



**HOW PRINCE HARRY
THOROUGHLY CHARMED
OPRAH WINFREY**

pg08

**MICHELLE OBAMA IS A SURPRISE TEXTBOOK
EXAMPLE OF HOW WOMEN THRIVE
AND GROW THROUGH ADULTHOOD**

pg04

**BTS' MAP OF THE
SOUL: PERSONA HAS
OFFICIALLY DROPPED**

pg08



SummitTIMES

Vol 04 | Issue 101 | Gangtok | Monday | 15 April 2019

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

Sikkim-BJP celebrates Ambedkar Jayanti

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 14 APR:**

Bharatiya Janata Party Sikkim Pradesh celebrated the 128th Ambedkar Jayanti as Samrasta Diwas here on Sunday.

On the occasion, BJP-Sikkim president, DB Chauhan, extended greetings and best wishes to the entire State.

A BJP press release informs that BJP was celebrating Ambedkar Jayanti as Samrasta Diwas at the national level.

**to book
advertisements
in SummitTimes,
mail us at
advertise@
summittimes.
com
or call us at
03592-208698**

BJP has promised to look into our Gorkhaland demand: Gurung

PRADIPTA TAPADAR

KOLKATA, APRIL 14 (PTI): Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM) leader Bimal Gurung, on the run since the 2017 agitation in the Hills, has claimed that the BJP leadership gave him assurances that it would look into his statehood demand if it returns to power at the Centre.

Statehood is a dream for every Gorkha living in the Hills, he said, adding that the saffron party's pitch for a permanent political solution was also "very encouraging".

The BJP, which is eyeing a third straight term in Darjeeling, has made no mention of statehood in its manifesto, but assured a "permanent political solution" in the Hills and scheduled tribe tags for eleven Gorka communities.

"We have sent a memorandum to the BJP, demanding Gorkhaland. They(BJP) have assured us that they will look into it. We are happy that their (BJP's) manifesto speaks about bringing a permanent solution to the region," Gurung told PTI in an interview over phone.

Lauding Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah for "being sympathetic towards the problems of the Hills", he alleged that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, on the other hand, has been pursuing "vote-bank politics" to gain her party's foothold in the region.

"She(Banerjee) has never addressed the real issues here. She is not interested in developing the region," he

claimed, demanding that the Trinmool Congress (TMC) supremo present a white paper on her welfare initiative in the Hills.

Asked what he thought about the BJP not taking any measure in the last five years to create Gorkhaland, the GJM leader was quick to defend the saffron party, claiming that the "the Narendra Modi government's priority was to improve the living standards of people".

"Gorkhaland tops our agenda and I will keep fighting for it till the end. But the central government needs to focus on the overall development of the country first. Everything else is secondary. We are hoping that it (BJP) will look into the Gorkhaland issue in the next term," Gurung said.

Refuting opposition's allegation that the sitting BJP MP from Darjeeling, SS Ahluwalia, has done little to develop the Hills, Gurung claimed that the parliamentarian has been trying to work "honestly and sincerely" in the region, but the TMC-led government in the state thwarted his initiatives.

"He (Ahluwalia) had tried to initiate several projects in the region, but the local administration and the state government did not cooperate with him. This is why utilization certificates were not issued," Gurung said.

According to records, Ahluwalia has utilized 56.30 per cent of the allotted MPLAD funds.

People have not forgotten the atrocities committed by the TMC

during the 104-day-long agitation over statehood demand in 2017, Gurung claimed.

"The voters in the Hills are with Modiji. This time, we have urged them to vote against every bullet fired by the TMC during the Gorkhaland agitation. This election is a fight for restoration of democracy," he asserted.

Gurung, then GJM supremo, had gone into hiding after the June 2017 clashes in Darjeeling. The agitation also led to a split in the Morcha, with Binay Tamang, his deputy, emerging as the leader of one of the factions.

"Our boys along with cadres of the Gorkha National Liberation Front and other hill parties are reaching out to the masses to garner support for BJP candidate Raju Singh Bisht. I can assure you that this time we will win by a bigger margin. Winning this election will take us a step closer to realising our dreams," he said.

For the first time in about three decades, the demand for a separate Gorkhaland has not figured in the list of poll issues in Darjeeling as parties, including the local GJM and GNLF, have sought development and democracy in the region.

Bisht, who has the support of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) and the Bimal Gurung faction of the GJM, is pitted against TMC candidate Amar Singh Rai.

The Binay Tamang faction and other smaller outfits in the Hills are backing Rai.

turn to pg02

Highway project debris damages Namchi water supply lines

Restoration underway on war-footing, PHE Deptt informs

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 14 Apr:**

Debris from back-cutting works on the Roads National Highway Project Upgradation underway on the Namchi-Damthang stretch has damaged the water supply-lines to Namchi, information released by the Divisional Engineer (South), Water Security & PHE Department, explains. The South district headquarter town, it may be recalled, has been facing acute shortage of regular drinking water supply.

The DE's clarification arrived after complaints started circulating on social media earlier today.

Namchi receives its water from Dhapper, Bermelli, and various small sources which are col-



lected at the Damthang Water Treatment Plant from where it is carried over 12 KMs to the reservoir in Namchi.

A new 200 mm pipeline was laid out as recently as in December 2017 to supplement the 150mm pipeline of 1987

vintage.

This pipeline, it is informed, runs between 300 to 800 metres below the Namchi-Damthang

road, and has been damaged by the back-cutting works frequently in the recent past.

In the latest instance, on 11 and 12 April, the pipeline was damaged by debris from the road work at several places and while the 150 mm pipeline was restored, the new 200 mm pipeline remains buried under 14 feet of debris, the DE informs.

He adds that while the PHE Department's field personnel have been working continuously to restore the lines, the sheer size of boulders and the difficult and unstable terrain are making the task difficult and time-consuming.

As of now partial supply has been restored, the Department informs.

Ambedkar Jayanti celebrated in Gangtok



GANGTOK, 14 APR [IPR]:

The 128th birth anniversary of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar was celebrated at State Legislative Assembly followed by a special programme at Chintan Bhawan today. The function was organized by the Social Justice Empowerment and Welfare Department in coordination with All Sikkim Scheduled Caste Welfare Association.

Governor Ganga Prasad was present as the chief guest accompanied by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling as the guest of honour.

The Governor and the Chief Minister started the programme by garlanding the statue of Dr Ambedkar at the Sikkim Legislative Assembly complex. They then visited stalls put up by various colleges at Chintan Bhawan.

President, All Sikkim Scheduled Caste Welfare Association, Shekhar Sewa, presented the welcome address after which Bhimbandhana was performed by the students of Modern School and Tashi Namgyal Senior Secondary School.

In his address, the Governor delved on the essence of the thoughts and philosophy of Dr Ambedkar and reminded the audience about how Dr Ambedkar led a number of social movements to secure human rights for the oppressed sections of the society and worked to abolish caste discrimination and untouchability.

HP gov takes cognisance of Dalit family's allegation of denial of access to crematorium

Shimla, Apr 14 (PTI): Himachal Pradesh Governor Acharya Devvrat Sunday directed officials to take necessary action after a Dalit family cremated an elderly woman in a jungle in Kullu after upper caste people allegedly did not let them use the village crematorium, a spokesperson said.

The governor took strong cognisance of the matter after a delegation of Sri Ravidas Dharma Sabha, led by its president Karam Chand Bhatia, brought the matter to his attention, he added.

The incident had taken place in Fozal valley of Kullu district. The elderly woman, a resident of Dhara village,

"He was also a sociologist and contributed much to the discussions of various social problems," the Governor added.

He urged the gathering to follow the principles espoused by Dr Ambedkar towards eradication of social inequality and heralding human equality and liberation of minds to understand human reforms.

He also asked the students to draw inspirations from his ideas and action. He Governor stressed that Dr Ambedkar fought for the well-being of all in society and that we must all strive to bring uniformity in the society.

The Chief Minister congratulated the organizing committee for organizing a successful function and called upon the people to think beyond caste for the betterment of the State.

He also appreciated the committee's gesture of felicitating former Minister, Neru Sewa, and Nilesch Lamichanay and urged the young, especially students, to take full advantage of the facilities provided by the Government.

He also advised the All Sikkim Scheduled Caste Welfare Association to open a Dalit Sahitya Library to record and share the real essence of their history and culture.

He appealed to the gathering to bring a change in society by following the principles

turn to pg02



Namchi girls Mampy Roy and Amrita Limboo have impressed in the Women's Physique segment of Gold's Classic Championship held in Siliguri today. While Mampy was adjudged runner's up, Amrita came in third.

1,100 Jet Airways pilots decide not to fly from Monday: NAG

MUMBAI, APR 14 (PTI): Around 1,100 pilots belonging to crisis-hit Jet Airways' pilots body National Aviator's Guild (NAG) have decided not to fly from 10 am Monday in protest against "non-payment of salary dues, a source said Sunday.

The pilots along with engineers and senior management have not received salaries since January. The debt-ridden carrier has also not paid March salary to

employees of other categories as well.

"As on today, we have not been paid for nearly three-and-a-half months and we don't know when we will be paid. So we have decided to go ahead with our call of no-flying from April 15. All 1,100 pilots of NAG will stop flying from 10 am Monday," said a Guild source.

The NAG, which claims representation of around 1,100 pilots of the total 1,600 with the

full service carrier, had in late March called for no flying from April 1 over non-payment of salaries.

However, on March 31 it deferred the agitation to April 15, saying it wanted to give more time to the new management.

Jet Airways is at present under the management control of SBI-led consortium of lenders after the approval of a debt-rejig plan last month, which also led its founder chairman Naresh Goyal to quit.

Oppn parties to approach SC again to demand verification of 50 pc votes by paper trail

NEW DELHI, APR 14 (PTI): Persisting with their doubts over the credibility of EVMs, several opposition parties Sunday said they will move the Supreme Court again to seek verification of at least 50 per cent of the polled votes against VVPAT slips.

Opposition parties, including the Congress, Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Samajwadi Party, CPI and CPI(M), jointly addressed a press conference to highlight the issue of transparency in the election process and protection of voter rights and gave a call to “save democracy”.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of “programming” the electronic voting machines to win the Lok Sabha polls, while his Andhra Pradesh counterpart Chandrababu Naidu said 21 political parties have demanded matching of the VVPAT slips with at least 50 per cent of the votes cast through the EVMs.

Naidu had met Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora Saturday to raise the issue of alleged malfunctioning of EVMs.

The demand by the parties comes days before the 2nd phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections on April 18, when the a total of 97 constituencies across 13 states go to polls. The first of the seven-phase polls was held on April 11.

The Supreme Court had on Monday asked the Election Commission to increase the random matching of VVPAT slips

with votes cast through EVMs at five polling booths per assembly segment, from one at present, in the Lok Sabha polls.

It had given the direction saying the measure would provide greater satisfaction not just to political parties but the entire electorate.

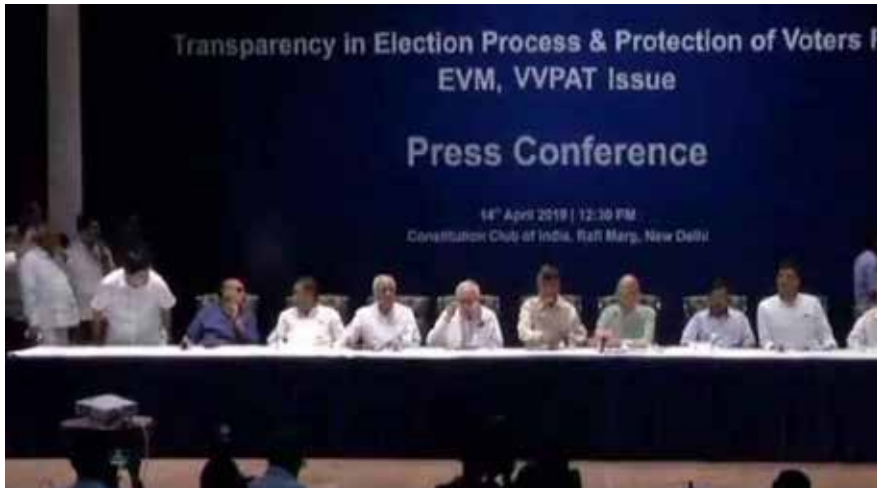
The opposition parties, including the Congress, have been demanding that at least 50 per cent of all votes polled through EVMs be verified against the paper slips of the the voters’ verifiable paper audit trail (VVPATs) machines.

A VVPAT is an auxiliary, independent device linked to an electronic voting machine to allow voters to see if the votes cast by them have gone to the right candidate. The VVPATs are also meant to help detect any possible “election fraud” or malfunction of EVMs.

The Election Commission of India has decided to use VVPATs with all the EVMs in the ongoing elections to impart greater transparency and credibility to the country’s poll process.

The BJP, meanwhile, termed the opposition parties’ meet in Delhi an exercise “to find excuses for their impending massive defeat” in the Lok Sabha polls.

In a separate press conference, BJP spokesperson GVL Narasimha Rao said, “The so-called all party meeting convened in Delhi is nothing but a confession of defeat by the so-called Mahagathbandhan.”



“They are already trying to find excuses for their impending massive defeat. They have not only failed to mount a challenge against the BJP in this election but have also failed as an opposition in the last five years,” he added.

After the opposition parties’ meet on EVMs, AAP supremo Kejriwal told reporters that the people were losing faith in EVMs and the election procedure.

Congress leaders and senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Abhishek Singhvi also attended the conference.

Singhvi said the opposition parties will approach the Supreme Court for a direction to the EC for matching at least 50 per cent of the votes recorded in VVPAT slips with those registered by EVMs in every assembly segment.

Sibal said, If the EC ignores this issue, we will take other measures. We will not sit quietly. We will approach the Supreme Court.”

Singhvi said the opposition parties would

launch a nationwide campaign on the issue of “discrepancies” in EVMs and alleged the EC was not doing enough to address it.

“Questions were raised after the first phase of elections, we don’t think the EC is paying adequate attention. If you press the button before X party, vote goes to Y party. VVPAT displays (paper slips) only for 3 seconds, instead of 7 seconds,” he claimed.

“Why the EC does not want 50 per cent VVPAT slips to be counted. Today, 20 to 25 per cent EVMs are not working properly. People vote till 4 am and wait in queues. What does this mean? asked Sibal, doubting the EC’s intentions.

It will be unfortunate if the EC supports voting machines instead of the voters, he added.

Accusing the BJP of “programming the EVMs” to win the poll, Kejriwal claimed, “People don’t believe in EVMs anymore.”

He said all opposition parties, except the BJP which is “benefitting out of this manipulation

of machines”, want the counting of at least 50 per cent of the VVPAT slips.

The loss of faith in the electoral procedure is raising a question mark on the country’s democratic structure,” he said.

He also accused the poll panel of ignoring the complaints of manipulations of EVMs.

“Why is the EC not listening or acting on the complaints? There is a serious manipulation of EVMs. Why is the EC ignoring this?” he asked.

Claiming that all votes goes to the BJP irrespective of the buttons pressed on EVMs, Kejriwal asked why this discrepancy was not being investigated by the EC.

Asserting that the EVMs are not reliable, the opposition parties’ key interlocutor Naidu said they are not satisfied with the Supreme Court order to the EC to increase the number of EVM’s to be randomly verified from one to only five per assembly constituency.

He said a fresh petition will be filed in the matter.

Cong seeks probe into “suspicious black trunk” in PM’s chopper

New Delhi, Apr 14 (PTI): The Congress Sunday demanded a probe into the alleged transportation of a “suspicious black trunk” in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s helicopter during his visit to Chitradurg in Karnataka for poll campaign.

Congress spokesperson Anand Sharma asked the prime minister to come clean and said the Election Commission should inquire into the contents of the “trunk”.

He said the Congress’ Karnataka unit has already filed a complaint with the Election Commission in this regard.

The prime minister had addressed an election rally in Karnataka’s Chitradurga on April 9.

“We saw there were three more choppers escorting the prime minister’s helicopter. After landing, a black trunk was taken out and whisked away in a private car which was not part of the SPG carcade,” he alleged.

Sharma suggested there was cash stashed in the trunk. “What was there in the trunk. If there was no cash in it, let there an inquiry be held.”

The party also played a video clip claiming that the purported trunk, after being unloaded from

the PM’s helicopter, was shipped to a private Innova car, that Sharma alleged was not a part of the SPG carcade, and taken away.

Sharma also asked Modi to give an account of his five-year rule to the people of the country as a tribute to Dr B R Ambedkar on his birth anniversary.

“The Prime Minister is trying to control and change the narrative because he has no courage the face real issues,” he alleged.

Raising the issue of Rafale, Sharma asked Modi to make public the minutes of a meeting held last year between him and former French president Francois Hollande on the fighter jet deal.

“Why is he (PM) silent on his role in Rafale scam? Make the minutes of the meeting between Prime Minister and former French president Francois Hollande on the Rafale deal public by tomorrow. As there has been a controversy, it would help settle it once for all,” he said.

The Prime Minister in his “desperation to win has done enormous disservice to the nation by dragging in the Armed Forces for Partisan political propaganda”, Sharma

further alleged.

“Seeking votes for the courageous action and sacrifices of our soldiers is an unpardonable transgression and also an insult to the Armed forces who defend the motherland under the tricolour and not under one person or party. The Indian Army belongs to the Republic of India,” he said.

Sharma also slammed BJP leader and Union minister General VK Singh (Retd).

“There is Prime Minister’s defence and his apology minister including one of his ministers, who should have been made literate in the military history of the country. I am referring to retired General V.K. Singh, he said - Indira Gandhi benefitted electorally from the Bangladesh war.”

“Is he ignorant of history when he himself was a commissioned officer?” Sharma asked.

“To reeducate him, these are the facts: General Singh got commissioned in June 1970, Smt Indira Gandhi recorded a massive electoral win in March 1971 and India won the 13-day war with Pakistan on 16 December 1971. VK Singh should extend an unconditional apology,” he said.

1,000 youth IPFT workers join Congress in Tripura

AGARTALA, APR 13 (PTI): Over one thousand Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT) youth workers joined the opposition Congress in the state on Saturday, its leaders said.

Tripura Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president Pradyot Kishore Deb Burman said 300 youth IPFT supporters joined the Congress from Khowai district, while another group of 700 at Kamalpur in Dhalai district.

Addressing a press conference, he said leaders of the regional party have “betrayed” its supporters, and failed to deliver on the promises for the development of indigenous people of the state.

“IPFT supporters are coming to us because they have realised that IPFT supremo N C Deb-

barma, who is not even campaigning, submitted a nomination to cut down on votes of the Congress and help the BJP,” Deb Burman claimed.

The IPFT-BJP alliance formed the government in Tripura in 2018, ending the 25-year rule of the Left Front.

Earlier this month, IPFT vice-president Ananta Debbarma and its Youth wing general secretary Shuklacharan Noatia joined the Congress, blaming IPFT leaders for high-handedness and an absence of internal democracy in the party.

Meanwhile, a delegation of Congress leaders from Tripura reached New Delhi on Saturday to meet officials of the Election Commission for re-polling in booths, which the party alleges to have been rigged on April 11.

Parties got 99.8 pc donations through electoral bonds of Rs 10 lakh, Rs 1 cr donations: RTI plea

INDORE, APR 14 (PTI): A whopping 99.8 per cent of donations received by political parties was through electoral bonds of the highest denominations -- Rs 10 lakh and Rs one crore -- between March 2018 and January 24, 2019, revealed data obtained under the RTI Act.

Donors purchased bonds worth Rs 1,407.09 crore of which Rs 1,403.90 crore were in the highest denominations of Rs ten lakh and Rs one

crore during the period.

Social worker Chandrashekhar Goud shared the data received from State Bank of India (SBI) through an RTI query.

The donors bought 1,459 electoral bonds of denomination of Rs ten lakh and 1,258 bonds of Rs one crore denomination. They purchased 318 bonds of Rs one lakh, 12 bonds of Rs 10,000 and 24 bonds of Rs 1000 denomination, according to the RTI reply.

Electoral bonds worth Rs 1,395.89 crore

were redeemed by the parties.

Gaud had also asked the bank how many parties redeemed the bonds and worth how much money, but the SBI did not disclose it, saying it was in fiduciary capacity disclosure which is exempted under Section 8 (1) (e) and (j) of the RTI Act.

Electoral bonds were sold by the State Bank of India (SBI) in seven tranches. They were sold in five denominations of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1

lakh, Rs 10 lakh, and Rs 1 crore.

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), a voluntary organisation, working for political reforms, had approached the Supreme Court seeking a stay order on the sale of electoral bonds.

On Friday, the Supreme Court refused to suspend the political funding through electoral bonds but, did introduce conditions to bring transparency in the process.

TDP tech advisor is whistle-blower, not thief: Chandrababu Naidu hits back at EC’s charge

NEW DELHI, APR 14 (PTI): Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu Sunday said his technology advisor Hari Prasad Vemuru, whose presence in TDP’s delegation to the Election Commission was objected to by the poll panel, was a whistle-blower and not a thief.

“Yesterday we met the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and showed him how EVMs were not functioning properly. He (Vemuru) was called for discussion in the fight for transparency. He is a whistle-blower. He has not committed theft,” Naidu said speaking at a presser of opposition parties here on the issue of

transparency in the election process.

“I know technology. I have been promoting technology in the country. We should become masters of technology and not slaves of it,” he added.

In a letter to the TDP, the Election Commission on Saturday questioned how a person with criminal antecedents can be part of the delegation led by Naidu. The poll panel said Vemuru was involved in a criminal case regarding alleged theft of an EVM in 2010.

In its reply, the TDP said no charge sheet was filed against Vemuru in the last nine years. The EC had even invited

Vemuru to participate in the first field trial of VVPATs in Delhi on July 21, 2011.

He had also attended several other meetings of the EC in the last nine years, it said, adding that instead of focusing on the issue, the poll panel was “trying to avoid addressing the situation”.

At the presser, Vemuru made a presentation on how EVMs were not working properly.

“The machines which are claimed to be secure are not functioning as per the manual. The manual says the voter verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) slip has to be displayed for seven seconds and then cut

and drop into the box but it was not happening,” he said

Showing a video which captured different functioning of three EVM machines -- two machines from two constituencies in Andhra Pradesh and one from a demonstration given by the EC, he said: “Certain code has been changed or manipulated showcasing the differences in display time. The EC is not answering this.”

Leaders of over 20 opposition parties, including the Congress, TDP, AAP, SP, CPI, CPI(M) and Trinamool Congress, were present at the presser and launched a vociferous attack on the ruling BJP for trying to “influence” the EC.

BJP has promised...

Referring to his one-time protege Tamang, who “expelled” him from the party after he fled the Hills, Gurung said people of Darjeeling constituency will never forgive him.

“If he (Tamang) is not loyal to me and the Gorkha people, how will he be loyal to Mamata Banerjee?” he wondered.

Asked about his plans to return to the Hills, Gurung said he had wanted to do so, but the police has cordoned off the Bagdogra airport in Siliguri.

“I hope to return to the hills soon. Despite the Supreme Court’s order, I don’t understand why the police wants to stop me,” he said.

In view of the elections, the Supreme Court had earlier this month allowed GJM leaders Bimal Gurung and Roshan Giri to approach the Calcutta High Court for anticipatory bail in connection with the cases filed against them.

mbedkar Jayanti celebrated...

laid down by Dr Ambedkar and infuse at least one principle of Baba Saheb in the life of their children. This, he said, would give moral satisfaction to parents and enable the children to understand the importance of respect for elders and the society.

He also emphasized on the principles of oneness and equality in the state and the need to follow unity and a common goal for the upliftment of the community.

Let’s all work together to make Sikkim a better State, he added.

On the occasion, the All Sikkim Scheduled Caste Welfare Association felicitated Ms. Sewa for being the first woman Minister from the Schedule Caste community and Nilesh Lamichanay for his achievements in the field of cricket.

Also on the occasion, the All Sikkim Scheduled Caste Welfare Association website, www.asscwa.org. com was launched by the Governor.

Ambedkar Scholarship students were congratulated and offered khadas by the Governor.

Rajni Khati and Arnika Khati, granddaughters of the late Purna Bahadur Khati donated Rs 30,000 and announced that they would donate the amount every year to add to this scholarship.

A short film on the life of Dr Ambedkar by IPR Department was also screened.

The function was also attended by Dr K Jayakumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Raj Bhawan; K. Srinivaulu, Principal Secretary Social Justice Empowerment and Welfare Department; BM Ramudamu, former Minister, Advisor All Sikkim Scheduled Caste Welfare Association; Heads of Departments, students and other officials of the State Government.

~ SummitTIMES ~
CLASSIFIEDS

Required for Summit Times

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

Summit Times office
Church Road, Gangtok
03592-208698

URGENTLY REQUIRED:

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

PLOT FOR SALE:

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

Baisakhi celebrated in Gangtok

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 14 APR:**

Around 5,000 devotees from different communities and faiths came together to celebrate Baisakhi here at the Station Gurudwara in Deorali.

“Baisakhi marks the Sikh New Year and commemorates the formation of the Khalsa Panth of warriors under Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1699. This festival also marks the onset of the harvest season and ripening of Rabi crops. It observes major event in



the history of Sikhism and the Indian sub-continent that happened in Punjab region,” informs a press release. The release adds that

on the occasion, Maj Gen RC Tiwari, GOC, Black Cat Division, extended his greetings to the Black Cat troops and entire Sangat of Gangtok.



“In a message, GOC said that Baisakhi was the festival of equality, humanity, brotherhood and compassion for all.

It is also devoted to the hard working farmers that enabled peoples to survive joyfully,” the release adds.

Attempt being made to destroy the Constitution: Priyanka



SILCHAR (ASSAM), APR 14 (PTI): Coming down heavily on the BJP, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday said the Constitution is not respected and an attempt is being made to destroy it.

Holding a roadshow in Silchar in support of Congress candidate and sitting MP Sushmita Dev, she also said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has toured the world over, but hardly spent time in his own constituency in Varanasi.

“It is ‘Mahapurush’ (B R) Ambedkar ji’s birth anniversary. He laid the foundation of this country through the Constitution. It is the duty of every leader to respect that Constitution.

“Today, you are seeing that the Constitution is not respected and an attempt is being made to destroy it,” said Gandhi, who is Congress’s general secretary in-charge of Uttar Pradesh East.

Slamming the the BJP’s manifesto, she said there is no space for different cultures and religions in it, as well as any respect for the Constitution.

Gandhi said she was told by people in Varanasi that Modi did not spend even five minutes with anyone there in the last five years.

“He went to America and hugged there, went to China and hugged there, too. He went and hugged in Russia and

Africa. He went to Japan and played the drum. In Pakistan, he had biriyani.

“But in his own constituency, he did not go once to a family’s house to enquire about their condition,” she alleged.

Speaking highly of Sushmita Dev, Gandhi likened the Congress lawmaker with her grandmother and former prime minister Indira Gandhi.

“If you remember Indira Gandhi even today, it is because she worked for you. I have come here for Sushmita. She has that courage which Indira ji had. Sushmita has that honest and good intention, and wants to work for you from the heart,” she added.

Seminar on aerospace power on Monday to mark birth centenary of Marshal Arjan Singh

NEW DELHI, APR 14 (PTI): A seminar on aerospace power of the future and the impact of technology will be held here Monday to pay tributes to war hero Marshal Arjan Singh of the Indian Air Force on his birth centenary.

The event will be hosted by the IAF along with the Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS), an autonomous defence research and analysis body, at the Subroto Park.

The Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa, is slated to address the inaugural session, the organisers said.

The IAF Sunday also organised half-marathons across the country spanning 100 Air Force stations on the occasion of the centenary.

The Delhi leg of the event was held at Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium and more than 800 air warriors took part in it, the IAF said in a statement.

The Indian Air Force has accomplished a milestone in sporting activity by the simultaneous conduct of half-marathons across the country, Dhanoa said at the event.

“Late Marshal of the Indian Air Force Arjan Singh was an accomplished sportsman. The conduct of this half-marathon is a befitting tribute to the legend and an admirable way of expression of our gratitude towards his contribution to the nation,” he said.

Those who weaken justice, liberty, equality, fraternity doing disservice to BR Ambedkar: Rahul



NEW DELHI, APR 14 (PTI): Congress president Rahul Gandhi Sunday paid tribute to B R Ambedkar on his birth anniversary and said those who weaken the principles of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity are doing disservice to the memory of the architect of the Indian Constitution.

“On Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar’s jayanti, let us re-dedicate ourselves to the 4 universal values of JUSTICE, LIBERTY, EQUALITY & FRATERNITY enshrined in our Constitution. Those who pay him tributes on this day, while insidiously weakening these values, do his memory disservice,” he said in a tweet, which is

being viewed as an attack on the BJP leadership.

The Congress president also gave his best wishes to the countrymen on the occasion of Baisakhi, Ram Navmi, Hanuman Jayanti and the Odia New Year in separate tweets.

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also saluted the architect of the Indian Constitution and social reformer B R Ambedkar on his birth anniversary.

“Justice for all, protection of the weak, mutual brotherhood, equality and freedom remained at the heart of Babasaheb’s life. Let us take these ideas forward with full strength,” she tweeted in hindi.

Ambedkar statue removed in garbage truck, found damaged in Hyd’bad; 2 held

HYDERABAD, APR 14 (PTI): An Ambedkar statue, removed by the civic staff after being installed here without permission, was allegedly carried in a garbage truck and found damaged following which two people, including its driver, were arrested Sunday, police said.

As the incident which occurred a day ahead of the birth anniversary of the Dalit icon triggered protests by some Dalit organisations, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) ordered an internal inquiry into it and suspended an outsourced vehicle operator.

According to GHMC, a group of people attempted to install the life-size statue near Panjagutta circle here “without permission” in the wee hours Saturday. The civic staff prevented it and shifted the statue to a nearby stadium.

They claimed the statue was removed in the truck hours later by the outsourced operator without authorisation and it suffered damage when some people intercepted the vehicle and tried to take it out forcibly.

However, members of the Dalit organisations, who held protests demanding action against those responsible for the incident, maintained they found the statue damaged in the garbage truck.

Acting on a complaint by a Dalit outfit leader, Police arrested the GHMC driver of the truck and another person on charges of damaging the statue and shifting it in the garbage truck to the dumping yard.

The complainant alleged he found broken pieces of the Ambedkar statue when garbage was unloaded at the dumping

yard. The driver had told him he carried out the instructions of GHMC officials, the Dalit leader said seeking action against those responsible, a police release said.

Based on the complaint, a case under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and the IPC had been registered, it said adding the investigation was in progress to establish the identity of other culprits.

GHMC Commissioner M Dana Kishore in a release said an internal enquiry was on into the matter.

An outsourced operator “responsible” for shifting the statue from the stadium had been suspended as there was no permission from higher officials for removing it, he said.

GHMC officials said they have also brought the matter to the notice of police.

Congress says PM “cheated” devotees on Sabarimala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APR 14 (PTI): The opposition Congress in Kerala Sunday attacked the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the Sabarimala issue, saying people would not tolerate the ‘drama’ being played by the saffron party in the name of Lord Ayyappa and that the devotees have been “cheated”.

Hitting out at Modi and the BJP, AICC General Secretary (Organisation) K C Venugopal alleged that the party had “cheated” the devotees and “are sincere to Sabarimala only when it comes to election and voting”.

The senior Congress leader alleged that the Centre and the state were hand-in-glove for having worsened the Sabarimala issue.

“Why is the Prime Minister playing a drama over Sabarimala? I had brought up the matter in Parliament on January 4. I had sought legislative intervention to protect the rights of the believers.

Has the Prime Minister or his minister ever uttered a single word on the issue in Parliament?,” Venugopal asked.

Recalling that the NDA had brought forward an ordinance to validate the lapsed Bill on Triple Talaq, he sought to know why the same enthusiasm was lacking in the case of Sabarimala. “An ordinance would have been enough. The Centre could have intervened in the name of faith. But they didn’t.

Modi said his party and government will approach the Supreme Court, explaining the traditions of Sabarimala.

They could’ve have done this long ago. But they didn’t.

People will tolerate all kinds of drama, but using the name of Swami Ayyappa for election drama is beyond limits,” Venugopal said at a meet the press programme here.

The Congress has officially asked in Parliament for legislative intervention on the Sabarimala matter, he said.

Attacking the Left government in the state, he said it could have sought time to implement the Supreme Court verdict, but did not do so.

“The RSS/sangh parivar tried to disrupt the peace and tranquillity at the hilltop shrine. Sincere devotees were denied their right to pray.

Both the state and the centre governments were hand-in-glove in making the situation worsen.

Both the governments were responsible for worsening the Sabarimala issue,” Venugopal alleged.

Venugopal said the AICC decision to appoint a special observer in Thiruvananthapuram was to monitor the poll activities in the major constituencies.

Senior leader Nana Patole has been appointed as observer in Thiruvananthapuram constituency, where the high profile candidate Shashi Tharoor is contesting for the party.

Referring to certain media reports that Tharoor had complained to AICC about local level leaders not campaigning for him in the constituency, Venugopal said “Those were just rumours.

Tharoor has never given any complaint. The whole country knows the Parliamentary intervention of Tharoor.

Who else is there to compete with the stature of Tharoor in Thiruvananthapuram?,” Venugopal asked.

The observers were appointed as the BJP was using all its machinery to fight this poll.

Referring to a purported video clipping of two SPG men carrying two big boxes into a car which was not part of the Prime Minister’s convoy at Chitradurga in Karnataka, which had gone viral, Venugopal said the party had complained to the Election Commission.

“So the BJP thinks they can capture the seat from us.

We decided to fight back and appointed observers,” he said.

Venugopal also raked up the issue of the alleged fake degree of union Minister Smriti Irani, who is contesting against Congress chief Rahul Gandhi in Amethi, and said she had given four different statements in four elections.

“In 2004, she says she passed BA. In 2009, it became B.Com from Delhi university. Another one in 2014. Now, in 2019 she says she has not passed B.Com. What credibility does that candidate have?,” Venugopal asked.

Those who allege that Rahul Gandhi ran away from Amethi have fielded someone with a fake degree.

“Four times, four statements. What credibility does she have? You are giving the affidavit on your own educational qualification,” Venugopal said.

Pak releases another 100 Indian fishermen as goodwill gesture

**SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, APR 14 (PTI):** Pakistan has released another 100 Indian fishermen as a goodwill gesture amidst tensions between the two countries after the Pulwama terror attack. The fishermen released on Saturday were part of the second batch of 360 Indian prisoners Pakistan has announced to set free in four phases this month. Pakistan had released first batch of 100 Indian fishermen on April 7.

Another 100 will be freed on April 22 and the process will be completed on April 29 when 55 fishermen and 5 prisoners shall be released. Pakistan and India frequently arrest fishermen as there is no clear demarcation of the maritime border in the Arabian Sea and these fishermen do not have boats equipped with the technology to know their precise location.

Another 100 Indian fishermen were released from Malir Jail in Karachi as a goodwill gesture, officials said. They were being taken to Lahore through train where they would be handed over to the Indian authorities at Wagah border on Monday.

The fishermen were arrested for fishing illegally in Pakistani waters during various operations.

Pakistan had released

first batch of 100 Indian fishermen on April 7.

Another 100 will be freed on April 22 and the process will be completed on April 29 when 55 fishermen and 5 prisoners shall be released. Pakistan and India frequently arrest fishermen as there is no clear demarcation of the maritime border in the Arabian Sea and these fishermen do not have boats equipped with the technology to know their precise location.

Need for an objective narrative about Pakistan in India: Pak envoy

MANASH PRATIM BHUYAN

NEW DELHI, APRIL 14 (PTI): Pakistan is hoping for “re-engagement” with India after the Lok Sabha polls as structured dialogue will help the two countries understand mutual concerns, resolve disputes and build the edifice of durable peace and security, Pakistani High Commissioner Sohail Mahmood has said.

In an interview to PTI, Mahmood, who has been appointed Pakistan’s next Foreign Secretary, also said there was a need for an “objective” narrative about Pakistan in India which could facilitate peaceful, cooperative and good neighbourly ties.

“We hope for re-engagement after the elections in India. Diplomacy and dialogue are indispensable,” he said.

The comments came nearly six weeks after India’s military planes struck a terrorist training camp in Pakistan’s Balakot and Pakistan’s subsequent counter-offensive. The flare up triggered fears of a war and countries like the US and China played a role in de-escalating tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

Mahmood said diplomacy and dialogue are indispensable to improve ties between the two neigh-

bours and that engagement was the only option to understand mutual concerns and ensure peace, prosperity and security in the region.

“Sustained engagement and structured dialogue would enable the two countries to understand mutual concerns and differences, resolve outstanding disputes and build the edifice of durable peace, security and prosperity in the region,” Mahmood said.

Mahmood left for Islamabad on Sunday after nearly a 19-month long tenure as Pakistan’s envoy to India. He is expected to take up his new assignment on Tuesday.

He also said that there was a need for a review about the narrative on Pakistan in India.

“There is also a need to review the narrative about Pakistan in India. A narrative is needed that captures the reality in Pakistan objectively and more fully. A narrative that also helps recognise opportunities for peaceful, cooperative and good neighbourly relations,” he said.

“We must strive for stable peace, equal security and shared prosperity for ourselves and the region,” the envoy added.

In signs of easing tensions, Pakistan around two

weeks back announced that it was releasing 360 Indian prisoners, mostly fishermen as a “goodwill gesture.

The initiative was followed by Pakistan High Commission here granting visas to 2,200 Sikh pilgrims from India to facilitate their participation in the annual Baisakhi celebrations in Pakistan.

Over two weeks after the Balakot strike, India and Pakistan held talks to finalise the modalities for setting up a corridor linking the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan’s Kartarpur with Gurdaspur district in Punjab. Asked about the Kartarpur corridor project, the Pakistani High Commissioner said Islamabad was committed to completing the physical infrastructure on its side. “The government of Pakistan is proceeding in full measures to complete the physical infrastructure on its side and it is hopeful that the modalities will be mutually agreed between the two sides in good time before November 2019,” he said.

In a major initiative last November, both India and Pakistan agreed to set up the Kartarpur corridor to link the historic Gurdwara Darbar Sahib -- the final resting place of Sikh faith’s founder Guru Nanak Dev -- to Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur.

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Unplanned Still

There is a lot that is beyond repair, but some things can still be salvaged

For a town that has been a capital for barely little over a century but has ‘developed’ (read expanded) only in the past three decades, Gangtok is a frightfully ill-planned hill top. Monsoons invariably leave behind calling cards ranging from the disastrous 1997 slides to routine reminders in the form of a flooded highway, scratched hillsides, slipping foundation walls and storm-drain grills exploding out of their fitments and barreling down the highway. Living in a region that signs in at Zone IV on the earthquake expectancy chart and then clocks in rainfall that can leave Chera-punji blushing at times, Gangtok residents knew what they were aspiring for when they chased files to get sites allotted and offered sheepish explanations when the construction concrete digressed extensively from the original blueprint. There is no way that nature can be made to behave any differently from the way it wants to, but better planning and effective monitoring can keep human indulgence in check and even succeed in keeping even a safety-challenged town like Gangtok safe.

If Gangtok habitations are unsafe, they are so as much because of the weather conditions here as they are because of the short-sighted decisions that the eighties and nineties are littered with. Few other places carry the ignominy of a building collapsing in an area marked out as a ‘Development Area’ or live with national highways which narrow into single-lane passages and lose black-top with the briefest of showers. For a town that expanded only after ideas of town-planning had become the norm, Gangtok is frightfully littered with habitations, which, while they are most exposed to risk, are also most inaccessible to rescue and evacuation.

Unfortunately, there is very little that can be done for Gangtok anymore except sending up prayers to keep disasters at bay; fortunately, other towns in Sikkim that are ‘expanding’ even as the monsoons advance still have a fighting chance. District towns like Namchi, Gyalshing, even Rabongla and Singtam, are replicating the Gangtok curve of development. These towns have already reported frightful stories of buildings growing into High Tension cables and continuing with excavations even though the slopes have announced they won’t tolerate any more ‘cutting’, but there is still hope for them. Most of these growing towns now have Nagar Panchayats and municipal councils for themselves. One hopes that these bodies will eventually become about more than just situation-required [politically-correct and Aid agency-friendly] receptacles for development funds. One hopes that these urban bodies are run by people who understand urbanisation and respect the virtues of planning. One hopes that the elected members of these bodies don’t forever remain busy playing chief guests and spend more sessions brainstorming on how to develop their areas as safe zones for habitation.

Michelle Obama is a surprise textbook example of how women thrive and grow through adulthood

RUTHELLEN JOSSELSO
theconversation.com

Michelle Obama’s “Becoming” can be read in many ways: as a political memoir, as a story of being black and aspiring in America or as a Cinderella story that transports an ambitious black girl from a 900-square-foot apartment to a home with “132 rooms, 35 bathrooms and 28 fireplaces spread out over six floors, and a staff of ushers, florists, housekeepers, butlers and attendants for her every need.”

As a psychologist who tries to better understand the course of women’s growth throughout adulthood, I was surprised to see that it can also be read as an illustration of how women ideally evolve. For decades, psychologists have relied on psychologist Erik Erikson’s theoretical model of the stages of life, a model based on how men develop that largely overlooks women.

I’ve spent 45 years studying women’s lives to remedy this gap, most recently publishing “Paths to Fulfillment: Women’s Search for Meaning and Identity.” I followed 26 randomly chosen college-educated women from ages 21 to 58. They came from large cities, small towns and rural areas. Some were the first of their families to go to college, and many struggled with early poverty and abuse. All married at some point in their lives, and just over half of them had children. Most cultivated some kind of profession; others simply “worked.” In analyzing their lives, I offer a way of thinking about women’s life journeys that depicts the stages of adulthood for those who surmount the challenges they encounter.

Michelle Robinson Obama, despite living an extraordinary life, exemplifies the optimal path of development I found among my “ordinary” women. In contrast to Erikson’s male life stages, I learned that relationships to others are central for women’s development in adulthood. Candid about her inner life, Michelle titles her life chapters “Becoming Me,” “Becoming Us” and “Becoming More,” which map perfectly with the psychological stages of identity, intimacy and care – the eras I identified in women’s lives. In that sense, Michelle Obama represents “Everywoman.”

‘Becoming Me’ – the challenge of identity
Like the women I followed, Michelle found her fulfillment in ways very different from what she had expected. As a young girl, she had modest aspirations: a family, a dog and “a house that had stairs in it – two floors for one family.”

Optimal identity formation involves exploring possibilities, reworking the goals of childhood and forging one’s own path. Michelle Robinson set her sights on becoming a successful lawyer, emulating the people she had observed in downtown Chicago, “in smart outfits” and moving with purpose. Dogged through her adolescence and early adulthood by the question “Am I good enough?,” becoming a Harvard-degreed corporate lawyer showed her that she was.

Her identity crisis came when she recognized she didn’t really want the life she’d achieved. She felt empty practicing law. Taking a big occupational risk, she found that working in public service or for nonprofit organizations felt like doing something for a larger good. Identity – “becoming me” – came from achieving her goals and then taking on what



she expressed as the “universal challenge of squaring who you are with where you come from and where you want to go.”

Like Michelle Obama, women in my study often realized, in their 30s, that their initial choices were not what fit them. Generationally, they were among the first to penetrate meaningfully into the work world where opportunities for self-realization were opening. They could become judges or take on management roles. They could leave social work and become teachers for more family-friendly hours. They could, like Michelle, think seriously about what suited them and change course. They could create their own identity.

‘BECOMING US’ – INTIMACY

The quest for intimacy, which became central in their 20s, led many women in my study to modify their own occupational goals in light of their partners’.

Like many of them, Michelle chose her mate after a period of developing friendship rather than initial passion. Once married, she then had the challenge of aligning her goals with his – which were far from her dream of recreating the close, warm family she’d grown up in. Michelle disdained politics and resented Barack’s time away from the family. She refused to uproot her children and move to Washington when he was a senator. Out of love, she supported Barack’s presidential run, but didn’t think he would win and, in some ways, hoped he wouldn’t. Intimacy was leading her on a path she would never have chosen.

Many of the women in my study followed similar trajectories although, of course, on a smaller scale. One woman, Betty, had to readjust her goals as a physical therapist when her husband made a fortune in real estate and, in their 30s, wanted to retire and spend their time traveling. Maria, a nurse from a traditional Italian American family, had to become the family breadwinner when her husband was physically disabled. Like Michelle, each had to rework her identity to accommodate the unforeseen circumstances of her spouse.

‘BECOMING MORE’ – CARE

Adulthood is about what psychologists call generativity: investing in projects of care. Once situated in the White House, which she partly regarded as a prison, Michelle sought to focus her energies and use her influence for a larger good.

Michelle never internalized the media’s representation of her as a celebrity “rock star.” Instead,

her generative need to promote well-being in children through nutrition and exercise were what motivated her – and she used her fame and special status for these ends. She was passionate about being a role model for girls, and she still tried to create a close family. She writes that one of the best things about her husband being president was that their home was above his office and he could be present for dinner most nights – helping ensure as normal a family life for their daughters as possible.

“Becoming more” – or finding a way to care for others – was central in the lives of the most fulfilled woman I have studied. When these women reflect on the meaning of their lives at age 58, teachers describe students who returned to thank them for things they said that changed their lives. A doctor remembers working as a volunteer with AIDS patients. A judge recounts letters she received from claimants who were helped by her decision. A mother spoke of how well her autistic child had done with her efforts to find him support. Those whose lives had the most meaning were those who felt they’d had impact on the lives of others.

CULMINATING IN FULFILLMENT

Not all of the women I have studied felt fulfilled by age 58. Some were still trying to master the identity task, having drifted through life. Others never found the intimacy that could anchor their care.

But those who felt their lives most meaningful at age 58 followed the path that Michelle Obama details. They created themselves, shared this self deeply with another person and found that they could “become more” by offering themselves to promote others’ well-being. Of course, this can happen outside the traditional mold of marriage and children – many of the most profound and fulfilling connections my women reported came through their work or other relationships.

Like Michelle Obama, thriving midlife women create themselves in a network of interconnection with other people. They are contributing in some important way to the lives of others. They don’t talk a lot about making money or climbing ladders. That’s not where their ambition is.

As one of the women I’ve studied put it, “You find yourself by giving yourself away.” For women, and perhaps for men as well, mature identity, intimacy and care develop in the context of relationship, something that psychology is just beginning to understand.

[the writer is Professor of Psychology, Fielding Graduate University]

Linguists found the weirdest languages – and English is one of them

ADAM SCHEMBRI
theconversation.com

Is English “weird”? Many of us might feel this is true when we’re trying to explain the complex spelling rules of the language, or the meanings of idioms such as “it’s raining cats and dogs” to someone who is learning English. Teaching or learning any language is, however, never an easy task.

But what is a “weird” language anyway? I am a linguist and we generally aim to be as objective as possible in the study of human language. We view ourselves as language scientists who make hypotheses about how humans use language and test them against linguistic data. Unlike so-called “language police”, we believe it is important to avoid where possible making value judgements about language.

Some computational linguists have, however, used data in the World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS) to explore which languages might be considered the “weirdest”. This was not just a value judgement: they systematically compared the information in the WALS website for 239 languages from different parts of the world.

Their aim was to find out which languages had the largest number of features that differed most from other languages. In this survey, English came in 33rd position out of 239 languages. So it was definitely “weirder” than over 80% of the other languages in the survey.

Critics though have claimed the survey indulged in cherry-picking only a few features of the world’s many languages. Indeed, there are features of English that are not “weird” compared to many other languages, such as its basic subject-verb-object word order. But let’s look here at two features of English that might in fact be unusual.

ENGLISH SOUNDS STRANGE

English probably sounds a little “weird” to many speakers of other languages. According to the WALS, the average number of distinctive speech sounds in the world’s languages is about 25-30 – known as “phonemes”. Pirahã, an indigenous language spoken in the Amazon region of Brazil, has an unusually small set of phonemes. It has eight consonants, and just three vowels: /i/, /a/ and /o/. In contrast, Taa – also known as !Xóô) is a language in southern Africa



which has more than 100 phonemes, including many different types of click sounds. Sign languages, such as British Sign Language or American Sign Language, do not use sounds at all. Signs are, instead, composed out of combinations of handshapes, movements of the hands, and locations on or near the body of the signer.

English has more phonemes than many languages, with around 44, depending on which variety of English you speak. It has an unusually large set of vowel sounds – there are around 11. According to WALS, most spoken languages only have between five to six vowel sounds. This is part of

the reason that English spelling is fiendishly complicated, because it has inherited five letters for vowels from the Roman alphabet and speakers have to make them work for more than twice that number of sounds.

English has some comparatively unusual consonant sounds as well. Two sounds, those represented by the “th” in “bath” and “bathe” respectively, are found in fewer than 10% of the languages surveyed in WALS. In fact, these two sounds are generally among the last sounds acquired by children, with some adult varieties of English not using them at all.

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

English grammar is also “weird”. English uses varying word orders to distinguish between questions and statements – meaning that the subject of the sentence precedes the verb in statements. Take the phrase “life is a box of chocolates” for example. Here, the order is subject (“life”) followed by the verb (“is”). In the question, “is life a box of chocolates?”, the order of these elements is reversed.

In a WALS survey of 955 languages, fewer than 2% of languages in the sample used English-like differences in sentence structure for questions. Over 50% of the languages added a question particle to differentiate a question from a statement.

In Japanese, for example, you add the question particle “ka” to a statement to turn it into a question. The second most common strategy in WALS was to change the intonation pattern, such as changing a falling intonation pattern (for a statement) to a rising one (for a question). In contrast, Mixtec (an indigenous language of Mexico) is a highly atypical language because it does not use any grammatical strategy to distinguish between questions and statements.

That said, it is impossible to conclusively make the argument that English is, or isn’t, “weird” because all the data needed to make this judgement is not available. As several thousand languages have not yet been included in WALS, this means WALS can only be used to compare English with a small proportion of the estimated 7000 languages in the world today. So more language documentation is ultimately needed to give a better understanding of the world’s amazing linguistic diversity.

[the writer is Reader in Linguistics, Department of English Language and Linguistics, University of Birmingham]

Assam will vote for Cong, BJP committed to bring citizenship bill: Rawat

Guwahati, Apr 13 (PTI): The Congress-in-charge of Assam, Harish Rawat, on Saturday claimed that the people of Assam will not vote for the BJP in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, as the saffron party is committed to bring the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Bill.

The general secretary of All India Congress Committee (AICC) was optimistic that the Congress had put up a good show in the five constituencies where polling was held during the first phase of the elections on April 11.

Confident that the Congress will win all the five seats, he said, "According to ground reports the people in



Assam voted against the BJP as they want to punish the party for bringing the anti-constitutional bill."

Addressing a press conference here, Rawat asserted that this trend will also follow in the second and third phase

of elections to be held on April 18 and 23.

"Our president Rahul Gandhi has been voicing the agenda of our party that if voted to power, we will throw the bill into the dustbin. We have clearly stated this in our mani-

festo, too.

"As the people are protesting against the bill, I don't see the BJP winning this time," Rawat claimed.

He asserted that the Congress will win 10 out of the 14 parliamentary seats in Assam.

CIL rolls out Rs 50cr mine surveillance system

KOLKATA, APR 14 (PTI): Coal India Ltd has put in place over 5,000 security cameras across 300 mines of its subsidiaries to thwart pilferage attempts and ensure quick response to disasters, a senior company official said.

The Rs 50-crore project will provide live feed from the mines to the coal major's headquarters in Kolkata and other regional offices, prompting swift action in case of emergencies, he said.

"CIL hopes to achieve

twin purposes with the initiative - live monitoring of the collieries to prevent pilferage and other corrupt practices, especially during dispatch by rail, and increase overall efficiency of the mines with real-time response to crisis situations," the official said.

The CCTV project, unveiled recently by the Central Vigilance Commissioner K V Chowdhary, along with CIL Chairman A K Jha, will also help settle allegations and dis-

putes on coal availability.

"As a part of the in-house project, 5,100 CCTVs have been installed at strategic points vulnerable to pilferage -- the weigh bridges, near coal dumps and the entry and exit points of collieries.

"The information technology department of the company is also working on a system to automatically trigger alarms in case of a pilferage attempt from stockyards or mines," he added.

Contact Summit TIMES at 9832556698, 9832369520 news@summit-times.com advertise@summittimes.com summittimes16@gmail.com

Brass industry's sheen dulls, artisans and traders count GST, demonetisation losses before polls

ABHISHEK SHUKLA MORADABAD (UP), APR 14 (PTI): The room is a palette of gloom, the furnace throwing an orange glow on the soot covered walls and greenish, yellow hot metal being poured into a cast by two artisans painstakingly crafting brass lamps.

Outside, the sun shines bright and hot and the din of campaigning ahead of elections on April 23 in this western Uttar Pradesh constituency rises in crescendo.

But Imran and Mohammed Fazal continue to focus on the job at hand in the airless room, a rickety table fan, which is also pumping air in the furnace, their only relief from the stifling heat.

It's an 11-hour work day but there is little choice.

With GST, demonetisation and the rising cost of raw material pushing Moradabad's famed Rs 7,000 crore brass industry into crisis, jobs are scarce and the two don't want to take a chance.

An estimated 10 lakh people are dependent on the industry, a valuable pocket of votes for political parties.

Imran, who breaks into an old Mohammed Rafi song, as he carefully pours liquid metal into moulds, uses an app, Star Maker, to fine tune his singing skills and Facebook and WhatsApp to remain connected with developments in the country.

"My father used to do it, now I do it. After GST, the cost of raw material like coal and sand has shot up. After deducting costs, we get just Rs 300 a day as against Rs 500 before GST and demonetisation," he said.

November 8, 2016, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the demonetisation of high value currency notes, was a turning point for the brass industry of Peetal Nagari, as Moradabad is often known, say industry insiders.

And their vote will depend on which candidate offers them a turnaround back to better times, they say.

According to Rahat Ali Ansari, who runs several small units in Moradabad, demand dipped by almost 50 per cent after demonetisation, leaving thousands of artisans unemployed. Many picked up alternative livelihoods like driving e-rickshaws food stalls, became vegetable vendors or migrated to other locations like Kerala and Odisha.

Officials estimate that over Rs 7,000 crore worth of brass items are produced in Moradabad. However, there is no study to give an authentic figure of a dip in the industry in recent years.

The brass industry is primarily an unorganised sector dependent on exporters, karkhanedars (people who bring the work from exporter) and artisans who run their small specialised factories.

"For example, if an exporter wants 2,000 pieces of a particular design, he will call the karkhanedar who will assess the design element. After deciding on it, the person will allocate work to different artisans based on their specialties," explained Syed Ganim Miyan of the Fair Trade Primary Producers Association.

From designing to sand casting to carving and polishing, brass art passes through 15-20 different artisans who work in small, closed factories in the narrow bylanes of Moradabad.

Each one brings a specialisation to the brass item, from the lamps, or deepams, of Kerala to ashtrays and more, he added.

The industry, which has about 10 lakh people dependent on it, including those providing ancillary services, is cash intensive as artisans are paid in cash on the basis of number of pieces finished by them, Ganim said.

Demonetisation, say experts, was a huge blow to the industry which was still trying to come to terms with global recession started in 2008.

Machines lie unused in many factories.

"We have a capacity of six people but as you can see only two of us are working. The rising cost of raw material and drop in demand leaves very little margin," said Javed, a worker in one unit.

He added most artisans have left the trade and there is no one to work the machines.

"Whatever was left was hit hard by GST. Although businessmen below Rs 40 lakh of income are exempted, the government asks traders to get registered and obtain a GST number. Once the number is obtained, the person is supposed to file regular returns or else face a penalty," Nauman Mansoori, president of the Handicraft Development Society, told PTI.

He said most artisans are barely literate, leaving them dependent

on professionals to file returns. The charge is anywhere between Rs 2,000-5,000 and most artisans avoid taking a GST number.

Ask how the community of brass workers and traders will vote on April 23 and there is no one answer.

Ganim and Ansari proudly show on YouTube a video of Congress president Rahul Gandhi who held an interaction with artisans of Moradabad in 2014.

"We are looking at central figures--Rahul and (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi. We are evaluating the pros and cons of having either one as next leader of this country. We interacted with Rahul and he understood our problems, so he remains a favourite but the community is yet to make its mind," Ansari said.

ST Hasan, a former mayor and local doctor who is contesting on an SP- BSP-RLD alliance ticket and was a runner up in the 2014 election, has an advantage as he is a local, say some townspeople. But it has to be ascertained if he is effective at the national level, they add.

Hasan is challenging sitting BJP MP Kunwar Sarvesh Kumar who is pinning hopes on the division of Muslim votes. Muslims comprise about 47 per cent of the electorate in the constituency. Also in the running is Congress' Imran Pratapgarhi, a young fiery poet whose poems on missing JNU student Najeeb, lynchings and madrasas, have popularised him on social media.

Attempt being made to destroy the Constitution: Priyanka

SILCHAR (ASSAM), APR 14 (PTI): Coming down heavily on the BJP, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday said the Constitution is not respected and an attempt is being made to destroy it.

Holding a roadshow in Silchar in support of Congress candidate and sitting MP Sushmita Dev, she also said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has toured the world over, but hardly spent time in his own constituency in Varanasi.

"It is 'Mahapurush' (B R) Ambedkar ji's birth anniversary. He laid the foundation of this country through the Constitution. It is the duty of every leader to respect that Constitution.

"Today, you are seeing that the Constitution is not respected and an attempt is being made to destroy it," said Gandhi, who is Congress's general secretary in-charge of



Uttar Pradesh East.

Slamming the the BJP's manifesto, she said there is no space for different cultures and religions in it, as well as any respect for the Constitution.

Gandhi said she was told by people in Varanasi that Modi did not spend even five minutes with anyone there in the last five years.

"He went to America

and hugged there, went to China and hugged there, too. He went and hugged in Russia and Africa. He went to Japan and played the drum. In Pakistan, he had biryani.

"But in his own constituency, he did not go once to a family's house to enquire about their condition," she alleged.

Speaking highly of Sushmita Dev, Gandhi likened the Congress

lawmaker with her grandmother and former prime minister Indira Gandhi.

"If you remember Indira Gandhi even today, it is because she worked for you. I have come here for Sushmita. She has that courage which Indira ji had. Sushmita has that honest and good intention, and wants to work for you from the heart," she added.

Co-pilot, 2 policemen killed in plane crash in Nepal



KATHMANDU, APR 14 (PTI): A small passenger plane veered off the runway while taking off and hit two parked helicopters at Lukla airport in Nepal's Everest region on Sunday, killing a co-pilot and two policemen, officials said.

The incident occurred as the plane - a Twin Otter belonging to Summit Air - with registration 9N-AMH skidded off the runway while preparing to take off and hit helicopters parked 30-50 metres from the runway, the Kathmandu Post reported.

S Dhungana, co-pilot of the plane, and Assistant Sub-Inspector Ram Bahadur Khadka, who was stationed at the helipad, were killed in the incident, Tribhuvan International Airport spokesperson Pratap Babu Tiwari was quoted as saying by the paper.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Rudra Bahadur Shrestha, who was injured in the crash and airlifted to Kathmandu, died while undergoing treatment at Grande Hospital, the paper said, citing hospital sources.

Captain RB Rokaya who was flying the aircraft and Captain Chet Gurung of Manang Air, who was in the helicopter, were injured in the incident. They are receiving treatment at Grande Hospital and are said to be out of danger, it said.

The aircraft had hit the helicopters of Manang Air and Shree Air.

Lukla airport, also known as Tenzing-Hillary airport, is often referred to as one of the most difficult and dangerous airports in the world because of a short runway (527 metres) and challenging terrain.

4-cornered contest on cards for Raiganj LS seat

AMITAVA ROY RAIGANJ (WB), APR 14 (PTI): Once a Congress stronghold, the Raiganj Lok Sabha seat is set to witness a four-cornered contest this time, with the candidates of major political parties in the state pitted against each other in a neck-and-neck battle.

Since 1952, Congress candidates have won the seat 13 times including the two terms for party stalwart Priya Ranjan Dasgupta in 1999 and 2004. His wife Deepa Dasgupta also represented the constituency in Parliament for a term.

The former Congress bastion in Uttar Dinajpur district has also sent CPI(M) candidates to Parliament four times including the outgoing one.

CPI(M)'s Mohammed

Salim, who had won the seat in Uttar Dinajpur district in 2014 by a razor thin margin of 1,634 votes, seems to have an uphill task this time to retain the seat.

In the 2014 general election, the CPI(M) candidate got 3,17,515 votes and the Congress secured 3,15,881 votes. The BJP and the TMC came third and fourth bagging 2,03,131 and 1,92,698 votes respectively.

Congress leaders later said the fight between the party and the Trinamool Congress (TMC) had helped the CPI(M) candidate win the seat in the last Lok Sabha election.

Besides the Murshidabad seat, Raiganj had been the bone of conten-

tion between the Congress and the CPI(M) in the seat-sharing talks in the state that did not materialise. The CPI(M) had won only Raiganj and Murshidabad in 2014.

Between 2014 and 2019, the BJP has gained strength in the state eating into the vote share of the Left Front and the Congress, as evident from the 2018 rural election results.

In the three-tier panchayat polls, the TMC had won hands down. The BJP had come a distant second relegating the Congress to the third spot. The LF nominees won only few seats.

The TMC has also poached many opposition leaders into its fold over the years. The Con-

gress MLA from Islampur, 64-year-old Kanaialal Agarwal, is one such.

The TMC has fielded Agarwal, who was once a follower of Dasgupta, in the Lok Sabha seat. Raiganj Lok Sabha seat is one of the few seats in the state from where the party has never won.

Agarwal said he is confident of winning the seat for two reasons- opposition parties do not have support base in the constituency and the development work done by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

However, shifting of the proposed AIIMS from Raiganj to Kalyani in south Bengal at the insistence of Banerjee is an issue, Congress candidate Deepa Dasgupta is banking on.

After maiden win, RCB look to spoil Mumbai’s party

NIKHIL BAPAT
MUMBAI, APR 14 (PTI): Fresh from a much awaited victory, Royal Challengers Bangalore will be aiming to maintain winning momentum and spoil Mumbai Indians’ party when the two sides face-off in the Indian Premier League here Monday.

After a string of losses where nothing worked in their favour, fifties by skipper Virat Kohli and ever-reliable Ab de Villiers, helped RCB register their maiden win of the season on Saturday night.

The team is heavily reliant on Kohli and de Villiers and both would be keen to recreate their magic in front of a capacity crowd in Mumbai, on a day when the Indian

team for the upcoming World Cup is scheduled to be picked.

Despite the win against KXIP, RCB remain at the bottom of the points table and remain to win all their remaining league games to have any hopes of progressing in the tournament.

Apart from Kohli (270 runs from 7 matches) and ABD (232 runs from 7 matches), RCB’s other strength has been the pint-sized wicket-keeper batsman Parthiv Patel.

Despite his father being in the ICU, Patel has shown commitment and amassed 191 runs in seven games.

However, the likes of Akshdeep Nath, Moeen Ali, Marcus Stonis and Colin De Grandhomme should score heavily.



On the bowling front, RCB’s biggest asset has been Yuzvendra Chahal, who is the second on the most wickets list with 11 scalps. Chahal would be key player on a slow Wankhede track and has the potential to dismantle Mumbai’s strong bat-

ting line up.

But he would need support from Mohammed Siraj (6 wickets), Navdeep Saini (4 wickets), Moeen (3 wickets) and a profligate Umesh Yadav (2 wickets). The arrival of veteran South Africa pace Dale Steyn is

also a massive boost for RCB.

On the other hand, after suffering a four wicket loss against Rajasthan Royals, Mumbai would be aiming to get back to winning ways.

The good sign for them is that skipper Ro-

hit Sharma (165 runs), who made a comeback after missing out a game due to injury and South African Quinton De Kock (238 runs), have got runs under their belt along with Hardik Pandya.

The others Ishan Kishan, Surya Kumar Ya-

dav (154 runs), Kieron Pollard (185 runs) and Krunal Pandya (92 runs) need to be consistent with the bat.

The bowlers would want to forget the hammering by Englishman Jos Buttler and come up fresh.

Also a word on West Indian pacer Alzarri Joseph, who sustained a shoulder injury while fielding in the last game, is awaited from the team management.

Teams (From): Mumbai Indians: Rohit Sharma (C), Quinton de Kock (WK), Suryakumar Yadav, Yuvraj Singh, Kieron Pollard, Hardik Pandya, Krunal Pandya, Mitchell McClenaghan, Jason Behrendorff, Mayank Markande, Rahul Chahar, Jasprit Bumrah,

Alzarri Joseph, Anmolpreet Singh, Siddhesh Lad, Ankul Roy, Evin Lewis, Pankaj Jaiswal, Ben Cutting, Ishan Kishan, Aditya Tare, Rasikh Salam, Barinder Sran, Jayant Yadav.

Royal Challengers Bangalore: Virat Kohli (C), Parthiv Patel, AB de Villiers, Colin de Grandhomme, Umesh Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Moeen Ali, Shimron Hetmyer, Shivam Dube, Mohammed Siraj, Navdeep Saini, Devdutt Padikkal, Himmat Singh, Milind Kumar, Gurkeerat Singh Mann, Heinrich Klaasen, Pawan Negi, Washington Sundar, Akshdeep Nath, Prayas Barman, Kulwant Khajuria, Tim Southee and Dale Steyn.

Match starts at 8 PM.

Molinari seizes Masters lead with Woods, Finau two back

AUGUSTA (UNITED STATES), APRIL 14 (AFP): Francesco Molinari fired a flawless six-under par 66 on Saturday, seizing a two stroke lead over Tiger Woods and Tony Finau in a thrilling Masters third round at Augusta National.

Italy’s Molinari, the reigning British Open champion, stayed patient through five opening pars as birdies broke out everywhere on rain-softened Augusta.

After birdies at six and eight, he erupted with four straight birdies starting at the par-three 12th -- where his tee shot left him inches from the pin.

He methodically rolled in putts of six, eight and nine feet to birdie the next three -- and maintained his two-shot edge by getting up and down for par from a bunker at 18.

Molinari, one of five major winners to share the overnight lead, had a 13-under total of 203.

“My plan is to go out and do the same, but I think there’s going to be a few guys trying to mess up with my plan,” he said.

Woods, who won the last of his four Masters titles back in 2005 and hasn’t added to his tally of 14 majors since his 2008 US Open victory, carded a five-under par 67 for an 11-under total of 205.

He was joined by Finau, who fired a 64 -- one shot off the tournament record and matched by two other eight-under

rounds from Webb Simpson and Patrick Cantlay.

Woods was also slow to join the birdie bandwagon, opening with four straight pars before a bogey at the fifth.

He responded with three birdies in a row starting at the sixth. At the seventh he stuck his approach a foot from the pin and he rolled in an 11-footer at eight.

He kept the momentum going with a par save from the trees at nine before a birdie at 13.

Woods got up and down for birdie at 15, where his chip on left him two feet, and he reached 11-under with a seven-foot birdie at the par-three 16th.

“I just did everything,” Woods said. “I drove it well and hit my irons well. I made some putts. I just let the round just kind of build.” Woods’s effort thrilled the galleries at Augusta -- and got the attention of US President Donald Trump, who has played in the past with the superstar.

“Great playing by @TigerWoods (at the) @TheMasters,” Trump tweeted.

“Tomorrow will be a big and exciting day for golf and for sports ... Good luck to all!”

Finau, aiming to become the fifth straight player to make the Masters his first major title, opened with three straight birdies.

Another birdie at the sixth was followed by an eagle at eight, where his second shot left him a tap-in.

“I hit a really good shot, but I didn’t think it was going to be, you know, a foot from the hole,” Finau said.

- FINAU’S ‘DREAM’ PAIRING -

Two more birdies coming in put Finau in a “dream” final group with Woods and Molinari -- after Augusta National officials announced the final round would be played in threesomes from both the first and 10th tees, starting early in a bid to beat severe weather predicted for the afternoon.

“As a kid I always wanted to compete against him,” said 29-year-old Finau of Woods. “I’ve dreamed of playing in a final group with him in a major championship.” Molinari played with Woods in the final round at Carnoustie last year, when he lifted the Claret Jug.

“He obviously loves this place and he’s playing great golf,” Molinari said of Woods.

“So I’m aware that it’s not going to be easy.

“But it’s not like I can only worry about him.” Also lurking was Brooks Koepka, who won a second straight US Open title last year then held off Woods to win the PGA Championship.

Koepka was alone in fourth on 206 after a three-under 69.

Former US Open champion Webb Simpson had an eagle and seven birdies in his 64 for 207, level with England’s Ian Poulter, who signed for a 68.

Squash: Abhishek and Sanya emerge victorious

MUMBAI, APR 14 (PTI): Abhishek Agarwal and Sanya Vats won the Men’s and the Women’s titles respectively of the Otters Club Vedanta Squash Open held here.

Meanwhile, Veer Chotrani defeated Saksham Choudhary to take the U-19 Trophy.

Abhishek, who had an easy victory over Sandeep Jangra on his way to the finals, faced his toughest competition in unseeded Tushar Shahani.

Tushar started the game on a high scoring back-to-back winners to race to a 6-1 lead in the first game, but Abhishek who had a little trouble picking up the drop shots did not let the game slip away and came back strongly to level

the scores at 8-8.

Tushar managed to hold off Abhishek by blocking him just enough to avoid a replay and restricting his moment to take the first game 11-9.

The second game was in complete control of Abhishek, who made Tushar work all corners of the court before taking it 11-4.

Tushar made unforced errors at crucial moments, which helped Abhishek take the third and fourth games by 11-6, 11-6 and the championship by 9-11, 11-4, 11-6, 11-6.

Third seed Sanya Vats secured an upset win over top seed Urwashii Joshi to take the women’s trophy home.

In the Boys U-19 finals, Veer Chotrani dominated Saksham Choudhary win-

ning the game 11-6, 9-11, 11-3, 11-4.

Meanwhile, Aishwarya Khubchandani, who lost out on an opportunity for a double title after losing to Sanya Vats in the semis, fought hard to claim her U-19 title defeating a higher ranked Amira Singh in a game that went down the wire.

It was a very tough game with nothing separating the two in the first 4 games with Amira winning the 1st and 3rd game while Aishwarya bouncing back to win the 2nd & 4th games all by an identical 11-9 margin.

The fifth game was anti-climactic with Aishwarya stepping up and dominating Amira to take the fifth game 11-2 and win the championship.

Times Square inundates with Sikh culture as thousands tie turban on Turban Day

YOSHITA SINGH
NEW YORK, APR 14 (PTI): A sea of colours and tradition of the Sikh culture inundated Times Square, the crossroads of the world, as members of the community tied turbans to thousands of New Yorkers and tourists in an annual fixture aimed at spreading awareness about the Sikh identity.

Sikh organisation ‘The Sikhs of New York’ organised the annual Turban Day on Saturday in association with the Consulate General of India in New York. This year’s Turban Day also marked the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev and the festival of Baisakhi.

Deputy Consul General of India in New York Shatrughna Sinha said the Consulate is commemorating the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak with Gurubani recital programmes.

As part of the commemoration of Guru Nanak’s 550th birth anniversary as well as to mark Baisakhi, this year the Consulate associated with The Sikhs of NY on Turban Day, Sinha said.

“This is a great environment and ambience and the crowd is fantastic,” Sinha said, sporting a blue turban as he took part in the commemoration.

“There is no better way than this to raise awareness about Sikhism as well as propagating the message of universal brotherhood and humanity of Guru Nanak Dev ji,” he told PTI.

Turban Day was started in 2013 at Baruch College to promote and educate people about the Sikh religion and identity.

Sikhs of New York co-founder Chanpreet Singh said in the seven years that Turban Day has been organised in the city, there has increasingly been awareness about Sikhism, not just through people who are getting turbans tied but by the thousands others on social media following the event.

He said more than 38,000 turbans have been tied in the past seven years since the day started being organised in the city.

“Technically, by tying

one turban we are educating 200 people who are following it on social media,” Singh said, adding that number of volunteers signing up for the event has increased multifold over the years.

“We have people coming from California, Canada, Europe and some from India, especially planning their trip to the US around Turban Day,” he said.

This year, the organisation also honoured Sikh personnel serving in the US Army and Navy.

Singh said the organisation will continue in its endeavours such as Turban Day till “the day I walk on the streets and people don’t give me two looks,” noting that there is need to continue to spread awareness about the Sikh culture the organisation plans to take Turban Day to other cities across the US.

“The celebration was very special and important for us because we not only celebrated Turban Day, like every year, but this year it fell on Baisakhi Day and we are marking it with 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, our first Guru,” he said.

Gabriella Vinetti and her friend Eri Banjahi from Argentina clicked selfies, donning their bright green and pink turbans. “We wore the turban in solidarity and in respect of another culture,” they said.

Last year, the Sikhs of New York had created a world record for tying thousands of turbans within a few hours on Turban Day. The organisation had won a certificate from the Guinness World Record for the “most turbans tied in 8 hours was achieved by Sikhs of NY (USA) in Times Square in New York, USA on April 7, 2018.”

Every year, Turban Day brings together hundreds of volunteers from the the Sikh community who tie colourful turbans on New Yorkers, tourists and Americans from across the country visiting Times Square. While tying the turbans, they also talk about the Sikh heritage, identity and make those getting the turbans tied aware of the culture.

Batting with AB makes job easier: Stoinis



MOHALI, APR 14 (PTI):

Following a match-winning partnership with AB de Villiers, RCB all-rounder Marcus Stoinis said batting alongside the South African great made his job a lot easier.

Stoinis remained unbeaten on 28, ensuring an eight-wicket win against KXIP, RCB’s maiden victory of the season.

The all-rounder had walked in at the fall of skipper Virat Kohli with RCB needing 46 runs off 27 balls. Kohli (67) in company of de Villiers (59 not out) scripted a superb run chase, sharing a 85-run stand to lay the foundation.

“I am pretty familiar with this ground, I have played here for three years,” said Stoinis at the post-match press conference here.

“The more comfortable factor is batting with AB de Villiers, that makes

it easier.”

He said that RCB badly needed a win to stay alive in the tournament.

“We needed it, it’s good get to two points and get ourselves started,” he said.

After Kohli got out, Stoinis said he had a chat with de Villiers on how to go about the target.

“Make sure to keep head straight, watch the ball, keep it simple and then once you get in think about which balls you want to target,” Stoinis said, referring to the advice from his senior partner.

Stoinis also praised the knock played by KXIP opener Chris Gayle.

“Main thing is every team has got world class players and they have got someone like Chris Gayle, who is arguably the best T20 player,” he said.

Praising the effort of RCB bowlers, he said they applied brakes

during middle overs claiming wickets at regular intervals, which also ensured that Gayle had to play a controlled innings.

“Make sure you keep coming back and get into contest with every single ball and that’s what our seam bowlers did, they did particularly well. They got hit early but all of them had good spells later and then our spinners controlled through the middle overs as there was a little bit of turn,” said Stoinis.

On the games ahead, he said RCB are not thinking too far ahead.

“We are not thinking about finals and that sort of thing. it is just about each game now, we can’t afford to get too far ahead of ourselves, it is good to get started, we will take next game as it comes and hopefully we will win few on trot. it’s still a long season,” he said.

Early detection of cancer is essential: Sonali Bendre

Mumbai Apr 14 (PTI): Sonali Bendre, who was diagnosed with high grade cancer last year, said early detection and spreading awareness about the disease is essential.

In July 2018, the actor was diagnosed with cancer and she underwent the treatment in New York. She returned to the city in December.

Sonali said though the disease is scary, early diagnosis can make the treatment less painful.

“Early detection is most important. Right now the disease is less scary the treatment is actually more frightening and painful. If

it were detected early, the cost of treatment would have been less. It would also have been a lesser painful treatment,” Sonali said Saturday at the fifth International Conference “CAHOC-ON 2019”, organised by Consortium of Accredited Healthcare Organisation (CAHO).

The 44-year-old actor post her diagnosis she got to know that some of her family members had cancer.

“I wish I knew about it. I wouldn’t have thought this would happen to me... I felt if this was so prevalent why did I not know about it,” she said.

Sonali recalled a lot of people were shocked with her cancer diagnosis.

“Lot of people said how could I get it as my lifestyle was so healthy. Even I was like ‘Why I have got it?’ Then I heard a lot of stories and realised anybody could get it.”

The actor said an open discussion on cancer is very essential to foster awareness on a wider level.

“Healthcare institutions like hospitals should also play an important role in initiating dialogue on diseases and ensure community participation to improve healthcare outcomes.”

US, China nearing 'concluding issues' in trade talks: Mnuchin

WASHINGTON, APR 13 (AFP): US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Saturday trade talks with China were getting close to their conclusion.

Since January, shuttle diplomacy between Washington and Beijing to resolve their nine-month trade war has dragged on longer than officials had expected. Both sides have continued to project cautious optimism without predicting success.

"It is more important to get it right than have arbitrary date," Mnuchin told reporters. But "I'm hopeful we're getting close to the final round of concluding issues."

A sticking point in the talks has been American officials' insistence that any final agreement have teeth -- and that they retain the ability to impose fresh tariffs should Beijing backslide on its commitments.

Mnuchin declined to get into details on Saturday.

"There are certain commitments the United States is making in this agreement and there are certain commitments that China is making," he said.

"And I would expect that the enforcement mechanism works in both directions."

Trump said last week a conclusion in the talks was probably "four weeks" away but since discussions began earlier this year to end the nine-month trade war, the finish line has repeatedly slipped further into the future.

Two critical in Australia shooting outside nightclub

MELBOURNE, APR 14 (AFP): Two people are fighting for their lives after a shooting outside a Melbourne nightclub, police said Sunday, amid a spate of gun violence in Australia's second-largest city.

Police said four men were taken to hospital -- two in a critical condition -- after "multiple people were shot" outside the venue in the trendy inner-city suburb of Prahran early Sunday morning.

Three of the men were aged between 29 and 50, with the age of the fourth yet to be determined, police said.

A police spokeswoman told AFP the shooting was not believed to be linked to terrorism.

Investigators were probing links to motorcycle gangs, The Age newspaper in Melbourne reported.

Police were expected to provide updates later Sunday.

The latest incident came after a spate of shootings in Melbourne in March that left five people dead in four separate incidents. Two of the incidents were believed to be gang-related.

Mass shootings are rare in Australia, which has strict firearms laws introduced in 1996 after 35 people were killed by a gunman in Port Arthur.

Seychelles president's underwater speech: Protect our oceans

DESROCHES ISLAND (SEYCHELLES), APR 14 (AP): In a striking speech delivered from deep below the ocean's surface, the Seychelles president on Sunday made a global plea for stronger protection of the "beating blue heart of our planet."

President Danny Faure's call for action, the first-ever live speech from an underwater submersible, came from one of the many island nations threatened by global warming.

He spoke during a visit to an ambitious British-led science expedition exploring the Indian Ocean depths.

Oceans cover over two-thirds of the world's surface but remain, for the most part, uncharted. We have better maps of Mars than we do of the ocean floor, Faure said.

"This issue is bigger than all of us, and we cannot wait for the next generation to solve it. We are running out of excuses to not take action, and running out of time," the president said from a manned submersible 400 feet below the waves, on the seabed off the outer islands of the African nation.

Wearing a Seychelles T-shirt and shorts, the president told The Associated Press after his speech that the experience was "so, so cool. What biodiversity."

It made him more determined than ever



to speak out for marine protection, he said.

"We just need to do what needs to be done. The scientists have spoken."

The oceans' role in regulating climate and the threats they face are underestimated by many, even though as Faure pointed out they generate "half of the oxygen we breathe."

Scientific missions are crucial in taking stock of underwater ecosystems' health.

Small island nations are among the most vulnerable to sea level rise caused by climate change. Land erosion, dying coral reefs and the increased frequency of extreme weather events threaten their existence.

During the expedition, marine scientists from the University of Oxford have surveyed underwater life, mapped large areas of the sea floor and gone deep with

manned submersibles and underwater drones.

Little is known about the watery world below depths of 30 meters, the limit to which a normal scuba diver can go. Operating down to 500 meters, the scientists were the first to explore areas of great diversity where sunlight weakens and the deep ocean begins.

By the end of the mission, researchers expect to have conducted over 300 deployments, collected around 1,400 samples and 16 terabytes of data and surveyed about 25,000 square meters of seabed using high-resolution multi-beam sonar equipment.

The data will be used to help the Seychelles expand its policy of protecting almost a third of its national waters by 2020. The initiative is important for the country's "blue economy," an attempt to balance development needs with those

of the environment.

"From this depth, I can see the incredible wildlife that needs our protection, and the consequences of damaging this huge ecosystem that has existed for millennia," Faure said in his speech.

"Over the years, we have created these problems. We can solve them."

Currently, only about 5 per cent of the world's oceans are protected.

Countries have agreed to increase the area to 10 per cent by 2020. But experts and environmental campaigners say between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of the oceans outside nations' territorial waters should get protected status to ensure marine biodiversity.

Researchers hope their findings also will inform ongoing United Nations talks aimed at forging the first high seas conservation treaty,

scheduled to conclude this year.

Environmental groups argue an international treaty is urgently needed because climate change, overfishing and efforts to mine the seabed for precious minerals are putting unsustainable pressure on marine life that could have devastating consequences for creatures on land as well.

Oceans will be one of the seven main themes of this year's U.N. climate summit in Chile in December.

While scientists are nearing the end of their expedition, much of their work is just beginning.

In the next few months, researchers at Oxford will analyze the samples and video surveys and put them together with environmental data collected.

"When we pull them together we can understand not just what we see in the areas that we've visited but what we might expect in other regions in the Seychelles," said Lucy Woodall, the mission's chief scientist.

This is the first of a half-dozen regions the mission plans to explore before the end of 2022, when scientists will present their research at a summit on the state of the Indian Ocean. Billions of people live along the ocean's shores in Africa and Asia.

Over 120 killed, nearly 600 wounded in Libya fighting: WHO



TRIPOLI, APR 14 (AFP): Fighting near Tripoli has killed 121 people and wounded 561 since strongman Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive earlier this month to take the Libyan capital, the World Health Organisation said Sunday.

WHO's Libya account said on Twitter the organisation was sending medical supplies and more staff to Tripoli, and denounced "repeated attacks on health care workers, vehicles" during the fighting which erupted on April 4.

Haftar's forces, which control swathes of the country's east, have defied international calls to halt their battle against fighters loyal to the UN-backed Government of National Accord based in Tripoli.

The United Nations' office for humanitarian affairs said more than

13,500 people had been displaced by the clashes, while more than 900 residents are living in shelters.

"Three medical personnel have been killed and five ambulances have been incapacitated by shrapnel," OCHA said in a Saturday statement.

As well as fighting on the ground, the two sides have launched daily air raids and accuse each other of targeting civilians.

The north African country has been in turmoil since the NATO-backed overthrow of dictator Moamer Kadhafi in 2011, which has led to the creation of a bewildering array of militias all seeking to take control.

Haftar backs a rival administration based in eastern Libya that refuses to recognise the UN-backed unity government led by Faye al-Sarraj.

to book advertisements in

SummitTimes

call: 03592-208698,

9734152541, 9647102692

advertise@summittimes.com

Assange will cooperate with Sweden, but fight US warrant: Lawyer



LONDON, APR 14 (AFP): Julian Assange would cooperate with Swedish authorities if they reopen a rape case against him but will continue to resist any bid to extradite him to the United States, his lawyer said Sunday.

"We are absolutely happy to answer those queries if and when they come up," Jennifer Robinson told Sky News television about the rape claims.

"The key issue at the moment is US extradition, which we have warned about for many years," she added.

The WikiLeaks founder is in custody in London awaiting sentencing for breaching his British bail conditions in 2012 by seeking refuge in Ecuador's London embassy to avoid extradition to Sweden.

He was arrested at the embassy on Thursday after Ecuador gave him up, and is now also fighting a US extradition warrant relating to the release by WikiLeaks of a huge cache of official documents.

The Australian has always denied the claims of sexual assault and rape in Sweden. The first expired in 2015 and the other was dropped in

2017, but the alleged rape victim has now asked for the case to be reopened.

If Stockholm makes a formal extradition request, the British government will have to decide whether to consider it before or after that of the United States.

Robinson said Assange would seek assurances from Sweden that he would not be sent on to America, saying: "That is the same assurance we were seeking in 2010 and the refusal to give that is why he sought asylum."

She added: "He's not above the law. Julian has never been concerned about facing British justice or indeed Swedish justice. This case is and has always been about his concern about being sent to face American injustice."

The US indictment charges Assange with "conspiracy" for working with former US Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning to crack a password stored on Department of Defence computers in March 2010.

He faces up to five years in jail.

Manning passed hundreds of thousands of classified documents

to WikiLeaks, exposing US military wrongdoing in the Iraq war and diplomatic secrets about scores of countries around the world.

The conspiracy charge against Assange seems intended to sidestep limits on prosecution potentially arising from the US Constitution's First Amendment guarantee of press freedom.

But Robinson insisted: "This indictment clearly engages newsgathering activities and the kinds of communications that journalists have with sources all the time."

The lawyer condemned as "outrageous" claims made by Ecuador about Assange's behaviour in the embassy, including that he smeared his faeces on the wall, saying: "That's not true."

Quito also accused him of failing to care for his cat. WikiLeaks said Assange had asked his lawyers to "rescue him (the cat) from embassy threats" in October, adding: "They will be reunited in freedom."

Assange's father, John Shipton, on Sunday urged Australia to bring his son home.

Pak forms team to probe Hazarganj attack as Hazaras continue sit-in for third day

KARACHI, APR 14 (PTI): A team comprising senior counter-terror officials have been formed to investigate an ISIS suicide attack targeting Hazara Shias in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province, even as the community continued their sit-in for a third day on Sunday demanding better security measures.

An ISIS bomber blew himself in Hazarganj fruits and vegetable market in provincial capital Quetta Friday morning, killing 21 people and injuring 60 others, mostly Hazaras. The ISIS Saturday released a photograph of the attacker along with his name and said the attack targeted Shia Muslims.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Abdul Razaq Cheema said that a team of Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) officials had visited the

site of the attack to collect evidence, DawnNewsTV reported.

The body parts of the suspected attacker have been sent to the Punjab Forensic Science Agency for DNA testing, he said, adding that the test reports would be handed over to Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal.

The official did not specify when the test reports would be issued.

Meanwhile, the Hazara community members are continuing a sit-in on the main Western Bypass road in Quetta to protest against what they term as the persistent failure of law enforcement agencies to provide them security.

The sit-in started soon after the suicide blast ripped through the market on Friday. Women and children are among those who have been staging the sit-in.

Sudan protesters present demands to military in talks

KHARTOUM, APR 14 (AFP): Sudanese protest organisers have presented demands to the country's new military rulers, urging the creation of a civilian government, the group spearheading demonstrations said.

Thousands remained encamped outside Khartoum's army headquarters overnight to keep up the pressure on a military council that took power after ousting veteran leader Omar al-Bashir on Thursday.

A 10-member delegation representing the protesters delivered their demands during talks late Saturday, ac-

cording to a statement by umbrella group the Alliance for Freedom and Change.

"We will continue... our sit-in until all our demands are met," including the formation of a fully civilian government, one of the alliance's leaders, Omar al-Degier, said in the statement.

The umbrella group insists that civilian representatives should be accepted onto the military council, and that a fully civilian government should be formed to run day-to-day affairs.

"We surely want our demands to be met, but both sides will have to be

The protesters demand an effective security plan to ensure the protection of the Hazara Shia community.

Chief Minister Khan visited the families of the victims Saturday and said that his government is taking responsible steps to root out terrorist activities from the province. He also requested the protesters to end their sit-in.

Despite reassurances, the protesters refused to call off their sit-in until all their demands were met, including the arrests of those involved in the attack, steps for protection of the community, and implementation of NAP without discrimination. Hazaras make up a significant minority group in Pakistan and most of them live in Quetta.

There have been similar terror attacks in

Hazarganj area of Quetta in the past. The market serves as a wholesale market for fruits and vegetables.

The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) last year stated that 509 members of the Hazara community were killed and 627 injured in various incidents of terrorism in Quetta from January 2012 to December 2017.

According to the NCHR, targeted killings, suicide attacks and bomb blasts have inflicted harm to daily life, education, and business activities of ethnic Hazara community members in Balochistan's largest city Quetta.

Balochistan, which borders Afghanistan and Iran, is Pakistan's largest and poorest province, rife with ethnic, sectarian and separatist insurgencies.

flexible to reach a deal," said a protester who spent the night at the army complex.

On Saturday, the new chief of the military council General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan vowed to dismantle Bashir's regime and lifted a night time curfew with immediate effect.

Burhan also pledged that individuals implicated in killing protesters would face justice and that protesters detained under a state of emergency imposed by Bashir during his final weeks in power would be freed.

He took the oath of office on Friday after

his predecessor General Awad Ibn Ouf stepped down little more than 24 hours after ousting Bashir.

Tens of thousands of people have massed outside the army headquarters since April 6, initially to urge the armed forces to back their demand that Bashir be removed.

Burhan comes with less baggage from Bashir's deeply unpopular rule than Ibn Ouf.

But while celebrating the fall of Bashir and then Ibn Ouf -- a defence minister and long-time close aide of the deposed president -- protesters remain cautious.

How Prince Harry Thoroughly Charmed Oprah Winfrey

“At this stage in my life, I only talk to who I want to talk to, okay?”

It's a right that Oprah Winfrey has more than earned. But thank goodness that the media mogul determined Prince Harry was someone that was going “to stimulate, inspire and lift” her up, the criteria she gave during an appearance on The Daily Show Wednesday to explain the type of people she chooses to surround herself with.

Because when the queen of all media pairs up with Britain's most charming prince, good things are bound to happen.

“We are excited to announce that The Duke of Sussex and Oprah Winfrey are partners, co-creators and executive producers on their forthcoming mental health series launching on Apple in 2020,” the official announcement, posted to Harry and wife Meghan Markle's new Instagram account Wednesday, declared. “The pair have been developing the series for several months and are looking forward to sharing such an important project on this global platform.

Already well underway, the multi-part show “will focus on both mental illness and mental wellness,” the release continued, “inspiring viewers to have an honest conversation about the challenges each of us faces, and how to equip ourselves with the tools to not simply survive, but to thrive.”

It's a venture we never saw coming, but now that it's been revealed you almost wonder what took so long. Two astonishingly influential people teaming up for a cause close to their hearts that seems to grow in importance almost by the day. Of course these two would try to change the world.

Since forming Heads Together, his joint effort with brother Prince William and sister-in-law Kate Middleton to end the stigmas that surround mental health, Harry has grown increasingly open about his own struggles.

His transparency began with sharing just how deeply he was affected by losing his mother, Princess Diana, in a senseless, entirely preventable car crash mere weeks before he was to turn 13.

“I can safely say that losing my mum at the age of 12, and therefore shutting down all of my emotions for the last 20



years, has had a quite serious effect on not only my personal life but my work as well,” he told the Telegraph's Bryony Gordon for her Mad World podcast in April 2017.

Sure, he managed to do quite a bit of good with his enormous platform, serving two tours in Afghanistan and dedicating his life to helping his fellow veterans and those afflicted by AIDS. But with so much attention trained on his personal life as everyone wondered when the cheeky ginger prince would settle down, and the unchecked emotions roiling inside him, “I have probably been very close to a complete breakdown on numerous occasions,” he told Gordon, “when all sorts of grief and sort of lies and misconceptions and everything are coming to you from every angle.”

It was his brother who urged him to seek counseling, he revealed, and the therapy that followed had done him a fair bit of good.

His deeply personal confession was met with a fair bit of shock, followed by the sort of understanding and acceptance he was aiming for, his goal being to erase the negative connotation that sadly still accompanies mental illness in the hopes that people will be less hesitant about reaching out for the help they so desperately need.

Justin Bieber just took his couple nickname with Hailey Bieber to a whole new level

Justin Bieber has some thoughts about his couple nickname with his wife, Hailey Bieber.

The couple, who is sometimes affectionately called “Jailey” for short, tied the knot late last year and they have a penchant for posting sweet photos and tributes to each other on social media.

On Saturday, however, the “Sorry” singer took Jailey to a new level with an Instagram upload that did a rather fine job of combining more than just their respective first names.

On Thursday, Hailey posted a series of photos on Instagram from her new campaign that she shot with Adidas. In it, she's wearing blue track pants and a blue Adidas jacket with red sleeves and white stripes. She has a straight face in one photo and a goofy one in another.

It seems that some big Jailey fan on the Internet brought together the best of both worlds and Photoshopped Bieber's head onto his wife's body where she's wearing the Adidas outfit. The true Photoshop artiste even added in Bieber's many tattoos onto Hailey's arm and torso.

“The internet gotta chill,” Bieber captioned it. “jailey for real.” He also included many laughing emojis alongside it.

While the 25-year-old may have found it amusing, his model wife didn't seem to reciprocate the feelings.

“Lolol I hate this,” she wrote in the comments section.



Bieber's mom Pattie Mallette wasn't a fan either. “NO please make it stop,” she added.

Patrick Schwarzenegger chimed in, “Honestly...fire.”

On a more sentimental note, the Canadian penned a long poem and ode to his wife on Monday as the description for a photo of her from a Maxim photo shoot where she's standing in front of the Eiffel Tower.

“Sunlight falls into the Abyss / Just like i fall into your lips / Waves crash onto the shore,” he began. “My love for you grows more and more / Sound of the crickets a true meditation / I think

about you, Gods greatest creation.”

Bieber called her his “one true SOULMATE” and that he was lost but God brought them together.

“Things all around us Just get better with time. I fall more in love with you every day! You have walked hand and hand with me as I continue to get my emotions, mind, body and soul in tact!” he concluded. “You have given me so much strength, support, encouragement and joy. I just wanted to publicly honor you, and remind you that the best is yet to come!”

The “What Do You Mean?” singer has been open about his struggles with depression as of late and he's been leaning heavily on Hailey for support.

On March 25, he wrote a message to his fans and followers and told them that he understood they wanted new music, but he needed to prioritize “repairing some of the deep rooted issues.”



HARRIET'S ROOFTOP: Miley Cyrus and Jon Bon Jovi enjoy an exclusive “first sip” of Hampton Water during a star-studded evening out.

BTS' Map of the Soul: Persona Has Officially Dropped



The Bangtan Boys are back!

Just over an hour ago, the BTS boys officially dropped their comeback album, Map of the Soul: Persona, on Spotify and other major music streaming sites — all we can say is, it's everything we dreamed of, and then some! From their catchy lyrics that stay with you long after your first listen to the fancy footwork in their newly released MV with American artist Halsey (see below), it's safe to say that ARMYs everywhere will not be disappointed with this album. Our favourites? “Mikroskosmos”, “Boy With Luv” and “Dionysus” have officially made it to earworm status.

What's more, the colourful, much-teased

music video for “Boy With Luv”, which features Halsey has also been released on YouTube.

Chock full of fashion statements that blend masculine and feminine tropes of dressing, the music video is sure to inspire ARMYs everywhere to add pops of pink, feathers and statement accessories to their wardrobes. Add to that the BTS boys' seriously slick moves and memorable song refrains, and we're sure to see Twitter explode with homemade versions in the days to come.

For now, we're waiting to see what records “Boy With Luv” — and Map of the Soul: Persona — will be smashing in the days to come.

ARIES: Reunited and it feels so good. Saturday's friendly angle between Mercury and Uranus could lead you back to a group you once cherished. From an indoor sports league to an activist organization to people you just like drinking IPAs with, you've been missing that bond. If you can't convene in person, set up a time to video chat.

TAURUS: Kill 'em with kindness Saturday, Taurus, and a megadose of compassion. A stressed out friend or relative could make everyone's life miserable if you don't intervene. Rather than going mutinous, get to the source of this person's angst. Maybe they feel overwhelmed or upset about a recent “failure.” Preempt and prevail! Find out what support is needed before they ask.

GEMINI: Were you a little too quick to judge a group as weird or “not your thing,” Gemini? Saturday, you could have misgivings about your hasty write-off. Give this cutting-edge crew a second chance. Are they really asking you to become a devotee, or are they simply

offering a fresh perspective on life? If you still find them intriguing, dip your toe in the water without fear.

CANCER: If you can't beat 'em, join 'em? This Saturday, collaborating with the so-called competition might bring the win-win you're both looking for...If you can set aside your differences. The trick is to test the waters slowly small instead of trying to resolve every difference in one day. If you've been gasping for air—or maybe just a change of scenery—the next ten weeks could send you on some amazing adventures.

LEO: This Saturday, a refreshingly honest conversation can move the needle on a stuck relationship. Don't get hung up with saying the “right” thing, Leo; just speak your piece in a non-blaming way. And make sure you extend that open-minded courtesy to the other party as well. Of course, sometimes these sentiments are best expressed in a letter—one that you don't send, but rather write, then rip up and burn as a ceremonial release.

LIBRA: Who says February 14th gets to have all the fun? Saturday's playful pairing of Mercury and Uranus could bring an early visit from St. Valentine. A scintillating conversation could lead to a dinner date that lingers on for hours. If you're already spoken for, Saturday could be like a V-Day prequel. Reserve a table for two or pick up a pair of tickets for a raved-about show.

VIRGO: Thoughts are swirling through your head this Saturday, but don't let them evolve into an epic work of fiction. With analytical Mercury getting a boost from innovative Uranus, talk to people who can help you see the situation from an enlightened perspective. Everything happens for a reason, Virgo, even if it makes zero sense in the moment.

SCORPIO: Is it a fact or just a feeling? Saturday's Mercury-Uranus mashup brings some much-needed objectivity to a situation that's been hitting all your emotional buttons. While you don't want to ignore your intuition, what's bothering you might be a result of a past trigger rather than something that's actually occurring in

the here and now. The surest way to find out? Investigate, as only a Scorpio can! Your inner bon vivant takes the wheel this Sunday as social Mercury high-kicks into Pisces and your flamboyant, fun-loving fifth house!

SAGITTARIUS: If other people are slowing you down this Saturday, no need to drag those stragglers along for the ride. Enjoy a day of independence, allowing yourself to come and go as you please without checking for approval. The dedicated alone time will refresh your feed and you'll be ready to reign as life of the party come sundown. Avoid any venues that feel stuffy or elitist!

CAPRICORN: Anyone can dazzle you with a first impression—but can they actually walk their talk? Under Saturday's convivial alignment of Mercury and Uranus, you might not be the best at separating the wheat from the chaff. Enjoy the magic moments you share with people socially, remembering that only time can tell the true story about their integrity and character. Reserve judgement, one way or

the other, because it's equally possible that someone you wrote off as annoying could start to grow on you!

AQUARIUS: Chat up strangers this Saturday, because at any moment, random banter could reveal a serendipitous spark. The fateful encounter could happen during an espresso run or while you're rolling up your yoga mat after class. One thoughtful comment on an Instagram-friend's feed could lead to a DM exchange—and one bold right swipe could swiftly evolve into a Saturday night date!

PISCES: You don't have to make excuses for other people's bad behavior, Pisces, but it's possible that you overreacted to a recent slight. You're rightfully disappointed but is this really grounds for a freezeout? Maybe you extended the benefit of the doubt a little too quickly or projected qualities onto people that were never really there. Accept their limitations then consider letting go of your anger. Going forward, you can't count on these people for certain things—but that doesn't mean you can't still be cordial.