



KANGANA'S 'MENTAL HAI KYA' TO CLASH WITH HRITHIK'S 'SUPER 30' ON JULY 26

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THE DEMONIZATION OF CASTER SEMENYA CONTINUES

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PRIYANKA, DEEPIKA REALISE THEIR FAIRYTALE FANTASY AT MET GALA 2019

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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Stakeholders finalize concept of Lepcha shrine at Statue of Unity complex



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 MAY:**

The concept and design of the first Lepcha shrine to be constructed at the Statue of Unity on MG Marg was finalized in a meeting conducted by the Pang Lhabsol Celebration Committee [PLCC] on 05 May.

A press release from the committee informs that Bongthings perform

rituals every year at the Statue of Unity and since there is no proper shrine, it was felt that a permanent one should be constructed both for prayers as well as for academic purposes.

There was some delay as the Lepchas worship nature and some felt that there should not be a definite shrine, at the same it was also

felt that in days to come when there won't be many shamans and practitioners of the tradition, the whole system can be lost and as such there was the need to have a symbolic manifestation of the Lepcha shrine, the release mentions.

The first brainstorming was done in 2017, followed by another one in Kalimpong in 2018

with at least four concept drawings being prepared and used as reference.

The concept with all the requisite components/elements was adopted unanimously by all present in the meeting.

The responsibility of overall process of research, consultations, logistics for the shrine was undertaken by vice president PLCC, Tseten Lep-

cha, general secretary PLCC, Namgyal Lepcha and general secretary PLCC, Ongden Tshering Lepcha with active support from all other members.

PLCC president, T Lachungpa presided over the meeting which was attended by Bongthings, scholars, representatives of Lepcha associations, teachers and students.

SHSC trounces AU Raj 4-1, but beaten by Aizawl FC on goal difference



**REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 07 MAY:**

Sikkim Himalayan Sports Club thrashed AU Rajasthan FC 04-01 in their third and final group match of the Hero India Junior League for u-15 players at Kolkata today.

Purbanas Thatal and Anil Limboo scored two goals each for the Sikkim side. With this win, SHSC has bagged a total of seven points from two wins and one draw. Despite its strong showing, SHSC could not qualify for the next round, losing out on goal difference to Aizawl FC.

Aizawl FC had also secured seven points but went past Sikkim to the next round after it humbled Maximus

Prime Sports 13-0 in its final match of the league round today.

SHSC coach Pranay Subba, while sharing that he and the team were disappointed over the exit, said he was proud of the boys who gave their best.

"We played well in the group stage and collected two wins and one draw. It is disappointing not to qualify to the next round but the club is happy that its junior players gave a good display and also got a good exposure and experience of playing with clubs outside Sikkim. This will help them in the long run as it is important for u-15 players to play competitive matches regularly," he said.

Cong greets Sikkim on Tripartite Agreement anniv, regrets dilution of Art 371F

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 MAY:**

The Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee has extended best wishes to the Sikkimese people on the occasion of the anniversary of the signing of the Tripartite Agreement which was signed on 08 May, 1973.

The State Congress has remembered the day as the beginning of a new era for Sikkim.

"It was on this day, 43 years ago, the 08 May Tripartite Agreement 1973, was reached between the Durbar, Government of India and the people of Sikkim. This was the resultant consensus settlement after the historic peoples' movement of 1973, better known as the 1973 agitation. This

agitation in itself was an outburst of the peoples' long cherished desire to end the oppressions of monarchic rule, and was triggered by certain electoral violations in the form of alleged rigging of council elections in some booths in south Sikkim, that led to the victory of a pro-king political party," an SPCC press release details.

The release further reminds that "it was based on this agreement that the one man-one vote principle was introduced and general elections held on 13 April, 1974, which was the first and last such elections of Independent Sikkim."

"The elected assembly headed by Late Lendup Dorji Kazi abol-

ished Chogyal rule and annexed Sikkim to be India's 22nd state in 1975, though several political leaders actually desired a constitutional monarchy akin to United Kingdom. Sikkim has since then, moved on to flourish as an integral part of India," the release adds.

The release goes on to highlight that Article 371F of the Constitution of India, which sets the terms of the merger, was based on of this Agreement and goes on to claim that it was the Congress party that ushered democracy in Sikkim with Article 371F.

The release goes on to comment that the "progress and prosperity that Sikkim has witnessed so

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Myanmar frees two Reuters journalists after global outrage

YANGON, MAY 7 (AFP): Two Reuters journalists jailed for their reporting on the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar walked out of prison on Tuesday, freed in a presidential amnesty after a vigorous global campaign - and backroom diplomacy - for their release.

Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo were mobbed by media as they stepped out of Yangon's notorious Insein prison after more than 16 months in detention.

Their December 2017 arrests made them an international cause celebre and a sign of Myanmar's deteriorating press freedoms under Nobel laureate and civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Wa Lone, 33, thanked people from "around the world" for advocating for their release and vowed he would return to work. "I can't wait to go to my newsroom," he said. "I am a journalist and I am going to continue." Reuters editor-in-chief Stephen Adler said: "We are enormously pleased that Myanmar has released our courageous reporters".



"Since their arrests 511 days ago, they have become symbols of the importance of press freedom around the world. We welcome their return." They were freed in an amnesty that included

more than 6,000 prisoners. A government spokesman told reporters that family members had sent letters to Suu Kyi and the president Win Myint. "Leaders took into consideration the

long-term interest of (the) country," Zaw Htay said. Lord Ara Darzi, a British advisor and confidant of Suu Kyi, said it was "fitting" the pair were released a few days after World Press Freedom Day. "The lesson is simple: dialogue works even in the most difficult of circumstances," he told media in Yangon.

US Vice President Mike Pence, who had previously condemned the Reuters journalists' jailing, said the release was "great news". "Freedom of religion & freedom of the press are essential to a strong democracy," he tweeted. The journalists waved and smiled broadly as they walked out of the jail.

The two men were convicted on charges of violating the official secrets act and sentenced to seven years each.

At the time of their arrest, they had been reporting on a September 2017 massacre of 10 Rohingya Muslims in conflict-hit Rakhine state, where the Myanmar army forced some 740,000

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SummitTIMES IN NEPALI

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Cong greets...

far has been largely due to the special status it enjoys" and central grants, loans and various central schemes, and complains that despite Congress' "important contributions," the party has been "the victim of negative propaganda by regional political forces for many years."

The party also sees a "political conspiracy" to do away with Article 371F in recent political developments like the proposal to "increase assembly seats from 32 to 40 on the pretext of providing Limboo-Tamang seats, demands of Darjeeling and Sikkim's unification and implementation of Citizenship Amendment Bill and the uniform civil code by the Bharatiya Janata Party."

These moves will also erase the historical basis of Sikkim's unique identity, the 08 May Agreement 1973, the only document signed by our former ruler and the only official document to prove we are Sikkimese of Bhutia, Lepcha or Nepali origin, the release fears, while concluding with an appeal to the younger generation "to protect the interests of all the three constitutionally recognised ethnic communities of Sikkim..."

SHSC trounces...

per cent as against 95.40 per cent of boys.

Mumbai's Juhi Rupesh Kajaria and Muktsar's Manhar Bansal topped the class 10 ISCE examination with 99.60 per cent. The second rank has been shared by ten students with 99.40 per cent marks and the third rank has been shared by 24 students with 99.20 per cent marks.

Kolkata's Dewang Kumar Agarwal and Bengaluru's Vibha Swaminathan topped the class 12 ISC examination with 100 per cent marks. The second rank has been shared by 16 students with 99.75 percent and the third rank has been shared by 36 students with 99.50 per cent marks.

Myanmar frees...

of the stateless minority to flee over the border to Bangladesh.

The case prompted an outcry around the world and crushed what was left of Suu Kyi's legacy as a rights defender.

Reuters has said the two were imprisoned in retaliation for their expose.

The army jailed seven soldiers for the massacre in a rare response to allegations of atrocities.

Military spokesman Zaw Min Tun said it had no comment on the release except that the case was "undertaken in line with the law".

While inside, the duo missed numerous family milestones, including the birth of Wa Lone's daughter. Their families were overjoyed with the news.

"We are very happy," Chit Su Win, who is married to Kyaw Soe Oo, told AFP. A reunion photo of both couples celebrating, smiling and holding each of their daughters was widely shared on Twitter.

During their imprisonment, the journalists were showered with numerous awards and honours in response to their work.

Last month, they won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize.

Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo were also on the cover of TIME magazine as part of its person of the year coverage featuring journalists targeted for their reporting.

The case against them became a byword for the war against press freedom and prompted an international campaign that attracted the support of prominent rights lawyer Amal Clooney, who said Tuesday it had been an "honour to represent" her clients.

Rights groups and legal experts say the prosecution's case was riddled with irregularities.

A whistleblowing police officer testified during their trial that his superior had ordered his team to trap the reporters in a sting -- testimony the judge chose to ignore.

The now-former officer Moe Yan Naing told AFP he was "delighted" the families were back together, and expressed interest in meeting the journalists if they wanted to.

Media advocates, the UN, and rights organisations praised the release but slammed the original arrest and conviction.

"We congratulate Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo on walking free from unjust imprisonment and applaud they have now been reunited with their families," said Phil Robertson, Human Rights Watch deputy Asia director, adding they should have never been arrested in the first place.

Suu Kyi led her National League for Democracy party to victory in historic 2015 polls, ending decades of military-backed rule.

But the dreams of a new day for Myanmar were short-lived -- the army launched a campaign against the Rohingya in Rakhine state, which UN investigators have said amounted to genocide.

Myanmar has denied the charges and said it was defending itself against Rohingya militants, who attacked and killed police officers in August 2017.

Training for Counting officials held in West

GYALSHING, 07 MAY (IPR): The first round of training for Counting Supervisors, Counting Assistants and Micro Observers was held at the Community Hall, Gyalshing, West Sikkim. The training was chaired by DC West, Karma R Bonpo along with ADC West, Karma Lodey Lepcha and SDM (HQ), Tushar G Nikhare. SDM, Jigme Wangchuk Bhutia, Ravangla was the Master Trainer for the program.

Karma R Bonpo addressed the trainees present on the layout of how and where the Counting would take place in the district. He mentioned that a three layered security system would be constituted wherein the State Police, State intelligence Bureau and Central Parliamentary Armed Forces would be deployed to ensure proper security.

He also mentioned that separate counting halls for Parliamentary and Assembly Constitu-



ency have been designated, Hall 1 (BRC Auditorium Hall, Govt. Girls SSS, Kyongsa) and Hall 2 (Auditorium Hall, Govt. Girls SSS, Kyongsa for Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies respectively.

He also mentioned that the personnel involved in the counting process would be given Identity Cards without which they wouldn't be allowed to enter the

premises. He also advised that every personnel must be alert and vigilant in their duties.

He further informed that randomization of the counting tables would start from 5.00am on 23 May, 2019. He also informed that the entire process of opening of strong rooms, opening of EVMs would be videotaped for evidence purpose.

Master Trainer Jigme W Bhutia spoke on the

objective of the training was to learn about the counting of Postal Ballots, Counting of Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballots, Counting of Votes recorded in EVMs, Counting of VVPAT slips and Compilation of data. He also spoke in depth about the filling of different forms, compilation of data, counting teams for EVMs, Postal Ballots and Additional Counting Team for the

ECI Observer, Counting Team Compositions (1 Counting Supervisor, 1 Counting Assistant, 1 Micro Observer and one Support staff), Micro Observers and their duties, computation team who have to compile data manually and digitally, process involved in the postal ballot counting, cross checking of results by the ECI Observer and other aspects associated with the counting procedure.

South holds meeting on Pre-Monsoon Preparedness



NAMCHI, 07 MAY (IPR): A daylong co-ordination meeting on Pre-Monsoon Disaster Preparedness was organized by District Disaster Management Authority South (DDMA) at the Conference Hall of DAC Namchi today.

The meeting chaired by DC (South), Ragul K was held with an objective to meet the challenges of the impending monsoon. The meeting was also attended by SP(S), Manish Verma, ADM (South), Satyam K Pradhan alongside SDMs and HoD's of line Departments from the district.

During the meeting, issues related to monsoon induced calamities, action plans, coordination between all line departments, and readily available assistance to reinforce normally of lives post disasters were discussed.

Speaking on the occasion, DC (S), Ragul K, highlighted that all the concerned officials and disaster management team to be vigilant and

alert during times of monsoon disasters. He also spoke in detail about the availability and access of disaster management equipments and directed the stakeholders to remain vigil and ready to tackle any magnitude of disaster.

He also addresses the issues of effective communication during times of disaster and urged the public to report any incidents or casualties to the SDMs or the concerned officers of the area. Matters related to disbursement of ex-gratia were also taken up during the meeting.

In addition, the DC urged the representatives of different departments to ensure full preparedness to face natural calamities of any kind during monsoon season. He called for an active and correct monitoring and implementation for disaster relief plans for the district under Incident Response System (IRS).

The DC took up matters of damaged and vulnerable water pipe-

line supply in Namchi with the PHE Dept and directed them to get the problem resolved in a timely manner. Similarly, he issued directives to Roads & Bridges Department and the Private stakeholders to ensure restoration of slide prone areas along the highway prior to monsoons and emphasized the clearance of roads in order to avoid unnecessary traffic. He asked the officials of PMGSY and Roads Department to clear the drains urgently and take preventive actions. He also asked the SDMs to inspect the roads to avoid natural calamities.

Likewise, the DC advised the Forest Department to look into the problem of reckless dumping, felling of tilted trees and plantation wherever necessary. All officials were directed to be on high alert during the monsoons and stock adequate supplies of essentials in the respective stations during the course of the meeting.

BJP getting access to official documents in Tripura: Congress

AGARTALA, MAY 7 (PTI): A senior Congress leader in Tripura on Tuesday said the party has lodged a complaint with the Election Commission alleging that the BJP is getting access to government documents and has demanded an inquiry into it. A BJP delegation had met the Chief Election Commissioner on May 2 and submitted a memorandum demanding the removal of Tripura Chief Electoral Officer.

Tripura Congress vice president Tapas Dey said that " ... docu-

ments attached in the BJP memorandum to the CEC include a letter of the Returning Officer addressed to the chief secretary of Tripura, a representation by Tripura Civil Service Association and the chief secretary's letter to the ECI".

Dey said the BJP was 'not supposed' to have access to such government documents and alleged they were given to the saffron party in an "unauthorized manner" and demanded an inquiry into it. Dey said he has lodged a complaint with the Chief

Election Commissioner on Monday about the BJP getting access to official letters and documents.

Earlier, the opposition Congress and CPI-M had both lodged complaints of alleged large scale rigging and irregularities in the elections in West Tripura constituency, which went to poll on April 11. Both the parties have demanded fresh elections in the constituency. BJP spokesperson Nabendu Bhattacharya denied the allegations of Dey about leakage of official documents to the BJP.

EC clean chit to PM Modi in two more cases: Sources

NEW DELHI, MAY 6 (PTI): The Election Commission has given clean chit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in two more cases, sources aware of the development said Monday.

The Congress had alleged that he held a "roadshow" in Ahmedabad on April 23 and the sources said the commission has concluded that Modi did not violate the model code and the election law.

They said that the commission has also cleared Modi for his April 9 speech at Chitradurga in Karnataka where he had reportedly asked new voters to dedicate their vote for the heroes of the Balakot air strike.

On the same day, he had made a similar appeal in Ausa in Latur district of Maharashtra. The EC had given a clean chit to him in that case as well, but one of the election commissioners had given a dissenting view in the matter.

Though the commission has so far not made the two decisions public, with these decisions, Modi has been given a clean chit in eight matters.

The poll authorities in Gujarat are learnt to have maintained that prima facie no violation was found.

The Congress had moved the EC alleging that Modi took out a "roadshow" after casting his vote and made political remarks in violation of the Model Code of Conduct. After casting his

vote in Ahmedabad, Modi walked some distance from the polling booth and interacted briefly with media persons.

The commission Monday is also learnt to have cleared Congress leader Salman Khurshid's 'gaushala' remarks against Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, saying no violation was established.

In Farrukhabad, Khurshid had recently challenged Adityanath for a debate. "It will be better if it takes place in a gaushala to find out if the cow is with him or me," the lawyer-politician had reportedly said.

The BJP had moved the commission with a complaint.

Earlier, the EC had cleared six speeches of Modi, two of Shah and one of Congress chief Rahul Gandhi.

Gandhi had been issued a show cause notice for his Madhya Pradesh speech in which he had reportedly said that the government has enacted a new law which allows tribals to be shot.

On March 19, the EC had issued an advisory asking parties not to invoke armed forces in their political campaign.

The commission has now submitted a report to the Supreme Court of the cases related to Modi and Shah that it has disposed. Alleging delay on EC's part, the Congress had moved the top court for a remedy.

The matter would come up for hearing on Wednesday.

Allegations against CJI: Former woman employee of SC seeks copy of in-house inquiry report

NEW DELHI, MAY 7 (PTI): The former woman employee of the Supreme Court who levelled sexual harassment allegations against Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, on Tuesday sought a copy of the report of the In-House Inquiry Committee which gave clean chit to the CJI. The CJI Monday got a clean chit from a three-member Inquiry Committee headed by Justice S A Bobde which found "no substance" in the allegations of the former woman employee and further ruled that the report was not "liable to be made public".

The 3-member Committee, which completed its task in 14 days, proceeded ex-parte as the woman had opted out of the inquiry on April 30 after participating for three days. In a letter to Justice Bobde, the woman has alleged lack of transparency in the functioning of the inquiry panel and said that now, not providing her a copy of the order "would be a violation of the principles of natural justice and a complete travesty of justice".

She alleged that in the first hearing, she was not given any clarity on whether the present proceedings were the in-house. "However, the in-house proceeding rules are now being used to deny me and the public a right to the report. The Secretary General's press note states that a copy of the report will not be made public... It appears from the press release that even I, the complainant, will not be provided with a copy of the report.

"I have a right to the report, the reasons for the same as well as copies of the depositions of any witnesses, any other persons or any other evidence considered by the Committee," she said.

The statement further said that if the CJI was being given a copy of the report, directly or indirectly, the complainant was also entitled to it.

"I find it rather strange that the complainant in a case of sexual harassment is not to be provided with a copy of the report which finds her complaint to be without substance and that my complaint has been held by the committee to be this without giving me any reasons for the same," she said, adding that both the parties had a right to receive a copy of the report. "I am shocked that despite my detailed affidavit, ample corroborative evidence and clear, consistent statement before the Committee reiterating my experience of sexual harassment and consequent victimisation the Committee has found 'no substance' in my complaint and affidavit.

"I am shocked that Committee has come to an adverse finding against me despite the fact that I was compelled to withdraw from the Committee since the committee did not observe even the most basic principles of natural justice," she said in a statement.

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Authorities struggle to restore essential services due to lack of manpower in cyclone-ravaged Odisha



BHUBANESWAR, MAY 7 (PTI): Four days after extremely severe cyclone Fani hammered Odisha and damaged its infrastructure, authorities on Tuesday struggled to restore essential services like water supply, electricity and telecommunication due to an acute shortage of skilled manpower.

The state government needs to replace 1.5 lakh electric poles uprooted by high-velocity wind of about 200kmph in coastal districts, officials said.

“Everything is dependent on power supply. If there is no electricity, the filling stations cannot operate even though they have enough stock of petrol and diesel,” said Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister, Dharmendra Pradhan, who is visiting the cyclone-ravaged areas of Puri district to assess the damage.

The cyclone that made landfall near Puri on Friday has claimed at least 35 lives in Odisha.

On Tuesday, the state government started relief distribution in Bhubaneswar and Puri even as people cried for drinking water. High humidity level, above 90 per cent in coastal districts, has compounded their miseries.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday asked his administration

officials to expedite relief and restoration activities in other districts such as Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapara districts, as well.

“Relief, rehabilitation and restoration work is in progress on a war footing. We are trying our best to bring normalcy at the earliest,” said Sangram Mohapatra, the spokesperson of the special relief commissioner.

In a letter written to Union Minister of Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar, Patnaik has urged the Centre to extend the registration date for the JEE (advanced) for admission in IITs. Students have to register themselves online between May 3 to May 9 and with the telecommunication lines severed it’s become difficult for them to do that.

“As you are aware, the extremely severe cyclone FANI has hit Odisha on May 3, 2019, which disrupted mobile and data connectivity in many districts. Due to non-availability of internet at many locations in Odisha after Fani, the brilliant Odia students have not been able to register their names online for the examination. IIT, Roorke is the organizing Institute for the JEE (Advanced) Examination this year,” Patnaik wrote to Javadekar.

It is necessary to ex-

tend the registration date by at least 10 days. The all-India NEET examination has also been postponed for Odisha students, Patnaik said in the letter.

The administration requires 10,000 manpower to restore normalcy in Puri in a week’s time. “But, we have so far got 4,000 people for Puri,” said Energy Secretary Hemant Sharma.

In absence of essential services, many people, mostly students and elderly persons, have started leaving the state capital for other districts. “There is rush at the bus stand as people return to their villages,” said Odisha Private Bus Owners Association secretary Tusharkant Acharya.

He said 400 buses are plying in the state, but more are required to meet the spurt in demand after the cyclone. Bus services have resumed on 80 per cent routes as national highways and state highways.

Though train services resumed from the state capital Bhubaneswar on Sunday, the East Coast Railways Tuesday announced it has cancelled seven trains, including Haridwar-Puri Kalinga Express, Chennai-Sant-ragachi Suvidha Express, Neelachal Express and Puri-Shalimar Express.

Noida boy who died during class 10 exams with Stephen Hawking dreams scores nearly 100 in 3 subjects

GUNJAN SHARMA

NEW DELHI, MAY 7 (PTI): Vinayak Sreedhar, who idolised Stephen Hawking, scored nearly 100 in three subjects he appeared for during the CBSE 10 examination, and passed away in March before he could write the remaining two.

He scored 100 in English, 96 in Science and 97 in Sanskrit and could not appear for Computer Science and Social Studies.

Topping the class 10 board exams, becoming an astronaut and a trip to Rameswaram are among some of the unfulfilled wishes of Sreedhar, who was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy when he was two-years-old.

Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) is a genetic disorder characterised by progressive muscle degeneration and weakness. It is caused due to the absence of dystrophin, a protein that helps keep muscle cells intact.

The results for the class 10 Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) examination were announced on Monday.

The Amity International School, Noida, student appeared for the exams under the general category and not the Children With Special Need (CWSN) category.

“His muscular movement was very limited. He could write slowly

but since there is a time duration for exams he used a scribe to write English and Science exam. For Sanskrit, he insisted to write himself. His body movement was restricted and he was wheelchair-bound, but his mind was very sharp and aspirations very high,” Mamta Sreedhar, his mother, told PTI.

“He would always say I want to become an astronaut despite all the challenges and would say if Stephen Hawkings could go to Oxford and make a name in Cosmology I can go to space too. He was confident that he will be among top rankers. We were always amazed with his confidence and would

encourage him further,” she added.

Legendary British theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking also suffered from a motor neuron disease.

Sreedhar had plans to visit Rameswaram temple near Kanyakumari, after his exams were over.

“We are today in Rameshwaram and are going for darshan in the evening. It was his unfulfilled wish so we decided to not postpone the plans and do it for him,” his mother said.

However, Vinayak Sreedhar is not the only one in his family to make his parents proud. His sister is an Indian Institute of Science (IISc)

alumnus and is currently pursuing her Phd at the University of British Columbia on a fellowship.

While Vinayak’s father is vice president in GMR, his mother is a home maker by choice.

“I made this choice. My entire day revolved around him. From brushing his teeth to feeding him, I did it all myself but it was his willpower which always gave us the strength,” his mother said.

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URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM GANGTOK

No: 86/UD&HD/Secy

Dated: 1.05.19

NOTICE

In view of the ensuing monsoon and as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety of life and property the following instruction are hereby issued for compliance:

1. All construction works involving earth excavation in any form shall be stopped w.e.f 6th May to 30th Sept, 2019 as already notified vide Notice no: 613/GOS/JCTP/UD&HD dated 1st May 2019.
2. All concerned officers including District officials and ULBs shall ensure that the sewerage, drainage system and jhoras in their area of jurisdiction are not clogged/ blocked so as to allow free flow of rain water. Wherever necessary sufficient manpower along with tools and machineries shall be stationed for any emergent situation.
3. Any area which is vulnerable and likely to be under threat of landslide, flash floods and other related disaster is to be reported to the Head Office/ District Office immediately.
4. All Officers shall ensure that no debris or construction material is dumped along the roadside or Jhora areas by any individual/ agency/ organization. Any violation of this direction shall attract astringent action as per norms.
5. All individuals/ agency/ organization are requested to be vigilant to prevent any calamities. They are also required to bring any incidence of violation of norms or potential danger to the notice of concerned authorities immediately.
6. All concerned officers including District officials and ULBs are required to send a weekly status report of the area under their jurisdiction to the Head Office at Gangtok without fail.

By Order.

Sd/-

Ganga D Pradhan
Secretary UD & HD
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM GANGTOK

No: 613/GOS/JCTP/UD&HD

Dated: 01/05/2019

NOTICE

This is for information of the general public that no construction involving earth excavation works shall be permitted with effect from 6th May, 2019 till 30th September, 2019 due to the onset of the monsoon. Further, Construction Orders shall not be issued during the aforesaid period.

Anyone found carrying out construction in contravention of the above shall be penalized as per the relevant clause of the Sikkim Allotment of House Sites and Construction of Building (Regulation and Control) Act, 1985 as and the Sikkim Building Construction Regulation, 1991 as amended in 2000. Such person shall also be held solely responsible for any loss of life and property, as a result of such unauthorized excavation/ construction. Further, any building material found lying on the road setback or over drains henceforth, shall be seized and auctioned without any notice whatsoever, and action shall be taken as per the bye-laws against the defaulters.

BY ORDER.

Sd/-

R.O. No. 23/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20

Date: 7.5.2019

Secretary
Urban Development & Housing Department

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Now is the time that every eligible girl students must give a try instead of repenting later.

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For any further information& assistance, please visit our Sainik Board Office at Gangtok at any time for online registration.

Contact Numbers – 8170005757 / 8145837898 / 9593268469

You must have following documents ready during online submission of application:-

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- Passport size photograph
- E-mail ID (your own email ID)
- Your mobile number (for OTP)

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The 49th day Kutse Shegu of our beloved mother Late Pempa Bhutia who left for her heavenly abode on 26.03.2019 falls on 13.05.2019. All friends, relatives & well-wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence at Tin Taky, Metro, Lower Tadong. We also take this opportunity to thank all those who stood by us during the time of bereavement.

PEOLO LEPCHA (HUSBAND), BHAICHUNG LEPCHA, RINCHEN LEPCHA (SONS), TASHI ONGMU LEPCHA (DAUGHTER-IN-LAW), TSHERING DOMA LEPCHA (DAUGHTER), PHUCHUNG NAMCHANGKORPA (SON IN-LAW), GRAND SONS & GRAND DAUGHTERS.

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C'garh police deploys first ever anti-Naxal women's commando unit

RAIPUR, MAY 7 (PTI): The Chhattisgarh police for the first time has inducted women commandos in the District Reserve Guard, its frontline anti-Naxal force.

A senior official said these women commandos were part of the security forces’ “short action teams” that eliminated three Naxal “commanders” in the past one month.

The specially-raised squad, christened ‘Danteshwari Ladake’, or fighters of Goddess Danteshwari, was inducted in the state’s Naxal-hit Dantewada district, around 400 kilometres from here.

Comprising 30 women led by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Dineshwari Nand, officials said they have received extensive training in jungle combat.

“A first-of-its-kind platoon of women DRG commandos has been raised. Of the 30 recruits, 10 are surrendered women Naxals, while 10 others are assistant constables who were part of the erstwhile Salva Judum (anti-Naxal militia) movement,” Dantewada Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava told PTI. With the

induction of the women commando contingent, the number of platoons of the DRG in Dantewada now stands at six, he said. Personnel of the DRG are recruited from local youth and it also has surrendered Naxals in its ranks and has of late gained a fearsome reputation for taking the fight into the enemy camp and conducting successful strikes in Maoist strongholds, officials said.

“Although the state police and paramilitary forces in Bastar have deployed women personnel but they have limited work. It is for the first time that an exclusive team of women commandos has been set up to carry out counter insurgency operations shoulder to shoulder with male DRG members in the area,” said Pallava, who is credited with introducing this platoon.

“These women commandos have been given three-months advanced in-house training in jungle warfare tactics. They are trained for motor-cycle patrolling in the dense forests, map reading, understanding Naxal profiles and counter ambush strategy,” he said.

“The important factor is all of them are lo-

cal residents, including surrendered Naxals, and therefore are well acquainted with the forested terrain and the local language. All these are key elements in the fight against Naxals,” he said.

The SP added that being able to melt into the local crowd wearing civil attire like sarees and still move around with concealed weapons gave the women commandos the “surprise element” to get the better of the Maoist ultras.

“In the past one month, this women platoon was part of the security forces’ short action teams that gunned down three Naxal commanders,” he said.

He said the women commandos could motivate others to join the forces and also curb chances of fake allegations of human rights violations.

A member of the platoon, Gange, a surrendered “deputy commander” with the outlawed CPI (Maoist), said, “We are feeling relieved after quitting the Naxal movement. We wanted to marry which was not allowed in the Naxal outfit. We are now living a life with dignity and purpose as police personnel.

Quality Education on the Agenda

Study and evaluate, then replicate best practices

For quite a while now, politicians, bureaucrats, teacher associations and even student groups have been speaking of the need for government schools in Sikkim to impart quality education. The Board exam results have just come in, and in the absence of any other, easier, yardstick to measure “quality,” this data should be studied some more. May be not how high the marks were, but more on how some students still manage to fail, because, let’s accept it, even if one has issues with exams as the deciding factor for quality, one needs to accept that a decent education will at least equip students with enough to at least pass the exams. That said, with the big exams over and the results out, chances are that Quality Education deliberations will get mothballed again, so here goes another attempt to reiterate how quality could be achieved in education here.

To qualify the following comments, it is also recognized that experiments and efforts are currently underway in an organized manner to inject improved learning at schools and what follows should be seen as something complementing that effort.

While ‘quality’ is welcome in any field and because there is always room to improve quality in everything, Quality Education will be welcome. To have such a thing, however, will require more than rhetoric; it will not deliver by itself just because it is a felt-need or because it is demanded. ‘Quality’ will have to be defined first and then ways and means devised to meet that definition. Not enough has been done in any earnest thus far. If the policy-makers in Sikkim believe that the quality of education in schools here is inadequate, then, the first thing they will have to do is identify the gap that spans between schools in Sikkim and schools that deliver quality education here or elsewhere. Since China seems to be devising ways to deliver results on issues that India continues to only aspire for and pay lip-service to, perhaps even in this case, Sikkim should take a leaf out from how its northern neighbour achieved this end. China, with a human resource base rivaled only by India, realised that knowledge was the strongest weapon in the new millennium. Many other countries, including India, have realised this but only China appears to have addressed the issue with any intelligence and long-term commitment. One might add here that the Chinese experiment was with regard to higher education in universities. That said, the model could be adapted for school-level education as well. Recognising that the quality of its universities could use some ‘quality’ enhancement, the first thing that China did was carry out an honest and earnest ‘Academic Ranking of World Universities’ in the year 2003. The universities were graded according to the quality/ qualification of its faculty, the range of research undertaken by its students, the academic output of its staff [research papers, dissertations etc], number of awards tagged against the names of faculty and amount of future involvement of its students in path-breaking research. Then the Chinese studied the world leaders among the universities and tried to replicate their management and academic models at home. Higher education in China is already improving at a fast nip.

Sikkim needs to do something similar. It has to commission its own ranking of schools that deliver quality education and then send its officials from the HRD Department to these schools to learn how they deliver quality. While Sikkim learns what quality education is and how it can be delivered, it could also free the sector from all unproductive influence. Politics, for instance, should only influence the policy directions, not the actual human resource management and bureaucrats should be facilitators, not directors of the effort. Appointments and transfer of teachers should be freed from influence of any kind. A basic problem with government schools in Sikkim is their retention failure - their inadequacy to retain students [reflected in high drop-out rates] or even the teachers [manifested in high absenteeism, some schools without enough teachers and others with over-staffed faculty rolls]. This problem might get redressed if students had classes taught by qualified teachers to go to and if teachers had schools with at least the basic infrastructure to impart education in. If this is achieved, education would have become uniformly accessible in Sikkim and then can begin the process of improving the quality.

The demonization of Caster Semenya continues

BRUCE KIDD
theconversation.com

Caster Semenya, one of the world’s greatest female middle-distance runners, may be forced to quit the event she has dominated for a decade. After easily winning the 800-metre race at an international meet in Doha on May 3, the South African athlete was defiant in saying she won’t comply with new restrictions that will be placed on her at future competitions.

“No man, or any other human, can stop me from running,” she said after the race, her first — and possibly last — competition since a controversial ruling by the supreme court of international sport.

Her defiant words were in reaction to a horrible ruling by the Court of Arbitration for Sport, which denied an appeal by Semenya against the policy of track and field’s international governing body.

The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) had previously ruled that female athletes like Semenya who have naturally high levels of testosterone must now take hormone-suppressing drugs to compete in any event between 400 metres and one mile. (There are five such events at the international level.) The court decision means the IAAF rules go into effect May 8.

The IAAF policy is based on bad science, flies in the face of best practice in policy making, overrides human rights and will cause tremendous anxiety and even harm among the female athletes in the world, particularly those in the Global South.

RULES COULD CAUSE HARM

Even the Court of Arbitration for Sport cautions that there are serious problems with the IAAF policy, including the potential for harmful side effects that hormonal treatment could cause for the athletes who must now take the medication to compete.

The Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sports, which directs Canada’s anti-doping program, the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sports and AthletesCAN, the association of Canadian national team athletes, have condemned the decision. Athletics Canada has said it won’t implement the policy in Canada.

Before the judgment was rendered, independent experts for the UN Human Rights group wrote the IAAF urging it to cancel the policy. But some track and field athletes came out to support the

policy, insisting that female athletes with high levels of testosterone have a “colossal” advantage.

WHY HAS SEMENYA BEEN SO DEMONIZED?

As a professor of kinesiology and physical education who competed in athletics at the 1964 Olympics, it’s my view the explanation is to be found in a misunderstanding of natural testosterone, a narrow misreading of the Olympic values, the distrust engendered by almost century of sex testing in international sports and a failure of leadership on the part of the IAAF.

Synthetic testosterone is justly banned from Canadian and international sports (except for approved therapeutic purposes). If taken carefully, at the time of hard training, it can enable significant strength and speed gains and reduce the risk of injury.

NOT A RELIABLE MEASURE

But natural testosterone is not the same thing. It may aid performance, but it may not. As Yale University researcher Katrina Karkazis has argued, there is no predictable relationship between natural testosterone and improved performance. Even in the same person, testosterone levels can change over time, depending on a range of factors. It’s not a reliable measure, and it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to monitor without frequent, invasive testing.

Then there’s the ethical question. On what basis do you exclude athletes because of who they are? Natural testosterone is a human condition. When I used to urge athletes against doping, I often said “play with your own chemicals.” Now the IAAF is banning female athletes who play with their own chemicals. The Court of Arbitration for Sport emphasized that Semenya was not cheating, and that she should be admired for her athleticism and courage.

High natural testosterone occurs from a genetic mutation, not unlike the hundreds of other genetic mutations that confer advantage in sports, such as exceptional height, reach and ability to draw oxygen into the blood stream. Virtually every top athlete has at least one of these inherent advantages. The Olympic spirit is to rejoice in the diversity of humankind.

FAIRNESS? LET’S ADDRESS THESE ISSUES

If the concern is really the fairness of condition, those who fear Semenya should address the huge international differences in personal and national

income, the most consistent factor determining athletic performance because of the advantages it can buy in better training facilities, nutrition, coaching, medical assistance and so on.

Why is no effort made to balance out these other factors? Would Canadians who support the IAAF against Semenya like it if they were required to train under the same conditions as their competitors from the Global South? Of course not.

Sadly, Semenya has not been the first highly successful female athlete to be accused of masculine qualities and to face banning from sports. In fact, from the very beginning of high-level women’s sport, the best athletes have been so vilified.

SEX TESTING STARTED DECADES AGO

In the 1930s, the men who controlled sports claimed that such women were “abnormal” and introduced “gender verification” to police them. In the 1960s, when women from the Soviet Union and the newly independent nations of the Global South, many of whom didn’t look like western women, began to win many of the medals, the test was made universal.

Every female athlete I know can recount the stress of “gender verification” and hundreds suffered from the stigma of false positives. Worldwide opposition led to the abolition of the universal sex test in 1999, but the very same people who administered it tried again when Semenya raced onto the scene. The legacy of this history continues to pit women against women and poison the sport.

What’s most troubling is the way the IAAF leadership has aggressively campaigned for this test. Instead of standing up for Semenya, admiring her and conducting an educational campaign to clarify the issues, IAAF president Sebastian Coe has made it his personal crusade to chase her from the sport.

But history is on Semenya’s side. As the Court of Arbitration for Sport’s decision acknowledges, there are so many problems with the IAAF policy that no doubt another legal challenge will be mounted before long.

Let’s hope that the next time, gender policing in sports will be abolished once and for all. And let’s hope that more track and field athletes will recognize the justice of Semenya’s cause and support her.

[the writer is Professor of Kinesiology, University of Toronto]



Global inequality is 25% higher than it would have been in a climate-stable world

NICHOLAS BEURET
theconversation.com

Those least responsible for global warming will suffer the most. Poorer countries – those that have contributed far less to climate change – tend to be situated in warmer regions, where additional warming causes the most devastation. Extreme weather events such as Syria’s prolonged drought, South Asia’s catastrophic monsoon floods, and Cyclone Idai in South-East Africa, the third deadliest cyclone on record, are becoming more likely and more severe.

These events are disproportionately bringing death, displacement, and crop failure. As a result of this, projections estimate that the economies of poorer, warmer countries will be gravely harmed by climate change over coming decades, while the cooler, richer countries responsible for the vast majority of the extra CO2 in the air may even benefit in the short term. But as new research reveals, this is not just a future concern – the economic injustice of climate change has already been operating for 60 years.

The study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, compared different countries’ GDP per capita – a measure of the average person’s economic stan-

dard of living – between 1961 and 2010. It then used climate models to estimate what each country’s GDP would have been without the effects of climate change. The findings are stark.

Many poorer countries’ economies have rapidly grown in the last 50 years, albeit often at great social and environmental cost and to the benefit of the globalised economy. But even that growth has been held back substantially by climate change – the gap in GDP per capita between richer and poorer countries is 25% higher than it would have been in a climate-stable world. And with most richer countries sitting below and poorer countries above the 13°C average annual temperature at which economic productivity peaks, global temperature rise is an immediate driver of this inequality.

Of the 36 countries with the lowest historical carbon emissions, which are also some of the poorest and hottest countries in the world, 34 have suffered an economic hit compared to a world without warming, losing on average 24% of GDP per capita. The poorest 40% of countries, much of which are located in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Central and South America, have lost between 17 and 31% of GDP in the last half century.

India, one of the lowest emitters

per capita, has been regarded as an economic growth champion in recent decades – but climate change has slowed its progress by 30%. While the country’s services sector has boomed, the agricultural sector – which employs half of India’s total workforce – has suffered greatly. A three-fold rise in extreme rainfall events and increased severe droughts have reduced crop yields and cause between \$9 and 10 billion in damage per year to the agricultural industry alone.

The same events also regularly bring India’s urban economic hubs to a standstill. With 12m inhabitants, Mumbai has the world’s largest population exposed to coastal flooding. Deluges in 2005 and 2014 forced the city’s international airport and roads to close, and cost millions in property damage.

Increasingly intense Indian summers that now regularly hit above 45°C reduce productivity, kill thousands, and cause thousands more to commit suicide. Add to this the multi-billion pound costs of rescue and rebuilding from cyclones such as 1999’s Odisha storm, which left two million homeless, and it’s easy to see how climate change can stunt the economic growth of India and similarly affected countries.

For the world’s wealthiest coun-

tries however, climate change has added to the coffers – 14 of the 19 highest-emitting countries now find themselves in a better economic position than they would have been if the planet’s temperature had stayed constant, with an average boost of 13%. The US economy has suffered, but by a miniscule 0.2%, while the UK finds itself 10% better off. The 2018 heatwave there posed its own risks to health and crops, but it also provided huge boosts to ice cream sales and tourism.

CANCEL DEBTS

As is becoming increasingly clear, there are no quick fixes or easy solutions to climate change or inequality. Reducing emissions is, sadly, not enough, and providing yet more high-interest loans to “help” poorer nations adapt to a warmer world will only deepen global inequality. Alongside radically changing the economies of the world’s wealthiest nations, we must demand that reparations for past injustices be paid, that the debts of the Global South be cancelled, that privatisation of local industries and lands be reversed, and that the brutal border regimes surrounding the world’s wealthy nations be torn down. Only then can global inequality truly be tackled.

[the writer is Lecturer, University of Essex]

Modi should get “tight slap” of democracy: Mamata

RANIBANDH/RAGHUNATHPUR (WB) MAY 7 (PTI): “Narendra Modi should get a tight slap of democracy,” a furious TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee said Tuesday, hitting back at the prime minister for alleging repeatedly that her government is run by extortionist syndicates.

She also questioned the BJP’s nationalistic and patriotic claims, saying it was an “RSS man” who killed Mahatma Gandhi.

“I do not bow my head in politics. When Modi alleges that Trinamool Congress is a party of syndicates...its government is run by syndicates, I feel he should get a tight slap of democracy (be defeated in election),” she said at a public meeting at Raghunathpur in Purulia.

Calling Modi a prime minister who is “known for telling lies”, Banerjee said during his visits to West Bengal for election he says her government does not allow Durga Puja and other Hindu rituals to be performed. “Do



you believe those allegations?” she asked.

Joining issue with the prime minister over his claim that she does not allow people to chant “Jai Sri Ram” and throw those who do behind bars, she said, “I will not join them (the BJP) in shouting their slogan. I will rather say Jai Hind.”

At another meeting at Ranibandh in Bankura district, she questioned BJP’s claim of patriotism. “I do not know who Gandhiji’s killers were. But we know the name of

Nathuram Godse, an RSS man. When you speak of patriotism and serving the nation can you tell us who was he? “Did you fight for the country’s independence? You (the BJP) had supported the British. Don’t you feel ashamed?” Banerjee said.

Speaking in the same vein at Barjora, also in Bankura district, Banerjee said, “They (the BJP) don’t revere Gandhiji and Netaji as leaders of the nation Modi should not sermonise us on patriotism”. A combative

Banerjee alleged that BJP starts doing politics over Lord Ram during elections. She said the saffron party could not build even a small Ram temple in the last five years.

The TMC supremo asserted Modi will not get a second term in office as he failed to bring in ‘acche din’ that he had promised in 2014.

Instead, more than 12,000 farmers committed suicide, factories got closed and three crore jobs were lost. However, she claimed, while there

was distress everywhere, income of those living in West Bengal went up three-fold.

She accused the BJP of orchestrating riots between “Hindus and Muslims, Muslims and Christians and Muslims and adivasis” during the last five years.

“I don’t tolerate rioters-- both Hindu and Muslim. We want peace not unrest. We (TMC) do not want Modi to stay in power. We will help in government formation in Delhi,” she added.

Madhesi party merges with former Nepal PM’s party to form new political outfit

SHIRISH B PRADHAN KATHMANDU, MAY 7 (PTI): Deputy Prime Minister Upendra Yadav-led Madhesi party has merged with former prime minister Baburam Bhattarai-led Naya Shakti Party to form a new political outfit Samajwadi Party-Nepal.

The new party, which was formed Monday, will be an alternative to both the Nepali Congress (NC) and the Nepal Communist Party (NCP), and would be based in the Terai-Madhes region in the southern plains, Bhattarai said.

Announcing the merger of the Naya Shakti Party-Nepal with the Federal Socialist Front-Nepal on Tuesday, he said they were not only unifying two parties, but the entire country.

According to the agreement of merger, Bhattarai will chair the Samajwadi Party-Nepal’s federal council, while

Yadav, who is also the Health Minister, chair the central committee. Rajendra Shrestha will be the co-chairperson. Apart from them, there would be eight vice-chairpersons.

The new party will institutionalise federal democratic republic and its political ideology is would be “Prosperous Federal Socialism” an enhanced version of socialism and federalism in the changed political context of Nepal. The unified party has also proposed directly-elected executive president and fully proportionally represented Parliament.

Apart from these, the new outfit would amend the constitution to create 11 provinces as recommended by the High-Level Recommendation Commission on State Restructuring.

Explaining the rationale for the merger, Bhattarai said they were presenting the new party

as an alternative to both the capitalists led by the Nepali Congress and the communists led by the Nepal Communist Party.

“Both these political ideologies are on the verge of collapse globally, so we present an alternative in the form of Prosperous Federal Socialism,” he said.

Stating that “regressive force”s’ ruling the country were trying to sabotage political achievements, such as federalism, Bhattarai warned of launching a decisive movement soon if the government failed to amend the constitution to make it acceptable to all sections of society.

On the occasion, Yadav said both the NC and the NCP had become irrelevant. Accusing the ruling NCP of corruption, he said the NC was yet to leave behind its ideology of constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy’.

Insect attack caused Rs 20cr crop loss, Mizoram tells Centre

AIZAWL, MAY 7 (PTI): Mizoram government has informed the Centre about an estimated crop loss of Rs 20 crore caused by an outbreak of the ‘Fall Army Worm’ (FAW) in the state, a minister said on Tuesday.

The outbreak caused by Spodoptera Frugiperda, an insect, has affected maize cultivation in 1,747.9 hectares in 122 villages, state Agriculture minister C Lalrinsanga said.

The state government has constituted a Rapid Response Team to monitor the outbreak and take measures to mitigate the loss of crops, he said.

Meanwhile, state Agriculture Department Director Rohmingthanga Colney said that chemical pesticides and organic ones were being used

to kill the worm in maize fields. “Concerted efforts are being made to contain the outbreak which was first detected in Lunglei district on March 8,” Colney said.

After receiving warning from the Centre, the state Agriculture department had sent warnings to all the District Agriculture Officers on February 27 last on the possibility of incidence of FAW in the state.

The FAW outbreak was reported in neighbouring Bangladesh and Myanmar early this year.

Agriculture experts said that the FAW is a lepidopteran pest feeding on multiple plants (polyphagous). Being a nocturnal pest, the FAW hides under maize leaves at day time and is difficult to detect.

Violence against journalists in WB: Editors Guild asks EC to take action

NEW DELHI, MAY 7 (PTI): The Editors Guild has condemned several incidents of physical attack on journalists in West Bengal during the fifth phase of polling and urged the Election Commission to take action against those who indulged in such acts. Physical attacks against journalists are always reprehensible, but particularly so during elections as they undermine fair media scrutiny of an election, the Guild said in a statement.

The Editors Guild said it condemns several incidents of physical attack on journalists in West Bengal on May 6, during the fifth phase of polling. Journalists



belonging to different media organisations including NewsX, ABP Ananda and Zee News were attacked, allegedly by workers of the Trinamool Congress (TMC), the statement said.

The Guild urges the EC to initiate necessary action against those who

indulged in physical violence against journalists and asks the TMC-led West Bengal government to ensure law and order in the state so that journalists are not attacked by political parties and they can perform their professional duties safely, it said.

SAIL supplies electric poles for restoration work in Odisha



NEW DELHI, MAY 7 (PTI): State-owned steel maker SAIL Tuesday said it is supplying parallel beam electric poles for restoration works in the cyclone-affected areas of Odisha.

The Ministry of Steel has directed Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) to ensure all-out efforts to meet the requirements of cyclone-hit Odisha, SAIL said in a statement.

“SAIL is moving special-quality wide parallel beam (WPB-160) electric poles on the top-most priority basis to cy-

clone Fani-affected areas in Odisha. SAIL moved the first consignment of 500 electric poles to the disaster-affected areas, another 5,000 poles have already moved to the affected areas,” the firm said.

The company has assured to move a total of 15,000 such poles in a time-bound manner, it added.

Restoration of electricity is a priority and for this purpose, SAIL said it is mobilising all resources from various locations of the country

to move the electric poles on an urgent basis to the affected areas.

Cyclonic storm ‘Fani’ made a landfall on the Odisha coast on the morning of May 3, packing heavy rain and winds with speeds of up to 175 kmph.

Till Monday, the death toll due to the cyclone rose to 35 in Odisha, as lakhs of people still grapple with water shortage and snapped power supply, three days after the storm barrelled through the coastal parts of the state.

ANJALI PILLAY AND SALONI BHATIA NEW DELHI, MAY 7 (PTI):

Chandni Chowk, the famed Delhi-6 glamourised in Bollywood films, is not all about sheen. A lack of infrastructure and stalled redevelopment projects are among the issues residents and business community grapple with in this Lok Sabha seat.

The traders of Chandni Chowk are still struggling with the after-effects of GST and demonetisation and residents of the walled city complain about the shortage of basic facilities.

In the constituency comprising 10 assembly segments of Adarsh Nagar, Shalimar Bagh, Shakur Basti, Tri Nagar, Wazirpur, Model Town, Sadar Bazar, Chandni Chowk, Matia Mahal and Balimaran, with 15,62,268 registered voters, traders and Muslim votes will hold the key. The Lok Sabha seat, which has been represented by the likes of senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal, Union minister Vijay Goel, is a perfect mix of commercial, residential, colonies, multi-storey flats and the heritage of old Delhi.

The markets in the constituency -- Chandni Chowk, Sadar Bazaar -- are known to be a shopper’s paradise across the country. Traders in the constituency said they were hit by the 2016 demonetisation and found it difficult to comprehend the GST. Many were also affected by the sealing drive. “It’s the traders like us who bear the brunt of it. GST was a welcome step, but its lack of uniformity was a disappointment,” said Neeraj Jain, owner of Namu Traders in Chandni Chowk.

A representative of GD Jewellers in Kucha Mahajani said they are suffering because of the never-ending redevelopment project that is waiting for completion. “Several roads are blocked and customers, who want to buy in bulk, do not want to come here,” the representative said. The parking infrastructure has been demolished and customers prefer to go to other areas, he said, adding that business has seen a decline by 60 per cent from December last year.

Yogesh Singhal, president of Delhi Bullions and Jewellers Association, said demonetisation and GST were good steps taken by the government but needed better implementation.

He said the indirect tax regime needs to be made more sound technically with reduction in the paperwork.

Ashish Nahar, another trader and also a resident of Chandni Chowk, said smaller businessmen had to pay Rs 5,000 to chartered accountants to get their GST returns filed.

Security of women is also an issue in the constituency. Locals said women also face harassment while walking down from Chandni Chowk metro station to the market due to encroachment and because of the large presence of cart sellers who ensure the narrow lanes become narrower and there is

bare minimum space to walk. Nahar also expressed concern over the dangling overhead electric wires that pose a threat to safety and complained how despite the locals agreeing to bear the costs of underground wiring system, authorities have been deaf. Complaining about bad roads and water issues, Anita Gupta, a resident of Nai Sadak, said ambulance cannot enter the narrow lanes in case of an emergency.

“It is scary to think what will happen if a fire breaks out since the fire-tenders won’t be able to enter,” she said. Political parties are seeking votes in the name of nationalism and full statehood for Delhi and some residents feel this Lok Sabha election is different. “This election is not about water, electricity or inflation. In fact, this election is being fought on nationalism,” said Varun Khandelwal, a resident of Paharganj. Some traders said the Centre and the Delhi government are taking credit for some of the initiatives of the past Congress governments at the Centre as well as in the national capital.

“Even posh areas like Model Town have issues of clean water and sewage system,” said Gauri Bhatia, a resident of Model Town and a teacher of a school in Ashok Vihar. The constituency is seeing a three-corner fight between the BJP, Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party.

Incumbent BJP MP Harsh Vardhan is pitted against Congress’ old-timer J P Agarwal, who represented the seat in 1984, 1989 and 1996 and AAP’s Pankaj Gupta who is making his electoral debut. Agarwal said he is fighting on all the issues he is sealing, GST and demonetisation. “Government did not do anything to help traders who were fed up with demonetisation and GST,” he said.

Vardhan blamed the AAP government for not cooperating in several developmental projects, including the Shahjahanabad redevelopment project.

“Look at the Rani Jhansi flyover, it was lingering on for almost 10 years. I took up this project and every 15 days, I used to have a meeting and visit the project site. When there was some difficulty, I got Rs 86 crore sanctioned from the Centre to ensure that the municipal corporation does not run out of money,” he said. If elected to power, AAP candidate Pankaj Gupta said he plans to convert parks in his constituency into “lungs” for the national capital.

“My constituency has the highest number of parks and if they are maintained properly then they can be made into lungs of this city and can also act as a tourist attraction,” Gupta said.

Noting that sealing of shops has broken the backbone of the middle class community in his constituency, he said it has led to massive unemployment and that is another area he plans to work on. All the seven Lok Sabha seats of Delhi will go to polls in the sixth phase of the general election on May 12.

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Pep disciple Ten Hag takes Ajax to brink of historic final

AMSTERDAM, MAY 7 (AFP): There are few clubs with a history to match that of Ajax, but they are in the process of writing a new chapter in Amsterdam with Erik ten Hag taking them to within sight of a first treble since the days of Johan Cruyff. On Sunday, Ten Hag's spellbinding team secured the first leg as they beat Willem II 4-0 to win the Dutch Cup.

The battle with PSV Eindhoven for the Eredivisie title resumes this weekend, and by then Ajax could be through to their first Champions League final since 1996.

They take a 1-0 lead into their semi-final second leg against Tottenham Hotspur on Wednesday, with young stars like Matthijs de Ligt, Frenkie de Jong and Donny van de Beek mesmerising Europe on a run that has already seen them defeat Real Madrid and Juventus. Those players have dominated the headlines, but the work done by the 49-year-old Ten Hag has been remarkable, and entirely in keeping with his progress up until now.

His career as a player was unremarkable by comparison, with the 2001 Dutch Cup the only major trophy he won on the field. The midfielder



captained Twente to victory on penalties against PSV Eindhoven.

"He was the captain, he led by example and he always had a lot of confidence," Scott Booth, who played in that Twente side, told AFP.

Booth, a former Scotland striker, scored in the penalty shoot-out that day. He remembers Ten Hag as "not international class, but a very good club player."

"He was loyal to the club and to his teammates, he loved the game

and he loved talking about the game."

Ten Hag was close to Fred Rutten, his coach at Twente, and after ending his playing career aged just 32, he later became Rutten's assistant at PSV.

- GUARDIOLA SCHOOL -

Prior to that, though, he had a spell as an assistant to Steve McClaren at Twente, helping lay the groundwork for the Englishman to go on and win a first ever Dutch title with them in 2010. These days, Ten Hag's playing style draws com-

parisons to Pep Guardiola. "When we lose the ball, we must win it back immediately," goalkeeper Andre Onana told AFP. "He is focused on that, he is always telling us that if we have control of the ball, we have the ability to push back any opponent."

In his first season as a coach in his own right, Ten Hag won promotion with Go Ahead Eagles, but he left them for a job with Bayern Munich's reserve side in the German fourth tier. His time in Bavaria coincided with

Guardiola's first two years as Bayern coach.

"I still remember very well that when I quit the Eredivisie to go and coach in the German Regionalliga, lots of people in the Netherlands were sceptical," he told German daily Bild.

- 'WINNING THE LOTTERY' -

"I never regretted that decision. To work at a club as big as Bayern, with strong characters like Pep Guardiola or (sporting director) Matthias Sammer was like

winning the lottery."

Ten Hag lapped up the opportunity to watch Guardiola's training sessions up close before returning to the Eredivisie with Utrecht in 2015.

After two top-five finishes and a Dutch Cup final appearance, Ajax saw Ten Hag as the ideal man to take over midway through last season when Marcel Keizer was sacked. Europa League runners-up in 2017, Ajax were knocked out of both European competitions in the preliminary rounds last season, but Ten Hag steered them to a second-place finish. The foundations were laid for this season's run.

"What he is managing to do with such young players is remarkable," former striker Pierre van Hooijdonk, now a leading pundit, told TV station NOS. "The likes of De Ligt, De Jong and Van de Beek have only just come out of the academy and are already playing like veterans. Ten Hag deserves huge credit."

If they go on to win a first treble since 1972, when Cruyff was starring on the field, then Ten Hag will go down as a legend at a club that has had so many great names down the years.

Gayle named West Indies vice-captain for World Cup



JAMAICA, MAY 7 (PTI): Explosive opener Chris Gayle has been named vice-captain of the West Indies team for the World Cup, beginning May 30 in the UK.

Gayle, who is set to retire from ODIs after his fifth World Cup appearance, is in top form going into the tournament, having scored close to 500 runs in the IPL. He was also in devastating form in the home series against England, hitting two hundreds and as many half-centuries in the five-match series.

"It is always an honour to represent the West Indies in any format and this World Cup for me is special," Gayle said after being named Jason Holder's deputy on Monday.

Gayle is a former West Indies captain who last led the regional side in June 2010.

"As a senior player,

it is my responsibility to support the captain and everyone else in the team. This will probably be the biggest World Cup, so there will be great expectations and I know we will do very well for the people of the West Indies," said the 39-year-old, who has amassed 10151 runs in 289 ODIs at 38.16.

It was also announced that Shai Hope will be the vice-captain in the on-going tri-series in Ireland involving the hosts and Bangladesh.

"It's a tremendous honour to be appointed vice captain for this series here in Ireland. Ahead of this tournament, I was asked to take on this role and I was happy to accept. Anything I'm asked to do for West Indies cricket I'm always happy and willing to put my hand up, so this is great," said Hope.

Llong under BCCI scanner but unlikely to be removed from IPL final

NEW DELHI, MAY 7 (PTI): English umpire Nigel Llong could face the BCCI's scrutiny for allegedly damaging the door of a stadium room after an argument with Virat Kohli but the Indian board is unlikely to remove him as an official for the IPL final on May 12.

Llong reportedly lost his cool after being confronted by Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper Kohli over a contentious no ball call against Sunrisers Hyderabad during an IPL match on Saturday in Bengaluru.

According to reports, the ICC Elite Panel official kicked the door of the umpires' room during the innings break and damaged it.

A BCCI official told PTI that Llong might have some explaining to do but the matter will not cost him his place as a designated umpire for the IPL final to be held in Hyderabad.

The BCCI, it is learnt, is in a dilemma on whether to even consider taking such a step "for a moment's indiscretion".

In Bengaluru, Karnataka State Cricket Association secretary R Sudhakar Rao said the KSCA has demanded action against Llong. Rao, however, did say that the 50-year-old paid for the damage caused.

"We have reported the matter to the Committee of Administrators (COA) and hopefully action will be taken against Nigel Llong. If the players are punished for their misdeemeanour and fined their match fees then why not the umpires," he said.

"I didn't speak to umpire Llong but I spoke to match referee Narayanan Kutty. I am hopeful COA will take action," he added.

Llong paid Rs 5000 after he was confronted by the KSCA officials and had demanded a receipt of the payment.

Llong has stood in 56 Tests, 123 ODIs and 32 T20 Internationals in his career and will be standing in the upcoming World Cup in the United Kingdom, starting May 30.

Pochettino urges Spurs to make history

LONDON, MAY 7 (AFP): Mauricio Pochettino has challenged Tottenham to seize their unexpected chance to make history as they try to overturn a 1-0 deficit against Ajax in the Champions League semi-final second leg on Wednesday.

Pochettino is convinced Tottenham can still reach the club's maiden Champions League final despite losing the first leg in north London last week.

Many pundits and fans claim Tottenham have blown their opportunity after Donny van de Beek's strike gave Ajax a priceless lead to defend in Amsterdam.

Tottenham go into their biggest game for decades on a low note after losing 1-0 at Bournemouth on Saturday, a defeat that stopped them wrapping up a place in next season's Champions League via a top-four finish in the Premier League.

It was a third successive loss in all competitions for Tottenham, who finished with nine men after red cards for Son Heung-min and Juan Foyth.

Fortunately for Tottenham, they are still all but certain to finish at least fourth after Arsenal and Manchester United were both held to draws on Sunday.

Tottenham are three points clear of fifth-placed Arsenal heading into their last league game of the season against Everton on Sunday and a draw will be enough to ensure their return to Europe's elite club competition.

But before that Tottenham, trying to reach their first European final

since the 1984 UEFA Cup, have to focus on the challenge presented by Ajax's vibrant young side.

Having already eliminated Real Madrid and Juventus this season, Ajax showed their vast potential against Tottenham in the first leg and should have been further ahead after Van de Beek's opener. Tottenham improved slightly in the second half, but largely looked toothless without the suspended Son and injured top scorer Harry Kane. Crucially, Pochettino will have Son back from his ban for the second leg and the South Korea forward should give his team a far more dynamic look.

- 'MASSIVE WEEK' -

Pochettino remained upbeat despite the frustration of losing to Nathan Ake's last-minute goal at Bournemouth, and the Tottenham manager hopes his confident attitude transfers to his players against Ajax.

"We have ahead two 'finals' against Ajax and Everton and it's in our hands to be in a good position at the end of the season," Pochettino said.

Although Tottenham will know they have missed a golden opportunity to reach the final if they don't succeed in the second leg, Pochettino is adamant his players have done more than enough already to make him proud of their efforts this term.

Hamstrung by playing most of their home games at Wembley before finally moving to their new stadium and without a signing for the last two transfer windows due to the cost of that ?1 billion arena, Pochettino's work this season deserves praise.

Delhi Capitals look to prove a point in eliminator against SRH

VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 7 (PTI): The road to the final has become difficult but Delhi Capitals have the means to drive their way through the obstacles, starting with the IPL eliminator against Sunrisers Hyderabad here Wednesday.

Re-branded before the start of the 12th season of the Indian Premier League, Delhi Capitals have been one of the top sides in this edition, playing cricket never seen before from them.

It is a bit harsh on Delhi Capitals that they are playing the do-or-die game despite securing 18 points after nine wins and five losses from 14 matches.

Despite winning three matches more than Hyderabad, severely weakened by the departure of David Warner and Jonny Bairstow for their World Cup national camps, DC find themselves in the same boat as SRH and a defeat will knock them out of the league.

The big loss to Chennai Super Kings hurt them a lot.

For a while before that drubbing, DC battled for the top spot with three-time winners Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians before finishing third at the end of league engagements.

Delhi Capitals have never reached the IPL final, never made the top-two, and ventured into the top-four for the first time since 2012.

Considering the results and consistency, it seemed DC's search for that elusive winning combination has finally



ended, which brought the smiles back on the faces of fans after years of disappointment.

There have been the failures too. After a dominant start against Mumbai, Delhi went down to CSK, suffered one of their worst collapses ever against Kings XI Punjab and lost a home game to SRH.

Things turned around after the SRH game and Delhi emerged as one of the best teams on the road this season.

Picked in the trading window, India opener Shikhar Dhawan lived up to the expectations of the team management and franchise, scoring over 450 runs.

Along with the young Prithvi Shaw, the experienced Dhawan formed a fine opening combination, and scored briskly in the powerplay overs.

Skipper Shreyas Iyer (over 400 runs) showed immense maturity while leading the side

and also played some substantial knocks.

Ignored from the World Cup squad at the expense of Dinesh Karthik, Rishabh Pant has proved his worth in the side with his handy cameos at crucial junctures.

Delhi were also helped by the presence of two of cricket's greatest brains Ricky Ponting and Sourav Ganguly.

They will miss the services of pace spearhead Kagiso Rabada but DC have enough firepower in bowling to surprise SRH, who became the first team in IPL history to qualify for the playoffs with 12 points.

While the duo of Warner and Bairstow played a pivotal role in SRH's performances and dominated the powerplay better than other teams, the likes of Manish Pandey stepped in after they left to be with their respective national teams.

In bowling, Rashid

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First woman to land on moon will be American: Pence

BY LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, MAY 7 (PTI): The United States is planning another space mission to the moon, Vice President Mike Pence said Monday asserting that the first woman to land on Earth's natural satellite will be an American.

"At President (Donald) Trump's direction, the United States will return to the moon within the next five years, and the first woman and the next man on the moon will be Americans," Pence said, in his address to the Satellite 2019 Conference here.

The Trump administration is incredibly proud that before the year ends, we will once again launch American astronauts on American rockets from American soil into the vast expanse of space, he said.

To fully unlock the mysteries of space, President Donald Trump recognises the US has to look beyond the halls of the government, beyond NASA, for input and guidance.

"That's why we assembled this Users' Advisories Group in the National Space Council, which, I'm proud to say has brought together some of the brightest minds and biggest talents in the



country to help accelerate innovation across the space enterprise," he said.

More than 15,000 scientists and industry representatives from 105 countries, including India, are attending the four-day mega event beginning May 6 in Washington DC.

It is touted to be the largest commercial satellite industry event. It has featured headline keynote appearances from Amazon and Blue Origin founder and CEO Jeff Bezos, SpaceX founder and CEO Elon Musk, One Web founder Greg Wyler, among many other. Not-

ing that other nations are joining the space race, Pence said while their capabilities increase, the truth of the matter is that there's no guarantee nations around the world share same values, ideals, or the US commitment to freedom and the rule of law and peace.

"And that's what makes our leadership in space so important," he said. "The truth is, nations from Russia and China to North Korea and Iran have pursued weapons to jam, blind, and disable our navigation and communications satellites via electronic attacks from

the ground," Pence said. "Recently, we've even seen nations working on bringing new weapons of war into space itself. From anti-satellite weapons and airborne lasers, to highly threatening, on-orbit activities and evasive hypersonic missiles, our competitors and our adversaries have been aggressively developing and deploying technologies that put our technology and put our prosperity and our security at risk," said the vice president.

"Today, we recognise space a war-fighting domain, just like the land [and] air and sea," Pence quoted Trump as saying.

And America is going to be as dominant for its security in space, as it is here on Earth, he asserted.

"To meet the emerging threats, President Trump has taken decisive action to strengthen American power.

"From the first days of this administration, we've been rebuilding our military, restoring the arsenal of democracy. And last year, President Trump signed the largest investment in our national defense since the days of Ronald Reagan, including renewed resources to enhance the resilience of our space defense systems," he said.

Trump awards highest US civilian honour to Tiger Woods

BY LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, MAY 7 (PTI): US President Donald Trump on Monday bestowed Tiger Woods with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honour, describing the golfer as "one of the greatest athletes in the history of sports." Woods, 43, is only the fourth and the youngest golfer ever to have received the highest American civilian award.

Calling Woods, "a global symbol of American excellence, devotion and drive," the president said, "Tiger's determination and work ethic drove golf to new heights of athletic competition and popularity." In his remarks, Trump praised Woods as "one of the greatest athletes in the history of sports." Trump said, "we were in the presence of a true legend" who is "also a great person, a great guy."

"We can't wait to see what's next, Tiger," said Trump, an avid golfer and owner of several golf courses around the world. Woods choked up as he thanked his mother, his two children, his girlfriend and his cad-dy during the ceremony on Monday in the White House Rose Garden.

"You've seen the good and the bad, the highs and the lows, and I would not be in this position without all of your help," Woods said, who dominated the sport for more than a decade. He won his first major in nearly 11 years at last month's Masters Tournament, a comeback that captivated the sporting world.

Woods's Masters victory was his 15th major championship, during

which he weathered a marital infidelity scandal that ended in divorce, a debilitating spine injury, an addiction to prescription painkillers and grave doubts about his athletic longevity.

Trump has long been a fan and recently, a business partner of Woods.

He announced his decision to give the award to Woods in a tweet, after Woods won the Masters tournament last month, his first major title since the 2008 US Open, capping a remarkable comeback from personal turmoil and physical injuries. Trump praised Woods' "relentless will to win, win, win." "These qualities embody the American spirit of pushing boundaries and defying limits," Trump said.

The president seemed particularly impressed by what he called "record setting ratings" on television. He noted that Woods has now won 81 PGA tournaments and the second most majors. He also praised him as a "devoted philanthropist," noting, "That's how I first met Tiger." He added, "We are inspired by everything you've become."

Woods was given standing ovation in the Rose Garden of the White House. According to ESPN, Woods is the 33rd sports figure and the fourth golfer to be honoured with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

At the age of 43, he is by far the youngest living sports figure to be honoured. The other golfers were Arnold Palmer, 74, in 2004; Jack Nicklaus, 65, in 2005; and Charlie Sifford, 92, in 2014. Sifford was the first African American to play on the PGA tour.

India, Germany, Brazil, Japan 'absolutely needed' at UNSC as permanent members: France



BY YOSHITA SINGH

UNITED NATIONS, MAY 7 (PTI): India and nations like Germany, Brazil and Japan are "absolutely needed" as permanent members of a reformed and enlarged UN Security Council to better reflect contemporary realities and the addition of these key members to the UN high-table is among France's "strategic" priorities, the French envoy to the UN has said.

India is at the forefront of efforts at the UN to push for the long-pending reform of the Security Council, emphasising that it rightly deserves a place at the UN high table as a permanent member.

"In terms of policy, France and Germany have strong policy which is to work together to enlarge the Security Council and to succeed in terms of the negotiations that should lead to the enlargement of the Security Council that we consider absolutely needed to better reflect the world as it is. There is no question about it, France's Permanent Representative to the UN Francois Delattre told reporters here last week.

Speaking along side German envoy to the UN Christoph Heusgen at the end of Germany's Presidency of the Council for April, Delattre emphasised that France considers that Germany, Japan, India, Brazil and a fair representation of Africa in particular are absolutely needed at the table to get towards a fairer representation of the Security Council. This is for us a matter of priority."

He underlined that Paris believes the enlargement of the Security Council with the addition of a few key members is "one of our strategic priorities."

Noting that when France and Germany launched their alliance for multi-materialism, he said it signifies that the two nations strongly believe in the UN as the core of today's global governance and that they strongly believe in "multi-lateralism and means that we are actively working to reform and in some respects to refund, reinvent

multi-lateralism so that it is really efficient for the decades to come.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin, speaking at the informal meeting of the Plenary on the Intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council earlier this year, had said that on the issue of Categories of Membership, a total of 113 Member States, out of 122 who submitted their positions in the Framework Document, support expansion in both of the existing categories specified in the Charter.

In short, more than 90 per cent of the written submissions in the document are in favour of expansion in both categories of membership specified in the Charter, he had said.

Akbaruddin had said that while reform at the UN is a process rather than an event, there is no process known to us here that has traversed winding pathways in the manner as this process of the Reform of the Security Council."

In terms of inertia too, it has no peer. While the world is not what it was when we began the process, the objections to moving forward remain the same. While the global challenges of the 21st century have multiplied, we remain divided even about the process to adopt in order to move forward, he had said.

France has maintained that if the crises of recent times have confirmed the centrality of the UN, they have also reinforced the need to make the organisation more effective and more representative of the current balances in the world.

"That is why France pushes for the expansion of the Security Council by supporting the accession to a permanent seat of Germany, Brazil, India, Japan, as well as a greater presence of African countries," according to the Permanent Mission of France.

Kerala CM to visit Netherlands to explore cooperation in water management, flood prevention

THE HAGUE, MAY 7 (PTI): Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will commence a four-nation tour of Europe with a visit to the Netherlands from May 8-12, at the invitation of the Dutch government to explore possibilities of cooperation in water management, flood prevention and agriculture.

The Netherlands, with 26 per cent of the country below sea levels is a world leader in the field of water management and flood control. It is also the world's second largest exporter of agriculture products.

Kerala witnessed the biggest floods in 100 years in August 2018.

"During the visit, the Kerala Chief Minister will meet Minister Cora van Nieuwenhuizen, Dutch minister for infrastructure and water management and Jan Kees Goet,

secretary general of the ministry of agriculture," a statement issued Tuesday by the Indian Embassy here said.

He will interact with representatives of business community in a meeting organized by Hans De Boer, president VNO-NCW (Dutch employers' federation), it said. The chief minister will visit the port of Rotterdam to discuss inland water management and also see first hand measures taken for flood control and water management by the Dutch government, the statement said. "He will meet agricultural experts of the University of Wageningen to understand latest agricultural techniques in horticulture and floriculture," it said.

Other items in the chief minister's programme include paying a visit to the National Ar-

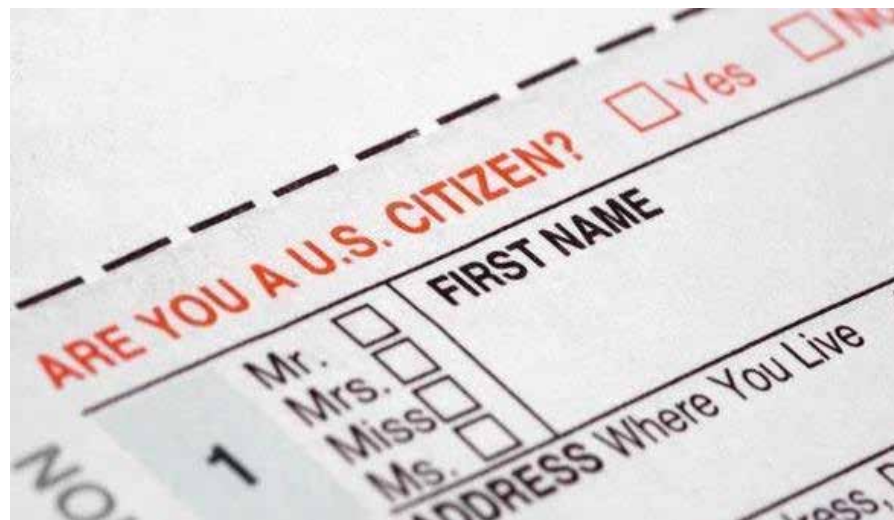
chives of the Netherlands to view items in their collection pertaining to the Dutch presence in Kerala in the 17th century and holding discussions on digitizing Dutch records in the possession of Kerala state archives, the statement said.

He will also meet and interact with the Indian community during the visit, it said.

Following the floods in Kerala, two Dutch water experts were part of the United Nations/Asian Development Bank/World Bank/European Union Mission to Kerala.

Subsequently, the Dutch government sent in March 2019 a four-member disaster risk reduction mission which has submitted a report to the Kerala government on Kuttanad, the region in the state below sea level, it said.

US to propose hike in H-1B application fee: Labour Secretary



BY LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, MAY 7 (PTI): The Trump administration is proposing a hike in the H-1B visa application fee to increase funding for the expansion of an apprenticeship programme, which trains American youths in technology related activities, Labour Secretary Alexander Acosta told US lawmakers.

Testifying before a Congressional committee on annual budget of the Department of Labour for the fiscal year 2020 beginning October 1, 2019, Acosta, however, did not give details of the proposed increase in H-1B filing fee and as to which categories of applicants it would be enforced on.

But given past experience, the Indian IT companies, which account for a large number of H-1B applications, are likely to face the additional financial burden because of this proposed increase in H-1B filing fees.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

Arguing that foreigners hurt American workers by competing for jobs and driving down wages, the Trump administration has tighten the noose around the H-1B visa programme. The Seattle Times on Monday reported that last year immigration officials de-

nied nearly one out of every four requests for new visas for skilled foreign workers.

In FY 2020, the Department's budget includes USD 160 million to continue our expansion of apprenticeship programmes, along with a proposal to increase H-1B fee revenues to fund additional apprenticeship activities, Acosta said in his testimony on May 2 before the Senate Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Labour, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies.

Acosta told lawmakers that last year the Department of Labour had launched the first-ever sector-based apprenticeship grant funding opportunity to invest USD 150 million to expand apprenticeships in those in-demand industry sectors most often filled by individuals on H-1B visas, such as information technology, health care and advanced manufacturing.

This grant funding opportunity introduced an innovative approach: a 35 percent private-sector match requirement. This brings the total investment to USD 202.5 million, USD 57.7 million coming from the private sector, he said.

"As a result of this private sector match requirement, educators have a greater incentive to join with industry to ensure curricula address the needs of our ever-changing workplace, investing in the latest technologies and techniques, and providing more in-demand opportunities for Americans,

Acosta said.

On July 18 last year, the Department of Labour had announced USD 150 million in H-1B funds to support sector-based approaches to expanding apprenticeships on a national scale in key industry sectors.

The focus is on industries reliant on H-1B visas. It aims at expanding apprenticeships and increase the level of apprenticeship activity among a range of new employers within these industries, particularly small- and medium-sized businesses.

Acosta also told lawmakers that the Labour Department has also made changes to the H-1B application forms to ensure greater transparency and better protect American workers from employers seeking to misuse the programme.

In fiscal 2018, the Department concluded 649 non-immigrant visa programme cases and found violations in 553 of those cases.

In a news story, Breitbart News said that every year, more than 100,000 foreign workers are brought to the US on the H-1B visa and are allowed to stay for up to six years. There are about 650,000 H-1B visa foreign workers in the US at any given moment, it added.

"Let's put our citizens first and protect US workers and wages. Hard-working and highly-skilled American men and women share their stories about H-1B visa fraud and abuse, Congressman Paul Gosar said.



PARTY TIME! The music star, Jennifer Lopez, who is set to begin her It's My Party tour, performs a concert on Today in NYC.

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Amitabh Bachchan, Emraan Hashmi's thriller to start rolling on May 10

MUMBAI, MAY 7 (PTI): Mega-star Amitabh Bachchan and Emraan Hashmi's untitled mystery thriller will go on floors on May 10, here.

The film, produced by Anand Pandit Motion Pictures and Saraswati Entertainment Private Limited, will be helmed by Rumi Jaffrey.

This is the first time Bachchan and Emraan will work

together in a film.

"We are extremely excited to commence the shoot of the film from May 10. Looking forward to seeing Mr Bachchan and Emraan onscreen for the first time. Given the subject of the film, I do believe we have a winner in our hands," Pandit said in a statement.

The film is scheduled to release on February 21, 2020.

Tabu joins 'Jawaani Jaaneman'



MUMBAI, MAY 7 (PTI): Tabu has joined the cast of light-hearted family comedy, "Jawaani Jaaneman", featuring Saif Ali Khan, the makers announced Tuesday.

The actors are reuniting after a gap of 20 years. The last worked in "Hum Saath Saath Hain". They have also worked in "Tu Chor Main Sipahi" (1996).

Saif is co-producing the film under his banner Black Knight Films, along with Pooja Entertainment and Northern Lights Films. A coming-of-age film, "Jawaani Jaaneman" is a comic take on how a man confronts the harsh reality of his life, the press release read.

"Tabu is a brilliant actor. This part is really funny on paper and I'm so pleased she has agreed to play it as now it will be hysterical. I'm really looking forward to it," Saif said in a statement. The movie will go on floors next month and the 45-day-long first schedule will be shot in London.

Kangana's 'Mental Hai Kya' to clash with Hrithik's 'Super 30' on July 26

MUMBAI, MAY 7 (PTI): It will be Kangana Ranaut versus Hrithik Roshan once again but this time at the ticket window as the release of "Mental Hai Kya" has been postponed to July 26 by the makers of the film.

In January, Hrithik announced that his film "Super 30" will release on July 26. The decision was taken after director Vikas Bahl was accused of sexual assault by a woman who worked under the now dissolved Phantom Films.

Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Motion Pictures, producer of "Mental Hai Kya", said that the clash is not deliberate and they have decided to push the release date from June 21 to July 26 "after the recommendations from distributors, trade analysts and their research team".

"We have been advised to shift the release of our movie to July 26, purely for the business prospects. On knowing, that there is already a movie scheduled for

a release on that date, we did it all in our purview to ensure that there will be no mud slinging and it will be dignified release. We stand by assuring that to all other parties," the statement from the production banner read.

please. I'm my own person," she wrote.

"Mental Hai Kya", directed by Prakash Kovelamudi, also features Rajkumar Rao. After "Queen", this is Kangana and Rajkumar's second film together.



Soon after the announcement, various online entertainment portals and social media users started labelling the change in release date deliberate.

Ekta took to Twitter to condemn the reports.

"My decision my film... So all brickbats directed to me

Prior to this film, Kangana's "Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi" was supposed to have a box office war with "Super 30" on January 25. Reports of "Super 30" team postponing the release to August 9 are doing the rounds, but no formal announcement has been made yet.

Priyanka, Deepika realise their fairytale fantasy at Met Gala 2019



New York, May 7 (PTI): Actors Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Deepika Padukone took inspiration from fairytale characters for their 2019 Met Gala red carpet appearance, reminding fans that a little adventure goes a long way in fashion.

The two Indian actors interpreted this year's theme for the event, "Camp: Notes on Fashion" in their own way.

According to the Met exhibition, the theme is sensibility which encompasses everything from "decorativism" to "the trash aesthetic".

Priyanka, who first met husband Nick Jonas at the same event, seemed to have plucked a leaf out of Lewis Carroll's fantasy classic, "Alice In Wonderland" and channelled self expression through a multishaded Dior gown in grey, yellow and pink with Chopard dangles. Some called the look inspired by The Mad Hatter, while others compared it with that of the Red Queen thanks to the bushy curls on which sat a long spiky silver crown.

The actor completed the look with grey tinted eyebrows, eyes lined with a white eyeliner, dark maroon lip and shimmering sheer stockings. Styled by Mimi Cuttler, Priyanka also gave a nod to her Indian roots by using 'bindis', not one but three on her face.

Nick, who was also wearing Dior, gave a hat-tip to his sister-in-law Sophie Turner as he turned up dressed as Peter 'Littlefinger'

Baelish from "Game of Thrones". Turner's Sansa Stark played an important role in the death of Littlefinger (played by Aidan Gillen).

"Sansa... We must protect the Vale. #met-gala #littlefinger," the "Sucker" hitmaker captioned his picture on Instagram, dressed in an all-white suit with a stole wrapped over his left hand and a thin, fake moustache.

He also joked about his look on Twitter in a reference to the 2010 teen comedy "Camp Rock 2: The Final Jam", in which he starred with fellow Jonas Brothers - Kevin and Joe and Demi Lovato.

"Honestly should have worn a 'Camp Rock' inspired outfit tonight given the theme was 'camp' that would have been super tight. #MetBall2019," Nick tweeted.

It was an anniversary of sorts for the couple, who first posed for the shutterbugs on the 2017 Met Gala red carpet in Ralph Lauren designs before tying the knot last December. They are also part of the 2019 Met Gala Host Committee, presided over by Vogue editor Anna Wintour.

According to Deepika's stylist Shaleena Nathani, the actor pitched her tent as a "Camp Barbie". She chose a multi-layered Zac Posen 3D printed gown in a quintessential pink shade and bespoke jewels by Lorraine Schwartz. Deepika wore a tiara in her flowing coiffed hair.

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THE DAY AHEAD

ARIES: You've got money on your mind as mental Mercury decamps to Taurus and your belt-tightening second house until May 21. Over the next few weeks, inspiration could strike for a lucrative business project, or you might conjure new ways to ramp up brand awareness for your business. Crunch the numbers for the endeavor you wish to tackle—the dollar signs could surprise you!

TAURUS: Say what's on your mind and don't hold back! From now until May 21, talkative Mercury traverses through your sign, passing you the mic and giving your voice a platform. You're emerging from a quieter stage and ready for lights, camera, action! Clever Mercury gives you the green light to express your most grandiose ideas. Ask for what you want with the confidence that you'll get it.

GEMINI: Get those creative juices flowing, Gemini. Imaginative Mercury, your ruling planet, sets up shop in Taurus and your twelfth house of musing until May 21. For the next two weeks, give your chatty, analytical side a much-needed break and allow

your imagination to drive. You'll benefit from taking time to reflect: journal, meditate, draw or paint.

CANCER: Scan your social media profiles and do a Google search of your name. Are you representing online as well as you are in real time? Expressive Mercury shifts into Taurus and your tech-savvy eleventh house until May 21. Consider a virtual make-over—or makeunder if you've been guilty of timeline TMI. Streamline your tweets and posts, add your latest hits to LinkedIn and pose for profile photos that reveal your personality and your professionalism.

LEO: Polish up your presentation, Leo. Expressive Mercury treks into Taurus and your sector of success until May 21, giving you the high-pro glow. Wheels you set into motion now could lay the groundwork for years to come, so consider your ambitious path carefully. While live-it-up Leos are prone to major FOMO, reserve space in your calendar for VIP invitations and events that benefit your career.

VIRGO: You're always one to read be-

tween the lines, Virgo, but with your ruler, chatty Mercury, exiting your meticulous eighth house today, you're ready to focus on the big picture. Until May 21, the messenger planet cruises through Taurus and your visionary ninth house. This expansive and forward-thinking cycle has you feeling refreshed and worldly. Are you overdue for a vacation?

LIBRA: Don your Sherlock chapeau and let the sleuthing begin. Detail-obsessed Mercury slips into Taurus and your investigative eighth house until May 21, sounding the call for some detective work. Hidden agendas and vague intentions may be the norm, so take nothing at face value. Dig into your finances: You could discover hidden charges in need of canceling—and funds that can be flowed into your investment accounts.

SCORPIO: There you go, finishing people's sentences for them, Scorpio. With communicative Mercury roving into Taurus and your partnership zone until May 21, you're totally tuned in. Your sign is naturally

intuitive—and while you often know what's coming next in a conversation, no one enjoys being cut off mid-sentence!

SAGITTARIUS: Meticulous Mercury makes a pit stop in Taurus and your sixth house of details until May 21. Get down to the nitty-gritty of even the most menial tasks. Chances are you've let some administrative affairs pile up: scheduling doctor's appointments, organizing paperwork, finishing your taxes. Streamline and systematize while the data-driven planet sharpens your focus!

CAPRICORN: Bring on the flowery metaphors and dramatic flourishes! Expressive Mercury zips into Taurus and your flamboyant fifth house until May 21, encouraging you to live—and speak—with passion. While this may feel out of character for your reserved sign, your mic-dropping commentaries will get everyone thinking outside the box. Keep a capture tool handy as you let the creative juices flow.

AQUARIUS: Ground control to Aquarius, do you copy? Communication planet Mer-

cury shifts into Taurus and your domestic zone until May 21, pulling you back down to Earth. You'll enjoy nesting and entertaining at Chez Aquarius, but you don't have to be tethered to base. Pay a visit to your folks or a childhood friend; return to your old stomping grounds. Collaborating with women could be quite fruitful over the coming three weeks. Scout out the powerful ladies in your radius and brainstorm away.

PISCES: Out from the cocoon you go! Garulous Mercury soars through Taurus and your third house of communication until May 21, turning you into a shameless social butterfly. Don't say yes to every invitation, though. Your calendar could quickly grow cluttered with all the lectures, workshops and happy hours you're asked to attend. Organize group hangs so you can see all the people you love, but choose a few connections you'd like to nurture with more one-on-one time. A kindred spirit could evolve from acquaintance to legit friend over the next few weeks.