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SummitTIMES

Vol 04 | Issue 128 | Gangtok | Monday | 13 May 2019

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5



SUNDAY CLEAN-UP: Residents of Raigoan, Lower Burtuk, Gangtok, undertook a daylong cleanliness drive to clear up clogged drains and jhoras along a 1.5 km stretch of a rural road connecting the recently opened hospital to the village. The initiative was taken to ensure proper channeling of rainwater into the nearby stream and to avoid water clogging and runoff at roads. Since Gangtok is witnessing heavy rainfall during the later afternoon hours, the road connecting Raigoan is in danger of being damaged. Early measures were hence put into action by the combined effort of the residents of Raigoan to ensure that road connectivity remains intact. The people of Raigoan are expressed gratitude towards the construction company of the hospital at Sokeythang for providing a dozer and extending support. [from RAJEN PRADHAN]

Loan defaulters have no right to be represented by lawyer in 'in-house' proceedings of banks: SC

NEW DELHI, MAY 12 (PTI): The Supreme Court has held that a person has no "right" to be represented by a lawyer in "in-house" proceedings initiated by banks or financial institutions to declare him willful defaulters for non-payment of dues.

A bench comprising Justices R F Nariman and Vineet Saran was dealing with the question whether a person is entitled to be represented by a lawyer of his choice in the process undertaken by banks to declare him a "wilful defaulter" under a circular issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). "We are of the view that there is no right to be represented by a lawyer in the in-house proceedings contained in...the Revised Circular dated July 01, 2015, as it is clear that the events of wilful default as men-



tioned...would only relate to the individual facts of each case.

"What has typically to be discovered is whether a unit has defaulted in making its payment obligations even when it has the capacity to honour the said obligations; or that it has borrowed funds which are diverted for other purposes, or siphoned off funds so that the funds have not been utilised for the specific purpose for which the finance was made available," the top court said in its verdict de-

livered on last Wednesday. It said that the question whether a default was "intentional, deliberate, and calculated" was the question of fact which can be dealt by the borrower or the lender and the assistance of lawyer was not needed.

The apex court allowed the appeal of State Bank of India against the Delhi High Court order which had held that the firm, Jah Developers Pvt. Ltd., can be represented by lawyers in the in-house proceeding of the lending

bank to declare it a willful defaulter.

Setting aside the high court order, the apex court ordered that the bank must give to the borrower the copy of the order of the first in-house committee which conducted the proceedings to declare the firm a willful defaulter.

"The borrower can then represent against such order within a period of 15 days to the Review Committee...The Review Committee must then pass a reasoned order on such representation which must then be served on the borrower, the apex court said.

The lending bank had contended that the defaulting borrower does not need the assistance of lawyers in the proceedings as no complex legal questions are decided in declaring a person a willful defaulter.

Nepali Sahitya Parishad preps for elections

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 12 MAY:

The three-year tenure of the 11th working committee of Nepali Sahitya Parishad, Sikkim, ends this month and a meeting of the working committee held on 11 May decided to call a general meeting for 02 June at the NSP conference hall to discuss the election process for the next working committee.

Former president of Press Club of Sikkim, senior journalist Bhim Rawat, was appointed the chief election commissioner for the NSP-Sikkim elections at the meeting and has been requested to issue the election notification.

A press release informs that the meeting also presented various activities and achievements of the present term.

Rider killed in motorcycle-Sumo collision at Sang Khola

YOGEN THATAL SINGTAM, 12 MAY:

A 25-year-old was killed on the spot and his 22-year-old pillion rider grievously injured when the Bajaj Pulsar motorcycle they were riding was involved in a head-on collision with a Tata Sumo taxi vehicle here at Sang Khola this afternoon.

Ajay Rai of Nandok is reported to have died on the spot while Pabitra

Basnett of Aho has suffered injuries to the head and leg and has been referred to STNM Hospital for treatment.

The driver of Tata Sumo is reported to have brought the injured to the District Hospital here himself in a GREF vehicle he flagged down after the accident. He reported to have then gone to the Singtam Police Station and given his statement and investigation is cur-

rently underway.

A tourist travelling in the Tata Sumo and the driver also sustained minor injuries in the mishap.

This was not the only accident involving a motorcycle today. At Sirwani nearby, another Bajaj Pulsar was involved in an accident, this time with a Mahindra Savari, near Sirwani. No one was thankfully injured in this accident.

SKM candidate visits Rhenock's remotest village



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 12 MAY:

A team of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party workers led by vice-president and Rhenock candidate, Bishnu Kumar Khatiwada, and senior party worker, LM Yonzon, visited the remote village of Kali Khola in Rhenock constituency in East Sikkim on Sunday.

An SKM press release informs that Teendharey Kali Khola ward is one

of the remotest villages in Rhenock and was still lacking road connectivity or health centre, drinking water supply and that no developmental activities have been undertaken here in the 25 years of the SDF government.

The release alleges that SDF promised several times to bring a road to the village but ignored the village after elections.

The release adds that the SKM candidate inter-

acted with the people of the area during the visit and also thanked them on behalf of the party president PS Tamang [Golay] for their support in the elections.

Mr Khatiwada assured to bring all basic facilities in the village should SKM form the next government in Sikkim.

He also shared the vision of the party to develop Smart Villages in the State.

Transgenders excited to cast vote first time under gender identity of their choice

NEW DELHI, MAY 12 (PTI):

Excited about casting their votes under their chosen gender identity for the first time in general elections, the transgender voters in the national capital flaunted their inked fingers and expressed hope for a government which ensures them a better future.

This is the first time that transgenders are casting their votes under the category after Supreme Court had declared them as the "third gender" in 2014. Earlier they had to cast their votes as male or female.

For 32-year-old Janasheen, it was an incredible experience.

"I have voted before but this is the first time I am voting as a transgender, an identity which I am proud of now. I have also posted a selfie on my WhatsApp status with my inked finger," Janasheen said.

Sapna Bai, a transgender who cast her vote in Matia Mahal said, "I am very happy that I can cast my vote as what I really am. I want a new government which thinks about us and also consider us equally on their agenda".

18-year-old Dummy wanted her chosen



government to ensure special toilets for transgenders.

"It is a progressive move that we have been identified as a third gender. While lot needs to be done for us, to begin with special toilets are a must for us," she said.

A Tughlakabad resident, a transgender who did not wish to be identified, was happy to be exercising her franchise for the first time saying the society and the government has acknowledged their community as the third gender.

"We have been neglected repeatedly by consecutive governments for quite a long time. Our condition in the society is pathetic. We are still an outcast. People ridicule us and we are not even acknowledged. We have managed to secure this

right after a long battle and will vote for the party which will work for our rights and for improving our condition," the transgender said.

Another transgender said on the condition of anonymity, "political parties promise us lot of things -- be it offering shelter homes or employment opportunities -- but it is only for elections. We are part of the community. But as a responsible citizen, it is my right to vote which I have irrespective of the outcome."

Voting is underway in all seven constituencies of Delhi Sunday.

According to Delhi Chief Electoral officer, a total of 660 transgenders were eligible to cast their vote besides 78,49,947 male and 64,21,283 female voters.

Students of Delhi govt schools do their bit to make voting a joyous experience for one and all

NEW DELHI, MAY 12 (PTI):

For students of Delhi government schools, it was a Sunday well spent at polling booths in the national capital where they volunteered to help disabled and elderly voters to cast their ballot. From giving flowers to first-time voters and candies to children accompanying their parents to rushing wheelchairs for the disabled voters, the student volunteers were on their toes to make voting a happy experience for one and all.

"We can't vote right now but we are very happy to be part of the electoral process. I have been helping disabled people and centenarians," said Shanita Chaudhary, a class 8 student, who was volunteering at a school in Chandni Chowk's Zeenat Mahal area.

Dishita Rajput, another student volunteer, said, "I am too excited about this. I got to see Rahul Gandhi who had come to vote here. We cannot go inside where votes are being cast but we can be around the polling booth. If somebody needs any help, we are here".

Similar excitement was shared by Sarthak Chaudhary, another class 8 student, at a polling booth in Gujranwala town.

"If anybody wants to check their names in the voter list before getting inside, I have been helping them out. Fulfilling any requests for wheelchair and facilitating early entry of pregnant women are part of my duties," he said.

Polling in seven Lok Sabha constituencies in the national capital was held on Sunday.

SummitTIMES IN NEPALI



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Demand for exemplary punishment in Bandipora rape case echoes in J-K

SRINAGAR, MAY 12 (PTI): Mainstream political parties and separatist groups in Jammu and Kashmir Sunday condemned the alleged rape of a minor girl in Bandipora district of the state and demanded exemplary punishment to the perpetrators.

The three-year-old girl was allegedly raped in Sumbal area of north Kashmir's Bandipora district, prompting the Jammu and Kashmir Police to constitute a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the incident.

"The rape of a child in Tirgaam is a travesty. @JmuKmrPolice must ensure a speedy investigation with only one consideration and that is to identify the guilty, pre-

pare a watertight case & ensure exemplary punishment to those responsible," National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah wrote on Twitter.

NC's chief spokesman Aga Syed Ruhullah also condemned the incident and urged the governor administration to constitute a time-bound investigation into the heinous act and bring the perpetrators to justice.

"The result of the investigation should be made public and severe punishment should be meted out to the guilty. The punishment should act as a deterrent," he said.

Ruhullah also urged the governor administration to have the case tried by a fast track court.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said Shariah law seems apt to deal with such cases.

"Mortified to hear about the rape of a 3 yr old girl in Sumbal. What kind of a sick pervert would do this? Society often blames women for inviting unwanted attention but what was this child's fault? Times like these, Shariah law seems apt so that such paedophiles are stoned to death," Mehbooba wrote on Twitter.

Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference chairman Sajad Lone said the incident merits introspection.

"The tragedy in Tarigam Sumbal as beastly it is merits serious social introspection. We need to seriously ponder on

this mad sickness on the prowl. We need to work hard to rediscover the moral foundations of our society," Lone said in a tweet.

He said he had talked to Governor Satya Pal Malik and requested that the perpetrator of the crime be strongly dealt with.

Separatist leaders Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Syed Ali Shah Geelani also condemned the incident.

"Deeply disturbed by the shocking heinous crime committed on a 3 year old child in Sumbal. Such repeated incidents raise a serious question mark on how much of our moral and religious values have been imbibed within us and are reflected

in our collective behaviour as a society.

"Appeal all to maintain calm and introspect while demanding stern punishment and speedy justice for the victim," Mirwaiz said on Twitter.

In a statement, Geelani termed such incidents as a black stain on the social fabric and rich culture of the state.

Protests broke out on Sunday at few places against the incident and people demanded immediate exemplary action against the perpetrators of the crime.

At Khomeini Chowk in Bemina area on the outskirts of the city, clashes took place between protesters and security forces who fired pellets and tear smoke shells to disperse them.

Curfew relaxed in Hailakandi, internet services remain suspended



HAILAKANDI (ASSAM), MAY 12 (PTI): The Hailakandi district administration in Assam relaxed the indefinite curfew for three hours on Sunday, even though internet services remained suspended in the entire Barak valley.

District Magistrate Keerthi Jalli ordered relaxation in curfew in the entire district from 12 noon to 3 pm, as no untoward incident was reported from anywhere in the last 24 hours.

The curfew, along with prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC, will remain in force till 7 am on Monday in order to maintain law and order in the district, Jalli said.

"The overall law and order situation will be reviewed and a decision will be taken whether to lift the curfew after 7 am tomorrow (Monday)," another senior official said.

During the three-hour relaxation of the curfew, most shops and business establishments remained closed and only private vehicles were seen on the roads.

Internet services, too, remained suspended in

Hailakandi, Karimganj and Cachar districts of Barak Valley since Friday night.

"The services will resume only after assessing the situation on Monday," said an official.

Following the clashes on Friday, curfew was imposed initially in Hailakandi town from 1 pm and later extended to the entire district from 6 pm, as the authorities apprehended breach of peace and tranquility.

One person had died in police firing and at least 15 people were injured, while more than 15 vehicles were damaged and 12 shops vandalised and set on fire in some parts of the town.

The district administration has begun assessing the damages to shops and properties.

Forest Minister Parimal Suklabaidya said due compensation will be given by the state government after assessment of the extent of damage.

To bring back normalcy and instill confidence among the people, Rapid Action Force (RAF) has been deployed in Hailakandi town and elsewhere.

Army and other paramilitary forces were also deployed in the district.

The Assam government has instituted a one-man inquiry panel headed by Additional Chief Secretary Rajiv Kumar Bora to conduct a probe into the incident.

Hailakandi Superintendent of Police Mohneesh Mishra said the first and foremost priority of the administration is to restore normalcy, and then identify the miscreants behind the violence.

Jalli claimed that the incident is the "handiwork of some miscreants" and not a communal flare up as "there exists unity and amity among the communities" in the district.

Trouble started when a group of people decided to hold the Friday noon prayers on the road, located at Kali Bari point of the town, in protest against some motorcycles being damaged by people belonging to another community.

Police had to disperse the protesters initially by resorting to lathicharge followed by firing in the air.

Groom arrives at polling station with 'band, baaja and baraat' to cast his vote in Delhi

NEW DELHI, MAY 12 (PTI): Quirky as it may sound, but a groom on Sunday went to cast his vote in Delhi along with 'band, baaja and baraat', riding a horse to boot.

The sight in East Delhi grabbed eyeballs as not only the groom, Rishabh Jain, but also his parents and sister exercised their franchise before moving on to Palwal in Haryana for the wedding, a family friend said.

"Rishabh is getting married today to a woman in neighbouring Palwal, but he decided to cast his vote before exchanging the wedding vows with the bride. And we all came to the polling station for his big day and what a memorable day it became," the groom's cousin Gaurav Jain told PTI.

He said the 'dulha', who has a jewellery business in Delhi, reached the polling booth in Shahdara, with all the fanfare and the family too enjoyed the moment.

"The bride is waiting



in Paliwal and we are on our way right now to the wedding venue," Gaurav Jain said.

The groom said he was delighted to participate in this festival of democracy ahead of getting married.

"Yes, I came to cast my vote first before going to my marriage. I am an Indian, I felt I must do my duty also," he said.

Gaurav Jain said the distance from the house to the booth is very close and we took out the procession as one would do in a wedding.

"Not just the groom, his father, mother and sister also voted there and everyone was very happy," he said.

In the North East Delhi constituency too a groom arrived in his 'dulha' avatar much to everyone's amusement.

"Yes, a groom came to a polling booth in Jahangirpur area. He was dressed as if he had just stepped out of a mandap. He was wearing a suit and a 'pagdi' and sporting a garland of notes in a typical 'dulha' style," a senior official said.

Voting was held for all the seven constituencies in Delhi on Sunday between 7 am to 6 pm, young and old, first-timers and centenarians queued up to exercise their franchise throughout the day.

Foreign electoral representatives, MPs witness Indian election process, use of EVMs

New Delhi, May 12 (PTI): Electoral representatives and lawmakers from over 18 countries witnessed the complex Indian election process in action and the use of the Electronic Voting Machines in the national capital on Sunday, officials said.

EA Shevchenko, a member of the central Election Commission of Russia, said he visited 12 polling stations in Delhi and spoke to election observers.

He said it was interesting to know about EVMs.

"We saw the new machines and we liked what we saw. We visited north and south Delhi constituencies and it was interesting to know about EVMs and learn that one gets to know that their vote has been registered," he said.

He said Russia has machines which take passport as the ID document and is based on

biometrics. He said those machines are similar to EVMs.

"In Russia, only the passport serves as the ID. Voters can vote from any part of the country and do not have to be in the city where they live. During the last presidential polls, over six million people voted from cities other than their hometowns," he said.

The official said in Russia, elections take place on a single day, not in phases.

Officials from Myanmar, Bhutan Cambodia, Russia, Bosnia, Bangladesh, Kenya, Mexico, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and others comprised the foreign delegation.

"Foreign delegations visit during Lok Sabha polls and Vidhan Sabha polls to study the electoral process. This time, members of over 18 countries are here," an official from Delhi's Chief Electoral Office said.

Nine places in Odisha record temperature above 40 degree C

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 12 (PTI): Despite marginal fall in the mercury level, there was little respite from the grueling summer heat in Odisha as the temperature soared above 40 degree Celsius in at least nine places on Sunday.

The high temperatures were recorded in western Odisha and the meteorological office here said heat wave conditions will persist for at least next five days in around 15 districts including some in coastal and southern region.

Jharsuguda in western Odisha was the hottest place in the state recording a maximum temperature of 43.5 degrees Celsius, it said.

Titlagarh followed closely behind with the highest temperature touching 43.5 degree Celsius, while Malkangiri recorded 43.4 degree Celsius, Sonepur 43.3 degree, Sambalpur 42.7 degree and Hirkud 42.4 degree Celsius, it said.

The maximum temperature at Balangir stood at 42 degrees Celsius, while it was 41.5 degrees at Talcher and 41 degrees at Sundargarh.

In Bhubaneswar, which is situated in

coastal Odisha and suffered devastation by Cyclone Fani, the mercury stood at 36.7 degree Celsius. With a high relative humidity of 95 per cent and power supply yet to be restored fully in the state capital, life was thrown out of gear in the city.

In neighbouring Cuttack, which too was ravaged by the cyclone, the highest temperature was 37.2 degrees, the MeT centre here said.

The MeT said high temperature will prevail in around 15 districts for next five days and advised the people to avoid going out in the sun, especially between 12 noon and 3 pm. People were advised to stay indoors as much as possible and avoid strenuous activities when outside in the afternoon.

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Hinduja brothers top UK rich list, Reuben brothers second

ADITI KHANNA LONDON, MAY 12 (PTI): Indian-origin brothers dominate the annual rich list of Britain's wealthiest, with the Hinduja brothers ranked at No. 1 with a fortune of 22 billion pounds followed by Mumbai-born Reuben brothers in second place with 18.66 billion pounds.

Srichand and Gopichand Hinduja, who run the Hinduja Group of companies in the UK, registered a 1.35 billion pounds jump in their fortunes over the previous year to return to the top of the Sunday Times Rich List after topping it back in 2014 and 2017.

"Whether or not Britain leaves the EU, Gopi Hinduja is convinced it can forge a closer relationship with his family's homeland," notes the newspaper's profile on the 79-year-old Co-Chair of the Hinduja Group, G P Hinduja.

The London-based industrialist, along with UK-based brother Sri, 83, and their brothers Prakash, 73, and Ashok, 68, who live in Geneva and Mumbai respectively, control more than 50



companies with a total turnover of nearly 40 billion pounds worldwide in 2018, notes the Rich List.

The family occupies four interconnected London homes in Carlton House Terrace, bought from Queen Elizabeth II in 2006. Their business empire was founded by father Parmanand in Mumbai in 1914.

The Hinduja, described as devout Hindus eschewing meat and alcohol, have stakes in oil and gas, IT, energy, media, banking, property and healthcare. Some of the biggest hike in profits last year came from London-registered Hinduja Automotive, which includes North Yorkshire bus maker Optare and saw profits rise by 50 per cent to 337 million

pounds on 3.5 billion pounds sales in 2017-18.

They had acquired former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's old War Office in London's Whitehall for 350 million pounds back in 2014 and plan to open it as a luxury hotel with the Raffles group by 2020.

Mumbai-born siblings David, 80, and Simon, 77, with interests across property and internet, have been on a buying spree, taking hold of 1 billion pounds of London property last year. The Reuben brothers snapped up Mayfair's 300-million pounds Burlington Arcade, Shoreditch's Curtain hotel and a 132 million pounds block in Piccadilly.

Delhi LS polls: National security, unemployment, noteban weighed heavy on voters' mind

NEW DELHI, MAY 12 (PTI): National security, unemployment and demonetisation were among the various issues on which Delhiites exercised their franchise on Sunday.

Anuj Agarwal, a 65-year-old retired Professor of Delhi School of Economics, said he voted for the stability of the country.

"The country needs a strong prime minister who can capably lead it on all fronts," Agarwal said after casting his vote at a polling station in the Nizamuddin East area of the East Delhi Lok Sabha constituency.

Sandip, a medical representative, criticised the heavy expenditure on campaigning by political parties, saying they should focus on real issues like public transport, employment and water supply.

Muhammad Waseem, 21, a resident of Nangloi,

said he voted for those who can give him a "real job and not someone who asks people to sell pakodas".

National security is important but people are also dying due to distress over crop failure, Waseem, a first-time voter, added.

Meena Jasotani, 47, a resident of Chandni Chowk, said she voted for the development by the Centre.

Communal discord also weighed on the mind of several voters.

Aijaz Ulhaq, 53, a resident of Chandni Chowk, said he needs a government which will keep all the communities united.

Sanjog Singh, 47, a resident of Hari Nagar, said his vote is to defeat the divisive politics.

Mohammad Rafi, 66, a resident of Nai Sadak in Chandni Chowk, also shared the Singh's view.

"In the last five years, there has been a grow-

ing atmosphere of fear. So, many cases of mob lynching were reported. We never felt so unsafe in the past. When the Modi government came to power, we hoped that all communities will live in harmony with each other. But things turned out the other way," he said.

A garment shop owner, Deepak, said he voted keeping in mind those long queues outside the ATM counters.

"As a responsible citizen, I did cast my vote but as a small trader I cannot forget how my business suffered due to noteban. Also, the lack of uniformity in implementing the GST," Deepak, 43, said.

There were also some like Rubal Sedhra, an engineer by profession, who opted for NOTA because he felt that none of the candidates contesting from his North East Delhi constituency were worthy enough.

Wedding processions of Dalit men face hurdles in Gujarat

AHMEDABAD, MAY 12 (PTI): The wedding procession of a Dalit bridegroom at a village in Sabarkantha district of Gujarat had to be provided police cover Sunday after members of the Thakor community objected to him offering prayers at a local temple.

The procession, however, passed off peacefully, police said.

Anil Rathod's family had sought police protection after elders of Sitvada village, belonging to the Thakor community,

had objected on Saturday to the procession passing through the village and his plans to offer prayers at the temple, Bhikhubhai Vaniya, a villager, said.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Meenakshi Patel, "The family of the Anil Rathod submitted an application to the police seeking protection for the wedding procession. In their application, the Dalit members of the village had raised apprehension that members of another community might create

trouble".

"We offered police protection to the marriage procession and it passed off peacefully. The groom also visited the village temple before he left for a nearby village for the marriage ceremony," the DSP said.

In a separate incident in Khambisar village in the state's Aravalli district, members of the Patidar community organised bhajan and yagna on the main road to stall a Dalit wedding procession, the groom's family alleged.

New committees take office at MYM Gangtok City Branch and Prerna

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 12 MAY:

The swearing-in ceremony of the new committees of Gangtok City Branch and Prerna Branch of Marwari Yuva Manch [MYM] for the year 2019-20 was held here on Sunday.

This is the seventh oath-taking ceremony of the Gangtok City Branch and the fourth for the Prerna Branch here.

Ajay Beriwal has been elected president of the MYM Gangtok City Branch for the second consecutive term while Naini Khatri was elected as general secretary again and Kiran Daga as treasurer.

Likewise, Amita Mundra was also re-elected president of



the Prerna Branch for the second consecutive term while Naini Khatri was elected as general secretary again and Kiran Daga as treasurer.

Both committees also have three vice-presidents, two joint secretaries and

other executive members.

The oath-taking ceremony was held in the presence of Paschim Bengal Sikkim Prantiya Marwari Yuva Manch [PBSPMYM] president, Bipul Sharma, and other office bearers.

The ceremony was also attended by Gangtok Mayor, Shakti Singh Chaudhary.

On the occasion, PBSPMYM president appreciated the works and initiatives carried out by the Gangtok City Branch and Prerna Branch of

MYM.

"Gangtok City Branch and Prerna Branch have delivered exemplary work in the country and it is good to see that both organisations have been working together for the society and

people in need," he said.

The MYM Gangtok City Branch president expressed gratitude towards all members for giving him a second chance to work for the organisation.

The Prerna Branch president also assured to continue with the organisation's efforts to help people in need and work for the society dedicatedly.

She expressed satisfaction with the tasks accomplished in her last term and assured to work even more for the society.

The function was also addressed by former president of Gangtok City Branch, Ajay Agarwal and former president of Prerna branch, Sunita Sirohia.

Farewells, celebrations and felicitations at Little Flower JHS



SUMMIT REPORT MANGAN, 12 MAY:

Little Flower Junior High School, Mangan, organised a farewell ceremony on Saturday for its outgoing students passing out of class VIII.

The function also included a celebration for former students of the school who are among the CBSE class

X from Mangan Senior Secondary School.

The school also felicitated the senior-most driver of Mangan, Ganga Prasad Chettri, a local taxi driver, who has been serving the area for the past 43 years.

Mr Chettri ferries people from Mangan to Gangtok in his daily service jeep and has trained more than 12 drivers.

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Honda to continue selling diesel models in India

NEW DELHI, MAY 12 (PTI): Japanese auto major Honda will continue to offer diesel models in India even after BS-VI emission norms kick in, unlike Maruti Suzuki which has decided to stop selling diesel cars from April 1, 2020.

According to a senior official of Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL), the company plans to upgrade its two diesel engines, which power models like Amaze, City, WR-V, BR-V, Civic and CR-V to conform to stricter BS-VI emission norms.

The auto major plans to start rolling out models with upgraded BS-VI engines in both petrol and diesel from the fourth quarter of this fiscal.

"From our experience, for the fuel choice among petrol or diesel, 80 per cent of customers make a rational choice based on consideration of driving distance and recovery period. However, there are still 20 per cent customers who make an emotional choice towards a particular fuel," HCIL Senior Vice President and Director (Marketing & Sales) Rajesh Goel told PTI.

The company will take care of these 20 per cent emotional choice buyers as well, he added.

Goel acknowledged

that fuel dynamics will change after BS-VI implementation from the next year with a price gap increasing between petrol and diesel models.

"But we believe the demand for diesel will not vanish immediately. Therefore, we will continue to offer the diesel models in line with market demand and gradually move towards future alternatives," he said.

The company currently has two diesel engines in its line-up and they will be made BS-VI compliant, Goel added.

HCIL currently sells Amaze, WR-V, City and BR-V with 1.5 litre diesel engine, while Civic and CR-V are powered by 1.6 litre diesel powertrain. The models are also available with petrol engine options.

With diesel cars set to become costlier from the next year with the implementation of stricter BS-VI emission norms, major automakers are contemplating about the future of such vehicles in their portfolios.

Already, market leader Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) has stated that it would discontinue diesel models from 1 April 2020, when the BS-VI norms kick in as it expects the increased cost would put most of the diesel cars especially the

smaller ones out of reach of small car buyers.

Besides, Tata Motors has also hinted to phase out small diesel cars from its portfolio as demand is expected to slow down due to upcoming BS-VI emission norms. Ford, on the other hand, has said, it will continue to sell diesel models in the country.

Goel said, the company's progress towards implementation of safety regulations and BS-VI regulations was on course.

"Smooth run-out of BS-IV vehicles and switch over to BSVI vehicles will be a key task during this financial year. HCIL will progressively introduce BS-VI compliant models from fourth quarter of this fiscal," he said.

As for the recently launched models such as Civic and CR-V, petrol variants are already complying with BS-VI norms, he added.

The Bharat Stage VI (or BS-VI) emission norm would come into force from 1 April 2020 across the country. Currently, the vehicles sold in the country conform to BS-IV emission standards.

The Bharat stage emission standards are standards instituted by the government to regulate the output of air pollutants from motor vehicles.

Imminent crisis in NBFC sector: Corp Affairs Secy

NEW DELHI, MAY 12 (PTI): There is an "imminent crisis" in the non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) sector as misadventures by some large entities and credit squeeze present a perfect recipe for disaster, a senior government official has said.

In recent months, the country's financial system has been grappling with multiple woes in the wake of the turmoil at diversified IL&FS group as well as debt defaults by some other large entities.

In an interview to PTI, Corporate Affairs Secretary Injeti Srinivas said the NBFC sector is facing issues of credit squeeze, over-leveraging and misadventures by some large entities.

"There is an imminent crisis in the NBFC sector. There is a credit squeeze, over-leveraging, excessive concentration, massive mismatch between assets and liabilities, coupled with some misadventures by some very large entities, which is a perfect recipe for disaster," Srinivas said.

However, he added that "responsible" companies are managing the risk well and are not facing such a dire situation.

Srinivas also said corporate governance in In-



dia is being put to test.

"It is a defining moment. The way things are moving, in the medium to long term it will be for the good. In the short term, there can be turbulence," he said.

"If you are responsible, you manage the risks. There are many companies in the country that have strong corporate governance. They take risks but manage them as well. So, they don't face such dire situation that some others are facing today," Srinivas said.

Amid instances of the situation of non-performing assets (NPAs) being linked to external factors, Srinivas noted that it would not be a convincing explanation.

"To say that the situation (NPA) can be attributed entirely to external factors and business risks is not a convincing answer because there is

something known as responsible behaviour," he emphasised.

Earlier this month, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said the banking sector is "under severe stress" and the way out of "this mess" is to reverse some "gross distortions", work closely with the RBI, restart the process of credit delivery and ensure sufficient liquidity and cash in circulation.

The NPA "scare" has brought lending to a virtual halt, the former prime minister had said, adding that a "one-size-fits-all approach" drove companies into insolvency while demonetisation shut out all sources of informal credit.

However, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had dismissed the concerns, saying, "When an economist turns into a politician, he loses sense of both economy and politics".

"Dr Manmohan Singh left behind in 2014 an economic slowdown, policy paralysis and corruption. He brought down his party to lowest ever strength in Parliament. India was a part of the fragile five. Today he regards the world's the fastest growing major economy as disastrous," Jaitley had said.

Reliance entry to digitise 5 million kirana stores by 2023: Report

NEW DELHI, MAY 12 (PTI): Richest Indian Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries' entry into online retailing will help expand the current 15,000 digitized retail stores to over 5 million by 2023, a study of Bank of America Merrill Lynch said.

As much as 90 per cent of India's USD 700 billion retail market is unorganised, made up mostly of neighbourhood kirana stores selling groceries and other sundries.

These kirana stores are keen to upgrade their tech and this is driving a wave of modernization, the study said.

"This is on the back of growing competition from modern trade and e-commerce," it said. "GST implementation has also acted as a catalyst, creating further modernization pressure as GST compliant bills

have to be generated."

Reliance, with a deep footprint in over 10,000 Reliance Retail outlets pan-India, is working to create the world's largest online-to-offline e-commerce platform in the country.

Reliance is looking at installing its Jio MPoS (mobile point-of-sale) device at kirana stores to connect neighbourhood suppliers to its high-speed 4G network that can be used by its customers to order supplies.

It will take on SnapBizz, Nukkad Shops and GoFrugal in this fragmented MPoS space.

While Jio MPoS is available at a one-time investment of Rs 3,000, SnapBizz offers the same machine at a one-time cost of Rs 50,000, the report said.

One-time charge on Nukkad Shops is Rs 30,000 to Rs 55,000

while GoFrugal offers POS software at a one-time investment of Rs 15,000 to Rs 1 lakh.

Jio MPoS has no merchant discount rate (MDR) on any charge and offers a loyalty programme, it said, adding its monetization strategy include merchandise delivery, advertising and supply-side aggregation.

"We believe, with RIL's entry, we could see an increase in merchant adaptability, as the price points will likely come down (RIL's current one time deposit is Rs 3,000) and reach should expand.

"Consolidation is also a possibility; as a big player, RIL is entering an otherwise scattered market. Overall, we expect RIL to help expand the current 15,000 digitized store base to 5 million-plus stores by 2023," it said.

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- (f) Your mobile number (for OTP)

Sd/
Col D N Bhutia
Secretary

KUTSE SHEGU

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 Taley, Metro, Lower Tadong. We also take this opportunity to thank all those who stood by us during the time of bereavement.

PELO 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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Let's Pledge to Learn From 1984

...since it is back in the news

The Congress has been backed into a corner over the comments of its in-house technocrat who put his foot in his mouth with a tasteless political statement over the communal riots of 1984 which targeted the Sikhs. This provides an apt time to learn from the horrors of that year, something we, as Indians, are otherwise expected to do when we observe Sankalp Diwas every year on 31 October. The date marks a significant moment in the nation's history which should not be forgotten. The official English translation of the name of the day is "National Re-dedication Day" and marks the death anniversary of Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister who was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards on this day back in 1984. The 're-dedication' that this day demands is not a firmer resolve to protect the nation's VIPs better, but a commitment to integration, a united country not slivered in communal or regional factions.

India is a well integrated nation in that it has only grown in size since Independence, not disintegrated; but regions still remain fractured and the people still segregated. Government officials will gather at official venues today and recite the pledge for the day, but a re-dedication is also required of the people – a commitment to themselves and everyone else that events that followed this day are never repeated, ever again. Unfortunately, the day is only observed in either Congress party offices or government offices where officials, at official functions read out officious and hollow resolutions towards national integration. Even more unfortunately, the anti-Sikh riots which followed the assassination and scarred the nation continue to remain largely ignored, and in this blindsiding, the lessons that need to really be learnt remain overlooked.

Let us accept it, as a nation, we have not learnt anything since 1984 which was a watershed year because it was when the State machineries really started getting compromised for communal and political settling of scores. Governments have changed since, but attitudes have not. As a result, a Nation that was born to the wails of communal rioting that the Partition wrecked, still does not display either the resolve or the wherewithal to avoid them. The media and the civil society need to ask why situations and incidents are still allowed to deny the people their instinctive desire for communal amity. Had the policy-makers realised their failings back in 1984, neither Ayodhya, nor Godhra would have happened. The Godhra riots happened because justice for the killing of Sikhs in 1984 remains largely undelivered. Only the malevolent learned from the 1984 riots and refined and deployed every tactic [including use of voter lists to target victims] used then to even more devastating effect in Gujarat in 2002.

1984 receives only token mentions because the media and the civil society shy away from it since it complicates their simplistic analysis of what and who are communal in our country. The post-Godhra riots were a result of the powers-that-be subverting the power to serve to become power-that-colludes in pushing political agendas and revenge. As a people, we continue to pay the price because the people who occupy the public domain do not ask the right questions, do not address the malfunction in the system. Yes, the country and its people need to rededicate themselves to the idea of India, an India that was imagined to be secular but today actively segregates its people; an India that was to have public servants but instead has officers who have mutated into bullies; an India that was to be run by people's representative but has been usurped by autocrats; an India which started democratic but is now foisting dynasties.

History needs to be remembered and understood so that we are not condemned to repeat past mistakes. The shames need to be accepted because then we can learn from them, even seek forgiveness and find it in ourselves to pardon. Then, leaders who survive by keeping past nightmares alive in public minds will have to make way for visionaries who deliver dreams for the nation to collectively aspire towards.

That is a wish that every Indian has always harboured. A wish which remains unachieved. For the record, more than 3,000 Sikhs were killed in the 1984 riots. The 2011 WikiLeaks revealed that the United States was convinced about the complicity of Indian Government ruled by the Congress in the pogrom [not that this was ever in doubt]. Also, as late as in January 2011, the burned and abandoned village of Hondh-Chillar, where 32 Sikhs were killed on November 2, 1984, was discovered in Haryana. In March 2011, the site of another forgotten killing of 17 people in nearby Pataudi, was discovered. This, nearly three decades since the communal rioting. To understand the hurt suffered and felt by the Sikh community, one must bear in mind that a sizeable section of Delhi's Sikh population is made up of Partition victims. Families there, already traumatized with living memories of the 1947 horror, were visited by the murderous rampage of 1984. Their anger then over the more than three decades of stalling topped by the continued failure to convict the mob leaders and instigators is thus obvious... and the offensiveness of what Pitroda said recently even more stark.

The resolve, the re-dedication that the nation needs to make should thus be obvious.

AI develops human-like number sense – taking us a step closer to building machines with general intelligence

ADAM STANTON
theconversation.com

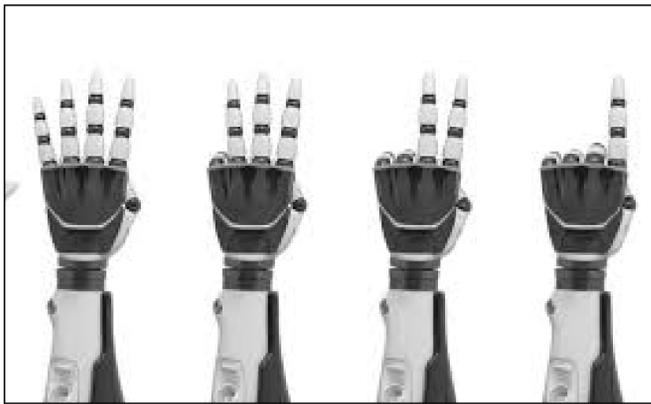
Numbers figure pretty high up on the list of what a computer can do well. While humans often struggle to split a restaurant bill, a modern computer can make millions of calculations in a mere second. Humans, however, have an innate and intuitive number sense that helped us, among other things, to build computers in the first place.

Unlike a computer, a human knows when looking at four cats, four apples and the symbol 4 that they all have one thing in common – the abstract concept of "four" – without even having to count them. This illustrates the difference between the human mind and the machine, and helps explain why we are not even close to developing AIs with the broad intelligence that humans possess. But now a new study, published in *Science Advances*, reports that an AI has spontaneously developed a human-like number sense.

For a computer to count, we must clearly define what the thing is we want to count. Once we allocate a bit of memory to maintain the counter, we can set it to zero and then add an item each time we find something we want to record. This means that computers can count time (signals from an electronic clock), words (if stored in the computer's memory) and even objects in a digital image.

This last task, however, is a bit challenging, as we have to tell the computer exactly what the objects look like before it can count them. But objects don't always look the same – variation in lighting, position and pose have an impact, as well as any differences in construction between individual examples.

All the successful computational approaches to detecting objects in images work by building up a kind of statistical picture of an object from many individual examples – a type of learning. This allows the computer to recognise new versions of objects with some degree of confidence. The



training involves offering examples that do, or do not, contain the object. The computer then makes a guess as to whether it does, and adjusts its statistical model according to the accuracy of the guess – as judged by a human supervising the learning.

Modern AI systems automatically start to be able to detect objects when provided with millions of training images of any sort – just like humans do. These unsupervised learning systems gradually notice parts of the elements in the images that are often present at the same time, and build up layer upon layer of more complicated commonalities.

Take recognising apples as an example. As images containing all manner of shapes are presented to the system, it first begins to notice groups of pixels that make up horizontal and vertical lines, and left and right curves. They're present in apples, faces, cats and cars, so the commonalities, or abstractions, are found early on. It eventually realises that certain curves and lines are often present together in apples – and develops a new, deeper level abstraction that represents a class of objects: apples, in this case.

DEEP LEARNING

This natural emergence of high-level abstractions is one of the most exciting results of the machine

learning technique called deep neural networks, which in some sense work in a similar way to the human brain. The "depth" comes from the many layers in the network – as the information goes deeper into the network, the commonalities found become more abstract. In this way, networks are created with elements that are strongly active when the input is similar to what it has experienced before. The most abstract things appear at the deepest levels – these are cats, faces and apples rather than vertical lines or circles.

When an AI system can recognise apples, you can then use it to count how many there are. That's great, yet it's not quite how you or I would count apples. We have an extremely deep concept of "number" – how many of something there is. Rather than just being active when an object is present, parts of our brain activate depending on the amount of objects present. It means we can look at a bunch of apples and know that there are four without actually counting each one.

In fact, many animals can do this too. That's because this sense of numerosity is a useful trait for survival and reproduction in a lot of different situations – take for instance judging the size of groups of rivals or prey.

EMERGENT PROPERTIES

In the new study, a deep neural network that was trained for sim-

ple visual object detection spontaneously developed this kind of number sense. The researchers discovered that specific units within the network suddenly "tuned" to an abstract number – just like real neurons in the brain might respond. It realised that a picture of four apples is similar to a picture of four cats – because they have "four" in common.

One really exciting thing about this research is that it shows that our current principles of learning are quite fundamental. Some of the most high-level aspects of thinking that people and animals demonstrate are related deeply to the structure of the world, and our visual experience of that.

It also hints that we might be on the right track to achieve a more comprehensive, human-level artificial intelligence. Applying this kind of learning to other tasks – perhaps applying it to signals that occur over a period of time rather than over pixels in an image – could yield machines with even more human-like qualities. Things we once thought fundamental to being human – musical rhythm for example, or even a sense of causality – are now being examined from this new perspective.

As we continue to discover more about building artificial learning techniques, and find new ways to understand the brains of living organisms, we unlock more of the mysteries of intelligent, adaptive behaviour.

There's a long way to go, and many other dimensions that we need to explore, but it's clear that the capability to look at the world and work out its structure from experience is a key part of what makes humans so adaptable. There's no doubt it will be a necessary component of any AI system that has the potential to perform the variety and complexity of tasks that humans can.

[the writer is Lecturer in Evolutionary Robotics and Artificial Life, Keele University]

Biodiversity collapse: the wild relatives of livestock and crops are disappearing

LOUISE MAIR
theconversation.com

"Transformative change" is needed to prevent over a million species going extinct, according to a new report on the world's biodiversity. Based on information gathered over three years from land, freshwater and marine ecosystems, and drawing heavily from the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the report from the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services warns that Earth's life-support systems may collapse if humanity doesn't change the way it values and uses nature.

But what does this mean for everyday life? "Biodiversity" – which describes the variety and abundance of species living on Earth – is a term which doesn't travel far outside debate between scientists and policymakers. The consequences of the biodiversity crisis can seem abstract and difficult for many people to understand, particularly the implications for their own lives.

Think food, though, and the implications become clear.

GENETIC DIVERSITY AND FOOD SECURITY

Modern livestock breeds and crop species have been bred to be highly productive, which means accentuating particular traits. Chickens have been bred to maintain a uniform size for cost effective production, while fruit and vegetables have been bred to have thick, juicy flesh. To concentrate these features within livestock and crop populations, plants and animals are bred with ever more genetically similar partners, leaving a shallow and homogeneous gene pool that is a poor defence against disease and environmental change.

Wild relatives of domesticated plants and animals are the ancestral species from which crops and livestock have descended, or their near relatives. The pigs we raise for food are descended from wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) and chickens are descended from red jungle fowl (*Gallus gallus*) – a species that is widespread in Asia. These wild species are thought to be sufficiently closely related to domestic varieties that they could crossbreed to increase their genetic diversity.

The wild relatives of domesticated species inhabit the rocky and icebound fastness of high mountain ranges, dense tropical forests and arid deserts. They've continued to evolve under natural conditions and so might contain genes that will help food species fight diseases and remain pro-



ductive in a changing environment. Genetic diversity helps species survive long into the future, by increasing the likelihood that individuals will have helpful genetic quirks, such as immunity to a new disease.

As climate change makes some growing regions hotter and drier, wild relatives of corn that are drought-resistant could be crossbred with farmed varieties to make them more resilient. As new pathogens emerge, wild relatives of cows could crossbreed with cattle to bolster the immune defences encoded in their DNA.

These ancestral species and wild relatives are however, not all as common as junglefowl or wild boar. A worryingly large number are little known and highly threatened, or even on the verge of extinction. Baer's pochard (*Aythya baeri*) is a critically endangered duck species from South East-Asia that is closely related to the mallard, from which the domestic duck is derived. The Kouprey (*Bos sauveli*) from central Vietnam is a wild relative of the cow and may even be extinct in the wild.

Humans are relying on a narrowing base of species for food, using more and more commercially-bred livestock and crops while losing the wild relatives – the reservoir of genetic diversity. These genetic resources may become increasingly important for feeding some nine billion people by 2050, in a world shaped by climate change and all the knock-on effects this will have for agriculture.

PROTECTING WILD RELATIVES

The status of wild relatives is, overall, worse than for birds and mammals generally. Whereas 25% of all mammal species are considered threat-

ened with extinction, more than half of mammals that are wild relatives of domesticated mammals are threatened. The figures for birds, while overall less threatened, show a similar pattern. Some 13% of all birds are threatened, compared with 31% of birds which are wild relatives of domesticated species like chickens and turkeys.

It's perhaps unsurprising given that these species, like their intensively farmed relatives, are large-bodied and so once caught or killed provide a good source of nourishing food. That's certainly the case for Edwards's pheasant (*Lophura edwardsi*) – a critically endangered species which belongs to the same subfamily as chickens, native to South East-Asia and widely snared. A further 30 species are considered endangered, such as the Lowland Anoa (*Bubalus depressicornis*), a close relative of the river buffalo and native to Indonesia.

Losing these wild relatives of domesticated animals seriously threatens the resilience of our food systems, by leaving crops and livestock genetically poorer. The IPBES report highlights this threat. Countries will agree targets for protecting biodiversity in 2020 and the wild relatives of domesticated species should be chief among them.

We really do need a transformation in our relationship with nature, and this will have to include serious change in our diets and how food is produced. We will need wild relatives of important food species to ensure that genetic diversity can enhance food security in an increasingly uncertain future.

[the writer is Research Associate in Biodiversity Conservation and Policy, Newcastle University]

BJP candidate attacked twice in WB, CEO seeks report

KOLKATA, MAY 12 (PTI): BJP candidate Bharati Ghosh was allegedly attacked twice by local people when the former IPS officer tried to visit polling stations in her Ghatal Lok Sabha constituency on Sunday when the sixth phase of polling was underway there.

One of her security guards was injured in stone pelting in one of the two incidents of attack.

The state CEO has sought reports from the West Midnapore district magistrate about the incidents.

Ghosh suffered minor injuries when a group of women allegedly attacked her when she tried to take one BJP agent inside

a polling booth at Keshpur area in the morning, officials said.

Following this, bombs were hurled and stones were pelted towards the former IPS officer's convoy when she was going to visit another booth at Dogachia in Keshpur after receiving complaints of rigging there.

One of her security guards was injured and a vehicle was damaged in the stone pelting following which the security officers restored to lathicharge, the officials said.

It was also alleged a Trinamool Congress worker was injured in firing by central forces who were with the BJP candidate who, however, denied the charge.



"This is a deliberate attempt by the Trinamool Congress to stop me. They attacked me and I am injured. That my security guards have fired is an absolute lie," Ghosh told PTI when contacted.

A senior election official said, "We have sought a report from the district magistrate over

the alleged attacks on the BJP candidate. Once the report arrives, we will take the necessary step."

The state CEO also sought a report after Ghosh was seen videographing inside a polling booth at Pikurda in Keshpur.

State minister and TMC leader Firhad Hakim claimed that the

BJP restored to violence when the polling was going on in a peaceful manner.

"This is nothing but a ploy to disturb the peaceful polling process. When the BJP is losing its ground in West Bengal it is trying to create an atmosphere of violence. Both the candidates of BJP, Bharati Ghosh and Dilip Ghosh, are trying to disrupt peace on the polling day. They have nothing to do. Both know that people have rejected them," Hakim told PTI.

Ghatal's sitting MP Deepak Adhikary of the Trinamool Congress claimed that local people resisted because of Ghosh's bad attitude towards them.

"She is a former IPS officer and knows what to do and what not to. She is trying to break the law. I will ask her and every other candidate as well as the voters to stay calm.

Polling should happen peacefully," Dev told PTI.

BJP state president Dilip Ghosh said this is not for the first time that Bharati Ghosh was attacked.

"Since the TMC failed to stop her politically, it is trying to physically harm her," he said.

The Election Commission has deployed a total of 770 companies of central forces in the eight Lok Sabha seats, including Ghatal, where polling is underway.

12 Indians arrested for running illegal networking business in Nepal

SHIRISH B PRADHAN KATHMANDU, MAY 12 (PTI): Twelve Indian nationals have been arrested for allegedly running an illegal networking business and duping several people in the Himalayan nation, according to media reports.

All the 12 accused, belonging to Uttar Pradesh, were arrested from a hotel in Kathmandu on Friday while organising an orientation and training programme to run the illegal networking business for around 300 Nepalis, the Himalayan Times reported.

Networking business, under which money is sent to foreign countries without any legal channel, has been banned by Nepal Rastra Bank. "Six cases have already been registered against Rashid Nasin, 43, the master mind of the illegal networking

business," a spokesperson for the Metropolitan Crime Range DSP Hobindra Bogati was quoted as saying by the paper.

He further said the arrested had lied to people saying that they were operating diamond and jewellery related business.

"They were asking the people participating in the orientation to invest USD 1,250 promising them attractive return, he said.

The official said all the suspects have been taken into custody.

He further said the arrested Indian nationals had opened an unregistered marketing company in Nepal named Shine Group International.

"The arrestees have already swindled many Nepalis in the name of the company," the official said.

Eco-tourism destination in Odisha ravaged by tidal waves



KENDRAPARA (ODISHA), MAY 12 (PTI): The unmanned Habelikahti Island at Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara district, a favourite eco-tourism destination, has been ravaged by mighty tidal waves during cyclone Fani, forest officials said.

Cyclone Fani that made landfall near Puri on May 3, however, spared the rest sheds for tourists at the island, they said.

But a day later, on May 4, 10-foot high tidal waves shattered the seaside island, the Divisional Forest Officer of Rajnagar Mangrove (wildlife) Forest Division, Bimal Prasanna Acharya, said.

Four guest houses located near the sea bore

the brunt of the furious tidal waves.

The eco-tourism complex was further damaged with cracks developing in the structures due to the impact of the marauding sea waves, Acharya said.

The rest sheds for tourists have been shut down owing to safety reasons.

As the warning was sounded on the cyclone and possible ingress of tidal waves, the forest employees on duty were asked to vacate the island.

Most of the green cover has also been wiped out by the tidal waves, the official added.

Habelikahti Island is an unmanned territory in the Bay of Bengal off Odisha coast.

The gorgeous beach of the island has emerged as a nesting ground of endangered Olive Ridley sea turtles.

One could come across the breathtaking sight of turtles invading the beach en masse to lay eggs by digging pits with their flippers.

The turtles could be sighted at the place during February-March when the creatures turn up for their annual sojourn, the DFO said.

Besides, the island is also an ideal spot for sighting gangetic dolphins.

The green cover bordering the island is home to wild boars, jungle cats, fishing cats, hyenas, sambar, striped palm squirrel and water monitors, the wildlife official said.

People protest as Odisha struggles to restore normalcy post cyclone

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 12 (PTI): Unable to get power and water even nine days after Cyclone Fani ravaged coastal Odisha, angry people blocked roads at many places, including the state capital Bhubaneswar, on Sunday, demanding that the authorities address their problems quickly.

At several places, demonstrators alleged that the restoration work was hampered by a lack of management and coordination among various government agencies, thereby compounding the miseries of the cyclone-affected people.

Despite the state government saying it is trying to speed up efforts to restore electricity, water supply and telecom facilities, large number of areas remained in the dark for the tenth day since May 3, when the cyclone made landfall near Puri.

The extremely severe cyclone has killed 43 people, affected over 1.5 crore and left over five lakh with a permanent roof in 14,000 villages in 14 districts.

Not seeing much improvement in their situation has made people angry and impatient, who are now coming out on streets to protest against authorities.

Though the state government has claimed it

has restored electricity and drinking water supply lines in Bhubaneswar and urban areas of Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur and Cuttack districts, people on Sunday blocked roads in Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack and Khurda districts, besides the state capital.

As Bhubaneswar witnessed protests in Samantrapur, Nuagaon and Lingpur areas, traffic on Bhubaneswar-Puri highway was hit for some time, police said.

"We are forced to hit the road as the government has failed to provide basic necessities such as water and power despite having promised to restore power supply by Sunday, May 12," said a woman who joined a road blockade at Nuagaon.

"There is a limit to our patience. We are made to spend sleepless nights. We have to purchase drinking water at exorbitant prices," said another protester.

Aggrieved people also staged similar road blockades on Jagatsinghpur-Machagaon road and at some places in Cuttack and Khurda districts.

In the pilgrim town of Puri, worst hit by the cyclone, locals were moving out of the place temporarily.

In almost all electricity offices in coastal districts, police personnel have been deployed to tackle

people attempting to attack officials, a state government official said.

Information and Public Relations Secretary Sanjay Singh maintained that electricity will be restored in all areas of Bhubaneswar by Monday.

He also said water has been made available in all parts of the state capital.

Energy Secretary Hemant Sharma said 90 per cent of consumers will be able to get electricity by Monday and restoration work is in progress on war footing.

"As extensive damage was caused to power infrastructure, we are working on war footing with 7,000 power technicians from other states," he said.

The cyclone unleashed copious rain and windstorms that gusted up to 240 kmph on May 3, blowing away thatched houses and swamping towns and villages in Odisha.

The state government has announced a Rs 1,600-crore package for livelihood support to farmers, fishermen and others affected by Cyclone Fani.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik unveiled the package Saturday and included the support for people dependent on animal husbandry, fisheries, handloom and handicraft.

Workload Management: Most World Cup bound India players feature in all IPL matches

BHARAT SHARMA HYDERABAD, MAY 11 (PTI): 'Workload management' of the World Cup bound India players was paramount for captain Virat Kohli before the start of the IPL but most of them have ended up playing almost all the matches in the cash-rich league.

With good three weeks left before India start their World Cup campaign, the fatigue factor may not be an issue for the two-time champions even though everyone will be keen to note how the fast bowling unit holds up.

The Indian skipper had indicated at the start of the tournament that if any of the players feel that they need rest, they should go for it keeping World Cup in mind.

"If I'm able to play 10, 12 or 15 games, it doesn't necessarily mean that the other guy can only play that many. My body might

demand I play a certain number of games and I need to be smart about that and rest," Kohli had said before the IPL opener.

It was easier said than done in a league where private franchises would demand everything from their star players and it did happen that way.

Skipper Kohli, Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul, Mohammad Shami, Yuzvendra Chahal, Dinesh Karthik, Kedar Jadhav played all their 14 league games.

Vijay Shankar and Bhuvneshwar Kumar played 15 games. Shikhar Dhawan along with Ravindra Jadeja, Hardik Pandya and Jasprit Bumrah played 16 (including the final on Sunday). Mahendra Singh Dhoni played 15 games, including the grand finale.

The only person, who played less than 10 games is chinaman Kuldeep Yadav, who was dropped by KKR man-

agement after 9 games due to poor form.

As far as others are concerned, Dhoni missed a couple of games due to stiff back, Rohit was unfit for one game, Jadeja missed a game while Kedar was pulled out of the tournament after hurting shoulder in the final league game.

Luckily for India, India's main players escaped injuries which otherwise are very much a possibility over the course of such a long tournament, as experienced by leading South African pacers Dale Steyn and Kagiso Rabada, who are now racing against time to be fit for the World Cup.

As someone who also leads from the front when it comes to fitness, Kohli knows what he is doing but like he said at the start of IPL, what works for him might not work for others.

"Someone else's body might be more capable than mine or less, that is a very individual thing.

And everyone wants to play the World Cup, so people will be smart about it because you don't want to miss out on such a big event," Kohli had said.

A batsman like Rahul used the IPL to hit top form ahead of World Cup but managing workload is always a bigger concern for the fast bowlers.

While playing all the games do take a toll on your body, the counter argument presented by India vice-captain Rohit Sharma ahead of the IPL final also holds weight.

"We spoke at the start of the tournament (on workload management). Like in Jasprit's case, he is someone who likes to play games to make sure that he is in good rhythm. We spoke at any given stage, if he feels the need to rest, we were open for it.

"Anyone who plays the IPL and goes to a big tournament (like the World Cup) I feel it

keeps them very much in touch with their game. It is great tournament to hit form in. Hardik is one example," said the MI captain.

"He was injured before the IPL, missed a few games as well (for India), now he has done tremendously well for us. You can judge yourself where you are at ahead of a big tournament like the World Cup," added Rohit.

Talking about how the international players looked after their bodies during the league, KXIP physio Brett Harrop and Delhi Capitals scouting head Pravin Amre said the cricketers managed their workload like thorough professionals.

In Capitals' case, Dhawan and Rishabh Pant were in the World Cup scheme of things but in the end, only the veteran opener made the cut.

"The players (Indians and even foreigners) are thorough professionals. They know the importance of a World Cup. They took couple of days

off whenever there was a window. They were wary of their niggles and made sure it did not lead to an injury. That precaution was always taken," said Amre, who played the 1992 World Cup.

"Our team surely wanted to win but not at the cost of risking players' participation in the World Cup. There is also a two-week break before the World Cup and I feel it is enough time to recharge your batteries," said Amre.

In case of Rahul and Shami, the KXIP duo preserved their energies by not taking part in majority of the optional practice sessions, said Harrop.

"The players were given hand-outs from the Indian team physio and they were just following that. Since they played all the games and were match-fit, it made sense to skip the optional practice session. They did not spend a lot of time in the gym and just focused on recovery," said the Punjab team physio.

80 per cent polling recorded till 5 pm in 8 LS seats in Bengal



KOLKATA, MAY 12 (PTI): Nearly 80 per cent of the 1,33,69,749 electorate exercised their franchise till 5pm in eight Lok Sabha constituencies in West Bengal on Sunday, an election official said.

"Except some incidents of disturbances in Keshpur, polling is mostly peaceful. We have sought reports from the district officials about the incidents.

"In the eight Lok Sabha constituencies in the state, around 79.93 per cent of voters have cast their ballots till 5pm," a senior official of the state CEO's office told PTI.

Tamluk seat recorded the highest voter turnout at 82.99 per cent, followed by Bishnupur (SC) at 81.90 per cent, Jhargram (ST) at 81.68 per cent, Ghatal at 80.350 per cent, Kanthi at 80.06 per cent, Purulia at 78.64 per cent, Medinipur at 78.17 per cent and Bankura at 75.68 per cent, he said.

The eight constituencies are spread across five districts.

There were reports of an attack on BJP's Ghatal candidate, former IPS officer Bharati Ghosh, when she tried to enter a polling booth in Keshpur.

Ghosh's convoy was also targeted when locals started pelting stones and hurling bombs after she tried to enter another polling station in Keshpur.

One of her security guards was injured and a convoy vehicle damaged in the stone pelting following which the security officers allegedly restored to lathicharge.

It was also alleged that a Trinamool Congress worker was

injured in firing by personnel of the central forces, who were the BJP candidate.

Ghosh, however, denied the allegation.

The official said, "So far we have not received reports of any firing. We are looking into it. Our officials in the districts have been asked to send details of the incidents of attacks on Bharati Ghosh quickly."

The CEO also sought a report after Ghosh was seen making a videography inside a polling booth at Pikurda in Keshpur.

Ghosh's vehicle was again blocked by locals when she tried to enter Keshpur market area. The state police personnel, posted in the area, intervened and her vehicle was seized.

"Her vehicle has no valid pass to move around the area on polling day. We cannot allow her to move around like this. It is a matter of security," the police officer said.

After the seizure of her vehicle, a large number of protestors gathered there and she took shelter inside a temple in Keshpur market area, with her security officers guarding her.

The mob also pelted stones at the policemen who resorted to lathicharge to disperse them. Owners of shops in the market downed the shutters.

Ghosh was then taken to Keshpur police station to protect her from the wrath of the protestors.

BJP's candidate and state party president Dilip Ghosh also faced protests from locals when he tried to visit a polling booth in his constituency, Medinipur.

Tsitsipas stuns Nadal to set up Madrid final with Djokovic

Madrid, May 12 (AFP): Novak Djokovic will play Stefanos Tsitsipas for the Madrid Open title after the 20-year-old Greek stunned Rafael Nadal to win a thrilling semi-final 6-4 2-6 6-3 on his fourth match point.

Nadal had been a clear favourite to face Djokovic in Sunday's showpiece at Caja Magica but the 17-time Grand Slam champion extended his stuttering build-up to the French Open with another surprise defeat.

Tsitsipas' stunning victory on Saturday means he reaches his fourth ATP final of the season while fully vindicating those that have him circled as a future star of the men's game.

"Emotionally it was very tough, it was one of my toughest wins," he said.

It might be too early to expect the world number nine to challenge at Roland Garros later this month but, with a fearless style and formidable forehand, Tsitsipas is developing a habit of delivering on the big stage.

In terms of career wins, this perhaps trails only his ousting of Roger Federer from the Australian Open in January, when he went on to reach the semi-finals for his best run yet at a Grand Slam.

But, as well as Federer and Nadal, Tsitsipas has now beaten Alex-



ander Zverev and Dominic Thiem, both twice, and Djokovic, whom he played on hard in Canada last year and prevailed in three sets.

He will draw confidence from that result ahead of Sunday's final but arguably even more so from overcoming Nadal, on clay, which Djokovic had earlier described as the "ultimate challenge" following his own 7-6 (7/2) 7-6 (7/4) victory over Dominic Thiem.

By his own high standards, Nadal's clay-court swing has been disappointing. He lost in the last four in both Monte Carlo and Barcelona, arriving in Madrid without winning either tournament for the first time since 2015.

"It's a lost chance," admitted five-time cham-

pion Nadal after his third straight semi-final defeat on clay.

- DJOKOVIC ENHANCES PARIS CREDENTIALS -

Few would bet against the Spaniard claiming a 12th success in Paris but the showings of Djokovic, and even Thiem, in this tournament suggests it is far from a foregone conclusion.

Djokovic enhanced his credentials as perhaps the greatest threat by edging past Thiem, who took down Nadal en route to clinching the trophy in Barcelona last month and had also knocked out Federer in the Madrid quarter-finals.

"I thought coming into the match, he was the favourite to win it," Djokovic said.

"So that's why it's a great win for me." Since

taking a month off after winning the Australian Open, Djokovic had also stuttered, enduring early exits in Indian Wells, Miami and then Monte Carlo.

But Thiem found the 31-year-old close to his best, delivering a timely reminder of why he has won the last three Grand Slam titles and will hold all four concurrently by winning his 16th at the French Open.

"It was a very important win for me against one of the best players in the world," said Djokovic, a two-time champion in Madrid.

"He's getting back to his 100 percent again," Thiem said.

"The closer it comes to the Grand Slams, the better he'll play and we are pretty close to the French Open.

Juventus lose their stripes as new kit unveiled



MILAN, MAY 12 (AFP): Serie A champions Juventus on Sunday unveiled their new home kit for the 2019-20 season, which for the first time in over a century removes the iconic black-and-white stripes traditionally worn by players.

The club was founded in 1897, but players have worn black and white stripes of various types since 1903.

Next season Cristiano Ronaldo and his teammates will wear a half-and-half jersey with white on the right and black on the left.

The team will debut the new jersey against Roma in Serie A on Sunday in the Stadio Olimpico.

"The daring new design evokes the past, whilst igniting the future of the club through the evolution of the iconic black and white stripes," the team said.

"An unexpected flash of pink sits at the heart of the design and honours the first colour the club ever played in."

Juventus are the record Serie A winners with 35 titles, including the last eight in a row.

Pacquiao to fight Thurman in WBA welterweight showdown



LOS ANGELES, MAY 12 (AFP): end Manny Pacquiao will fight Keith Thurman on July 20 in a World Boxing Association welterweight title showdown, promoters said.

An announcement on Saturday on the Fox television broadcast of the Premier Boxing Champions card featuring Jarrett Hurd and Julian Williams confirmed the bout.

Eight-division world champion Pacquiao, 40, is coming off a January victory

over American Adrien Broner that took his record to 61-7-2 with 39 knockouts.

He holds the WBA's secondary "world" welterweight title.

In Thurman he'll be taking on the WBA's "super world champion" in the division.

Thurman returned from a near two-year layoff to retain his title with a 12-round majority decision over Josesito Lopez on January 26.

The venue for the fight was not announced.

Neymar scores on final game before ban, Monaco in trouble

Paris, May 12 (AFP): Neymar responded to being handed a three-match ban by scoring as champions Paris Saint-Germain ended their three-game losing streak away from home with a 2-1 Ligue 1 victory at Angers.

Thomas Tuchel's PSG have seen their season fizzle out since a shock Champions League exit at the hands of Manchester United in March, losing the French Cup final and embarking on a run of just one win in seven matches.

The return of Neymar from a foot problem on Saturday has been a plus, with the world's most expensive player finding form ahead of his Copa America campaign with Brazil, which starts next month.

The 27-year-old's suspension for lashing out at a fan following PSG's penalty-shootout loss to Rennes in the French Cup final comes into effect on Monday, while he will also miss three Champions League games at the start of next season for criticising the referee after the Man United defeat.

But he scored his third goal in four games on his final appearance of the season to give PSG a 20th-minute lead at the



Stade Raymond-Kopa, diving to head home Dani Alves' scooped pass.

And Neymar turned provider as Angel Di Maria nodded in at the back post just before the hour mark to double the visitors' advantage.

But PSG have conceded 18 goals in eight games, failing to keep a clean sheet, after Flavien Tait grabbed a late consolation for midtable Angers, tapping in the rebound after Gianluigi Buffon had saved his penalty.

The French giants will now hope to ensure that the underwhelming win does not prove to be Neymar's final match for the club, ahead of the start of the transfer window next month.

"Neymar played well,

but these are the things that we expect from him -- that he is decisive for us, scores goals and makes assists," said head coach Tuchel. "It's his job, because it's his talent."

- MONACO SLIP BACK INTO DANGER -
Later on Saturday, Monaco's slide back towards danger continued as a 1-0 defeat at Nimes left them only one goal above the relegation play-off place, level on points with Caen.

Despite having a strong side available including Radamel Falcao, Rony Lopes and Gelson Martins, Monaco fell behind in only the ninth minute to Renaud Ripart's flying header. Leonardo Jardim's men plugged away, but never looked like equal-

ising in another lifeless display as Nimes missed a hatful of second-half chances to put the game to bed.

The principality club -- who appeared to have surged away from the wrong end of the table after Jardim first retook the reins from Thierry Henry -- are winless in seven matches, managing just three points from a possible 21.

Their host fellow strugglers Amiens next weekend before visiting Nice on the final day of the regular season.

Elsewhere, 18th-placed Caen beat Reims 3-2 to pile the pressure on Monaco with only that single strike on goal difference now separating the two.

Second-bottom Dijon poured further misery onto Falcao and company as substitute Kwon Chang-hoon scored a dramatic 94th-minute winner to snatch a 2-1 victory over Strasbourg.

Dijon, in the automatic relegation zone, are now just two points behind Caen and Monaco with two games to play.

Amiens sit two points clear of that pair after playing out a drab goalless stalemate with Toulouse.

Pakistan the latest left wondering how to stop Buttler



SOUTHAMPTON (UNITED KINGDOM), MAY 12 (AFP): How do you stop Jos Buttler? It was a question that was being asked again after the talented batsman's latest one-day international hundred saw England to a 12-run win over Pakistan in the second one-day international on Saturday.

With a home World Cup just weeks away, Buttler's 110 not out, which saw him reach three figures off just 50 balls, was another reminder of his match-winning ability in white-ball cricket.

This was Buttler's eighth century in 129 matches at this level, with the England ODI wicket-keeper now having scored 3,497 runs at an average of 42.

But what makes Buttler a particularly devastating batsman in this format is a strike-rate of 119.88 -- a figure bettered only by the West Indies' Andre Russell (130.45) and Australia's Glenn Maxwell (121.95).

Russell, however, has only scored 998 runs in 52 ODIs, with Maxwell making 2,700 in 100 matches.

Alterations in field and bouncer restrictions, a reduction in the number of overs in an ODI, generally shorter boundaries and the change to a ball from each end as opposed to just one for

a full duration of an innings, make comparisons across the generations arguably even harder than they would be in Test cricket.

For many observers that means Vivian Richards remains the most destructive one-day batsmen they've seen.

The West Indies great scored 6,721 runs in 187 ODIs including 11 hundreds at an average of 47, -- a tally including a brilliant, match-winning 138 not out in the 1979 World Cup final against England at Lord's -- with a strike-rate of 90.20.

But just as Richards revolutionised ODI batting with extraordinary 'inside out' drives to the boundary or bowlers as fast as Australia's Jeff Thomson, so are Buttler's range of scoops and flicks helping expand the repertoire of present-day run-getters.

Buttler's success is also a matter of attitude as well as talent -- as evidence by the words "fuck it" he has written on the top of his bat handle to remind him of his best approach to batting.

- 'NO ANSWER' -
Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur admitted he was at a loss about the best way to stop Buttler following the 28-year-old's batting fireworks in Southampton.

"Oh, I don't know, I've just asked the bowlers actually. They didn't give me an answer either," Arthur said after Pakistan fell 1-0 behind in this five-match series.

"We'll sit down and analyse that and try to work out a plan.

"I don't think we're going to stop him, we've got to find a way to get him out. The longer he bats he's going to do some serious damage."

England captain Eoin Morgan had arguably the best view in the ground while making a far from sluggish 71 not out while sharing an unbroken stand of 162 with Buttler that took the hosts to 373 for three in their 50 overs.

"He's very good. He really is," left-hander Morgan told Sky Sports.

"I was in prime position to see the whole innings and his freakish knocks seem to be getting closer and closer together, so that's a good sign for us moving forward.

"But he seems to have a gear that not many of us have. I certainly don't have it, but it's great to watch.

"He always seem to time his run really well, regardless of what time he comes in, he always seems to have enough balls to go on and bang a 50-ball hundred.

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Solskjaer issues fitness warning to United flops

MANCHESTER, MAY 12 (AFP): Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has told Manchester United's players they risk being omitted from the club's pre-season tour if they report back unfit.

United manager Solskjaer has repeatedly expressed his frustration at the fitness levels of his players since he took over in December.

Solskjaer is of the view that United have to be able to match their rivals physically if they are to close the huge gap between themselves and the top of the Premier League table next season.

United are 29 points behind leaders Manchester City going into the final round of league matches on Sunday, with Solskjaer suggesting that even next season, United are unlikely to mount a title challenge.

He feels the key to improvement is to make a fast start and build momentum, which is why he wants his players to return for pre-season training on July 1 in their best possible shape.

United are scheduled to visit Australia, Singapore and China for four matches in July, although their schedule could be disrupted if they are forced to start in the second qualifying round of next season's Europa League.

They are set to face Perth Glory on July 13, staying in the Australian city to take on Leeds four days later, then moving on to face Inter Milan in Singapore on July 20 and Tottenham in Shanghai on July 25.

That final match will have to move if United finish sixth in the Premier League and Watford



win the FA Cup; in those circumstances, Solskjaer's team would have to start in the Europa League qualifiers in late July.

The United manager, though, is focusing on making sure his players are ready, whatever their schedule.

- 'IT'S NOT A THREAT' -
"The players have all got their programmes to do over the summer. We expect them to be ready to go on July 1 when we

start," he said.

"We're not going to use the first 10 days to build them up. They should be ready to go. We've got a longer summer break than any of the other challengers and we need to use that as an advantage.

"It's not like a threat, but whoever is not ready on July 1 will probably stay here and not travel with us because we only want players we can use over there." Solskjaer

is looking to his experienced players to ensure United do not struggle again next season.

"It's down to me and the coaching staff. We drive this, we lead them on, but we want the players to be the main core of the surge forward, and we've got some experienced lads," he said.

"And we've spoken to them to say: 'We expect you to take charge next year.' We want them to, because we trust them.

"It's about getting momentum as well. The start of the season is going to be massive for us. If we can get the momentum early on, I'm sure we can catch a few teams.

"Our supporters know football. They know that teams go in cycles at times. Now it might be the start of a new team and era."

Trump to China: Trade deal now or it will be 'far worse' after 2020

WASHINGTON, MAY 12 (AFP): President Donald Trump warned China on Saturday that it should strike a trade deal with the United States now, otherwise an agreement would be "far worse for them if it has to be negotiated in my second term".

Washington and Beijing are locked in a trade battle that has seen mounting tariffs, sparking fears the dispute will damage the global economy.

Two days of talks ended Friday with no deal. China's top negotiator said the two sides would meet again in Beijing at an unspecified date, but warned that China would make no concessions on "important principles."

"I think that China felt they were being beaten so badly in the recent negotiation that they may as well wait around for the next election, 2020, to see if they could get lucky & have a Democrat win -- in which case they

would continue to rip-off the USA for 500 Billion a year," Trump said in a tweet Saturday.

"The only problem is that they know I am going to win (best economy & employment numbers in U.S. history, & much more), and the deal will become far worse for them if it has to be negotiated in my second term. Would be wise for them to act now, but love collecting BIG TARIFFS!" Trump had accused Beijing of renegeing on its commitments in trade talks and ordered new punitive duties, which took effect Friday, on 200 billion worth of Chinese imports, raising them to 25 percent from 10 percent.

He then cranked up the heat further, ordering a tariff hike on almost all remaining imports -- 300 billion worth, according to US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer -- from the world's second-biggest economy.

Those tariffs would



not take effect for months, after a period of public comment.

Trump also said Saturday that firms could easily avoid additional costs by producing goods in the United States.

"Such an easy way to avoid Tariffs? Make or produce your goods and products in the good old USA. It's very simple!" he tweeted, echoing a similar message he sent Friday -- and even retweeted.

Only a week earlier, the United States and

China had seemed poised to complete a sweeping agreement.

Washington wants Beijing to tighten its intellectual property protections, cut its subsidies to state-owned firms and reduce the yawning trade deficit; China wants an end to tariffs as part of a "balanced" deal.

While supporters laud Trump as a tough negotiator, free-traded-minded Republicans have warned that the tariffs could do real damage to the economy, and

many farmers -- including Trump supporters -- say the tariffs have hit their bottom line.

As the trade war spread, China imposed 110 billion in duties on farm exports and other US goods.

Republican Senator Chuck Grassley, from the farm state of Iowa, cautiously welcomed the new tariffs but urged negotiators to reach a quick solution "so we can avoid prolonged tariffs, which we know have an impact on the US economy."

In Mexico, 35 bodies found in mass graves

GUADALAJARA, MAY 12 (AFP): Local authorities have discovered the remains of 35 people in mass graves in violent Jalisco state, on Mexico's central Pacific coast, officials said Saturday.

Prosecutor Gerardo Octavio Solis said most of the bodies were located at a ranch in the town of Zapopan.

Among the dead, "27

of the bodies had been tied up when killed. And we have two people identified at this time," Solis told a news conference.

The number of dead could still rise as the forensics team wraps up processing of the site, he warned.

"We are digging more than three meters deep. We are also using

heavy machinery, with engineers to do structural calculations as we don't want to weaken some of the perimeter walls," he added.

Solis said the skulls of seven other people and other human remains were discovered on the premises of a house located in Guadalajara, Mexico's second most populous city.

Families with missing kin have rushed to authorities in Jalisco asking for details on the exhumations.

More than 40,000 people have gone missing and are presumed dead since Mexico's war on drugs was militarized with federal troops in late 2006.

More than 250,000

people have been killed in violent crime in Mexico since then, according to government data. The data does not say how many cases were linked to organized crime.

Last year in Jalisco state alone there were 2,418 homicides.

From January to March this year there were 720 murders in the state, official data show.

8 'terrorist' suspects killed in Saudi Arabia: state media

RIYADH, MAY 12 (AFP): Eight members of a "terrorist" cell were killed on Saturday in a police raid in Saudi Arabia's eastern Qatif region, a Shiite minority stronghold, state media reported.

The recently-formed cell was preparing to carry out "terrorist" activities against the security of the country, the official Saudi Press Agency reported citing a state security spokesman.

He said the men were killed after they fired shots at security forces, who had surrounded a residential apartment in the Sanabis neighbourhood.

"They were called on to surrender, but they did not respond and opened fire at the security forces... which resulted in their killing," said the spokesman.

No civilians or securi-



ty forces were injured in the operation, he added.

Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province -- which includes Qatif -- has seen bouts of unrest since 2011 when protesters emboldened by the Arab Spring uprisings took to the streets.

The demonstrators have demanded an end to what they say is discrimination by the Sunni-dominated government, a charge Riyadh denies.

One of the leaders of

the protest movement, prominent Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr, was executed in 2016 for "terrorism".

Nimr's execution exacerbated sectarian tension both across the Gulf and with Saudi Arabia's main regional rival, Shiite Iran.

The Shiite community is estimated to make up between 10 and 15 percent of the kingdom's population of 32 million, but the government has released no official statistics.

Theresa May to set date for resignation soon, says MP



ADITI KHANNA

LONDON, MAY 11 (PTI): Theresa May could be forced to set an exact date for her resignation as Conservative Party leader to make way for a new British Prime Minister in the coming days, a senior Tory MP has said.

Sir Graham Brady, who chairs the influential backbench 1922 Committee of the Conservative Party, told the BBC that he expects a "clear understanding" of May's departure timetable once she has met the committee on Wednesday.

"It would be strange for that not to result in a clear understanding (of when she will leave) at the end of the meeting," said Brady.

The 1922 Committee has asked for "clarity" about her plans for the future, and she "offered to come and meet with the executive", he said.

May has already announced back in March that she would step down as British PM once the Brexit process has been finalised but the pressure from within her party has only mounted for her to actually name a specific end date for her tenure.

On why the PM had so far been unwilling to

set a date to step down, Brady said: I don't think it's about an intention for staying indefinitely as prime minister or leader of the Conservative Party.

"I think the reticence is the concern that by promising to go on a certain timetable, it might make it less likely she would secure Parliamentary approval for the withdrawal agreement, rather than more likely."

A massive backlash against the Conservatives from voters in local elections earlier this month and fears of a similar drubbing in the European Parliament elections on May 23 have led Tory MPs to intensify their efforts to remove May as leader.

The UK was due to leave the European Union (EU) on March 29 but the deadline has now been pushed back to October 31 after Parliament has repeatedly rejected May's withdrawal agreement from the 28-member economic bloc.

Cross-party talks with Opposition Labour Party are ongoing in an attempt to arrive at a consensus that could pass through the UK Parliament, and meanwhile May's leadership woes continue to dominate headlines.

Sri Lanka imposes curfew in western coastal town after communal clashes



COLOMBO, MAY 12 (PTI): Sri Lankan police on Sunday imposed curfew with immediate effect in the country's western coastal town of Chilaw after a mosque and few shops owned by Muslims were attacked by a mob, authorities said.

The curfew has been imposed till 6 am Monday as a precaution, the police said.

Additional troops have been deployed in the city to bring the situation under control, they said.

Tension was brewing since Saturday between the Catholics and Muslims in the Christian dominated town. This is a fallout from the Easter Sunday attacks in which over 250 people were killed.

Nine suicide bombers, including a woman, carried out a series of devastating blasts that tore through three churches and three luxury hotels, killing 258 people and injuring over 500 others on the Easter Sunday.

The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack, but the

government has blamed local Islamist extremist group, the National Thawheed Jama'ath (NTJ), for the bombings.

Some inflammatory exchanges happened between the two communities in the town since Saturday, the residents said.

A Catholic woman claimed that she was threatened inside a Muslim-owned shop.

Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo, cancelled all masses since the Easter Sunday until the security situation could improve.

It was just this morning that churches resumed their normal Sunday services since the attack.

Early this month, several people were injured in clashes between Muslims and Christians in Negombo, a majority Christian town where St. Sebastian's Church was targeted during the Easter attacks.

After clashes in Negombo, Cardinal Ranjith appealed to Christians and other communities to show restraint.

"I appeal to all Catho-

lic and Christian brothers and sisters not to hurt even a single Muslim person because they are our brothers, because they are part of our religious culture," said Ranjith.

"Therefore please avoid hurting them and try to create a better spirit of understanding and good relations between all the communities of Sri Lanka."

In his address to the nation after the Easter Sunday blasts, President Maithripala Sirisena called on the public to refrain from looking at the Muslim community with a suspicious eye following the attacks.

"It was only a small group which had engaged in such acts of terror," he added.

Sri Lanka has a population of 21 million which is a patchwork of ethnicities and religions, dominated by the Sinhalese Buddhist majority.

Muslims account for 10 per cent of the population and are the second-largest minority after Hindus. Around seven per cent of Sri Lankans are Christians.



Gully boys to global stars: How Suresh Mukund led 'The Kings' to glory

JUSTIN RAO

MUMBAI, MAY 12 (PTI): With torn jeans and slippers, Suresh Mukund's group entered their first dance reality show a decade ago. Last week, The Kings scripted history: winning "World of Dance" and walking away with USD 1 million.

The Kings, also known as 'Kings United', shot to global fame after they won the third season of the US reality show recently.

The story of its founder and choreographer, Mukund, remarkably follows every beat of a Bollywood film: an impossible dream, a dotting father, an underdog team, a group split, starting from the scratch and winning the biggest championship.

"The journey has been full of struggles, pain, sacrifices, and yes, it is a bit filmy," Mukund told PTI.

Belonging to a middle class family in Maharashtra's Vasai, Mukund started 'Fictitious' dance group between 2008-2009 along with his partner Vernon Monterio, which mostly consisted of young and aspirational dancers from Nalasopara-Vasai belt.

"Back then, there was only one reality show, 'Boogie Woogie', and no social media. Our dancers didn't even have a smartphone. But last week they were trending on Twitter. Can you imagine how... dreamy that is?"

For Mukund and team, the struggle was immense a decade ago. They battled not only scepticism regarding their ambitions but also financial constraints.

"Initially we had few dancers who didn't have money at all. They came from poor families and didn't even have shoes. When we went to 'Boogie Woogie', some were wearing torn jeans and were on stage in slippers.

"That day I told one of my crew members, that someday these people will be stars. This time when the prize money was announced, I was recollecting those memories. They became stars after all."



Much before "World of Dance", Mukund and Monterio's group was already on a roll. They had won the reality show "India's Got Talent" and they were noticed by filmmaker-choreographer Remo D'Souza.

In 2015, Remo made "ABCD 2", inspired by their life. But before the release of the film, the group split.

"As I was always known as a part of the 'Fictitious' group, once we split, I was suddenly out of work. I gathered some people with me - some old, some new and started Kings United."

Mukund said he knew he had to come back stronger and the only way to do that was by winning the next competition in sight: World Hip Hop Dance Championship 2015.

"But because it was a new group, I had no one backing me. We had no place to rehearse and we just had 20 days to practice for the championship."

It was then Mukund found a huge support in his father.

"My dad is into construction. He used to help me financially. But after we won 'India's Got Talent', I stopped asking him for anything. But now I had no one to go.

"So I asked my father to provide me with a place as I needed to start from

scratch. He built us a concrete place with tin sheds from all four corners. Whatever we did, we did it from that tiny place."

'Kings United' eventually went on to win the bronze medal in the championship.

"I think what my father built for us, it was extremely lucky. When we came back, we constructed the place properly. Today, it is India's biggest dance studio. It's the same place where we practised for 'World of Dance' too."

Mukund is aware how far The Kings can go from here. A global platform has opened up for them and has also given him the opportunity to pursue his other ambitions.

"I want to establish myself as a Bollywood choreographer first and then want to go into direction. That will take time, but I'm prepared for it. That's on my bucket list."

But till that dream is achieved, Mukund wants to give it all to dancing and to his crew.

"The level of struggle they have gone through and the faith they had in me, I'm thankful. It's incredible to have something like that. That someday, a group of dancers from a local gully would become global stars."



KIM TOOK "CORSET BREATHING LESSONS" FOR MET GALA: The 38-year-old Keeping Up With the Kardashians star revealed on Friday that she took actual "corset breathing lessons" from famous corsetmaker Mr Pearl to prepare for this past Monday's 2019 Met Gala. Kim wore a custom-made nude silicone organza dress that French designer Manfred Thierry Mugler designed to look like a "California girl stepping out of the ocean." The outfit included a Mr Pearl corset and was paired with a "wet" hairstyle and makeup.

It seems wiser to let go: Arunoday Singh announces split from wife

MUMBAI, MAY 11 (PTI): Actor Arunoday Singh on Saturday announced that he and his wife of over two years, Lee Elton, have decided to part ways.

The 36-year-old actor shared the news of his separation on Instagram.

"I haven't been writing or posting for a while. There's a reason for it, a rather sad one: My marriage seems to be over.

"Turns out we were very good at love, but couldn't survive reality. Despite our best efforts, professional counselling, and a current trial separation, nothing seems to have helped bridge the fundamental differences that have emerged between us. It seems wiser to let go. I think we both deserve better. We shall try to resolve this with compassion and dignity," Arunoday said in a statement posted on his official Instagram account. The actor and Elton had tied the knot in December 2016 as per Hindu rituals in a grand ceremony in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.



"I believe I am not the hero of this film. The mission is heroic. They are not behaving like heroes even though their life is heroic. I never wanted to work on this film thinking I am a mainstream commercial hero.

"They do not have hero-like body language or personality. They are normal in the film. And that was the most challenging and exciting part. Raj sir told me do not think, stand and talk like a hero and imagine that you are saying these lines from your heart. I had to be as normal as I can," Arjun said.

The "Mubarakan" actor said he met few police officers before working on the film to get an idea about how they lead their lives.

"Ironically during 'Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar' I had met cops in Delhi so I had some kind of understanding. But Raj sir made me meet certain people to understand the calmness. Violence is the last resort for these people. The film is all about that.

Left trappings of quintessential Hindi film hero for 'India's Most Wanted': Arjun

KOMAL PANCHAMATIA

MUMBAI, MAY 12 (PTI): He may have played a typical hero in quite a few films but Arjun Kapoor says for his upcoming movie "India's Most Wanted", he shed the skin of the true-blue Bollywood lead.

The actor, who plays Intelligence Bureau officer Prabhat in the film, said his character may not fall in the bracket of a hero but its journey is inspiring.

"I did not have any burden and trappings of a Hindi film hero to play this part. It is a commercial setting but it is new-age. I can expect anyone and everyone who would want to watch this inspirational story.

"There might be a lack of heroism in the character but the heroism is in the film and that for me was very exciting and new. It stayed with me in a way that I felt I will enjoy doing these kind of films," Arjun told PTI in an interview.

The 33-year-old actor said, to get his part right in the Raj Kumar Gupta-directed movie, he tried to understand the mindset of his character.

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Aries:

You can expect your love life to take a dramatic turn for the better, Aries. This may be because you feel more self-confident than you have in a long time. In addition, you feel great and look even better. It's no wonder your romantic partner is reacting to you in such a powerful, positive way. Make the most of this opportunity by spending some quality time together.

Taurus

You're looking good and feeling great, Taurus. Now if only your home environment reflected who you are. As you look around, you may realize that it isn't as elegant as it could be. Today you can begin to change it. Begin with the basics - tidy up and clear away clutter. Once all the extraneous items are gone, you can begin to look at more serious changes.

Gemini

Sign up for a class or workshop today. Your career could greatly benefit from more training. A short computer course might be all you need to move your

career a giant leap forward. Don't neglect your artistic abilities, Gemini. Ideally, you will find a way to integrate your creative talents into your daily business life. There's always room for creativity

Cancer

You've been working especially hard lately, Cancer, and today you may begin to reap the benefits of all your hard work. Some project that's dear to your heart may be nearing completion, and even you are impressed by the results! All those naysayers who said it would never work are now looking at you with admiration and respect. Give yourself a pat on the back for your accomplishment.

Leo

There's no other way to say this, Leo - you're in the mood for love. Tonight you may feel a strong urge to be with your partner. If there isn't one in your life, you should take steps to correct that. You may meet someone who sweeps you off your feet. You want to be head-in-the-clouds in love, which is the only way to be!

Virgo

You have a generous spirit, Virgo, which could get you into trouble if you aren't careful. When you get a gift of money or even a hint of one, your tendency is to buy presents for all your friends. It's hard to fault you for this, but there are other ways to show your affection. You could bake cookies to distribute, for example. This will keep your money safe and earning interest.

Libra

You hardly even believe in love, much less love at first sight, Libra, but something that occurs today may turn you into a believer. You never know when it will happen. You could be in line at the grocery store when someone catches your eye (and heart). Perhaps someone with whom you've only had a phone relationship suddenly shows up at your office. Adventure lies ahead

Scorpio

It's likely a hidden talent of yours is revealed today, Scorpio. All those scraps of writing could turn into something more concrete, such as a novel. Maybe you begin to dabble with your children's paint set and realize how much you enjoy the creative process. Be open to all possibilities. You may find your life takes a different, more authentic direction.

Sagittarius

You will feel especially close to family and friends today, Sagittarius. There's a lot of positive energy in the air, and people feel optimistic and congenial. It's a pleasure to be with your loved ones, and interactions with strangers have a lovely flavor as well. Take advantage of the warm astral energy and plan a get-together with your favorite people. You will enjoy growing closer.

Capricorn

You're likely feeling confident, optimistic, and enthusiastic today, Capricorn. You feel as though anything is possible, and indeed it is. If you feel a bit of wanderlust and are anxious to explore new places and meet new

people, you may soon receive the chance. Life is one great big adventure. You're fortunate to have the sort of spirit that embraces it fully.

Aquarius

You have a wonderful combination of optimism and spirituality, Aquarius. You believe in miracles as well as angels, Santa Claus, and the Tooth Fairy. We support your attitude wholeheartedly! Today something may happen that only further solidifies your beliefs. Perhaps your guardian angel saves you from stepping in front of a bus, or you receive a telepathic message that stops you from making a bad career mistake.

Pisces

Don't be afraid to ask for help today, Pisces. It may be that your friends and family help you with a task or you discover a mechanized solution that does the job for you. Technology can be a wonderful thing. Don't let any aversion to it stop you from incorporating it into your daily life. You will find that once you embrace innovation, it improves your quality of life dramatically