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# SummitTIMES

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# Road to Mangan blocked again by landslide

WANGCHUK BHUTIA MANGAN, 29 MAY:

andslide triggered by heavy rain has Lagain blocked the North Sikkim high-

ing to Mangan had to take a detour via Dzongu. Traffic is expected to be restored by Thursday morning. Some commut- work was done.

way at 4th mile today. Light vehicles plywhile stranded tourist vehicles managed to cross the stretch after some restoration

#### Jacob Khaling appointed Political Secretary to CM

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 29 MAY:

Sikkim Krantikari Mor-cha Spokesperson, Jacob Khaling, was appointed Political Secretoday. The notification to the Chief Minister.

announcing his appointment also informs that the post will carry Minister of State rank. Also today, SKM's Bikash Basnet was appointed tary to the Chief Minister Confidential Assistant

Bharat Basnet, and was

attended by SPCC office bearers, all candidates

fielded by the party in

the recently concluded

elections, party workers

and supporters.

and fair election.

President of SPCC,

Mr Basnet has tendered

his resignation from his

post, on moral grounds,

taking responsibility for

the party's poor perfor-

mance in the recently

concluded assembly and

Lok Sabha elections. A re-

port has been forwarded

to the All India Congress

Committee regarding the

current developments

and the SPCC's propos-

al for re-structuring the

party in the state. The

present office bearers

will continue with their

respective responsibili-

ties till further decisions

are taken by the AICC, the

#### SPCC dismayed over SKM's over-eager support for BJP

**SUMMIT REPORT** GANGTOK, 29 MAY:

Tikkim Pradesh Con-**J**gress Committee has expressed dismay over the present Chief Minister, PS Tamang's [Golay] announcement that his government was a part of the BIP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), immediately after he called on the Governor of Sikkim, as per a press release.

"It is the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) party that has received the people's mandate and not the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and such hurried announcements immediately upon forming the government smacks of betrayal of the electorates' faith in

them," the party has said. SPCC extends its best wishes to the new government, and hopes they will work without compromising the provisions of Article 371F in any manner, and keeping the interests of Sikkim and the Sikkimese people in highest regard, the release adds.

Meanwhile, a review and analysis meeting of the party was held today at SPCC head office, 6th Mile, Tadong. The meeting was presided over by SPCC president,

release mentions. visit us at www.summittimes.com

## Sikkim Chess team of 6-yrolds leaves for National C'ship



**SUMMIT REPORT** GANGTOK, 29 MAY:

The party expressed four-member Sikkim Achess Association gratitude, appreciation and thanks to all its can-[SCA] team is leaving on didates, party workers Thursday to represent and supporters for their Sikkim in the 33rd Ediparticipation tion of National U-7 Open and hard work during & Girls Chess Champithe elections. The SPCC onship, 2019 to be held also thanked the Elecfrom 01–06 June at Koltion Commission, all kata in West Bengal. This Returning Officers, law is for the first time that enforcing and security a very young U-7 team agencies, and all other from Sikkim is particsupporting staff for conipating in the national ducting a peaceful, free championship.

The team members are six-year-old, Aaradhya Raj Adhikari, sixyear-old, Pragyan Sharma, six-year-old, Atisha Chettri and six-year-old Manasvi Acharya. The team is led by Leela Prasad Acharya as team coach-cum-manager. The team is also accompanied by parents of the state team members.

Speaking to media persons, SCA general secretary, Mahendra Dhakal mentioned that for the first time the association is sending a team with such young members. This is a good sign of the development of chess in Sikkim in all age groups, he said.

"This time, the team members will also be accompanied by their parents and this would be a motivation for players and the parents as well. This is a good sign for the further development of chess," he said.

Mr Dhakal stated that all team members performed well in the recent North East Chess Championship held in Sikkim. Aaradhya won a gold medal, Atisha won a silver medal and Pragyan and Manasvi won a bronze medal each in the north east championship.

He expressed hope for a better performance by the State team members in the national championship.

"This national championship would be a big exposure for these young players to test their performance among leading players of the country," he added.

# Governor in Delhi for swearing-in of PM Modi

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 29 MAY:

overnor of Sikkim, **G**anga Prasad called on Union Home Minister, Rajnath Singh at his residence at Akbar Road, New Delhi this evening, a press release informs.

It was a courtesy call by the Governor wherein he extended his greetings and congratulated the Union Minister for historic mandate achieved by the Bharatiya Janata Party and National Democratic Alliance led by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi in the recently concluded General Elections 2019.

The Governor is in Delhi on invitation from Rashtrapati Bhavan to attend the Swearing in Ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Council of Ministers for second consecutive time scheduled for Thursday evening at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

It may be mentioned



that Sikkim Krantikari Morcha president and Chief Minister, PS Tamang [Golay], Lok Sabha MP, Indra Hang Subba, Political Secretary to CM, Jacob Khaling and Confidential Assistant to CM, Bikash Basnett are also in Delhi for the swearing-in.

# Swearing-in does not make Golay eligible: SDF

**SUMMIT REPORT** GANGTOK, 29 MAY:

Cikkim Democratic Front has today Said that PS Tamang [Golay] being sworn in as the Chief Minister was no proof of his eligibility either for the post or even to contest elections. In allegations that it had misled people the party states. on Mr Tamang's disqualification from contesting elections.

general secretary [press & publicity], Kavita Subba, further states that even if the agencies tasked with holding up the constitution opted to ignore constitutional provisions on the matter, it does not mean that there are no higher agencies to address the issue. Law this regard, the party has dismissed and truth will prevail sooner or later,

At the same time, SDF president, Pawan Chamling has congratulated An SDF press release issued by its Mr Tamang and his team, it is added.

### Banks can use Aadhaar for KYC with customer's consent: RBI

MUMBAI, MAY 29 (PTI): Banks can use Aadhaar for KYC verification with the customer's consent, the Reserve Bank said Wednesday as it updated its list of documents eligible for identification of individuals.

The RBI specifies Know Your Customer (KYC) norms to be followed by banks and other entities regulated by it for various customer services, including opening of bank accounts.

"Banks have been allowed to carry out Aadauthentication/ offline-verification of an individual who voluntarily uses his Aadhaar

number for identification purpose," the central bank said in its amended Master Direction on KYC.

In February, the Union Cabinet had appromulgation proved of an ordinance to allow voluntary use of the 12-digit unique number as identity proof for opening bank account and procuring mobile phone connection.

The ordinance was necessitated as a bill, passed by the Lok Sabha on January 4 but pending in the Rajya Sabha, would have lapsed with the dissolution of the current Lok Sabha. The ordinance gave effect

to changes in the Aadhaar Act such as giving a child an option to exit from the biometric ID programme on attaining 18 years of age.

The RBI further said that 'Proof of possession of Aadhaar number' has been added to the list of Officially Valid Documents (OVD).

For customer identification of individuals, the RBI said those desirous of receiving any benefit or subsidy under direct benefit transfer (DBT), the bank should obtain the customer's Aadhaar and may carry out its e-KYC authentication.

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# International Everest Day celebrated at Kupup

**SUMMIT REPORT** GANGTOK, 29 MAY:

ich tribute was paid to the first Ev-**N**erester, Tenzing Norgay Sherpa, on the occasion of International Everest Day which also marked the 105th birth anniversary of Tenzing Norgay Sherpa at Kupup in East Sikkim.

Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Edmund Hillary had scaled Mount Everest on 29 May in 1953. Following the same, 29 May has been observed as the International Everest Day every year.

The programme, which was organ-

ised by JN Road Sherpa Kiduk, was attended by Indian Army Commanding Officer, Col Anindya Ray, as chief guest accompanied by Everester Doma Sherpa as the guest of honour.

On the occasion, the organising committee felicitated Everester Doma Sherpa, Sikkim Herald Sherpa language editor, Tarbu Sherpa, Denzong Sherpa Association former president, Lha Tshering Sherpa and Traffic Police personnel, Pema Lhamu Sherpa.

The chief guest thanked the Sherpa

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# Decorated former army officer declared 'foreigner' in Assam; sent to detention camp

29 (PTI): A former army officer in Assam who had won a President's medal was apprehended on Wednesday and sent to a detention camp in after a foreigners' tribunal declared him a 'foreigner', police said.

Mohammad Sanaullah, a resident of Kolohikash village under Boko police station in Kamrup district and now serving

BJP MLA Manjinder S Sir-

sa conducted a poll on

Twitter over what peo-

ple felt about Delhi Chief

Minister Arvind Kejriwal,

but the move backfired

when most of the partic-

ipants voted in favour of

as assistant sub-inspector (ASI) in border police. was declared a 'foreigner' by the Foreigners Tribunal, Kamrup.

This came following a case registered there in 2008 after Sanaullah's name was listed as a 'D' (doubtful) voter in the voters list, according to Kamrup district Additional Superintendent of Police Sanjib Saikia.

After the verdict of

the tribunal, Saikia said police according to laid down procedure, picked up Sanaullah and took him to the detention camp in Goalpara district to be lodged there.

Before proceeding to the camp, Sanaullah told waiting journalists that he is an Indian citizen and has all the necessary documents of his citizenship.

He said he served the country's interests for 30 years (1987-2017), joining the force as an official of Electronic and Mechanical Engineering department and was also awarded with President's Medal in 2014.

Sanaullah said he had passed High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examination from Champo Para Government High School at Boko in the district and after retirement he was serving as an ASI

in border police since last year. His daughter while talking to the media after he was taken away said her father had presented all the necessary documents to the tribunal proving his Indian citizenship, including voter card and ancestral property documents.

The family said it will appeal to the Gauhati High Court against the tribunal's verdict.

# IIT Guwahati signs MoU with ISRO



the AAP supremo. Taking a jibe at Sirsa. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj on Wednesday said it was a good on Wednesday. The AAP thing that the BJP MLA conducted the poll as it showed that even the supporters of the saffron party wanted to vote for the AAP in next year's

BJP MLA conducts poll on Kejri-

wal's popularity, move backfires

New Delhi, May 29 (PTI): minister in his survey,

Delhi Assembly election. Sirsa, in the Twitter poll, gave options for or against Kejriwal. As many as 70 per cent favoured the Delhi chief next year.

while 30 per cent voted against him. Sirsa. however.

claimed that the poll was rigged by AAP volun-"Congratulations to

AAP IT cell for voting in favour of Kejriwal. If the ground reality was same then the AAP would have won in the Lok Sabha polls," he said in a tweet suffered

a crushing defeat in the just-concluded Lok Sabha polls. The party won just one of the over 40 seats it had contested. All the seven AAP candidates lost the poll battle

The Assembly election in Delhi is due early

#### Delhi govt targets to plant 23 lakh trees, shrubs in 2019-20

NEW DELHI, MAY 29 (PTI): The Delhi government has set a target of planting more than 23 lakh trees and shrubs in the financial year 2019-20, according to a statement.

number around 10 lakh lower than the last year's target. Of the 23 lakh trees and shrubs to be planted this fiscal, 4,25,000 saplings will be distributed free, the statement said.

Delhi Environment and Forests Minister Imran Hussain Wednesday held a meeting with senior officers of the forest department and horticulture wing of various greening agencies, including the three municipal corporations, Delhi Development Authority, Delhi Parks and Gardens Society, New Delhi Municipal Council, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, among others in this regard.

He sought active involvement of local residents, market associations, school and college students in the exercise to enhance the city's green cover to combat air pollution. Hussain asked all greening agencies to identify locations and targets for one-day mass plantation drive scheduled in the third week of July.

At the meeting, the minister also reviewed the targets achieved during 2018-19. Majority of the land-owning agencies informed that they have achieved the plantation targets for the financial year 2018-19.

He expressed concern over low plantation by the Delhi Development Authority, DSIIDC, DUSIB, and the health department.

The minister also directed all the agencies to carry out a third-partv audit of the trees and shrubs planted during 2015-18. The exercise should be completed within four months, he said.

#### Banks can...

For non-DBT beneficiary customers, the Regulated Entities (REs) should obtain a certified copy of any OVD containing details of customer's identity and address along with one recent photograph.

"REs shall ensure that the customers (non-DBT beneficiaries) while submitting Aadhaar for Customer Due Diligence, redact or blackout their Aadhaar number in terms of sub-rule 16 of Rule 9 of the amended PML Rules," it added.

The amended KYC norms further said for non-individual customers, PAN/Form No 60 of the entity (for companies and Partnership firms - only PAN) should be obtained apart from other entity related documents. The PAN/Form No 60 of the authorised signatories shall also be obtained.

Form 60 is required to be submitted by an individual who does not have a Permanent Account Number (PAN).

"For existing bank account holders, PAN or Form No 60 is to be submitted within such timelines as may be notified by the Government, failing which account shall be subject to temporary ceasing till PAN or Form No 60 is submitted," the RBI said.

However, before temporarily ceasing operations for an account, RE shall give the customer an accessible notice and a reasonable opportunity to be heard, it added.

#### International Everest...

community of Kupup for their support to the army. The programme has also featured a cultural presentation by different organisations of the Sherpa community in the State.

# to set up space technology cell



GUWAHATI, MAY 29 (PTI): Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati has signed an MoU with The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to set up an IITG-ISRO Space Technology Cell (STC) at the institute where Assam Governor Jagdish Mukhi inaugurated a new academic complex and research and development building on Wednesday.

Stating the MoU was signed on May 24, an IIT-G press release on Wednesday said the IITG-ISRO STC would be first of its kind in the North-east region to augment research and capacity building processes in the field of space-technology.

The STC will constitute faculty members from IIT Guwahati, visiting scientists/ experts from ISRO, research students and technical staff, the release said.

Through the STC, IIT Guwahati aspire to partner with ISRO for performing cutting edge research not only catering to the socio-economic needs of the Northeast but also to contribute towards the basic research activities of various ISRO projects across India, it said.

The STC is a major

milestone for IIT Guwahati that can kick start collaborative research activities involving faculty members and ISRO scientists for short term and long term solutions to challenging space-research problems, the release said, adding, it would serve as a platform for motivating and involving undergraduate, post graduate students and research scholars and orient them towards the realms of space-re-

Meanwhile, governor Jagdish Mukhi inaugurating the new academic complex said that Nanotechnology which is a field of future has opened vistas for newer and newer medical avenues for the welfare of mankind.

search activities.

To achieve this distinctive profile, Mukhi said the IITs have to play their crucial role and the brilliant students of the Institute should take proactive role in dedicating themselves for the great vision of transforming the nation with the help of Nanotechnology.

Appreciating IIT Guwahati empowering the students with quality technological knowledge, skill and ability to help them inculcate the right attitude and holistic values, he said research and development activities always play a pivotal role in shaping up a nations progress especially in the realms of science and technology.

The Governor urged the IIT Guwahati fraternity to use its wisdom and expertise for the extensive application of research and technology like nanotechnology to lead mankind to the path of well being.

Mukhi also emphasized that the teaching methodology and impartment of education in IITs should additionally highlight importance of entrepreneurship and prepare the students get oriented towards setting up of business ventures using their creativity, freedom and ability to generate wealth and employment avenues.

#### IMA opposes PCIs decision to allow Pharm D degree holders to use 'Dr' prefix

New Delhi, May 29 (PTI): The IMA has opposed the Pharmacy Council of India's (PCI)decision of allowing those receiving Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm D) degree to prefix 'Dr' before their name, saying such "transgressions of entitlement are

illegal and illegitimate".

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has also written to the Union Health Ministry and the Medical Council of India (MCI) over the issue stating it is against all such shifts from those who are trained in other streams of health sector to venture into medical practice.

According to the IMA, such illegitimate conferment cannot become entitlements, just incase if an advocate or an engineer should be called doctor by an executive order.

"Such social anarchy only creates confusion in the minds of a common man and the impact it has on the structure of a well organised society is clearly evident," it said in

a statement.

Aspiration in any course needs to be legitimate and appropriate to be recognised. The roles and responsibilities of nurses, physiotherapists, optometrists and others in the field of healthcare are irreplaceable and are as per their entitlement, the statement stated. "Bridge courses and

illegitimate conferment of the title of 'Dr' are two faces of the same issue which defies the sole purpose of National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET). This year, the cut-off marks in the NEET for government seats were 497 out of 700, wherein most of the students, settled for non-medical courses.

"A pharmacist by any other name will remain a pharmacist. Indirect entitlement to practice of modern medicine on human beings by colored exercise of power by bodies created for a limited purpose is unacceptable. Transgressions of entitlement are illegal

and illegitimate," Dr Santanu Sen, National President of the IMA.

The IMA referred to rules, regulations governing the practice of modern medicine and several verdicts which clearly held that, only a person holding a registration with the Medical Council of India or the state Medical Councils is entitled to practice Modern System of Medicine.

As per several judgments and rulings, pharmacists cannot use prefix "Dr" to their name, they can work only under medical supervision and in any case cannot be the first contact person for an illness, Sen said.

"The IMA has the duty and privilege to defend the rights of medical graduates. The IMA demands that the government of India use its authority and settle the issue as per the law of the land. The IMA also urges the Pharmacy Council to take back the unlawful order," said R V Asokan, Secretary General, IMA.

# Ad-hoc employees call on HRDD, receive assurances

"95% adhoc employees supported SKM, but remaining 5% will not be victimized" **SUMMIT REPORT** GANGTOK, 29 MAY:

Executive members of the All Sikkim Ad-hoc and Temporary Employees Association called on officials at the Human Resource Development Department yesterday and discussed issues like service extension of SSA employees, appointment of four association leaders who were denied service extensions, the ongoing regularization process and "justice to employees under other departments too," a press release informs.

'Officials were positive regarding our issues and solve our it as soon as the New Government instructs the department," the release adds.

The release goes on to inform that the executive members have been with the committee that receiving phone calls and messages regarding "hardship we had done for forming a new government and our dedication toward the adhoc problems without misleading the mass."

The executive members have informed members that they don't plan to pressurise the Department and will let it "work smoothly for proper formation of policies keeping in mind no one gets excluded from the rights and privilege the adhocs should get." It also adds that the

executive members have no hard feelings against department officials or the police for the action taken against adhoc teachers during their protest earlier this year and states that the association believes that the officials acted on instructions received from Ministers and other powerful people above them.

"I request HRDD to kindly form the committee or reset/discuss was formed previously to solve the issues keeping in view rules and regulations or obstacles that may hinder the adhocians dreams. I also request department to kindly issue orders to SSA and four leaders who were arrested, let's not take small issues and make it a big one again. Hope to see some positive response from the Department," the release issued by "Yogesh and all executive members" states.

The executive members have appealed to all adhoc teachers to stay and not get agitated and realize that resolution takes time.

It adds that some teachers who supported SDF and did not support the association were worried that their services will be terminated. In this regard, while stating that it was a fact that 95% of the adhoc teachers supported SKM, the interests of the remaining 5% will not be allowed to be hampered.

#### NPP extends unconditional outside support to Khandu govt in Arunachal Pradesh

MAY ITANAGAR, **(PTI):** The National Peoples Party (NPP) Wednesday extended unconditional outside support to the new BIP government in Arunachal Pradesh headed by Chief Minister Pema Khandu, a senior party leader said.

NPPLegislature Party leader Mutchu Mithi told reporters after the swearing-in that Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, who is also the party president, had conveyed NPP's support to Khandu government in writing as the party is an ally of the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre. Khandu along with 11 MLAs took oath as the tenth chief minister of the Himalayan state. The NPP and the BJP

would work collectively now to translate their promises into reality, Mithi said, congratulating Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Khandu for their victories.

He said as BJP and NPP candidates contested the elections in the country and in the state, respectively, with almost similar manifestoes, the regional party would work in tandem with the Khandu government for all round development of the

"But outside support does not mean remaining silent. The NPP will raise its voice and offer suggestion to the state (Arunachal Pradesh) government in the larger interests of the people," he added.

The NPP bagged five seats in the just-concluded assembly elections Arunachal Pradesh emerged in the third position after BJP with 41 seats and Janata Dal (United) with seven seats in the 60-member

#### IRCTC user complains of vulgar ads, railway says 'clear your browsing history'

New Delhi, May 29 (PTI): An Indian railways passengers support Twitter handle Wednesday asked a user to delete his internet search history, responding to his complaint that "vulgar and obscene" advertisements popped up on IRCTC's ticket booking app.

The Indian Railways Seva handle (@Railway-Seva), which was set up in December 2017 for passenger support, also educated the complainant that online advertisements depend on personal browsing history of a user.

"Obscene and vulgar ads are very frequently appearing on the IRCTC ticket booking app. This is very embarrassing and irritating," the complainant wrote.

The user also tagged official Twitter handles of the Railways Minister, IRCTC and Railway Minister Piyush Goyal's of4.15 pm. Responding to the complaint, the Indian Railways Seva tweeted, "Irctc uses Googles ad serving tool ADX for serving ads.These ads uses cookies to target the user. Based on user history and browsing behaviour ads are shown. Please clean and delete all browser cookies and history to avoid such ads."

Cyber expert Jiten Jain said online ads largely depend on a user's ad preferences and the kind of content browsed through a particular de-"And the users them-

selves give Google the permission to show such ads when they agree to their terms and conditions while subscribing to its services. Although it is not 100 per cent, because in some cases Google also puts forth some ads on its own online,"

fice in the tweet made at Jain told PTI. By 9.21 pm, the Indi-

an Railways Seva's tweet was liked by over 7,800 users and retweeted nearly 3,700 times.

The handle generally provides support to railway users on queries related to timings, PNR issues or concerns with cleanliness or food on trains.

On its support website, Google states that ads should respect user preferences and comply with legal regulations, so it does not allow certain kinds of adult content in ads and destinations.

"Some kinds adult-oriented ads and destinations are allowed if they comply with the policies below and don't target minors, but they will only show in limited scenarios based on user search queries, user age, and local laws where the ad is being served," it says.

to book advertisements in SummitTIMES call 03592-208698 9734152541, 9647102692 advertise@summittimes.com

ministers Thursday. Rashtrapati Bhavan kitchen's speciality 'Dal Raisina' will be served to foreign delegates in a dinner to be hosted by President Ram Nath Kovind to dignitaries after

swearing-in ceremony of

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi and his council of

the function. The swearing-in ceremony will be of about 90 minutes and after that a dinner will be served to around 40 dignitaries, including Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and the prime minister, besides leaders of all BIM-STEC countries, Rashtrapati Bhavan spokesperson Ashok Malik said Wednesday.

"This is for the first time that 8,000 guests will be attending the swearing-in ceremony that will be held from 7 pm to 8.30 pm on Thursday," Mailk said.

He said it will be the biggest event held in Rashtrapati Bhavan.

#### 'Doesn't matter' if some 'opportunist' MLAs join BJP: TMC

KOLKATA, MAY 29 (PTI): With three Trinamool Congress MLAs joining the BJP within two days, the TMC leadership Wednesday said it "doesn't matter" if some "opportunist" legislators switch loyalties.

The TMC also claimed that some among those who had joined the saffron party had been threatened to do so.

"It doesn't matter if one or two opportunist MLAs switchover to the BJP. Some are opportunist and some are being forced to join by using threat and intimidation," senior TMC leader Tapas Roy said.

Roy's comment came after TMC MLA Monirul Islam joined the BJP earlier on Wednesday, the third legislator to desert the ruling party in West Bengal after the reverses in the Lok Sabha polls.

Two TMC legislators, including BJP leader Mukul Roy's son Subhrangshu Roy, and over 50 councillors, had joined the saffron party on Tuesday.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Mamata Banerjee-led party had claimed in a tweet that its MLAs and councillors were forced at gunpoint to join the BJP, which, in a stunning result, won 18 Lok Sabha seats in the state, only four less than the TMC's 22. "One suspended MLA of Trinamool joined BJP yesterday. The others were from Congress and CPI(M). The number of councillors is 6. That too they were forced at gunpoint to do so," the TMC said.

# North Sikkim teams shine in C Division Sikkim League



#### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 29 MAY:

Teams from North Sikkim had a good start in the ongoing Sikkim Football Association [SFA] C Division Sikkim League 2019 here at Paljor Stadium. Two teams from North Sikkim registered a convincing victory in their match in the league on Wednesday.

In the first match, North District Football Association thrashed Mustang Football Club, Sang 6–1 to take full points.

Chandup Tamang scored four goals for NDFA and his teammate Pranay Rai and Michael Lepcha contributed a goal each in the team's victory. The only goal for Mustang FC was scored by Ongden Lepcha.

In another match,

Manik Football Club, Dzongu outplayed Sumin Football Club 4-1. Pema Wangchuk, Sonam Lepcha, Suraj Limboo and Rapgay Lepcha scored a goal each for Manik FC, while Ganesh Chettri scored the only goal of

# AIC-SMUTBI conducts entrepreneurship workshop at ICFAI

#### **SUMMIT REPORT** RANGPO, 29 MAY:

One-day entrepre-neurship workshop and Bootcamp was organized by AIC-SMUT-BIF at ICFAI University Sikkim, Gangtok. Resource person, Dr Bikash Sharma (Program Lead, AIC-SMUTBI) introduced the audience to the stateof-the-art incubation centre which is scheduled for its inauguration

around mid-June.

Being the state's first incubation centre, it not only aims to serve the aspiring entrepreneurs of Sikkim but the entire North East. Dr Bikash talked to the students about the facilities at the incubation centre and also highlighted the fact that it is one of the 31 incubators set up under Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog across

the country currently.

With world class network of mentors and investors, the incubator aims at delivering awareness about the opportunities for anyone who would be motivated in becoming a job provider rather than a job seeker.

Another resource person, Sumit Thakur [CEO, Untapped Technologies] engaged the students in an interac-

tive session discussing about the challenges and prospects of entrepreneurship. The students actively participated in the discussion and expressed their views on the startup ecosystem in

Prof (Dr) Tejbanta S Chingtham [CEO, AIC-SMUTBIF], in his message invited and encouraged everyone to make the best use of the available facili-

New Delhi, May 29 (PTI):

The Delhi High Court

sought the Centre's re-

sponse on Wednesday on

a plea seeking directions

to it to regulate the ed-

ucation being imparted

in the madrasas and gu-

A bench of Chief Jus-

tice Rajendra Menon

and Justice Brijesh Sethi

issued notice to the

ministries of human re-

source development and

minority affairs, seeking

their stand on the joint

plea moved by a Con-

gress MLA from West

Bengal and an RTI activ-

(RTI) activist Sunil Sarao-

gi and Congress MLA

Akhruzzaman, in their

petition filed through

advocate Vidhan Vyas,

have claimed that the ac-

ademic syllabus followed

in these institutions "are

still stuck in the 18th

century with the Holy

Quran, Urdu and Persian

being the only subjects".

Right to Information

ist from the state.

rukuls in the country.

the state.

ties and be a valuable resource to the nation.

AIC-SMUTBI is based at SMIT, Majitar boasting of world-class facilities awaiting its inauguration. It will be holding the prelims of the Entrepreneurship World Cup in the month of June 2019. The finals of the event will be held at Riyadh with huge prize money worth 5 million USD. [from Sanjay Agarwal]

#### PIL to regulate education Preparations on for imparted in madrasas, gurukuls: Bru repatriation **HC seeks Centre's reply**

With the Lok Sabha elections over, preparations have begun for the eighth and final repatriation of the Brus lodged in six relief camps in neighbouring Tripura, Mizoram home department officials Wednesday said. The district core committee on Bru repatriation held a meeting at Mizoram-Assam border town of Kolasib on Tuesday and at Mamit district on the Mizoram-Tripura-Bangladesh border on Wednesday to discuss the final repatriation of 32,876 Brus belonging to 5,407 families, lodged in the Tripura relief camps since late 1997, they said.

The officials said that 4,185 Bru families would be resettled in Mamit district, 822 families in Kolasib district and the remaining 400 families in south Mizoram's Lunglei district.

"Though it may not be advisable to undertake the repatriation process during the monsoon due to bad condition of roads, preparations would continue for the final repatriation process, during autumn," the Additional Secretary of Home Department of Mizoram, Lalbiakzama, said.

The state government and the NGO Coordination Committee, an um-

AIZAWL, MAY 29 (PTI): brella body of civil society groups in Mizoram, and student associations reached an agreement before the Lok Sabha polls that the repatriation process would be taken up this year and it should be the last attempt. The agreement said that those who refuse to return to Mizoram during the proposed repatriation should stay back in Tripura and after that their names would be deleted from the voters list in Mizoram.

Thousands of Brus continued to refuse to return to Mizoram even after the Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF), the apex body of the Brus in the relief camps, signed an agreement with the Centre and the state governments of Mizoram and Tripura on July three last year. In the agreement, the Centre promised to provide Rs four lakh to each repatriated family.

In addition, each family was supposed to get Rs 1.5 lakh for housing assistance and Rs 5,000 per month and free ration for two years. The vexed Bru problem arose when Bru bodies demanded a separate autonomous district council by carving out areas of western Mizoram adjoining Bangladesh and Tripura in 1997.

"This severely impacts the job prospects of the students studying at these madrasas," the petition has alleged.

It has also alleged that the "children attending such institutions are unable to compete with their peers with respect to job and future opportunities". "This will ultimately result in a section of 'young India' not being able to develop their faculties fully and contribute to the task of nation building," the petition says.

According to the petition, there are around 3,000 madrasas in the national capital alone and about 3.6 lakh students study in these institutions.

It has sought a direction to the authorities to "bring all the madrasas, maktabahs and gurukuls within a regulated and recognised legal framework by mandatory registration".

#### Australian *jailed* to 10 years over British backpacker rape

SYDNEY, MAY 29 (AP): An Australian man who kidnapped and repeatedly raped a British backpacker during a monthlong ordeal in the country's Outback has been jailed for 10 years.

Marcus Allyn Keith Martin, 25, had pleaded guilty in the District Court of Cairns, in the far north of Queensland state, to charges of rape and deprivation of liberty against the 22-year-old woman from Liverpool, England.Prosecutors told the court the pair met in Cairns in January 2017 and had begun a relationship.When the relationship soured, Martin subjected the woman to weeks of physical abuse while forcing her to drive him hundreds of miles (kilometers) south and then into the west of the state.

Police intercepted the pair after the woman drove off from a gas station in the town of Mitchell, 380 miles (600 kilometers) west of Brisbane, without paying for fuel. They found Martin hiding in the back of their 4x4 vehicle. The gas station's manager, Beverley Page, told reporters at the time that the woman was bruised and battered, and was crying and shaking, as she explained that she couldn't pay for fuel because her ex-boyfriend had her wallet.

The Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported that prosecutor Nathan Crane told the court Martin had tried to isolate the woman on their road trip, including by cutting up her British passport.

#### 'Stranger Things 3' will be moving, unexpected, says David Harbour

LONDON, MAY 28 (PTI): Actor David Harbour says the new season of "Stranger Things" will examine his character, Chief Jim Hopper's relationship with his adopted daughter, Eleven.

Harbour said season three will explore their dynamic and how it is changing now that Eleven is growing up, reported Digital Spy.

"Eleven is growing up and I think that's the terrifying thing for Hopper. He doesn't like the idea of his baby daughter hanging out with boys. So the season starts with him a little bit uncomfortable.

"His daughter is becoming a teenager and beginning to find herself, so that's scarier for Hopper than any Demogorgon creature that he's going to have to deal with," Harbour said at MCM Comic-Con

The actor teased that the episode eight of the new season is something to look out for. "You get to see a lot

of that throughout the season and it's very unexpected what happens in the end and it's very, very moving. I think episode eight is the most moving thing we've ever shot," he said. "Stranger Things 3" will launch on Netflix on July 4.

# World Menstrual Hygiene Day at Sweet Little Things cafe

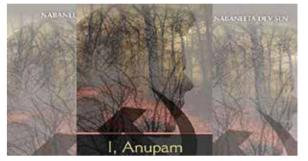


**SUMMIT REPORT** GANGTOK, 29 MAY:

World Menstrual Hygiene Day was celebrated at Sweet Little Things, 6th Mile, Tadong by ESS India on 28 May, 2019. The celebration also marked the first anniversary of "The Menstrual Revolution".

ESS members along with staff of the Sweet Little Things cafe and customers of the cafe observed the day. Some fun activities were organized by the ESS India team for the customers of the cafe to create awareness about Menstrual Hygiene.

#### Nabaneeta Sen's 1978 book on Naxal movement in Bengal now in English



NEW DELHI, MAY 29 (PTI): Nabaneeta Dev Sen's book on the Naxal movement in West Bengal, first published in Bengali in 1978, is now available in English. Some prominent per-

sons of West Bengal had played a strange twofaced role in this political movement. They encouraged and led the youth, who put their lives at stake and fought for the cause.

However, most of these personalities failed to take responsibility later on when they were needed the most.

I, Anupam (Ami Anupam) is a sharp depiction of those turbulent

times and is about one such betrayal. The central character of the novel is Anupam Roy, a newspaper columnist, commentator and academician. The book deals with a conflict between integrity and expediency.

It has been translated from the original by Paulami Sengupta, Tias Basu and the author and is published by Niyogi Books' imprint Thornbird.

Sen is regarded as one of the prominent Bengali litterateurs of present times with more than 80 books to her name. She recently retired as Professor of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University.

#### $\sim$ SummitTIMES $\sim$ **CLASSIFIEDS**

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#### **PLOT FOR SALE:**

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#### **WANTED**

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# **SummitTIMES**

#### Bees, neither Buzzing nor Busy What will the farms be without the pollinators?

The Baramati sub-division under Pune district in Maharastra is a rural belt of pomegranate and onion growers. Some of the farmers, those who became part of a pilot project - Madhu Sandesh - have been reporting bumper crop. In fact, not only has the volume of their produce grown substantially, the quality too has been markedly better. The pilot project was launched in November 2015, for farms to report a substantial turnaround within a year should get everyone interested.

Growers are reporting harvests of around 12 tonnes from farms which used to otherwise yield between 7 to 8 tonnes. Sure, these could be cyclical variations, but traditional growers would know that, Hence, when they credit the improvement in volume and quality to honey bees, everyone should sit up and take note, especially horticulturists in Sikkim who continue to struggle with failing crops and poor quality. Under the Madhu Sandesh project, farmers were trained to rear honeybees on their farms and use them extensively for pollinating their pomegranate and onion seeds. So dramatic have the improvements been that more farmers are lining up to take the training and those who already have honeybee hives in their farms, are looking around to install more, even on rent! There is nothing earth-shatteringly new in the Baramati experience given that colony collapse (of bees) and the resultant effect on fruit orchards across the world have been much discussed worries in these times of climate change and ecological distress. Unfortunately, not enough people are speaking of this phenomenon in Sikkim. But if one were to look around, the warning signs are aplenty.

Farmers from Dzongu have been complaining of falling produce in their orange orchards. Local orange produce could be in decline elsewhere as well. It has been several decades since the State lost its North Sikkim apples [although one hears off and on about attempts to revive apple orchards there]. Large cardamom plantations stand devastated across the State. Between an entire Board devoted to spices and a department charged to look after Horticulture, an explanation remains awaited. Although one hears often about mischievously named crop diseases afflicting the fruits and frequent reference to the advanced age of the [large cardamom] plantations, these only explain the symptoms which are manifesting in the fields and not the overall crop failure. There have even been reports of disease-resistant strains being developed and attempts to promote improved plantation management practices. What one does not hear being discussed as often is the health of pollinators in Sikkim's fields. Agriculture does not require pollination, but horticulture, every expert will agree, is not possible without pollinators. Fruit-bearing trees flower to attract pollinators, and the number of pollinating agents is directly proportional to the number and health of fruits borne. Bees are among the most prolific and important pollinators and the role of wild bees in pollinating large cardamom, as against the damage that honey bees can wreck, has been studied and documented. The same applies to oranges and apples, which are also serviced by a host of other insects.

Study of declining produce in orchards elsewhere in the world has flagged shortage of pollinators as the main culprit. Bee populations are in unexplained decline across the world and even casual surveys will prove this to be the case here as well. It is perhaps important then that horticultural issues facing Sikkim should start at the basics by checking first on the presence and health of pollinators in the farms. Another good place to pick up some tips would be Baramati, and a study tour to that corner of Pune could be easy managed with Pune being the Sikkim Governor's home base. The Bee experiment also ties in well with Sikkim's Organic Mission. In Baramati for instance, a substantial part of the training was on how to use pesticides and fertilizers without affecting the bees. That worry does not exist in Sikkim since chemical pesticides and fertilizers which are known to wipe out bee colonies are not use in farms here. These are all ideas and suggestions and would be of some consequence if there was some follow-up.

#### **WRITE US:**

Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence.

Mail us at: news@summittimes.com

# India election: national security helped 'watchman' Narendra Modi win, but major challenges loom

IAN HALL theconversation.com

India's recent election campaign was overshad-Lowed by a suicide bombing in Kashmir, retaliatory air strikes against alleged terrorist targets a few days later, and then an anti-satellite missile test just before voting began.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, the contest focused on who was best suited to keep Indians safe: Narendra Modi, who restyled himself as a "chowk-

("watchman"), apparently ever alert to threats to the nation, or his main opponent, the untested Rahul Gandhi.

Modi won big, but major national security challenges remain. His government's record in managing security during his first term was mixed. Overall, it struggled to come to terms with domestic insurgencies, modernising the military, and deterring potential threats from Pakistan and China.

Modi's government certainly had some successes, above all containing Maoist "Naxalite" violence. At its peak, in 2010, that insurgency affected nearly 40% of the country, mainly in the central and eastern states, and left more than 1,000 people dead. Since then,

more intense activity by the security forces and new economic development programmes have greatly reduced the danger. In 2018, 40 people died as result of Naxalite attacks.

The government did less well, however, in Kashmir. In July 2016, unrest flared after Indian security forces killed the prominent separatist Burhan Wani - and dozens died in the rioting that followed. Before and after, there was also an upsurge in terrorist attacks carried out by infiltrators from Pakistani-controlled territory.

In early January 2016, eight Indian soldiers were killed fending off an assault on an airbase, and in mid-September 2016, 23 more died at another military camp.

'SURGICAL STRIKES'

After that last attack, Modi ordered so-called "surgical strikes" across the Line of Control in Kashmir, and Indian special forces destroyed a

number of alleged terrorist camps. The strikes recently dramatised in blockbuster Indian movie, Uri whether they did so is unclear. Government figures show a rise in terrorism-related fatalities after 2014,

ware for India's military also tested the Modi government. The shuffling of the defence portfolio from finance minister Arun Jaitley to the mercurial Manohar Parrikar, then back to Jaitley, and then to

- were intended, in part, to deter further attacks. But and no obvious dip in 2017 and 2018. Beyond internal security, acquiring new hard-

Nirmala Sitharaman did not help. Nor did the diminishing defence budget, which shrunk to a mere 1.5% of GDP by the end of Modi's first term.

As a result, despite some changes to rules concerning procurement and foreign investment in the defence industry, modernisation proved patchy and slow. India finally commissioned its first nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine under Modi, purchased new French Rafale aircraft - albeit in a controversial deal - and inducted new light fighters and attack helicopters. But other much-needed projects, like the raising of a new Mountain Strike Corps tasked with defending the Sino-Indian border, were postponed.

So, too, were much needed reforms to India's national security apparatus. It floated, then put off, a decision to create the post of chief of the defence staff, which seasoned analysts think essential to managing inter-service rivalry. It toyed with the idea of publishing a National Security Strategy and tinkered with the National Security Council, but to the frustration of former officials, it did not expand

Like his immediate predecessors, Modi compensated for these institutional shortcomings through diplomacy. He tried to leverage what he could from strategic partnerships with the US, Israel, Japan, and others - with some success. Arguably, Modi's greatest achievement during his first term was securing, in 2016, Washington's desig-

nation of India as a "major defence partner". This bespoke arrangement allows New Delhi to access US military technology normally available only to allies.

#### **ENGAGEMENT AND PUSHBACK**

At the same time, to manage potential threats from Pakistan and China, Modi oscillated between engagement and pushback, with more mixed results. It remains unclear whether Islamabad will come to the table for meaningful talks any time soon, or whether militant groups operating from its territory have been deterred by India's recent strikes against them. It is also unclear whether China rates India's capacity to defend itself any more highly now than it did in 2014, before Modi came to power.

Aside from these challenges, one more will have to be addressed in the months to come. During the campaign, Modi and his political allies faced criticism for politicising not just national security, but also the armed forces.

The prime minister's call to voters to dedicate their choice to those who carried out the February air strikes was singled out, as was the Uttar Pradesh chief minister's reference to the armed forces as "Modi ki Sena" ("Modi's army").

Repairing relations with officers unhappy with their work being used for political advantage will be a key task for Modi's next term. Building the national security institutions and modern armed forces India needs will go a long way towards achieving that objective, and fulfilling his promise to serve as the country's "watchman".

> [the writer is Deputy Director (Research), Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University]



# Celestial Bodies: Booker International Prize highlights rich literary tradition among Arab women

**SHADYA RADHI** theconversation.com

It says something that the winner of the 2019 Man Booker International prize for Literature, Jokha Alharthi, is the first woman from her country to have a novel translated into English. Alharthi – from the Arabian Gulf state of Oman - who won for her novel Celestial Bodies, shares the £50,000 prize with her translator Marilyn Booth. The book has the distinction of also being the first novel translated from Arabic to win the award.

"I am thrilled that a window has been opened to the rich Arabic culture," Alharthi told journalists after the ceremony in London in May. "Oman inspired me but I think international readers can relate to the human values in the book - freedom and love."

Celestial Bodies revolves around three sisters from a middle-class background in the small Omani village of al-Awafi. The novel is a fragmented collection of past and present events in Oman as they pertain to particular characters in this small village. These intricate storylines come together to shape the broader narrative of the novel, of a village going through remarkable change.

Celestial Bodies gives the reader a glimpse into a society that isn't often spoken about in terms of its literature, culture and traditions. And a woman's perspective is particularly rare - Arab Gulf women only really began publishing their writings in the second half of the 20th century. backdrop of the story – with the way It's a trend that is intimately connected to the introduction of girls' education - spanning half a century between 1928 and 1970 in different

Gulf states. But this doesn't mean that Arab Gulf women weren't producing literature before then – they were particularly well known for the tradition of oral storytelling and were especially esteemed for their poetry - the works of Kuwaiti poet Suad al-Sabah and Bahraini poet Hamda Khamis are particularly worth checking out.

But it was the explosion of oil wealth, which forced the Arabian Gulf out of isolation and into the international arena - leading to the establishment of schools and newspapers and media outlets that allowed for literary creativity. Since the 1970s, Arab Gulf women's writing has evolved - now Arab Gulf women write in a whole range of genres that reflect different themes and issues through their storylines, especially those issues which pertain to the specific experience of women in Arab Gulf society. But the novel is still something of a recent genre for Gulf women.

#### MODERNITY AND NOSTALGIA

One common theme in Arab Gulf writings is nostalgia for a simpler past, which is often used in contrast to the remarkably fast growth these countries have undergone with the discovery of oil. The narrative of Celestial Bodies draws a connection between the slave trade in Oman – the Omani society started to change with the introduction of oil wealth into

the region. Although Alharthi positions her story within this narrative of tradition versus social change, she does so in a way that offers an objective outlook to the practices and history portrayed in the novel. She does this by portraying neither a romanticising of the past nor an overly optimistic focus on the positive aspects of oil revenue in the present. Instead, Celestial Bodies presents an honest portrayal of change and how it has affected different members of the village she is writing about.

A defining feature of Omani literature is that Oman, in particular out of the Arab Gulf, has remained a traditional society in many aspects, which is oftentimes reflected in the writings produced in the region. The novel makes use of specific cultural and religious features of Oman and the Arab Gulf region, such as references to supernatural spirits - or jinn - as well as the all-important date harvest - as well as allusions to classical Middle Eastern literature and poetry such as Iraqi poets al-Mutanabbi (915-965AD) and Ibn al-Rumi (836-396AD).

You don't need to be intimately familiar with Arab Gulf customs, literature and traditions to appreciate Celestial Bodies - but to fully grasp the impact of these references and the beauty they add to the text, it's worth doing some background reading. This literary technique invites the reader to become immersed into Omani culture - and, in turn, play a role in the interpreta-

#### tion of the text itself. RICH LITERARY TRADITION

Celestial Bodies is emblematic of the fact that Arab Gulf women are actively producing remarkable works of literature that are very much worth exploring. Worthwhile, not only to offer a glimpse into this society, but also in order to discover a rich literary tradition that has not been accessible to a wider audience beforehand.

In an interview published on the Man Booker International Prize website Alharthi says this about her book:

"I hope this helps international readers discover that Oman has an active and talented writing community who live and work for their art ... They take on sacrifices and struggles and find joy in writing, or in art, much the same way as anywhere else. This is something the whole world has in common."

Alharthi's novel offers a glimpse of the world being experienced by women in the Arabian Gulf. I hope that Celestial Bodies will encourage more translations of works from the region, encouraging readers to experience for themselves the cultural

> [the writer is PhD Researcher, King's College London]

# **CPI likely to lose national** party status after poll debacle

New Delhi, May 29 (PTI): The Communist Party of India (CPI) is likely to lose its national party status following the debacle in the just-concluded Lok Sabha elections in which the party won just two seats

The CPI along with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) were facing the prospects of losing their national party status after their dismal performance in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections as well.

However, they had got a reprieve when in 2016 the Election Commission (EC) amended its rules, whereby it will review the national and state party status of political parties every ten years instead of the present five.

"According to the present criteria of the

RANCHI, MAY 29 (PTI): A

special CBI court here on

Wednesday sentenced 16

fodder scam convicts to

three to four year prison

terms in a case relating

to fraudulent withdraw-

al of Rs 37 crore from the

Chaibasa treasury in the

1990s. The court of SN

Mishra also slapped vary-

ing penalties ranging from

Rs 25,000 to Rs seven lakh

on the convicts in connec-

tion with RC 20A/96 case,

defence counsel Sanjay

Prasad is among 44 ac-

cused who have been

convicted in the instant

prison term here after

conviction in cases of

multi-crore fodder scam.

term Wednesday includ-

ed former treasury mes-

senger and technical as-

sistant Lal Mohan Gope.

of the treasury Bharat

Narayan Das and ex-as-

assistant

Those awarded jail

Prasad is serving

RJD president Lalu

Kumar said.

case in 2013.

ex-account



losing the national party status. They will decide if we exist nationally. I hope the poll body takes a positive view," said CPI general secretary S Sudhakar Reddy.

"However, the lack of this status will not affect the work that we are doing," he added.

According to the EC, we are in danger of Election Symbols (Res-

treasury Sahadeo Prasad,

all employees of the Chai-

basa treasury when the

scam was unearthed, the

pliers, he said. The CBI

had filed a supplemen-

tary charge sheet against

20 persons as they had

not been included in the

original list of accused af-

ter not getting sanction,

absconding, three oth-

ers died during trial, the

2013, a total 44 accused,

including former Bi-

har chief minister Lalu

Prasad, had been con-

was convicted in three

other fodder scam cases,

with maximum 14 years

sentence he got in one of

the cases. He is facing tri-

al in a fifth fodder scam

in undivided Bihar in

The scams surfaced

case in Ranchi.

Prasad

victed in the same case.

Thereafter,

While one person is

On September 30,

the lawyer said.

counsel said.

The rest were sup-

counsel said.

Jail term for 16

fodder scam accused

ervation and Allotment) Order, 1968, a political party can be recognised as a national party if its candidates secure at least six per cent of votes polled in four or more states in Lok Sabha or assembly elections, and, in addition, it has at least four members

It also has to have at for every 25 MPs from

in the Lok Sabha.

(8.3% vote share in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls), but fails on other counts. A notification issued

by the Election Commission on March 15 lists seven national parties in India. They are (in alphabetical order): All India Trinamool Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), BSP, CPI, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Indian National Congress (INC) and NCP.

"The marginalisation of the Left will have very serious implication on the future of the country. Therefore, the National Executive of CPI has reiterated its position that situation demands the reunification of the communist parties and reworking of strategies," Reddy said, adding that there was a need to bring in young blood

#### (1.28 Lok Sabha MPs into the party. **Another Trinamool Congress MLA joins BJP**



The BJP projected the decision of TMC's Muslim MLA to join the party as a vindication of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's slogan of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwash" (together with all, development for all, trust of all).

Modi gave the slogan in his first address to MPs of BJP-led NDA after the Lok Sabha poll results were declared. He had asked them to win over the trust of minorities with their work.

Besides Islam, who represents Labpur in Birbhum, a few other TMC leaders, including former MLA Gadhadhar Hazra, also joined the saffron party in the presence of BJP leaders Mukul Roy and Kailash Vijayvargiya.

Roy, a former TMC leader, termed the development as "very significant" and said it vindicates Modi's call to the party to win over the trust of minorities.

Asked about some controversial comments made by Islam earlier in which he allegedly supported violence, Vijar-

not believe in any form of violence and there is no place for such views once a leader joins the party.

least two per cent of the

total Lok Sabha seats and

its candidates come from

not less than three states.

Third, it is recognised as

a state party in at least

criterion of being a state

party in Kerala (19 MLAs

in 2016), Tamil Nadu

The CPI fulfils the

four states.

He also mocked state Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who heads the TMC, after she she cancelled her plan to attend Modi's swearing-in, saying she was always looking for an excuse.

Banerjee had objected to the BJP's invitation to family members of many of its workers, who the party claimed were killed in political violence in the state, saying the reason behind their death was not political.

There is no political violence in the state, she said, accusing the BJP of devaluing the swearing-in ceremony.

BJP leaders claimed that more TMC MLAs will join the party in the coming days.

Islam told reporters that minorities are now "supporting" Modi due to his development agenda.

Three MLAs, including Mukul Roy's son Subhrangshu Roy, Tusharkanti Bhattacharya and CPI(M)'s Debendra Nath Roy had joined the BJP on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, sources in Kolkata claimed that six more legislators of the Trinamool Congress -- four from south Bengal and two from north Bengal -are likely to switch sides in a few days along with

"Six TMC MLAs are likely to join us soon. Many more councillors of various municipalities are also in line. Just wait and watch," a senior BJP leader said on condition of anonymity.

The developments come after the stunning performance of the BJP which raised its tally from two to 18 in Lok Sabha election in the state, only four less than the TMC's 22.

The Trinamool Congress, however, tried to downplay the desertions.

"One suspended MLA of Trinamool joined BJP yesterday. The others were from Congress and CPI(M). The number of councillors is 6. That too they were forced at gunpoint to do so," the TMC claimed in a tweet. The Trinamool Congress leadership had accused the BJP of indulging in horse-trading, an allegation denied by the BIP.

"The allegation is completely baseless. If someone wants to join BJP and fight against TMC's misrule, how can we stop it. And TMC leaders should be the last person to talk about horse trading, when TMC poached on Congress and CPI(M) MLAs in last few years, what was that? Is it not horse trading?" Mukul Roy had said.

The BJP earlier had only three MLAs in the 294-member West Bengal Assembly.

# the state) and Manipur



Mamata to participate in TMC sit-in outside Naihati municipality on Thursday

KOLKATA, MAY 29 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will take part in a sit-in demonstration organised by the Trinamool Congress (TMC) outside the Naihati municipality on Thursday to protest against the violence on party workers after the Lok Sabha poll results.

"Tomorrow, we will organise a sit-in outside the Naihati municipality in protest against our workers being rendered homeless by BJP goons. Our party supremo Mamata Banerjee will also participate in it," a senior TMC leader said on Wednesday.

The decision comes hours after Banerjee said she would not attend the swearing-in ceremony of Narenda Modi as the prime minister, citing "untrue" claims made by the BJP that 54 of

its workers were killed in political violence in Bengal.

The TMC supremo had on Tuesday said she would attend the ceremony to be held in New Delhi on Thursday.

Incidentally, the Nai-

hati municipality is located in the Barrackpore area of North 24 Parganas district, which has witnessed violent clashes between TMC and BJP workers since the results of the Lok Sabha polls were announced on May 23. On Tuesday, a majority of the councillors of the Bhatpara, Halisahar, Naihati and Kanchrapara municipalities in North 24 Parganas joined the BJP, passing over the control of these civic bodies from the TMC to the saffron party.

As many as 29 of the 31 councillors in the Naihati municipality joined Front drew a blank.

the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday.

Clashes have since been reported from the Bhatpara and Kakinara areas, which fall under the Barrackpore Lok Sabha segment, where the BJP's Arjun Singh defeated Dinesh Trivedi of the TMC in the just-concluded polls.

Violent incidents have been reported from across the state post the general election.

Two people were killed and many injured in the clashes that broke out between the TMC and the BJP since the poll results were declared, officials said.

The BJP won 18 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in Bengal, only four less than the TMC's 22. The remaining two seats were bagged by the Congress, while the Left

### Humanitarian aid kits distributed in cyclone-hit Puri

BHUBANESWAR, 29 (PTI): Business conglomerate Shapoorji Pallonji Group Wednesday reached out to the people of Puri, who lost their livelihood in cyclone Fani that wreaked havoc in various parts of Odisha.

Members of the group visited the gram panchayats of Gandamunda Bhoi and Bila Bhoi under Puri Sadar block of the worst-hit district and distributed relief materials among the affected families.

The kits included a number of shelter items like tarpaulin and rope, household kit including plates and tumblers,

and mugs, toiletries including soaps, towels, toothbrushes and toothpaste apart from mosquito coils and sanitary napkins. Also, chlorine tablets were provided to the families as groundwater in the area is feared to be contaminated.

Cyclone Fani struck Odisha on May 3 claiming 43 lives and leaving a trail of destruction in Puri and other parts of

Relief materials were distributed among 75 families on the day. Villagers appreciated the efforts of the team as they felt the items in the kit

sleeping mats, buckets will be helpful in maintaining normalcy in their lives, Jagadish Chandra Rout, Associate Vice President, Corporate Affairs Communications, Shapoorii Pallonii Port Maintenance Limited said.

> Shapoorji Group is committed to the noble cause of serving the people of cyclone affected district of Puri. We always stand by the rebuilding process and development of the people of Odisha," he said.

> The relief gramme was hosted by the Group with support from Habitat for Humanity India and Mahashakthi Foundation.

#### the 1990s. a few former MPs of the sistant accountant of the Hyundai to launch electric SUV 'Kona' in India in July

GUWAHATI, MAY 29 (PTI): South Korean auto major Hyundai will drive in its first electric vehicle 'Kona' SUV into India in July, followed by a brand new 'Grand i10' before the festive season as it looks to increase its share in the auto market here, a top company official said Wednesday. Besides, the automaker, which is present in India through its wholly-owned subsidiary Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL), is planning to start exporting its latest compact SUV 'Venue' from its Chennai factory in the next 3-4 months.

"We are constantly adding new products in our poprtfolio for the Indian market. We will launch our electric SUV 'Kona' in India in July," HMIL Senior Gen-

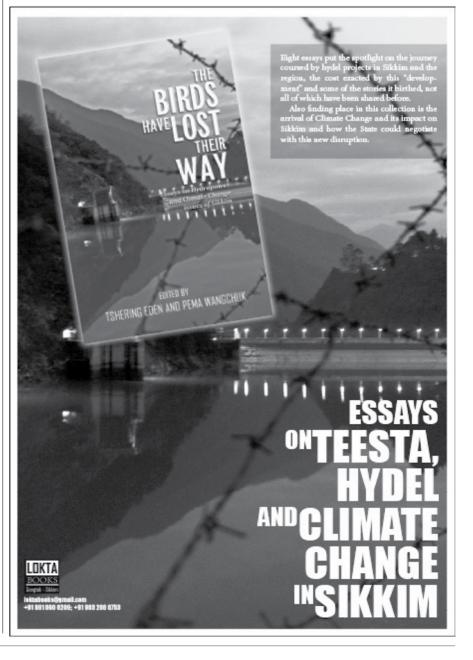
eral Manager and Group Head (Marketing) Puneet Anand told PTI here. He, however, declined to share specification details of the proposed sports utility vehicle planned for India. Earlier, Hyundai had announced plans to launch its first electric vehicle in a completely knock-down (CKD) form, which would be assembled at HMIL's manufacturing plant in Chennai. "After the electric vehicle,

we will introduce a full model change variant of an existing small car. It is going to be the 'Grand i10' and it will hit the roads before the festival season this year," Anand said.

When asked about its latest compact SUV 'Venue', the senior official said the company has already received over 20,000 bookings and the waiting period of the vehicle is around 3-4 months at present depending upon different options. "We are currently producing around 7,000 units of the 'Venue' per month at our Chennai plant. We have the capability to ramp up production and we plan to increase the output to monthly 10,000 units within next 3-4 months," Anand explained. On exports of the model, he

said the company's first aim is to fulfill the requirement of the domestic market and does not have immediate plans to sell overseas countries. "After we stabilise the sales in India, we will start exporting the 'Venue' to our existing strong overseas markets. I do not think the export will begin before next 3-4 months," Anand said. On May 21, HMIL forayed into the high selling compact SUV segment in India with the launch of new model 'Venue' with three engine options -- 1.0 litre turbo and 1.2 litre petrol powertrains besides 1.4 litre diesel engine -- and placed below the 'Creta' in terms of price and positioning. Talking about the slowdown

in auto market, Anand said the slump in sales began from Kerala flood last year and is continuing till now. "We hope that with the launch of various new products by our company and other automakers, the market will revive.



# Cup of Life: Kohli's passion pitted against Smith's determination and Morgan's ambition

His batting conquests are already a stuff of legends and a World Cup victory will be like the 'Kohinoor' in 'King' Virat Kohli's crown. His tunnel vision quest for the crowning glory will be littered with many hurdles which may come in the garb of Steve Smith and David Warner, the Australians who have been longing for a career resurrection for more than 12 months now.

And then there is Irishman Eoin Morgan leading the England team, as he seeks to end a '44-year-old English itch' no WC victory since 1975 backed by a team packed with talent and ambition like never before.

During the next six and half weeks 10 countries will play against each other for global cricket's most coveted crown and the battle will begin with a clash between firm favourites and hosts England and South Africa on Thursday.

A minimum of five victories will be required to qualify for the semi-finals and that will be the primary aim of the teams.

While India, England and Australia headline the event, a disciplined New Zealand, the mavericks from Pakistan and the flamboyant Caribbeans are well capable winning the title.

On batting belters, it will be the potent bowling attacks that will hold the key and Jasprit Bumrah along with two talented wrist spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal are expected to play pivotal roles in India's campaign.

The batting line-up is one of the most formidable with Kohli leading from the front, Rohit Sharma providing the zing and Hardik Pandya the flamboyance.

The Indian team would strive to make it a memorable World Cup swansong for Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who will be playing his fourth and final mega event.

The middle-order does have some issues but India are firmly in contention and a semi-final slot is there for the taking. For Australia, the perfect reintegration of David Warner and Steve Smith in the set-up was just what the team needed.

Warner got into the groove straightaway in the IPL ending with nearly 700 runs (692) while Smith, who was a bit rusty in the league found his bearings in the warmup games in the lead-up to the tournament.

Add to it, Usman Khawaja, skipper Aaron



Finch, pacers Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc, spinner Nathan Lyon and Adam Zampa and it gives them a formidable look.

Since the inception of World Cup in 1975 (60-overs a side Prudential Cup back then), no England team has had so much of hype surrounding it as the current one, led by Morgan.

Precisely due to the presence of some of the most prolific ODI batsmen that the world has ever seen. Jos Buttler, Jonny Bairstow, Morgan, Root are menacing both on paper as well as on the 22-yards. Jofra Archer's late addition has given them the much-needed boost alongside Mark Wood, Adil Rashid in the bowling department. Ben Stokes and Moeen Ali are the three-dimensional cricketers with multiple skill sets that can upset

plans of any opposition.

Pakistan are going into the tournament with a string of defeats and an unsettled feel where Muhammad Aamir and Wahab Riaz have been late entrants, more due to their experience than performance.

Fakhar Zaman, Imam ul Haq, Muhammad Hafeez, Babar Azam and Haris Sohail are all talented players in their own rights but like all Pakistan teams of the past, there are no guarantees as to when they will play as a unit.

There is something about New Zealand which always keeps them in the mix at all global events. A matured captain and a world class batsman in Kane Williamson makes the Black Caps one of the most

likeable teams. The likes of Martin Guptill, Colin Munro are good players in their own right and on their day could make a difference.

Trent Boult is more than handful in seaming conditions and committed all-rounders like Colin de Grandhomme and Jimmy Neesham will give it their all to go one better than 2015 edition.

West Indies cricket has gone through enough turmoil but the amount of talent at their disposal easily makes them the dark horse with 'Universe Boss' Chris Gayle being nightmare for any opposition. The 50 plus sixes that Andre Russell hit during IPL has scared the bowler. Batting is the strength on which the Caribbeans will rely heavily as the bowling remains a

bit weak.

This edition is one such when there isn't too much hopes pinned on South Africa, who have always been eternal chokers but in Faf du Plessis, the Proteas have a quality leader. Dale Steyn's fitness issue will remain a worry for South da's pace and Imran Tahir's guile will keep rivals on their toes.

Afghanistan's rise in world cricket is a beautiful story and one would expect them to upset a few plans of the traditional powerhouses. Rashid Khan has already established himself as one of the best spinners in T20 leagues.

The flashy Mohammed Shahzad, free-flowing Hazratullah Zazai, Hashmatullah Shahidi and the veteran Mohammed Nabi are capable of producing eye-catching performances.

For Bangladesh, at least a semi-final finish is something that their passionate fans expect. Mashrafe Mortaza is a very popular captain who has world's premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan at his disposal along with seasoned campaigners like Tamim Iqbal, Mahmudullah Riyadh and Mushfiqur Rahim, all keen to make a mark at the global stage.

The only team which is looking out of depth is Sri Lanka, who only have Lasith Malinga's experience. Dimuth Karunaratne has big shoes to fill as the Arjuna Ranatungas and Mahela Jayawardenes will

# Arsenal and Chelsea ready for Europa League battle in distant Baku

BAKU, MAY 29 (AFP): The build-up to the Europa League final has been marred by the controversy surrounding UEFA's choice of venue, but it is now time for the football to do the talking as familiar foes Chelsea and Arsenal prepare to do battle in the unfamiliar setting of Baku on Wednesday

Two and a half weeks after the Premier League season ended, here is a London derby exported almost 3,000 miles (5,000 kilometres) to Azerbaijan's capital, by the Caspian Sea.

It is the first leg in a week of European finals dominated by England, with Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur contesting the Champions League showpiece in Madrid on Saturday.

However, there will not be much of an English atmosphere at the Baku Olympic Stadium when the match kicks off at 2300 local time (1900GMT), with reportedly only around 6,000 tickets sold by the clubs in a ground which holds almost 70,000.

The distances and costs involved and the difficulty in getting to Baku have prevented more fans from travelling, while Arsenal are also handicapped by the absence of Henrikh Mkhitaryan.

He decided not to travel because of fears over his safety due to an ongoing political dispute between Azerbaijan and his home country, Arme-

"It is not in my hands. They have their reason to play here and I must respect this decision," said Arsenal coach Unai



Emery on Tuesday. "Yes I prefer to play with our supporters here. I'd prefer it if a lot of supporters from us and from Chelsea could come here from London, but it's difficult."

Emery's players have promised to try to win the trophy for Mkhitaryan, and the stakes are certainly high for the Gunners.

After finishing fifth in the Premier League, two points behind Chelsea in third and one point behind Tottenham, Arsenal have to win to qualify for next season's Champions

"For a club like Arsenal we have to be in the Champions League. It's an amazing and important game because we want to give us, the fans and the club the Champions League back," said midfielder Granit Xhaka.

Whether that in itself is more important than winning a European trophy is another matter.

- SARRI STORMS OFF

Arsenal have not been in a European final since 2006 and have not won a continental trophy since lifting the Cup Winners' Cup 25 years ago.

In Emery, though, they have a coach who won this competition three years running with Sevilla.

"All teams' first objective is to play to win a title -- I think that is the first objective, and then there is also the fact that it helps you to achieve the Champions League," Emery reasoned.

Despite the pressure, Emery appeared calm ahead of the game. In contrast, his opposite number Maurizio Sarri looked anything but as he stormed off the pitch at the Olympic Stadium during a training session on Tuesday evening that was open to the media.

Television cameras caught the Italian angrily throwing away his baseball cap as he headed for the tunnel shortly after a moment of friction between David Luiz and Gonzalo Higuain.

Sarri, who has been heavily linked with a move to Juventus, had earlier said winning the final would turn a "very good season" into a 'wonderful" one.

- NIGHT OF FARE-WELLS? -

He is still to win a

major trophy, but he has already steered the Blues to a return to the Champions League and also took them to the League Cup final, where they lost on penalties to Manches-

ter City. The game could also be Eden Hazard's last as a Chelsea player amid reports he will finally move

on to Real Madrid. It will definitely be the last game for Arsenal goalkeeper Petr Cech, who will retire afterwards at the age of 37. A Chelsea great who crossed London in 2015, he has been tipped for a return to Stamford Bridge in an upstairs capacity.

"I can speak about Petr Cech a lot, but above all he's a great man, a great professional," Emery said. "I want to do something important, with him playing or not playing."

Bernd Leno is the other option in goal, while Chelsea are sweating on the fitness of midfielder N'Golo Kante.

"Kante has a very little problem with his knee. The problem is the timing, but we are trying," said Sarri.

#### ICC launches criiio campaign on eve of World Cup

DUBAI, MAY 29 (PTI): The ICC Wednesday launched the criiio campaign on the eve of the men's World Cup, bringing together 460 million people playing cricket globally to celebrate the magnificent diversity of cricket. The ICC asked the fans to join the social cricket tribe by sharing pictures and videos of where and how they play cricket across the world using the newly launched #criiio and visiting criiio.com.

This builds on the success of the recent user-generated social media initiative #WorldWideWickets and is the first of a series of programs that will be launched by the ICC over the next 12 months. "On the eve of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup which brings together the best ten teams and players in the world, we want to celebrate the nearly half a billion fans playing social cricket around the world," said ICC Chief Executive, Manu Sawhney.

"Criiio is a celebration of everyone playing cricket their way and world cricket wants to invite them into the criiio tribe. Cricket is for everyone, it is inexpensive, engaging, simple and fun, and we want to share all the different ways that the game is being played."

Around the world hundreds of millions of fans are playing cricket the way they like to on the beach, in a carpark or gully or their backyard.

Criiio is a celebration of all the brilliant and unique ways people play the game which can be played anywhere, by anyone and at any time.

### **Sports Ministry has agreed** to ask NADA to conduct dope tests in state meets: AFI



PHILEM DIPAK SINGH NEW DELHI, MAY 29 (PTI):

Agreeing to a request from Athletics Federation of India, the Sports Ministry has asked the National Anti-Doping Agency to conduct dope tests for all state meets, a move that could help curb the menace.

An official of the national federation confirmed this to PTI.

The AFI, in the ACTC

(Annual Calendar of Training and Competitions) meeting held on May 21 and 22 under the chairmanship of Sports Secretary, had requested the ministry to do dope testing at the state meets.

"In order to curb doping in athletics at the lower level events in the domestic circuit, the AFI asked the Sports Ministry to conduct dope tests at all the state meets and the government has agreed to our proposal. The Sports Secretary

said the ministry will issue necessary directions to the NADA to conduct these tests," AFI media manager Divesh Bhal said on Wednesday.

Dope testing of athletes at important national meets had been a cause of friction between the AFI and NADA. On many occasions, due to the non arrival or late arrival of dope testing teams of the NADA, issues cropped up regarding the ratification of national records.

The AFI has also been claiming for long that many positive dope cases of athletics come from departmental and lower level meets.

In a circular issued to state units, AFI secretary C K Valson wrote that "NADA will take appropriate action regarding conduct of dope tests during state meets".

"In the (ACTC) meeting, it was decided that the dope tests will be carried out during all the state meets and state meets will be conducted as per the calendar submitted by you to Athletics Federation of India. Details of the persons arriving will be informed to you well in advance,"

he wrote. Valson asked the state officials to cooperate with the NADA representatives in facilitating efficient and fair conduct

of the dope tests. "States who do not cooperate in this regard, their state meet results will not be validated by AFI," he said. The AFI also decided to constitute a team of experts in every states to spot talent in the age group of under 14 and 16 and groom them.

The state units have been asked to recommend names of coaches and international athletes who are interested to be part of the committee.

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# Ancient supernovae prompted human ancestors to walk upright

WASHINGTON, MAY 29 (PTI): Cosmic energy bombarded by supernovae eight million years ago may have triggered a chain of events that eventually led to ancient humans walk on two legs, a study claims.

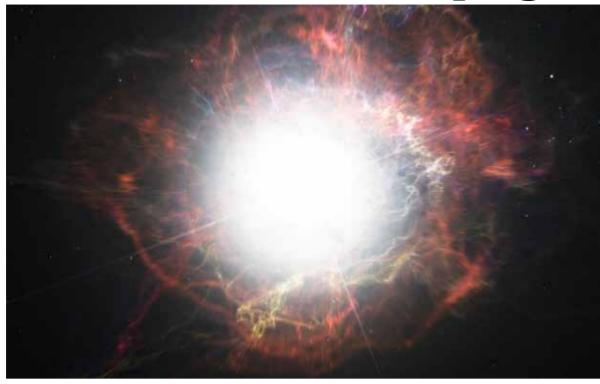
The research, published in the Journal of Geology, suggests that the supernovae initiated an avalanche of electrons in the lower atmosphere.

atmospheric ionization probably triggered an enormous upsurge in cloud-to-ground lightning strikes that ignited forest fires around the globe.

These infernos could be one reason ancestors of Homo sapiens developed bipedalism -- to adapt in savannas that replaced torched forests in northeast Africa.

"It is thought there was already some tendency for hominins to walk on two legs, even before this event," said Adrian Melott, a professor at the University of Kansas in the US.

"But they were mainly adapted for climbing around in trees. After this conversion to savanna, they would much more often have to walk from one tree to another across the grassland, and so they become better at walking upright,"



said Melott. They could see over the tops of grass and watch for predators," he added.

It is thought this conversion to savanna contributed to bipedalism as it became more and more dominant in human ancestors.

Based on a "telltale" layer of iron-60 deposits lining the world's sea beds, astronomers have high confidence supernovae exploded in Earth's immediate cosmic neighbourhood -- between 100 and only 50 parsecs (163 light years) away -- during the transition from the Pliocene Epoch to the Ice Age.

"We calculated the ionization of the atmosphere from cosmic rays which would come from a supernova about as far away as the iron-60 deposits indicate," Melott said.

"It appears that this was the closest one in a much longer series. We contend it would increase the ionisation of the lower atmosphere by 50-fold," he said.

"Usually, you don't get lower-atmosphere ionisation because cosmic rays don't penetrate that far, but the more energetic ones from supernovae come right down to the surface -- so there would be a lot of electrons being knocked out of the atmosphere," he added.

Ionisation in the atmosphere meant an abundance of electrons would form more pathways lightning strikes.

The researchers said that the probability that this lightning spike touched off a worldwide upsurge in wildfires is supported by the discovery of carbon deposits found in soils that correspond with the timing of the cosmic-ray bombardment. "The obser-

vation is that there's a lot more charcoal and soot in the world starting a few million years ago," Melott said.

"It's all over the place, and nobody has any explanation for why it would have happened all over the world in different climate zones. This could be an explanation."

Melott said no such event is likely to occur again anytime soon. The nearest star capable of exploding into a supernova in the next million years is Betelgeuse, some 652 light years from Earth.

## US again refuses to label China as currency manipulator

BY LALIT K IHA WASHINGTON, MAY 29 (PTI): The Trump administration once again refused to label China as a currency manipulator, even though on Tuesday it kept Beijing on a list of countries whose trade surpluses with the US

In its semi-annual report on macroeconomic and foreign exchange policies of major trading partners of the US, sent to the Congress, the Treasury department said that no country meets the criteria to be labelled as one seeking to gain unfair trade advantages over the US by manipulating its currency.

and other indicators are

closely tracked.

However, the report placed nine nations China, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam on the monitoring list.

India and Switzerland that had been on the previous watch list issued in October were removed.

The Treasury said while China does not meet the standards to be declared a currency manipulator, it will carefully monitor and review this determination over the following 6-month period in light of the exceptionally large and growing bilateral trade imbalance and China's history of facilitating an undervalued currency.

In its report, the Treasury said that it continues to have significant concerns about China's currency practices, particularly in light of the misalignment and undervaluation of the renminbi (RMB) relative to the US dollars.

China should make a concerted effort to enhance transparency of its exchange rate and reserve management operations and goals, it said.

The Treasury said it will continue its enhanced bilateral engagement with China regarding exchange rate issues, given that the RMB has fallen against the dollar by 8 per cent over the last year in the context of an extremely large and widening bilateral trade surplus.

"Treasury continues

necessary steps to avoid a persistently weak cur-

rency, the report said. China needs to aggressively address market-distorting forces, including subsidies and state-owned enterprises, enhance social safety nets to support greater household consumption growth, and rebalance the economy away from investment, it said.

Improved economic fundamentals and structural policy settings would underpin a stronger RMB over time and help to reduce China's trade surplus with the United States, it added.

The Treasury alleged that China continues to run an extremely large, persistent, and growing bilateral trade surplus with the United States, by far the largest among any of the United States' major trading partners.

The Treasury Department is required to report to Congress every six months on whether any countries are manipulating their currencies to gain trade advantages over the US.

During the 2016 campaign, Trump vowed to declare China a currency manipulator as soon as he took office.

The opposition Democratic party immediately slammed the Trump administration for not designating China as a currency manipulator.

This is the fifth time in a row that the Trump administration has refused to label China a currency manipulator. I hope this does not portend the administration backing off on Huawei or trade; It would be a tragedy for American workers if they did. Senate Minority Leader Senator Chuck Schumer said.

China's goods trade surplus with US stands at USD 419 billion over the four quarters through December 2018. The outsized magnitude of the bilateral deficit is a result of China's persistent and widespread use of non-tariff barriers, non-market mechanisms, state subsidies, and other discriminatory measures that

to urge China to take the are increasingly distorting China's trading and investment relationships, it said.

These practices tend to limit Chinese demand and market access for imported goods and services, leading to a wider trade surplus, the report said, ruing that China's policies also inhibit foreign investment, contributing to weakness in the RMB.

Over the course of 2018, the RMB depreciated 5.4 per cent against the US dollar, and just under 2 per cent on a broad, trade-weighted basis.

If maintained, this depreciation would likely exacerbate China's large bilateral trade surplus with the United States, the report said.

Treasury places significant importance on China adhering to its G-20 commitments to refrain from engaging in competitive devaluation and to not target China's exchange rate for competitive purposes. Treasury continues to urge China to enhance the transparency of China's exchange rate and reserve management operations and goals, it said.

Treasury remains deeply disappointed that China continues to refrain from disclosing its foreign exchange intervention. Treasury is closely monitoring developments in the RMB and continues to have ongoing discussions with Chinese authorities, it said.

China should pursue more market-based economic reforms that would bolster growth and confidence in the RMB, the report said.

The US and China are locked in a bitter, yearlong trade dispute which has seen the Trump administration recently boost tariffs on USD 250 billion of Chinese goods.

Trump is demanding China to reduce the massive trade deficit which last year climbed to over USD 539 billion. He is also pressing for verifiable measures for protection of intellectual property rights (IPR), technology transfer and more access to American goods to Chinese markets.

### Attacks by extremists on Afghan schools triple: UNICEF

UNITED NATIONS, MAY registration and poll-29 (PTI): Attacks on schools in Afghanistan tripled in 2018, surging from 68 in 2017 to 192, the United Nations agency for children said in a report, as the Taliban and other extremist groups in the war-torn country continue to wage a campaign of violence against softer targets.

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) on Tuesday said in a report that it was the first time since 2015 that a rise in attacks had been recorded.

"Education is under fire in Afghanistan," said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore.

"The senseless attacks on schools; the killing, injury and abduction of teachers; and the threats against education are destroying the hopes and dreams of an entire generation of children."

More than 1,000 schools across the country remain closed because of security threats from groups such as the Taliban and Islamic State, which have sought soft targets for attacks aimed at extending and consolidating their influence through intimidation. Half a million children were denied their right to education as result.

Although the Taliban have shifted from their previous opposition to all forms of girls' education, they have faced regular accusations of shutting down schools run in a way they do not approve.

The UNICEF said the use of schools as voter

ing centers for the parliamentary elections in 2018 may have been a reason for the increase in the attacks. An estimated 3.7 million children between the ages of 7 and 17 nearly half of all school-aged children in the country are out of school in Afghanistan.

Worsening insecurity, high rates of poverty and persistent discrimination against girls caused the rate of out-of-school children to increase last year for the first time since 2002. Girls account for 60 per cent of children not in education.

The UNICEF is working with the government and other partners to provide informal and accelerated communitv-based education. This includes running classes in community buildings and homes, helping to reduce the risk of insecurity on the way to school.

On Monday, the third International Conference on Safe Schools opened in Spain for decision-makers to discuss the implementation of the Safe School Declaration endorsed by 87 nations its challenges and lessons learned, at the national, regional, and international levels. The conference is an occasion to encourage cooperation and stronger gender-responsive practices.

As the International Conference opened, UNICEF calls for an end to all attacks on schools and urges all warring parties to protect education during armed conflict.

#### **US removes India from its** currency monitoring list and India, there was a notable decline

BY LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, MAY 29 (PTI): The Trump administration on Tuesday removed India from its currency monitoring list of major trading partners, citing certain developments and steps being taken by New Delhi which address some of its major concerns.

Switzerland is the other nation that has been removed by the US from its currency monitoring list which among others include China, Japan, South Korea, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam.

India has been removed from the monitoring list in this report, having met only one out of three criteria a significant bilateral surplus with the US for two consecutive reports, the Treasury Department said in its latest semi-annual report on macroeconomic and foreign exchange policies of major trading partners of the US sent to the Congress. After purchasing foreign exchange on net in 2017, the central bank steadily sold reserves for most of 2018, with net sales of foreign exchange reaching 1.7 per cent of GDP over the year, it said.

India maintains ample reserves according to the IMF metrics for reserve adequacy, it said. In both Switzerland

in 2018 in the scale and frequency of foreign exchange purchases, the report said. Neither Switzerland nor India met the criteria for having engaged in persistent, one-sided intervention in either the October 2018 report or this report. Both Switzerland and India have been removed from the monitoring list, the Treasury said in its report running into over 40 pages.

India for the first time was placed by the US in its currency monitoring list of countries with potentially questionable foreign exchange policies in May 2018 along with five other countries - China, Germany, Japan, South Korea and Switzerland.

In its next report in October 2018, the Treasury had said that India has made improvements and its name would be removed from the currency manipulation list in the next report.

"India's circumstances have shifted markedly, as the central bank's net sales of foreign exchange over the first six months of 2018 led net purchases over the four quarters through June 2018 to fall to USD 4 billion, or 0.2 per cent of the GDP," the Treasury had said in its October 2018 report.

### Bangladeshi leader visits Japan to talk economy, partnership

Токуо. Мау 29 (АР): Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is wooing Japan for aid, trade and investment in a visit that highlights cordial relations with the administration of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Hasina, who is beginning a third consecutive five-year term, arrived late Tuesday and is set to meet Abe and hold a joint news conference Wednesday. A dinner is also being held in her honour.

The leaders will discuss the Bay of Bengal development project and strengthening economic and security partnerships, according to the Japanese Foreign

Ministry. Japan has been weary of the security and economic threat of neighboring China and has been courting other nations in Asia as well as the U.S. and Europe. This week alone, Abe

is meeting with leaders of the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore and Laos in addition to Bangladesh. He just finished playing host to a four-day visit by President Donald Trump, which ended Tuesday.

Hasina has visited five times before, as prime minister and opposition leader, but this marks her first visit since taking office in her latest term. Promoting trade between Japan and Ban-

gladesh is important for both sides, with Bangladesh importing mostly steel, autos and machinery from Bangladesh, and Japan importing clothing products and jute. Japanese imports

from Bangladesh have quadrupled recently compared to 2009 levels. Japanese companies setting shop in Bangladesh are also growing, mostly in textiles and manufac-

Japan has long seen Bangladesh as a key partner because Bangladesh has supported Tokyo's wish to become a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, as well as backed its position on nuclear weapons.



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ALL SMILES NOW! The actor, Tom Holland takes a selfie with some fans during the Spider-Man: Far From Home Pan-Asian Media Summit Bali event in Indonesia.



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### Don't hate anyone: Arjun to woman who accused him of disliking Sridevi



MUMBAI, MAY 29 (PTI): Arjun Kapoor, who recently made his relationship with Malaika Arora official, gave a befitting reply to a woman who accused him of showing hatred towards the late actor Sridevi, his father Boney Kapoor's second wife.

Arjun, 33, and Malaika, 45, initially kept their relationship under wraps, but are more open now. Malaika was married to actor-director-producer Arbaaz Khan but got divorced in 2017. The woman, who claimed to be a fan of actor Varun Dhawan, on Tuesday accused Arjun of "double standards", saying that he used to hate Sridevi but has no problem dating Malaika. "You hate your father's second wife because your father left your mother, and now you are dating a woman who is 11 years elder to you and has a teenage son. Why double: standards @arjunk26???" the woman wrote on Twitter.

Sridevi, who died in February 2018, was Boney's second in ing on the film which would have terrorism as wife. The producer was previously married to Arjun's mother : its backdrop. Dhawan, who worked with the Mona Shourie Kapoor. Replying to the woman, Arjun said he · filmmaker on "Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania" used to maintain distance from the late actor and had he hated • and "Badrinath Ki Dulhania", was set for the her, he would not have been present at her funeral.

wouldn't have been there for my dad, Janhvi & Khushi at a : then "somewhere along the second half I besensitive time... It's easy to type & judge, think a little. You're : came very rehearsed." @Varun\_dvn fan, so I feel I should tell you don't spread nega-: tivity with his face on your DP," he wrote.

she apologised to the actor.

"I apologise if I have hurt anyone's sentiments. I meant to • shouldn't say it. do no harm. Extremely sorry to all @arjunk26 Fans.... Please Forgive me. It was just my opinion. Have nothing against @ar- i least as of now, that I'm not finding anything junk26 Sir or #MalaikaArora Ma'am. . SORRY SIR @arjunk26," ݨ new to say. So I've kind of kept it on the backshe wrote. Varun said he is "glad" the woman and added that : burner," Shashank told PTI. Arjun has a very big heart. "I'm glad you apologised. It's okay, Arjun is not upset. Lets just all live our own lives. Arjun has a : Productions' "Dhadak", said he did not want big heart like I always say. I don't want any of my fans to talk to tell a story "just because it'll be a cool acbad about any actors #keepiteasy" he posted.

# Kit Harington checks into wellness centre



Los Angeles, May 29 (PTI): It seems like the end of "Game of Thrones" has hit Kit Harington really hard as the actor has checked into a rehabilitation centre to receive treatment for stress, exhaustion and alcohol use.

According to PageSix, the luxury health retreat in Connecticut weeks before the finale aired on May 19. He played Jon Snow across eight seasons on the HBO's epic fantasy show.

Harington has been doing cognitive behavioral therapy, meditating, and practising other psychological exercises to better cope with stress related to the "Game of Thrones" ending.

Rose Leslie, the actor's wife and former co-star, is some personal issues".

"extremely supportive" of Harington. "The end of 'GoT' really hit Kit hard... He realized, 'This is it, this is the end'. It was something they had all worked so hard on for so many years. He had a moment of, what next?

"He's in the clinic pre-32-year-old checked into a dominantly for stress and exhaustion and also alcohol. His wife Rose is being extremely supportive. Everyone close to him really wanted him to get some rest. Right now, he just needs peace and quiet," a source close to the actor told the outlet.

> Harington's representative said that the actor has "decided to utilise this break in his schedule as an opportunity to spend some time at a wellness retreat to work on

The actor had previously admitted that he had to resort to therapy to deal with his character's death in the show, which he said was his "darkest time".

"It wasn't a very good time in my life. I felt I had to feel that I was the most fortunate person in the world, when actually, I felt very vulnerable. I had a shaky time in my life around there - like I think a lot of people do in their 20s," the actor told Variety recently.

"That was a time when I started therapy, and started talking to people. I had felt very unsafe, and I wasn't talking to anyone. I had to feel very grateful for what I have, but I felt incredibly concerned about whether I could even f\*\*\*ing act," he added.

# **Shashank Khaitan puts Varun's** action film on backburner



MUMBAI, MAY 29 (PTI): Shashank Khaitan was gearing up to make an action adventure film with Varun Dhawan but the director has now put a hold on the project as he was not finding "anything new to say" with it.

Last year, Shashank revealed he was worklead part. The director said he wrote a lot on "I don't hate anyone... We kept a dignified distance, If I did 🕯 it and felt he had cracked a great first half but

"As a writer director, you can't live in isolation. Everyday there's so much material com-The woman later deleted her posted and in another tweet, ing out on shows, films and TV on this (subject), that if I don't have anything new to say, I

"That's what happened with that film, at

The director, who last directed Dharma tion film". "There needs to be a story to tell. But right now I'm not finding enough purpose in the story. You need this honesty because even before a filmmaker, I'm a consumer.

"I see movies, digital content all the time and when I'm seeing these shows being made and if I don't have a newer perspective then what's the point of telling a story.

Before the untitled film was announced, Shashank was set to make his ambitious warrior film "Rannbhoomi", featuring Varun.

The director says the film will take a lot of time due to the research and VFX.

"It's not a film that I can depend on others to do it. Every person who comes on board I need to learn from them and say this is what I want to do. It's something which unfortunately I can't give a timeline too.

"However excited we are about it and the script which we -- Varun, Karan (Johar) and me -- love a lot, we cannot commit to it immediately till we have more clarify on when are we going to execute it. Till we are not clear on budgets and VFX, we can't give a timeline."

The director, meanwhile, will be seen as a judge on the second season of Colors dance reality show "Dance Deewane", scheduled to air from June 15.

**ARIES:** Are you still hanging on to THAT one, Aries? Under today's moon-Neptune connection, you can finally surrender and free yourself a toxic tie. You don't have to justify wrongdoing, but through forgiveness, you release yourself from being controlled and limited by resentment. Have you developed self-protective armor in response to a past hurt?

TAURUS: Supportive friends surround you today, Taurus, so reach out if you're feeling overwhelmed. An act of kindness from your inner circle could touch your heart, reminding you that it's the people in your life, not the material stuff, that really matters. Make sure you put the same caring energy out there, too. When someone is struggling, your first instinct might be to dish out tough love.

GEMINI: Hello, influencer! Your creative ideas are welcome at the boardroom table today, so share those unconventional visions. The moon and imaginative Neptune meet in Pisces, your tenth house of career, aligning ambition and inspiration.

Your ability to "think different" could make you stand out from the crowd, tapping you as a thought leader among your

CANCER: Ask, believe, receive. Today, the soulful moon unites with intuitive Neptune in Pisces and your broad-minded ninth house. This is the day to imagine what you want, because you can magnetize your dreams to you through creative visualization. The ninth house is all about expansion, so don't just aim for the "safe," low-hanging fruit. Go bigger, Cancer! Feeling out of touch with your power to manifest? Try writing up a gratitude list. When you recall all the things you're thankful for, you'll begin to attract more abundance.

LEO: You SAY that you want happiness, love and freedom, but do you actually believe that your desires are possible, Leo? Today's moon-Neptune conjunction in your mystical eighth house encourages you to examine your own limiting beliefs. Since you may need tangible proof to REALLY change your mind, hunt for people who are living and quixotic Neptune embrace in your the life you want for yourself.

VIRGO: Relationships can be hard work, we know, we know. But they can also be a haven from stress and struggle so stop telling yourself that you don't need people. Today, the moon and compassionate Neptune align in Pisces and your partnership house. The tranquilizing effect can be beneficial to your bonds with the ones who matter most. Soften your stance with your partner, and be gentler in your interactions with close friends.

LIBRA: Pampering and self-care are hi-pri items on your agenda and today's stars give you a free pass to luxuriate as only a Libra can. With the moon and sensual Neptune aligned in Pisces and your sixth house of wellbeing, look for healthy ways to indulge. Dip into the steam room after your workout or spend the evening getting soaked and scrubbed at a traditional Korean spa.

SCORPIO: Still musing over the weekend's romantic escapades? Don't rush to "back to business" mode. Today, the moon

fifth house of passion, adding a sensual spin to your agenda. An attraction could spark, or you could be feeling especially amorous. Nobody to sidle up to (yet)? Get glamorous for yourself, Scorpio.

SAGITTARIUS: Home is where your heart is today, as the moon conjoins with sensual Neptune in your domestic fourth house. If you must trek into the office, bring the cozy vibes with you. Keep an open-door policy so coworkers can plop down and share tales of their weekends. (That expense report can wait).

**CAPRICORN:** Straight to the point? Not today, Capricorn. The reflective moon and compassionate Neptune meet in Pisces, your communication house. Doling out tough love and stern reprimands will get you nowhere. Validating the other person's emotions and experience? That will help you feel connected. Sometimes, a person just needs to be heard before you rush them into problem-solving mode. Instead of being emphatic, be empathetic. Catch yourself if you're being too hardcore, and dial back the intensity.

**AQUARIUS:** Sprinkle some practical magic into your Monday as the moon and psychic Neptune aligned in your pragmatic second house. Neuroscience is starting to show that our thoughts and intentions CAN shape our reality. Cultivating a mindset of abundance could attract legit prosperity for you, Aquarius. If you've gotten caught in scarcity thinking, shift your mindset. Clear your space of blocks: unpaid bills, parking tickets, a cluttered inbox of unanswered emails. Out with the old means making room for new opportunity to flow in.

PISCES: BWant effortlessness and ease as a way of life? Stop swimming upstream and go with the flow. The moon and your ruling planet Neptune align in Pisces, sharpening your intuition and giving you the astrological It Factor today. You're radiant and magnetic, so make that "big ask" now while your powers of persuasion are this irresistible. This is the day to forward one of your personal goals, and you won't have to struggle to do it. You could turn heads without even trying, too, as Neptune gives you extra dazzle.