the crude oil to Ghana before

they were arrested by naval forces.

Among those arrested was the Managing Director of Petrogress Incorporation in Nigeria, Osimili Adah, Nigerian media reported.

"Our findings revealed that Adah has been actively involved in sourcing crude oil from Nigerian creeks and shipping it to Platon Gas Oil Refinery in Tema, Ghana without clearance and approval," Ebo said.

The identity of the Indian national arrested was not disclosed.

"Evidence available to us suggests that the illicit crime had been going on for a while," Ebo alleged.

Ebo said that the suspect later disclosed names of his accomplices and facilitators and also presented evidence and proof to the illicit trading.

The suspect during interrogation, revealed that the report of pirate attack on MT Apecus on

April 19 was stage managed, he said.

Five Indians and two Nigerians were reportedly abducted onboard MT Apecus by suspected sea pirates off the coast of Bonny in Rivers on April 19.

According to Ebo, the pirate attack occurred following disagreement between two alleged oil thieves over rights to lift stolen crude oil abroad. "Contrary to the initial reports, our investigation revealed that the abduction was rather as a result of failed oil theft collaboration," Ebo said.

"Investigation revealed that one of the aggrieved syndicate resorted to the abduction of the five Indians and two Nigerians," Ebo said.

A sister maritime agency revealed that MT Apecus had been conducting trading activities in Nigerian waters since 2014 without clearance and approval," he said.

Khalilzad has done an amazing job in Afghanistan by bringing parties to peace table: US

WASHINGTON, MAY 23 (PTI): Special US Representative on Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad has done an amazing job by bringing the parties to the peace table, the Trump Administration said as the envoy briefed lawmakers in the US capitol on the progress in the peace process.

"I think that the ambassador has done an amazing job at bringing the parties to the table that many in the US government probably thought would never be able to get to the table," State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortagus told reporters here Wednesday.

"He's making slow and steady progress in these talks," Ortagus said soon after Khalilzad briefed Congressmen.

"I know he completed another round recently. While he has an incredibly tough job, I



think that he is doing something that is important to the president, the secretary and the American people: to try to get a peaceful solution in Afghanistan," she said in response to a question.

The Congressional hearing titled "The Reconciliation Process in Afghanistan" by Khalilzad was classified.

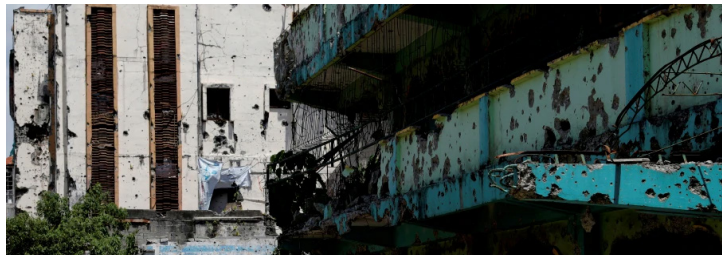
During the briefing, Senator Bob Menendez said the peace process must incorporate the views of the different ethnicities and political factions across the country. The US must insist on an intra-Afghan dialogue and actively participate

in helping to shape the terms of those negotiations, he said.

"After being such an enormous factor in the course of Afghanistan over the past 18 years, it is neither fair nor realistic to expect Afghan political leaders to settle these differences without us at the intra-Afghan table and without the leverage afforded by US troops," he said.

Referring to the recent remarks by Khalilzad about securing counter-terrorism guarantees, Menendez said this was perhaps the most critical component of a very complex peace deal.

Shattered Philippine city a tool for jihadist recruitment



MARAWI (PHILIPPINES), MAY 23 (AFP): Two years after the Philippine city of Marawi was overrun by jihadists it remains in ruins, with experts warning that stalled reconstruction efforts are bolstering the appeal of extremist groups in the volatile region.

The May 23, 2017 invasion by gunmen waving the black flag of the Islamic State group sparked a five-month battle that shattered swathes of the southern city.

Demolition of blast-pocked buildings has finally begun, but after several false starts the government does not expect rebuilding to be finished before the end of 2021.

The delays have left about 100,000 residents in squalid relocation camps or sharing homes with relatives, feeding simmering anger among the displaced and providing a recruiting tool for extremists.

"The narratives (to join IS) used to be about the Middle East and the plight of Muslims around the world," said Mouhammad Sharief, who co-founded a support group for Marawi's youth.

"Now it's closer to our hearts because the narrative is Marawi," said 32-year-old Sharief, who was himself displaced by the fighting.

Marawi is symbolically important because it is the Muslim capital of the nation's south, which has been locked in a cycle of poverty and

extremism as separatist insurgencies have raged for decades.

It is all the more significant as IS works to maintain a presence via its global affiliates following the fall of its self-proclaimed "caliphate" in the Middle East.

IS regularly claims responsibility for killings of Philippine government troops and took credit for the January bombing of a Catholic cathedral during Sunday mass that was the nation's deadliest attack in years.

The organisation has links to local extremist networks, including the kidnap-for-ransom group Abu Sayyaf, that have long operated in the Philippines' restive south.

In this context, an angry displaced population in Marawi is not a risk that can be ignored, experts say.

"The government needs to be concerned about the threats of ISIS attracting young (locals) because of the ongoing resentment from the failure to rebuild and general anger over the destruction," analyst Sidney Jones told AFP.

Fixing the city has been repeatedly delayed. A Chinese-led consortium initially tapped to spearhead the rehabilitation plan was disqualified over legal and financial issues.

The clearing of debris, the first step before the actual construction, also hit a snag due to legal problems and the government hopes it will finally be fin-

ished in November.

"This will be used as an example again of government discrimination against Muslims and the government neglect for the responsibility of rebuilding Marawi," said Francisco Lara, an adviser with peace group International Alert.

The government says it is making progress in repairing the city, which was pounded by military air strikes and artillery as it struggled to dislodge the jihadists.

"We are following the guidance and instructions of the president that he will see to it that Marawi will rise as a prosperous city again," Eduardo del Rosario, a retired general overseeing the rebuilding efforts, told journalists this week.

"We... are all undertaking the task given to us as per instruction of the president," he added.

Though President Rodrigo Duterte has tried to portray himself as sensitive to the Philippines' Muslim minority, he has sent mixed signals about Marawi.

He has claimed the city was home to illegal drug activity, a very serious accusation from a leader whose narcotics crackdown has killed over 5,300 alleged dealers and pushers.

"I don't think that I should be spending for their buildings. People there have a lot of money," he said in reference to Marawi in an April speech.

US aviation regulator says Boeing hasn't submitted 737 MAX fix



FORT WORTH (UNITED STATES), MAY 23 (AFP): The US' aviation regulator has still not received Boeing's proposed fix for its 737 MAX aircraft, which have been grounded globally following two deadly crashes, the agency's chief has said.

Boeing has said it will patch the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS) stall prevention system, which has been blamed for the two crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia that killed a total of 346 people and caused the best-selling planes to be taken out of service.

Boeing said last week that it had finished making changes requested by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), but the agency's interim chief Dan Elwell told reporters on Wednesday that the agency hadn't yet seen the fixes.

"We are still waiting for Boeing to formally submit the software for approval," he said on the sidelines of a summit of global aviation regulators in Fort Worth, Texas.

Elwell said the FAA sent Boeing additional questions about its proposed fixes for the MAX planes, which caused the delay.

The summit set to begin Thursday will

see the FAA attempt to re-establish trust with aviation regulators from 33 countries including China, Canada, the European Union, Ethiopia and Indonesia.

The regulator called the summit to walk through the steps taken to address concerns with the MAX aircraft after it was criticized for dragging its feet on ordering the jets grounded.

Canadian and American regulators have differed on the proper training for the 737 MAX 8, with Canada insisting pilots train in a flight simulator and the US saying a training course on a computer or iPad is enough.

"We haven't determined the final training yet," Elwell said.

Two American carriers -- Southwest and American -- have announced plans to restart flights on their MAX aircraft from August in hopes the fix will be completed by then.

The FAA chief added that he couldn't say when the jet would be back in the air, blaming the recent delay.

"It takes as long as it takes to be right," Elwell said. "We need to be the first to lift the prohibition."



Corporate empires has taken over artistic vein of movie making, says Leonardo DiCaprio

LONDON, MAY 23 (PTI): Leonardo DiCaprio says the current studio system in Hollywood is blocking the way of creative storytelling and believes it is responsible for the switch of the filmmakers towards the streaming medium.

During an interview with Esquire magazine, the 43-year-old actor said such a trend is unhealthy for cinema.

"I don't want to act as if I've been around since f***ing silent cinema, but I see this as a huge shift in the way movies are going to get done, what gets financing. The studio system has tons of content, libraries of things that they can make movies of, but in a lot of ways they are hemorrhaging.

"They've become -- much like in the twenties -- these corporate empires that have taken over the artistic vein of movie making. We're now in an era when there's a flush of cash into streaming," DiCaprio said.

The actor, who is partnering with Hollywood star Brad Pitt for director Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood," said the excess of content has also led to a "lot of garbage out there."

"Now I do see a lot of chances being taken for story lines, certainly documentaries, certainly giving some artists opportunities to make out-of-the-box story lines that I don't think 10 years ago would have been possible. But these types of films that Quentin is doing are also becoming endangered species," he added.

DiCaprio said the film aficionados and critics should continue to celebrate

the filmmakers who are still holding the fort for creative and risk-taking cinema.

"I'm not saying celebrate this movie, but let's celebrate filmmakers who are still holding on to the craft of making movies, and let's hope that in that transition into whatever this is going to be, this type of filmmaking will still exist.

to me. And they may not even get to see them.

"I've always believed every good film finds its eyes, inevitably. But there's a shift in attention span. I've been hearing from newer generations that they're used to something shorter, quicker, big jump, and get out. And the



There are some dark ages coming up."

Pitt also weighed in on the discussion and said a positive takeaway is people are getting more opportunities to showcase their talent.

However, he lamented the lack of awareness among the new breed of filmmakers about the classics, which he attributed to the "shift" in the attention span of a movie viewer.

"I see something else happening with the younger generations. I was dismayed at how many 20 year olds have never seen 'The Godfather', 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest', 'All the President's Men', these films are the Bible

streaming services work that way; you can move on to the next one if you're enticed," Pitt, 55, said.

The actor believes commitment is key for movie watching process.

"What I always loved about going to a cinema was letting something slowly unfold, and to luxuriate in that story and watch and see where it goes. I'm curious to see if that whole form of movie watching is just out the window with the younger generations. I don't think so completely," he added.

"Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" premiered at the ongoing Cannes Film Festival and is set to be released in July.



RISING RIHANNA! The Fenty founder attends her first luxury brand pop-up store in Paris, France.

Alan Menken believes Disney won't remake 'Pocahontas'

LONDON, MAY 23 (PTI): Alan Menken, the composer of Disney '90s classic films such as "The Little Mermaid",

tas", if given a go ahead, might not suit the "modern" society and will instead end up "offending" people.

next, with Rob Marshall directing and I'm going to be having lyrics by Lin Manuel Miranda, who I knew since he was a little kid."

"They're developing 'Hunchback', which will be complicated because there are dark aspects to that which we're going to have to navigate. I don't know if we'll ever be able to do 'Pocahontas', I think that story is going to be difficult. With modern sensibilities, it'd be hard you're going to offend somebody so I don't know," he added. The 69-year-old composer, however, is glad to revisit the Disney classic and he had a great time working on the new "Aladdin" song "Speechless".

"I'm happy to come back to these films and continue to add to them. Writing 'Speechless' was a surprising benefit," Menken said.

The film, which featured voice works by Irene Bedard and Mel Gibson, is about a Native American woman falling for an Englishman, who has just come to invade her homeland.

According to DigitalSpy, speaking at an event to promote Disney's "Aladdin" remake, Menken said, "They all seem to be moving that way! 'The Little Mermaid' is



"Beauty and the Beast" and "Aladdin", believes the 1995 animated feature "Pocahontas" might not be remade by the studio.

Disney of late has green lit a number of remakes of its yesteryear classics, including "The Lion King", "Lady and The Tramp", "The Little Mermaid" and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame", but Menken believes the new "Pocahon-

Holly Hunter boards 'Succession' season two



LOS ANGELES, MAY 22 (PTI): Oscar winner Holly Hunter is set to star in the second season of HBO satirical family drama "Succession".

The show, which premiered on the network in June last year, follows the fictional Roy family, the dysfunctional owners of a global media empire who are fighting for control of the company amidst uncertainty about the health of the family's patriarch, Logan Roy.

Hunter, best known for starring in films such as "Broadcast News", "The Piano" and shows like "Top of

the Lake", joins Brian Cox, Jeremy Strong, Hiam Abbass, Sarah Snook, Kieran Culkin, Alan Ruck, Nicholas Braun and Matthew Macfadyen in the cast. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the show is expected to come back for its sophomore run in August this year.

Created by Jesse Armstrong, "Succession" is executive produced by Adam McKay, Frank Rich, Kevin Messick, Will Ferrell, Jane Tranter, Mark Mylod, and Tony Roche.

Armstrong also serves as showrunner and executive producer.

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ARIES: With the moon and weighty Saturn aligned in your career zone, you're in your productive element. But before you hit the "Go!" button on any new missions, make sure you aren't leaving a ton of unfinished projects in the pipeline. Your professional street cred is on the line, Aries, and if you don't make good on your promises, you could lose the reputation you worked so hard to build.

TAURUS: Loving without limits again, Taurus? Uh-oh. It's a twisted truth: The more sacrifices you make, the less the others seem to appreciate your efforts. To preserve the delicate balance in relationships, hit the brakes on over-giving, over-functioning and over-anything! But check that resentment, Bull.

GEMINI: Brace for intensity! With today's Capricorn moon percolating in your obsessive eighth house, you might find yourself agonizing over an important relationship. But if you fixate on what COULD go wrong (but hasn't yet), you will give yourself major anxiety. Stop ruminating and set up a time to talk so you can find out how this person actually feels.

CANCER: You're in a results-oriented groove, Cancer, and ready to make this a seriously productive day. Next question: How do you get people on-board with your game plan? It will take more than a smile and a handshake to get those contracts signed. Put together a pitch deck or outline a detailed action plan with clear deliverables and "KPIs." If people aren't ready to step up, they may pull back, and that can be disappointing.

LEO: You're hustling to achieve an important benchmark, but relax, Leo! Instead of stressing over minutiae, call a summit to make sure everyone is aligned around long-term goals. If you're unhappy with someone's deliverables, today's moon-Saturn alignment can help you deliver feedback in a poised, professional manner. While you don't want to berate anyone, provide clear direction about how you'd like it done. Maybe it's time to put your step-by-step process into writing or conduct some hands-on training.

LIBRA: When conflicts flare up today, try not to autopilot into peacekeeper mode. True,

that's a Libra's default setting, but in your zeal to smooth things over, you could wind up suppressing an important conversation. With the moon and mature Saturn aligned, there's space to discuss touchy topics without drawing battle lines. Criticism from a managerial type may also put you in a mood.

VIRGO: You're pumped up and ready to share your discoveries with anyone who crosses your path today! But read the room before you unleash like a paid sponsor for your latest passion. People could feel overwhelmed, even pressured, if they sense that you're trying to sell them on something. You know that's not the case, Virgo, but if you don't want to alienate your audience, warm them up slowly.

SCORPIO: Keep your mind on your money as the moon aligns with conservative Saturn in your fiscally savvy second house. Whether professional or personal, have frank conversations about cash flow—especially if YOUR bank account is on the line. And even if it isn't, you don't want to be accused of overspending someone else's funds, right? Clarity saves the day. Hitting the town tonight?.

SAGITTARIUS: With the moon and weighty Saturn in your communication corner today, your words carry extra weight. If you have an important message to share with the world, cue up the posts, record a podcast or an IGTV video. An influential person may be inspired to DM you; maybe your ideas could go viral among a strategically hashtagged group. If people request your feedback, make sure your critiques are constructive!

CAPRICORN: With the moon hovering in Capricorn all day AND connecting to your ruler, focused Saturn, you're in your productive element. You've got a mission to accomplish, and you won't take kindly to any slackers in the bunch. Warning: If you start barking orders, your collaborators might resist—or even go rogue. If you want to retain their loyalty, invite them to weigh in on the process and outcome. That said, a "tortoise" on the team could seriously test your patience. Before you excommunicate them, consider this: Could their exacting attention to detail be redirected to a more nitpicky task?

AQUARIUS: Over the past couple years, the planets have supported you with stepping into your power—and you're really enjoying this new phase of leadership. But watch out! Today, an uppity overachiever could threaten your position. Before you start defending your throne, consider an alternative route. Could you lighten your workload by delegating a few (important) tasks? You don't have to be a control freak to stay in command. Support your "competitor's" growth and use them to your advantage!

PISCES: Your easygoing spirit clashes with your possessive side, igniting a major internal battle. You work hard to project a mellow image—kind of like a chilled-out guru who's got it totally handled. But be honest, Pisces: In private, have you been texting friends at all hours with messages like, "OMG, does this mean they totally hate me now?" If you're searching for answers about the future of an alliance, be upfront about your needs. If you discover that your missions don't align anymore, it will hurt for a minute, yes—but at least you'll finally have clarity about next steps.