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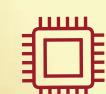
Strong deposits franchise growing at 39%. Healthy CASA ratio of 47%. Deposits cross ₹ 2 lakh crore (USD 24 billion)

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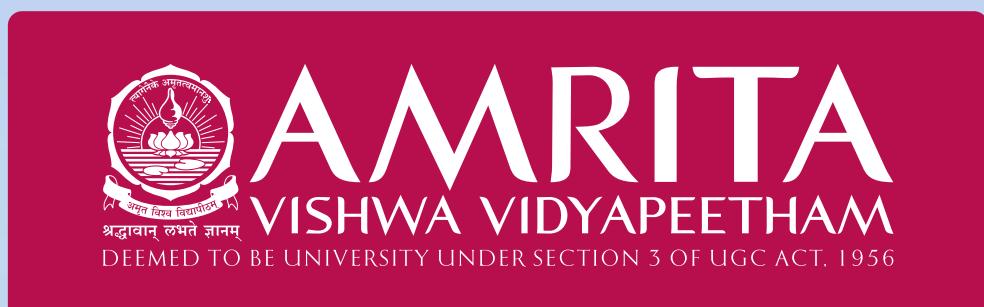


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IDFC FIRST Bank

For a financial year, Incremental credit to deposit ratio = incremental growth in gross advances for that financial year / incremental growth of total deposit for that financial year; Loans & Advances includes Credit Substitutes; The Bank consciously calibrated loan growth to improve the credit deposit ratio; '14 years' mentioned above refers to the period - FY'19 to FY'24; IDFC FIRST Bank offers Zero Fee banking on all Savings Account Services; Monthly average balance charges for Savings Account applicable, for more details, visit: www.idfcfirstbank.com/zerofeebanking; Details on the IDFC FIRST Bank Credit Card Reward Points and APR are available on: www.idfcfirstbank.com/credit-card.



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THE HINDU



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DENIES ALLEGATIONS

RSS never opposed quota, says Bhagwat

NEWS » PAGE 12



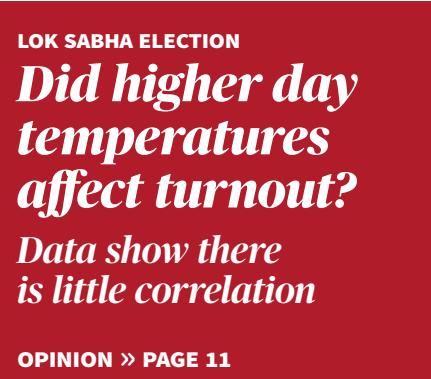
ANDHRA POLL SCENE
A do-or-die battle for all key players

NEWS » PAGE 13



OFF GUJARAT COAST
14 Pak. nationals held with 86 kg of narcotics

NEWS » PAGE 12



LOK SABHA ELECTION
Did higher day temperatures affect turnout?

Data show there is little correlation

OPINION » PAGE 11



DEFINING KNOCKS

Rituraj stars for CSK; Jacks dazzles for RCB

SPORT » PAGE 17

NEARBY



26 elephants shifted out of ATR camp

COIMBATORE
Authorities of the Anamalai Tiger Reserve have shifted 26 captive elephants from the Kozhikumuthi elephant camp to four other places within the reserve. » PAGE 6

T.N. Heritage Commission Act comes into force

CHENNAI
The Madras High Court has succeeded in making the State government bring into force the Tamil Nadu Heritage Commission Act of 2012, 12 years after it was enacted by the legislature. » PAGE 6

EDUCATION PLUS » PAGE 5

One killed, three injured in gunfights in Manipur

Clash along the boundary between Kangpokpi and Imphal West districts comes less than a day after attack on a CRPF camp in the State; police say 'miscreants' from both sides exchanged fire

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

At least one person was killed and three injured in fresh gunfights in the early hours of Sunday along the boundary between Kangpokpi and Imphal West districts in Manipur, where the ethnic conflict between the valley-based Meitei and the hills-based Kuki-Zo communities continues.

This comes within 24 hours of an attack on a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) camp in Nairnseina of Bishnupur district by unidentified militants, who had killed two CRPF personnel and injured two.

Manipur Security Adviser Kuldip Singh declared that no stone would be left unturned to punish those



No end in sight: The ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur has killed over 220 people since it began on May 3 last year. REUTERS

responsible.

The latest clash began around 2.30 a.m. on Sunday, with gunfire being reported from Koutruk village in Imphal West district, police sources told *The Hindu*.

Following this, "miscreants from the valley-side and the hillside were

engaged in an exchange of fire", one of the police sources said, adding that security operations were launched immediately. Another police source added, "The situation was brought under control and both groups of armed miscreants were dispersed. Given the situation, it is not

'State police were likely target of Bishnupur attack'

NEW DELHI

A day after two CRPF personnel were killed in Bishnupur district of Manipur by unidentified militants, a senior government official said on Sunday that the target seemed to be Meitei members of the State police. » PAGE 12

possible right now to say where the firing started from."

Soon after the clash, the Committee on Tribal Unity in Kangpokpi called for a shutdown across the district till 5 a.m. on Monday.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

NHRC accreditation status faces review in Geneva this week

Critical assessment

The Sub-Committee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) made the following observations on the NHRC in March 2023:

- The NHRC has failed to create conditions required to be "able to operate independent of government interference"
- Involvement of police officers in the investigative process amounts to a "conflict of interest"
- The committee lacked any members representing India's largest minority religions



**Suhasini Haidar
Ishita Mishra**

NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is preparing to defend the Union government's human rights processes at a meeting in Geneva this week, where a decision on whether India's human rights body will retain its "A status" is

expected to be made.

The NHRC's ratings were put on hold in 2023 after concerns were raised on its composition procedure, the presence of police personnel in human rights investigations, and the lack of gender and minority representation in the committee.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

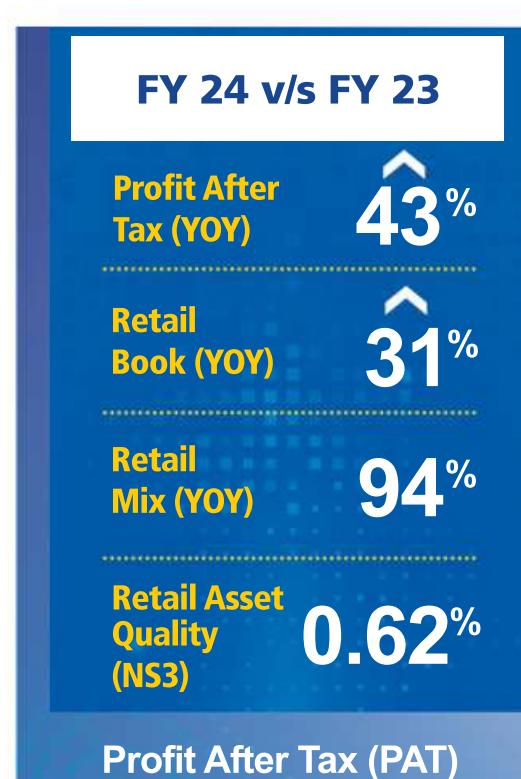
Exclusive wing to handle T.N. sand quarry operations

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The State government will soon constitute a separate department for sand quarry operations, official sources said.

In the wake of irregularities in the sale of sand and illegal mining to the tune of ₹4,730 crore, as alleged by the Enforcement Directorate, the Water Resources Department has proposed a separate department to handle sand mining operations. The decision also follows the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court directing the State "not to allow any private operators in sand quarry operation and to ensure that sand quarry operations are performed only by the Government as per Rule 38A of Tamil Nadu Minor Mineral Concession Rules".

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 6



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FY23

0.62%

FY24

Retail Book

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₹ 61,053 Cr.

FY23

FY24

SME Finance

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FY23

FY24

Rural Business Finance

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FY23

FY24

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IN BRIEF



Stalin presents cheque for ₹75 lakh to Grandmaster Gukesh

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Sunday handed over a cheque for ₹75 lakh as an incentive to Grandmaster D. Gukesh, who has become the youngest winner of the FIDE Candidates tournament that concluded in Canada recently. Mr. Stalin handed over the cheque to him at his camp office in Chennai in the presence of Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development Udhayanidhi Stalin and Mr. Gukesh's parents, a release said. Mr. Stalin also presented him with a citation and a shawl. The State government had earlier granted ₹15 lakh to Mr. Gukesh.

Senior citizen run over by mini-truck near Tambaram

Sivabushanam, 60, of Vellavedu, was run over by a mini-truck when she was riding pillion on a two-wheeler with her brother Anandan near Tambaram on Saturday. The truck rammed the two-wheeler, causing them both to fall. Mr. Anandan escaped with minor injuries. The Tambaram Traffic Investigation police have filed a case and are searching for the truck driver.

'Operation Tiger' of November 1986 caused 'much confusion' in T.N. Police Department, says former DGP

T. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

The simultaneous "disarming" of all the Sri Lankan militants in Tamil Nadu during November 1986 – also called Operation Tiger – caused "much confusion" in the Police Department, according to W.I. Davaram, former Director-General of Police (DGP).

In his recently-launched memoir *Munnar to Marina: The Journey*, the former DGP, who held the post between September 1995 and May 1996, referred to an exercise carried out in the early hours of November 8, 1986 to "disarm" the militants all over the State. The police recovered weapons such as AK-47 rifles, SAM missiles, rocket

launchers, two-inch mortars, hand grenades, rifles and pistols, said a news item of *The Hindu* on November 9, 1986.

Apart from Madras, there were raids in Chengalpattu, Tiruchi, Pudukkottai, South Arcot [Cuddalore, Villupuram and Kallakurichi], Salem, Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram, Madurai and Anna [now called Dindigul] districts," the report added.

'Unevenly matched'
In his work, Mr. Davaram, who was the then Police Commissioner of Chennai, said: "The disarming itself had no parallel in history. Even an accidental firing



W.I. Davaram

by one of the militants in any of the [militants'] camps would have developed into a major conflagration. I shudder to think of a battle between militants armed with the most modern weapons and the Tamil Nadu police armed with pre-historic firearms

fit only to control unlawful and unarmed assemblies."

Exactly a week earlier, a 24-year-old youth, belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SC), was killed and two others sustained bullet injuries in the city when the militants belonging to the Sri Lankan Tamil group, the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) opened fire "indiscriminately" at a crowd following an altercation, *The Hindu* reported on November 3, 1986.

Mr. Davaram recorded that it was he who, "with a small team" of police personnel, "surrounded" the residence of LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] chief V. Prabhakaran in Indira Nagar, "disarmed him and his followers, number-

ing over 30, and took them to the office of the DIG, CID."

Prabhakaran, "who was kept waiting" on the corridor of the CID office, "maintained total silence." Only his associate, Anton Balasingham, had protested the arrest.

The author went on to say that the arrested militants were released but without their weapons. The exception was made in the case of Tamil Tigers, to whom the weapons were given back. "This process benefitted none but the LTTE," he mentioned.

Even though Mr. Davaram said the then Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran [who was in New Delhi when Operation Tiger was carried out] was behind the move to disarm the

militants and the decision to return the weapons to the LTTE, he felt that the order to disarm the militants was the "brainchild" of DGP-CID Mohandas.

Describing his senior colleague as a "brilliant, self-willed and capable" officer, Mr. Davaram said Mohandas had the "capacity to influence the Chief Minister and even the Prime Minister on matters relating to Sri Lanka. The lack of direction, the inconsistency of both, the Government of India and that of Tamil Nadu, and above all, the prolonged illness of MGR complicated the whole situation."

He regretted that Mohandas served in "unimportant posts" during the rest of his career.

History-sheeter found murdered near Minjur

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A history-sheeter's body was found on D.H. Salai in Minjur early on Sunday.

A senior officer of the Avadi Police Commissioner-

ate said the Minjur police received a call saying a headless body wrapped in a bed sheet was lying on the road. The police retrieved the body and sent it to the Government Stanley Hospital for a post-mortem. The police la-

ter found a severed head at a crematorium near Sholavaram and identified the victim as Ashwin Kumar of Vanchivakkam, near Ponneri.

The officer said Ashwin Kumar, who was in his 30s, was recently married. He

had several criminal cases, including drug trafficking, against him. The victim was last seen with his friend Ajay on Saturday evening. The police are searching for Ajay to ascertain the details of the crime.

1,641 students receive their degrees at RMK Group's graduation day

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A total of 1,641 graduates, including 93 rank holders, received their degree certificates at the graduation day ceremony of RMK Group of Institutions, which included RMK Engineering College, RMD Engineering College, and RMK College of Engineering and Technology, in the city on Sunday.

R.S. Munirathinam, the group's Founder-Chairman, presided over the event. G. Viswanathan, Chancellor of Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) and chief patron of the Education Promotion So-

ciety for India, who was the chief guest, distributed cash prizes worth ₹11.90 lakh to meritorious students. Mr. Viswanathan said educating women and the rural population would pave the way for economic empowerment and social progress.

G. VISWANATHAN
Chancellor, VIT

ciety for India, who was the chief guest, distributed cash prizes worth ₹11.90 lakh to meritorious students. Mr. Viswanathan said educating women and the rural population would pave the way for economic empowerment and social progress of the country.

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1. What is the security deposit required for candidates contesting in the Lok Sabha elections?
2. During RVS Peri Shastri's tenure as Chief Election Commissioner, which electoral aspect was addressed by a landmark constitutional amendment?
3. How do Indian EVMs differ from those in developed nations in terms of vulnerability to hacking?

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Answer to yesterday's quiz:
1. All of these
2. Lakshadweep
3. 85

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I. Mohamed Ali Jabar Sadik S/o. Mohammed Ali R/o Plot C2, Sathy Sai Nagar, 3rd Main Road, Rajakilpakkam, Chennai - 600073 have changed my name to Jafer Sadiq.

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Residents rescue infant from sunshade of building near Avadi

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A baby girl who was stuck on the edge of a temporary sunshade of an apartment building near Avadi was rescued by neighbours on Sunday. She has been admitted to a private hospital in Egmore and is doing fine.

A senior officer of the Avadi Police Commissioner said the seven-month-old baby along with her parents Venkatesh and Ramya lived on the fourth floor of the apartment complex in Thirumullavoyal. On Sunday, when Ms. Ramya was playing with her daughter on the balcony, the baby slipped from her hands and landed on the temporary sunshade below.

Noticing the infant on the edge of the roof, residents on the ground floor



A screen grab of the rescue that went viral. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

held a tautly stretched bed sheet, hoping to catch her safely in case she falls. Meanwhile, a few men broke open a glass window on the second floor of the building and tried to rescue the baby. One of them managed to grab hold of the infant, and with help of others, safely got her down from the sunshade.

The video of the rescue went viral on social media.

Private vehicles using unauthorised stickers to be penalised: police

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

on private vehicles in the city.

Such affiliations displayed on private vehicles could compromise operational efficiency and safety and could lead to the misuse of the department's reputation, the GCTP said from May 2.

The GCTP said the display of government department identities in the form of stickers or any symbol/marks on a private vehicle or its number plate could have a negative impact on the individual and the departments concerned.

Mostly, stickers with names of departments or institutions such as 'PRESS', 'SECRETARIAT', 'TNEB', 'GCC', 'DEFENCE', and 'POLICE' can be seen

From May 1, strict action will be taken against the violators and cases will be booked under various sections of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

THE HINDU
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Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted

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Stores/Supply Vendors may also contact the

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regarding the e-Tender. IRPCLW information

for more details, contact: 0434-2525594 or SM/CON/

HQ, 0341-2535631. Office Address: Office

of the PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan, Sl. No.: [1] Tender No. 7523370B, Brief

Description of Item: Axle Box Bearing for

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Rev-2. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after

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Number of Bidders: 00 (Rupees): ₹ 519200.00 Tender Closing Date & Time (IST): 23/05/2024 at 11:00 AM.

(IST):

8 men held for defrauding ICICI Bank of over ₹3 crore

Two firms opened current accounts based on applications made by their directors. They obtained personal loans, credit facilities from the bank with fabricated salary slips issued by the companies

R. Sivaraman
CHENNAI

The Bank Fraud Investigation Wing of the Central Crime Branch (CCB) has arrested eight suspects, including two former employees of ICICI Bank, for allegedly defrauding the bank of over ₹3 crore.

The police arrested them following a complaint from M. Ranganathan, Chief Manager of the bank.

He said the bank had the facility to provide current accounts to companies and power pay accounts (PPAs) and salary accounts to the firms' employees, with an individual identification code being allotted to each company.

After conducting an internal audit of accounts,



The fraud was detected after ICICI Bank conducted an internal audit of accounts. IMAGE USED FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSES

suspicious credit/debit and artificial transactions came to light.

Unitrend Global Products Private Limited and IRS Metronics Private Limited had opened their current accounts based on applications made by their directors.

Subsequently, customers, claiming to be em-

ployees of these companies, opened PPAs and salary accounts with the codes allotted to the firms.

Sixty credit cards, worth ₹38,22,000, and 54 personal loans of over ₹3 crore were availed by 59 customers with fabricated salary slips, supposedly issued by the two companies.

These personal loans

and credit cards were availed between January 2019 and May 2023 by stage-managing in collusion with two of the bank staff.

The credits received in the employees' accounts were found to have been immediately withdrawn.

They obtained personal loans and credit facilities through fraudulent means and gained wrongful gain and caused losses to the bank.

After investigating, the CCB personnel arrested Sathish Selvaraj, 34, a director IRS Metronics, Dhaneeswaran, 49, Jawahar Perumal, 28, an ex-employee of ICICI Bank, S. Karthik, 31, a former staff at the bank, and five others in connection with the case.

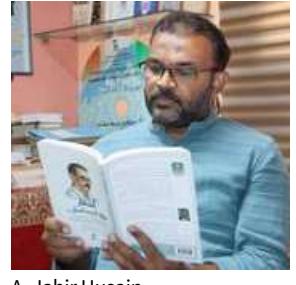
They were remanded in judicial custody.

Taking Bharathidasan's works to the Arab world

Dennis S. Jesudasan
CHENNAI

The late Tamil poet 'Paavendhar' Bharathidasan penned *Thamizhukkum Amudhendru Per*. Thanks to the Tamil Nadu government, the literary 'amudhu' of Bharathidasan with mature ideas soaked in the richness of Tamil language, could now be translated and served to the Arab world living far away from the Tamil speaking society.

Associate Professor A. Jahir Husain, Head, Department of Arabic, Persian, and Urdu in the University of Madras, has translated 50 poems of Bharathidasan into Arabic. The book, made possible by a grant of the State government, was released re-



cently. The grandson of late Bharathidasan and president of Bharathidasan Trust, Ko. Bharathi, has organised an event to release the book in Puducherry on April 29.

"I have selected poems that I thought would be suitable for the Arabic-speaking countries. I have chosen poems on themes such as nature, education, women rights, freedom, among others," says Mr.

Husain. He has earlier translated the *Thirukkural*, select poems of late poet Subramania Bharati and Avvaiyar's *Athichudi* into Arabic too.

Mr. Husain has been taking the translation project as a tool to strengthen the relationship between Tamil Nadu and Arab countries. He recalls that the translation of noted Tamil works into Arabic commenced about 15 years ago. Following an announcement in the Governor's Address to the Assembly that the *Thirukkural* would be translated into Arabic, he was provided with a grant for the task. The work was supervised by the International Institute of Tamil Studies and was released in 2013.

Out of his personal in-

terest, Mr. Husain presented 40 couplets from the *Thirukkural* in an international conference of Arabic poets in Saudi Arabia in 2015. "The couplets were received with great enthusiasm," he recalls. In 2021, along with music director Taj Noor, the couplets in Arabic set to music was released in an audio format. Mr. Husain had also translated Avvaiyar's *Athichudi* in 2015. Mr. Husain has earlier translated the 25 poems of Tamil poet Subramania Bharati into Arabic, that were on the themes of education, women freedom, children, nature and patriotism.

He chose *Allah, Sudhanthira Payir, Thudikkindra Nenjam, Aacham Illai*, among others from the poems of Bharati.

Timings
CHENNAI

MONDAY, APR. 29
RISE 05:50 SET 18:24
RISE 23:25 SET 09:57
TUESDAY, APR. 30
RISE 05:49 SET 18:24
RISE 00:00 SET 10:57
WEDNESDAY, MAY. 01
RISE 05:49 SET 18:24
RISE 00:19 SET 11:57

Chennai Weather max min
Tiruvallur 40 25
Chennai Airport 37 26
Chennai City 35 28

Chennai Airport Today
37°C The weather will be dry. The morning will be comfortable. The day will be very warm and humid. The night will be comfortable.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
38°C The weather will be dry. The morning will be comfortable. The day will be slightly hot and humid with an uneasy afternoon.

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Board exam and lack of access to NCERT books make things tough for NEET aspirants

Meghna M.
CHENNAI

With the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) scheduled for May 5, a section of aspirants said they found it challenging to juggle studying for the Class XII board exam and preparing for the competitive exam.

"I had been preparing for NEET for the past two years and even took up private coaching, but I could not continue it in the last six months as I had to prepare for the board exam," said Sheela A., a government school student.

Like her, T. Harini had to quit preparation for NEET due to the public exam. "I

will attempt the exam this year. However, I have decided to take a year's break if I don't qualify so that I can focus on NEET preparation," she said.

This view is echoed by many government school students taking up the entrance exam while some others have decided to enrol in another course while also repeating the NEET next year. "The State Board syllabus is vast. It is difficult to cover that in 10 months. So, there is no way to focus on NEET while also preparing for the public exam," said a teacher from a government school in Chennai.

The students attempting NEET this year also face

another roadblock. Their foundation in concepts has taken a hit due to the online classes held during the pandemic. "The teachers would say this concept was discussed in Class IX, but how would we know that when the classes were online. Most of us had not even opened the books. So, we had trouble as our basics were not strong," said Dharshini S., a government school student.

"It was all online, most of us made no notes. Suddenly, we realise that we don't know the basics, so it has taken us more time to prepare for the exam," added another student.

Undergoing NEET entrance coaching given by

the government, J. Yashwanthi said, "Only now did I understand most of the concepts that were discussed for the board exam. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) textbooks have it in a crisper format, which has been useful."

Students also stated that access to the NCERT books posed a challenge as preparation for NEET also required that they study from them.

"There are only one or two books in our library, and we cannot afford to buy a copy. There is nothing better than studying from the actual book," Priya E., another NEET aspirant, said.

Gang hurls country bomb at restaurant in Kilambakkam

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A gang on Sunday hurled a country-made bomb at a restaurant run by a 62-year-old political functionary in Kilambakkam and fled.

The Tambaram police said the restaurant belonged to M. Muthupandi, an AMMK functionary. Around 4.30 a.m., Mr. Muthupandi and his wife Mary heard a loud explosion near the restaurant's gate. When he checked, he saw a banner on fire due to the bomb explosion.

He also saw the persons who hurled the bomb fleeing the spot. Based on his complaint, the police are analysing CCTV camera footage to trace the suspects.

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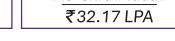
Dr. Anish Kumar Adak ₹35.6 LPA



Ms. Janhvi Singh ₹32.17 LPA



Mr. Amaanullah Khan ₹32.17 LPA



Ms. Shruti Yadav ₹32.17 LPA



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IN BRIEF

126th annual flower show in Ooty to begin on May 10

The 126th annual flower show, which was scheduled to take place for five days from May 17, have been advanced to May 10, the Nilgiris district collector, M. Aruna said. The flower show will now be held from May 10 to May 20. Due to the model code of conduct that is in place for the Lok Sabha elections, special permission was sought from the Election Commission of India to hold the flower show. The annual fruit show, will be held at the Sims Park in Coonoor from May 24 to 26.

Sathyabama students get over 2,500 placement offers

Students of the Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology received 2,545 job offers from around 300 recruiters, a press release said. As much as 93.09% of the students who registered themselves for placements received offers, with the highest salary package being ₹49.59 lakh. The institute held its Excellence Day on Saturday, in which its Chancellor, Mariazeena Johnson, and president Marie Johnson took part. Fifteen final-year students had qualified through the Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering Exam for higher studies. Five visually-challenged students were admitted to programmes at IIMs.

History-sheeter detained under the Goondas Act

The Cuddalore district police have detained under the Goondas Act, a history-sheeter who was arrested recently in connection with an extortion bid. The accused, S. Uthandarajan, 29, had five cases pending against him in various police stations in the district. He was arrested in Neyveli on April 12 on charges of attempting to extort cash from S. Suresh. On the recommendation of Superintendent of Police R. Rajaram, he was detained under the Goondas Act.

Four bridges in Kancheepuram to be completed by end of the year

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The construction of four bridges at a total cost of ₹12.65 crore under the funding of NABARD in Kancheepuram district is likely to be completed by the end of this year.

The bridges will benefit

over 24,000 people.

Officials, including the Kancheepuram District Rural Development Agency Project Director, V. Jayakumar, recently inspected the four sites and held discussions with engineers of the Highways Department, which is constructing the bridges.

The first bridge coming up near the Karur tank is to be constructed over the Kuthiraaval Madavu. This high-level bridge is located 800 metres away from the Chennai-Bangalore Highway and will connect many panchayats such as Illupapattu, Karur, Marutham, Puthagaram, Naickenkup-

pam, Singadivakkam, Athivakkam, and Thenneri in Walajabad Panchayat Union.

With flood waters flowing at least 5 feet above the existing piped causeway at Arumbuliyur tank supply channel, the proposed bridge will permit residents of Pinayur, Kurru-

manjeri, Kaliyapettai, Seethanjeri, Arumbuliyur and Thirumukkoodal villages to travel comfortably to Chengalpattu district headquarters and Walajabad Panchayat Union during the rains too. The third bridge is coming up across an inlet channel of the Uthiramerur tank.

The minor bridge coming up on Singilipadi Pan-chayat Union Road across the Kamban canal will allow residents of Singilipadi, Maduramangalam and Ekanapuram to cross the flood waters running from Andhra Pradesh towards Sriperumbudur during rains.

'We are living in times when dictatorial regimes make a mockery of rule of law'

Mohamed Imranullah S.
CHENNAI

Former Chief Justice of Orissa High Court, S. Muralidhar, said here on Sunday that, "We live in challenging times when there are persecutions, increase in polarisation on the grounds of race/caste/religion, growing inequalities with the poor getting poorer, mass spontaneous protests by the affected people and the rule of law being made a mockery of by dictatorial regimes."

Delivering the Rakesh endowment lecture, he said, the United Nations Development Programme's recent Human Development Report talks about the 'democracy paradox.' It refers to ty-

rants getting elected through a democratic process. "They then continue ruling over you making a complete mockery of democracy and the rule of law," he added.

He said, the topic of the lecture - 'Guilty Till Proven Innocent - Dark areas of criminal jurisprudence' - was in the context of growing instances of weaponisation of law and deprivation of people's fundamental rights. And also that, around the world, law was being used as an instrument of oppression and abuse in the hands of powerful and dominant groups who seek executive control, through elections, to target their opponents.

He listed out special criminal enactments like Ter-

rorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA), Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), which presume the suspects to be guilty, and shifts the onus on them to prove that they were not guilty, make statements made to the police admissible in evidence, provide for longer incarceration even if the police fail to complete the investigation within a reasonable time and also make obtaining of bail next to impossible.

Speaking of bias, he said, "There is a huge bias in the administration of law. Just as in the United States, where there is over-representation of people of colour in prisons, in India too

the percentage of Muslim undertrials in jails is 21.9% whereas their representation in the country's population is only around 14% or so. Likewise, the Scheduled Castes too had a high representation of 21.6% and the Scheduled Tribes - 12.4%."

Rakesh Law Foundation, instituted by senior advocate N.R. Elango in memory of his son who died in a road accident in 2022, had organised the lecture in association with Roja Muthiah Research Library, Madras High Court judges Anita Sumanth and N. Anand Venkatesh; former judges Raja Elango, C.T. Selvam and G.M. Akbar Ali; Higher Education Minister K. Ponmudi and N. Ravi, Director, Kasturi and Sons, participated.

Writer Bama receives Verchol Dalit Literary Award at Vaanam Arts Festival

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Writer and poet Bama, who is well-known for literary works such as *Karukku*, *Sangati* and *Manushi*, received the Verchol Dalit Literary Award and a cash prize of ₹1 lakh from filmmaker Pa. Ranjith at the valedictory of the two-day Verchol Dalit Literary Conclave as part of the Vaanam Arts Festival 2024 in Chennai on Sunday.

The festival was organised by the Neelam Cultural Centre, founded by Mr. Ranjith, to mark Dalit History Month.

Speaking after the



"Recollecting my life through the documentary by Vijay made me both happy and emotional. I have received many awards, but this award is special. It is like a function in my family. We are connected through our traditions and culture. I have had both *kalakalappu* (happiness) and *kalagam* (revolt) in my life. At some point in time, we will be lonely. I have no words to thank Pa. Ranjith. But it is also his responsibility and duty," she said.

An eye-opener'
Mr. Ranjith said that non-Dalit writers and filmmakers were unable to reflect

the lives of Dalits because they had never tried to understand their lives.

"When non-Dalit writers write about Dalit women, they often write about their sexual desires. This is true till date. *Karukku* completely differs from this. It was an eye-opener for me. I could identify the women of my family in *Karukku*. This is why I think Dalits should create their own stories," he said.

Poet Sukirtharani, who spoke about Ms. Bama's works, said, "I learnt humanism from her through her words. I learnt humility from her even after she became a well-known writer."

Nilgiris Collector invites parties, candidates to check security at counting centre

The invitation comes after the CCTV cameras in the counting centre go offline as overheating due to lack of ventilation causes "technical malfunction"; polling machinery safe, says M. Aruna

The Hindu Bureau
UDHAGAMANDALAM

The Nilgiris District Collector and Returning Officer for the Nilgiris parliamentary constituency, M. Aruna, said that she is willing to take representatives of political parties and their candidates to check the security arrangements made at the counting centre in the Government Polytechnic College in Udhagamandalam, where ballot boxes and Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) have been stored.

Her statement comes after the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras at the centre went offline due to a "technical malfunction" caused by overheating due to the lack of ventilation. She clarified that the CCTVs stopped working between 6:17 p.m. and 6:43 p.m. and they have been rectified. Further measures have been taken



Safety measures: The Nilgiris District Collector said there were around 170 CCTV cameras around the college as well as the strong rooms where the polling machinery had been sealed. FILE PHOTO

to prevent such instances from recurring. There were around 170 CCTV cameras around the college as well as the strong rooms where the polling machinery has been sealed in the presence of the candidates and their representatives, she said.

Despite the malfunction, Ms. Aruna confirmed

that there was no lapse in security at the counting centre.

The centre had a three-tier security system in place, and in addition to the Central Reserve Police Force, the Tamil Nadu Special Police battalion, as well as local police, were also providing security, making it impossible for anyone to

tamper with the ballot boxes or EVMs.

She said the Election Commission of India (EC) has clarified that any candidate or political party representative seeking reassurance on the security measures would be escorted to the college and briefed on the security arrangements in place.

Fishermen call for rescheduling of annual fishing ban

N. Sai Charan
CHENNAI

decide the ideal time period to impose the annual ban."

He said, though steps have been taken to desilt and dredge some of the estuaries near the Chennai coast, the government should ensure the free flow of fresh water into the sea at estuaries located in other parts of the State as well, to facilitate the breeding of fishes during the lean season.

This yearly fishing ban for 61 days, to facilitate the breeding of fishes and the conservation of fish stock, along the eastern coast came into effect on April 15. Mechanised fishing boats are banned from venturing into the sea while fibreglass boats and country boats have no ban.

According to K. Bharathi of Neithal Makkal Katchi,

"Fishes breed in large numbers near the coast, particularly in estuaries, where freshwater mixes with seawater. This usually happens during the monsoon season. The northeast monsoon season falls along the Tamil Nadu coast between October and December. The Union and State governments should conduct a fresh study on coastal ecology and then

Fishermen association leader P. Jesu Raja, from Ramanathapuram district, suggested that the government could consider implementing the ban in two phases - one month in the summer season and another month during the monsoon season.

The fishermen community leaders also urged the State government to increase the one-time assistance given during the lean season. "Recently, the State government increased the lean period assistance to ₹8,000. Though it is a welcome step, they could consider disbursing it on par with the minimum daily wages of labourers," he said.

The minor bridge coming up on Singilipadi Pan-chayat Union Road across the Kamban canal will allow residents of Singilipadi, Maduramangalam and Ekanapuram to cross the flood waters running from Andhra Pradesh towards Sriperumbudur during rains.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH



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most affectionate father and

grandfather, uncle, friend,

a guiding light

to all that knew him.

Wife: Annamary Selvaraj

Children: Caroline,

Mary Magdalene Santa, Vivek.

Son-in-Law: Premkumar John

Daughter-in-Law: Charlotte Pinto

Grandchildren:

Gerald, Daniel, and Michael.

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DEATH ANNIVERSARIES



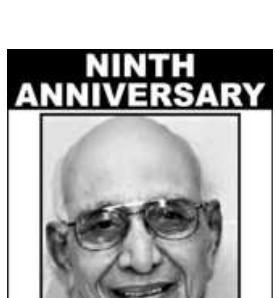
Tenth Anniversary

We miss you

Mr. V.G.B. SARMA

044-26703070

NINTH ANNIVERSARY



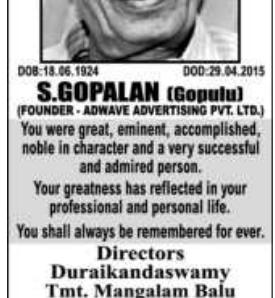
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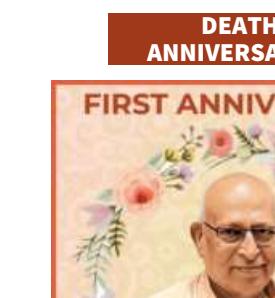
in Peace with smile. Love and Prayer's

P.K. Thomas & Mary Thomas

St. Peter's & St. Paul's Church, Koyambedu

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DEATH ANNIVERSARIES



FIRST ANNIVERSARY

SHRI. C. SUKUMARAN

13 May 1943 - 29 Apr 2023

"Still in our minds and hearts"

Fondly Remembered by

Family Members, Relatives & Friends

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES



TWELFTH ANNIVERSARY

12.01.1946 - 29.04.2012

Remembering and Celebrating your life

From Page One

T.N. to form exclusive wing to handle sand quarry operations



In the wake of irregularities in the sale of sand, and illegal sand mining, as alleged by the ED, the WRD will set up a separate department to handle sand mining operations.

In a communication to the State government, a top WRD official, referring to the court order, said that the purpose for which Rule 38A was introduced was only to prevent sand quarry operations by private individuals.

In order to achieve the objective, the government had to take a decision to constitute a separate department for conducting sand quarry operations without depending on any private lifting or transport operators, the sources said.

Since Section 38A envisaged that the right to exploit sand shall be vested with the State government, an order was issued in 2003 directing that the Chief Engineers, Water Resources Organisations, Public Works Department, would directly operate sand quarry at 230 locations across Tamil Nadu. Accordingly, such operations were being carried out in Chennai, Tiruchi and Madurai regions.

No machinery

As the department does not own any machinery for sand quarrying operations, private agencies were engaged on a contact basis for lifting and transporting sand to the depots for sale. In view of the court orders prohibiting sand quarrying and transportation involving private contractors, there was a need for constituting a separate department for conducting sand quarrying operations, the sources said.

The official suggested that the new department may be named 'Sand Quarrying and Monitoring Corporation', in which the existing engineering setup of mining and monitoring offices may function on a deputation basis.

Another option before the government was to file a Special Leave Petition in the Supreme Court regarding the issue, he said.

Chennai

Two pages of exclusive content appear on *The Hindu* ePaper, Chennai edition (epaper.thehindu.com) every Monday and Wednesday. In this issue, the following stories are available:

- A school for happy childhood at Besant Nagar bit.ly/childhoodbesantnagar
- Chennai Corporation to develop more playgrounds after the poll bit.ly/moreplaygrounds
- At Anna Salai-GP Road junction, traffic police close their eyes to violations bit.ly/groadjunction
- Fragrance in the midst of the mundane bit.ly/midstfragrance
- A slew of festivals marks the month of April in Chennai bit.ly/slewfestivals
- MTC buses skip the stop near Metro Rail station at Nanganallur on GST Road bit.ly/mtcbusskip

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* ePaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (April 29, Monday), the following articles are available:

- The significance of carrier aviation bit.ly/virkantins
- Anticyclones, hanging even now over India, link warming to heat bit.ly/anticyclones

PODCAST

■ Pornography and the Young Person Women Uninterrupted podcast - Episode 2 newsht.live/6EIIK4

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Post HC intervention, T.N. Heritage Commission Act put into effect after 12 years

Mohamed Imranullah S.
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court has succeeded in making the State government bring into force the Tamil Nadu Heritage Commission Act of 2012 (as amended in 2017), 12 years since it was enacted by the legislature. The court has directed the government to constitute the commission to preserve the heritage structures in the State.

First Division Bench of Chief Justice Sanjay V. Gangapurwala and Justice J. Sathy Narayana Prasad recorded the submission of State Government Pleader A. Edwin Prabhakar that the amended Act was notified pursuant to interim orders passed by the court on February 22 and that it had come into force with effect from March 1, 2024. After recording his submission, the judges said that now, there would be no im-

Government told to constitute panel to preserve heritage structures in T.N.

pediment to constituting the heritage commission as insisted by senior counsel N.L. Rajah representing the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), whose public interest litigation (PIL) petition had been pending in the High Court since 2019. "The State authorities shall now take steps to implement the said Act and constitute the Heritage Commission as contemplated under the Act," the Bench said, and directed the High Court Registry to list the PIL petition next on July 15, 2024 for reporting compliance of their orders.

In its affidavit INTACH had stated that the 2012 Act, as amended in 2017, required constitution of a Tamil Nadu Heritage Com-

mission, chaired by an eminent person with concern for heritage conservation and comprising top government officials. However, it said that no such panel had been constituted till date. When the matter was heard on February 22, the then first Bench comprising the Chief Justice and Justice D. Bharatha Chakravarthy had expressed shock over the Act not having been brought into force for 12 years and said that the delay in framing statutory rules under the Act could not be cited as a reason to not notify it.

"The stand taken for non-implementation of the 2012 Act does not augur well for the government. Twelve years is not small a period for not implementing the Act. The very object of promulgating the Act would be frustrated if the same is not brought into force," the Bench had said.

"Most of the students who take part in these camps are from government and State-aided

AIADMK flays decision to collect fee from students for summer coaching camps

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami, in a statement on Sunday, opposed the decision of the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDATN) to collect fee from government school students for summer coaching camps, which are scheduled to commence on Monday.

According to a notification of the SDATN, the fee for the camps that would be organised between April 29 and May 13 this year would be ₹500 for those organised in Chennai and ₹200 in the district headquarters. The camps would have two sessions and would coach students in football, volleyball, kabaddi and basketball, among others.

Criticising Minister for Sports Development Udhayanidhi Stalin, he said that the DMK government,



which was claiming credit for having organised the International Chess Olympiad and planning to set up sports stadia in every district, had now decided to collect fee from students for summer coaching camps, Mr. Palaniswami said.

"On behalf of the AIADMK, I condemn this action of the government. I urge the DMK government not to collect fee for the summer coaching camps," he added.

Meanwhile, SDATN said in a statement that it had now regularised the collection of fee for various disciplines, as fee up to ₹2,000 was collected earlier.

Previously, the fee for coaching in various disciplines was not uniform and ranged between ₹200 and ₹2,000. It recalled that fee was being collected from 2013 for the camps. In 2013, the fee for tennis was ₹1,500, ₹1,000 for badminton and ₹500 for cricket.

New Tirupur Area Development Corporation and IL&FS spat reaches Registrar of Companies

Sanjay Vijayakumar
CHENNAI

The dispute between New Tirupur Area Development Corporation Limited (NTADCL) and its shareholder Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Ltd. (IL&FS) over debt repayment has now reached the doorstep of the Registrar of Companies (RoC), Coimbatore.

The NTADCL management has written to the RoC alleging conflict of interest over participation of IL&FS's nominee directors

in board meetings with an agenda related to disbursement of IL&FS's senior loan. However, the IL&FS has denied the charge.

In 1995, the NTADCL was incorporated as a special purpose vehicle and public utility to improve potable water and sewerage infrastructure in Tirupur through an integrated water supply and sewerage project. In 2000, the Tamil Nadu Water Investment Company Ltd. (TWIC) was formed to route all investments into the NTADCL. The Tamil Nadu govern-

ment owns a 46% stake in the TWIC and the IL&FS, 54%. The TWIC holds a 28.72% stake in the NTADCL. Overall, the State government owns a 38.32% stake in the NTADCL, and the IL&FS, 25.88%.

The total cost of the project was ₹1,023 crore and the financial closure was done in March 2002. For the project, the IL&FS brought in ₹180 crore as a senior loan, of which it raised ₹90 crore from the U.S. Agency for International Development

(USAID). On this loan, the IL&FS made deductions of about ₹41.24 crore and disbursed ₹48.76 crore to the NTADCL.

Due to the deteriorating financial position of the NTADCL, a corporate debt restructuring (CDR) plan was implemented on March 29, 2012, as part of which the State government infused ₹150 crore into the NTADCL. As per the plan, 30% of the IL&FS debt was converted into equity. After the implementation of the CDR, the senior loan to be repaid by

the NTADCL was ₹120.27 crore.

In its letter to the RoC, the NTADCL management has alleged that the deduction of ₹41.24 crore by the erstwhile IL&FS management was illegal and that the short-disbursement of senior loan by the IL&FS resulted in more financial implications. The NTADCL management decided to stop payment to the IL&FS based on legal opinion, it said. The NTADCL also alleged that it had been defrauded by the erstwhile IL&FS management. It

pointed out that out of the nine directors, three were nominees of the IL&FS – L. Krishnan, G. Mahalingam, and Baiju Mathew – and sought the intervention of the RoC to direct the nominee directors of the IL&FS not to participate on the agenda items related to IL&FS senior loan disbursement issue. Based on the NTADCL's letter, the RoC sought clarifications from the nominee directors of the IL&FS. In a letter, dated March 5, the RoC said that till the matter was under consideration, the nomi-

nee directors should refrain from attending the board meeting relating to the agenda items under conflict of interest.

Responding to the RoC, the IL&FS said its new board (constituted after 2018 fiasco), including Mr. Mahalingam, have been appointed by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Mumbai on the recommendation of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. The new board and nominee directors have been granted immunity by NCLT and said that the question

of conflict of interest does not arise. It also said that the issues raised by the NTADCL were already *sub judice* before the NCLT.

It also denied the allegations of fraud and said that the NTADCL had unilaterally stopped repaying the IL&FS Senior Loan to the tune of ₹52.92 crore and requested the RoC to dismiss the NTADCL's compliant and restore the status quo. Meanwhile, it is learnt that Mr. Mahalingam has resigned, and has been replaced by another director from the IL&FS.

CM YK

M CH-CHE

26 captive elephants temporarily shifted from Kozhikamuthi camp in the ATR owing to water crisis

Water in a stream, which flows through the camp, became inadequate for all the elephants. ATR authorities say that the measure was taken to also facilitate construction of houses for mahouts and 'cavadi' attached to the elephant camp

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

As part of a temporary arrangement for summer, authorities of the Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR) have shifted 26 captive elephants from the Kozhikamuthi elephant camp near Top Slip in Coimbatore district to four other places within the reserve.

Water in a stream, which flows through the Kozhikamuthi camp, became inadequate for all the elephants and, hence, the animals were shifted.

'A routine'

Bhargava Teja, Deputy Director of the Pollachi Division of the ATR, however, said that the practice of splitting the camp elephants in summer was usual. "It is a routine practice. Usually, some elephants are shifted to Varagai and Chinnar in summer. This year, they have been moved to other places too," he said.

Of the 26 elephants in the camp, one of the oldest in the country along with the Theppakadu camp in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR), 10 were shifted to the nearby Varagai.

While five elephants were moved to a place



Timely measure: Ten elephants were shifted to the nearby Varagai, five to a place close to the Kozhikamuthi camp, six to Chinnar, and the remaining to a place in Manambolly forest range of the ATR. FILE PHOTO

close to the Kozhikamuthi camp, six were shifted to Chinnar. The remaining were moved to a place in the Manambolly forest range of the ATR.

Authorities of the ATR said that the measure was also taken to facilitate construction of houses for mahouts and 'cavadi' attached to the elephant

camp. In March last year, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin had announced houses for them, while felicitating Bomman and Bellie – the mahout couple from the MTR who were featured in the Oscar-winning Indian documentary *The Elephant Whisperers*. In Kozhikamuthi, 47 Malasar tribesmen, who work as ma-

houts and 'cavadi', would get houses. The elephants were expected to remain at the four alternative places for a few months in view of the construction work.

Norm at camp

As per the practice, a day at the camp begins at 6 a.m. when mahouts and 'cavadi' take their camp

elephants to the stream for a bath, after which the animals are given nutritious breakfast. The mahouts and assistants then take the elephants to the forest patches around the camp to graze till the evening. Visitors come to the camp in the morning, mainly to witness the camp elephants being fed.



Union govt. ensured adequate funds to T.N., says Tamilisai

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

BJP leader Tamilisai Soundararajan on Sunday told journalists in Chennai that the Union government had ensured adequate funds and justice to Tamil Nadu, and hit out at Chief Minister M.K. Stalin for praising the Congress's manifesto more than the party's leaders.

"The Centre has ensured *nidhi* [funds] and *needhi* [justice] for Tamil Nadu. The government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has implemented more schemes in the State than what was implemented during the period between the rule of V.P. Singh and Manmohan Singh... Mr. Stalin is hailing the Congress manifesto more than the Congress's leaders. The State was ignored during the Congress rule. The country doesn't want different Prime Ministers every year. Only the BJP can give a strong Prime Minister," she said.

SCHOOLS OVER 50

A school for happy childhood at Besant Nagar



Landmark: Before moving permanently to Besant Avenue to take in more students, the school was near the Adyar bridge. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Megha M.

"A happy childhood leads to happy adulthood. Only if the students are happy, can the learning take place," says Sasikala Sriram, director of academics, Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School, Besant Nagar. The school is spread over nine acres, with large playgrounds. It provides free education to the underprivileged children from the local community.

It was in 1894 that Col. Henry Steel Olcott, president-founder of the Theosophical Society, was establishing a series of Panchama schools for students who were denied education because they belonged to lower castes. "He had mainly come to India for spirituality and set up these schools to provide education to those who did not have access to it," says headmistress S. Lalitha.

Before moving permanently to Besant Avenue to take in more students, the school was near the Adyar bridge.

A small beginning

Started with about 10 students in elementary classes, the school has grown to 500 students studying through English as well as Tamil medium. "Most of our students are first-generation learners from the nearby communities where they would probably have to go to work once school is done. So, we ensure that when they are in school, they are fully present for studies," says Ms. Sasikala Sriram.

The school, which is 130 years old, also provides the students with breakfast, snacks, and lunch. "When I was a student in 1972, for breakfast we would get milk and a multivitamin tablet, while for lunch we would get sambar rice. This was even before the noon-meal scheme was introduced," recalls Ms. Lalitha.

Speaking about the importance of education, Ms. Sasikala Sriram says, "It's the only way for the children to stand up in society. We get students from various places such as Urur Kuppum, Odaikuppam, Semmancheri, and Kannagi Nagar, where the students lack support from their families to pursue education. We make sure that they have enough exposure to pursue higher education too."

Counselling centre

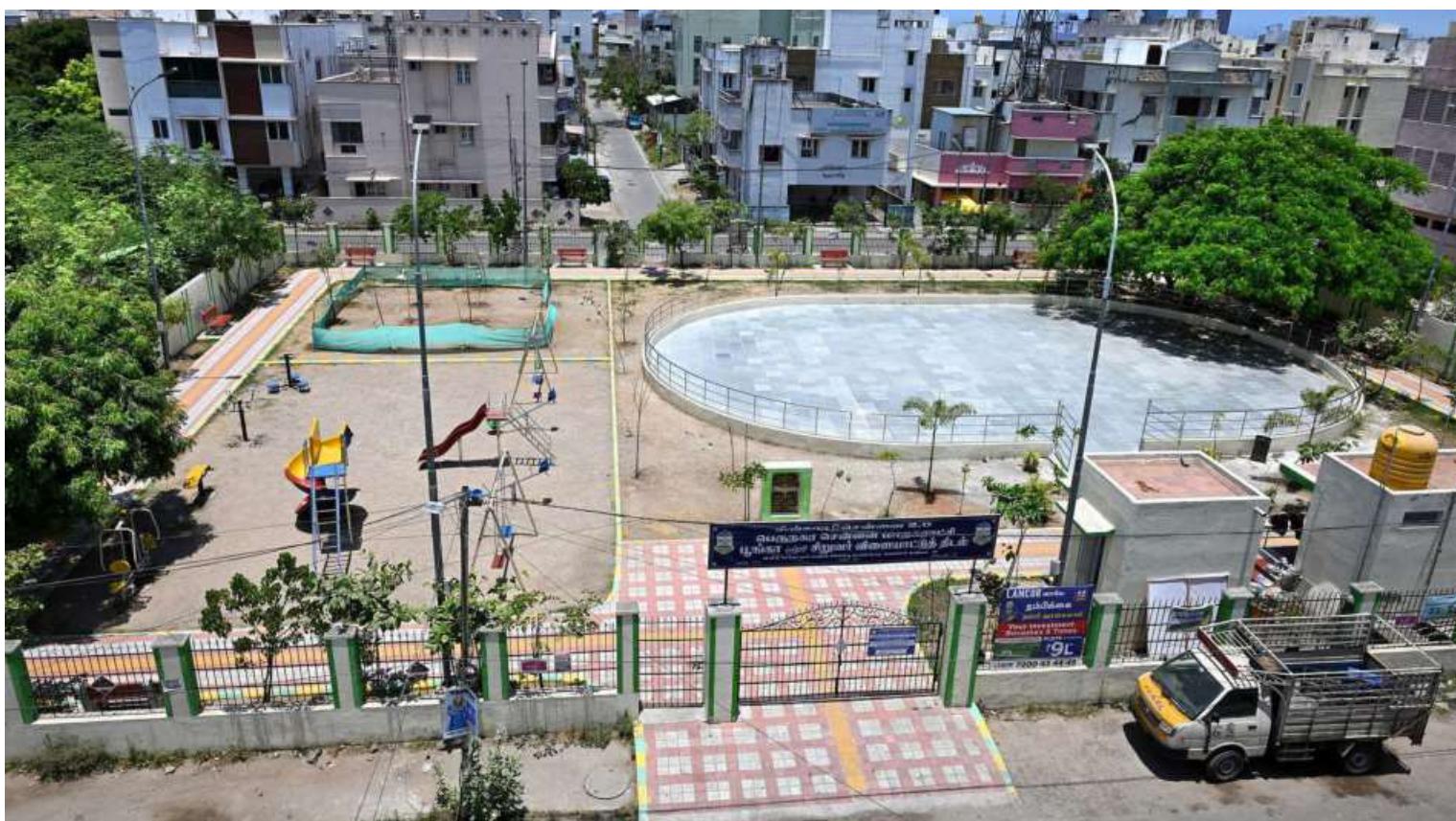
The school also has a counselling centre for the students as their home life is turbulent, in most cases. The centre equips them with better coping techniques.

While homework may be a mainstay in other institutions, here the 38-strong team of teachers conduct classes after school hours to help students catch up with their homework. "When the board exams are near, the school operates until 8 p.m. to ensure that the children are equipped to pass the exams at least," says Ms. Sasikala Sriram.

In 2018, as the demand for English medium grew, the school decided to introduce it from Class VI. "We have two classes, one in Tamil medium and the other in English medium. The strength in English medium is higher, but there are children who opt to remain in Tamil medium."

The school has a strong sports team and its *Villupattu* folk art team is famous.

"As times are changing, the students are also changing. The influence of social media is very deep, which affects the lives of the students. It has become difficult to manage them sometimes, especially when they enter Class IX as the influence manifests. Tackling it with an open mind is the key," Ms. Lalitha says.



Put to right use: A park and playground developed by the Chennai Corporation on the open space reservation land at VGP Selva Nagar in Velachery. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Chennai Corporation to develop more playgrounds after the poll

The civic body wants to convert the open space reservation (OSR) into urban recreation space for people of all ages. It is also pursuing the theme of sponge parks for effective utilisation of the OSR for recreation as well as disaster mitigation, says an official

CITY MATTERS

Aloysius Xavier Lopez

The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) is likely to identify new land parcels in various parts of the city for creation of playgrounds and parks for recreation and disaster mitigation. Once the model code of conduct is lifted after the completion of the Lok Sabha election in the first week of June, it intends to identify more land for recreation. Corporation Joint Commissioner (Works) G.S. Sameeran says the civic body wishes to convert the open space reservation (OSR) into urban recreation space for people of all ages. "We also go by the principle of less grey and more green in the construction of parks. Sponge parks is another theme the civic body is pursuing for effective utilisation of the OSR for recreation as well as disaster mitigation."

Proposal for parks

"Every year, the GCC takes over approximately 20-25 OSR land parcels, and the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) takes over 30-40 OSR land parcels in the Corporation limits. Then the GCC hands them over to the Parks Department, which develops proposals for parks and playing fields," he says. According to the Tamil Nadu Combined Development and Building Rules, 2019, if the extent of the layout is between 3,000 square metres and 10,000 square metres, the developer or owner must either pay the guideline value of the equivalent land, excluding the first 3,000 square metres, or reserve land for the OSR with 10% of the area, excluding roads. If the extent of the land exceeds 10,000 square metres, it is obligatory to reserve 10% of the land, excluding roads, and no equivalent land cost is acceptable, Dr. Sameeran says.

After a few candidates of national political parties flagged the issue of inadequate playgrounds during the campaign for the Lok Sabha election, residents have started demanding new playgrounds and parks, pointing to the need for maintaining the OSR and other government land for recreation.

Residents' associations have urged the



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G.S. SAMEERAN
Corporation Joint Commissioner (Works)

civic body for modern playgrounds in their localities. A. Francis, president of the Federation of Thoraipakkam Residents' Welfare Associations, says the Corporation rejected their demand for playgrounds on the OSR land in their layouts and instead created parks a few years ago. "We do not have adequate playgrounds. Youth have been unable to play in our locality. Private agencies have started creating playgrounds and making money. A majority of the families who voted in the election cannot afford such a private facility. So, we request the Corporation and other government agencies to create modern playgrounds in each locality. While the old city areas have large playgrounds, the newly developed areas do not have them. The government should address this issue," says Mr. Francis.

Used for commercial purposes

Former Congress councillor P.V. Tamil Selvan says the Tamil Nadu Housing Board has failed to hand over OSR land for recreation and is instead utilising the space for commercial purposes. "Residents have alleged that under the Mogappair Eri Scheme, OSR land measuring 17,000 square feet near SBOA School has not been handed over for recreation. We have 15 parks in the area but only one playground. Open space has been utilised for police stations, fire stations, and for commercial purposes. Public purpose sites have been sold by the Tamil Nadu Housing Board (TNHB). We want government land for recreation," he says.

Velachery resident S. Kumararaja said the OSR land belongs to Chennai residents, but many parcels of such land are under litigation. "Velachery's ward 177 has a number of OSR land parcels. At some places, the civic body has constructed community halls and handed them over to the Tangedco for installation of electricity supply infrastructure. Temples have also been constructed on OSR land. On Sastri Street of Anna Indira Nagar, a marriage hall is under construction on a piece of OSR land. On Velachery Main Road, opposite the police station, an apartment developer was given a piece of OSR land. But it has not been open to members of the public. There are so many encroachments on OSR land. The Corporation should follow

up on court cases," he says. Urban planning experts say a resilient city should not have used OSR land for construction of buildings.

The Second Master Plan of the CMDA states, "Open spaces should be developed not only to provide psychological openness but also for ecological self-renewal. Recreation becomes an essential part of life in any civilised society. It is an activity people pursue for relaxation and personal enjoyment, usually during their leisure time, to break from their routine busy work. In an urban environment, such recreation facilities have to provide a variety of opportunities accessible, affordable, and attractive to all groups of population."

According to CMDA officials, the Tamil Nadu Parks, Play-Fields and Open Spaces (Preservation and Regulation) Act, 1960, was enacted to provide for the preservation and regulation of parks, playing fields and open spaces are periodically notified under the Act by the local bodies. These spaces should be maintained for the purposes notified. The spaces should be clean," says an official. When the Second Master Plan was adopted in 2008, Chennai city had 195 parks spread over 60 hectares. Playgrounds maintained by the Corporation during the same period was estimated at 200, with a total extent exceeding 50 hectares. While the number of parks has increased from 195 to 700 in the city in the last 16 years, the number of playgrounds has not increased in the 15 zones of the city.

Fewer in suburban areas

In the suburban areas of the Chennai Metropolitan Area, the parks and the playgrounds are fewer. In the new layouts, a portion of the land (10%, excluding roads, in layouts exceeding 3,000 square metres) is handed over to the local body for being maintained as parks or playgrounds. On the outskirts of the city, during the period between 1975 and 2008, more than 300 hectares of parks and playgrounds were reserved by the developers and taken over by the local bodies. But many local bodies have not maintained these spaces. Residents have demanded that the government consider increasing the number of playgrounds in the metropolitan area.

At Anna Salai-GP Road junction, traffic police close their eyes to violations

SIGNS AND SIGNALS

Sangeetha Kandavel

Vehicles parked outside popular restaurants on Anna Salai are creating traffic snarls, especially at the GP Road-Anna Salai signal. Crossing the signal and moving towards Blackers Road through Dams Road has become a nightmare for commuters, especially at peak hours. The refurbished Bilal Hotel is attracting good crowds at lunch and evening hours, and the crowds cause bottlenecks.

GP Road is two-way now. With vehicles parked for repairs on either side of the road, the traffic moves at a snail's pace.

"At times, people park their vehicles near the Daragh-e-Hazrat Syed Moosa

cult to navigate the traffic at evenings and nights because of the vehicles parked in front of a row of hotels.

Moving at snail's pace

"Vehicles come to this junction from GP Road and turn towards Dams Road. At the same time, vehicles from Wallajah Road and from Anna Salai make a U-turn at this junction. This is not safe at all," says an employee who works in a sticker company near the junction.

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ROADSIDE PROS

Fragrance in the midst of the mundane



Sahana Mira S.

Horns blare incessantly, the vehicle exhaust creates frenzy on the roads at the rush hour. On the road margins, the flower-vendors handle fresh blooms in huge baskets, under a makeshift canopy. The flower-vendor's hands dance around the thread with fresh jasmines, blue pea, and hues of tangerine and greens along, stringing a *Madras Kadhambari*.

Sudha sits there with most of her flower stock sold, while the discarded half stays in the sack, taking on hues of brown by dusk. Their lives aren't so dainty-like. Sudha and Karthi, the couple behind the flower cart on Siva Elango Salai have been in the hustle for eleven years now.

While Karthi slings the marigolds and roses into a garland, Sudha strings jasmines with finesse. However, Sudha reveals that their shop still runs on razor-thin margins, solely focused on making it through each day. And when the monsoon clouds arrive, they bring along the blues for the couple.

"My husband and I go to the Koyambedu market around 3 a.m. to grab the freshest flowers for garlands,"

Sudha says. "And, we toil the whole day, but for a brief interval in the afternoon, then rush to the Koyambedu market again to stock up on more jasmines for the evening rush. But when it rains like bricks, we don't go to the Koyambedu market, and that struggle to get through the day is indescribable," she says. By then, Sudha has finished double the length of arm's worth of jasmine string, and with a blush, adds how her husband taught her the art of stringing.

Waiting for festivals

One street away, Latha, another flower-vendor, patiently awaits the festivals when her sales will peak. "It is truly discouraging when people bargain a ₹20 bag of roses down to ₹10. Despite sitting here in the sweltering heat all morning and evening, slinging garlands after garlands, we are not seeing much profit to lead a comfortable life. My children are working for daily wages. But it gives me joy stringing jasmines in the evening and I mostly wait for Deepavali to arrive, and Valentine's Day, when everyone comes looking for that single rose which sells from ₹80 to ₹100. And that day is the happiest."

No holidays

Across the street, Amalu, another vendor, has a flower cart. "I head to the Koyambedu market at 5 a.m. with my daughter, but in times of festivals, we go as early as 3 a.m. to purchase baskets of marigold and roses to make garlands. But, after all, I don't have holidays in this business, or a proper time to sleep. I have been in this place for 20 years, and I have seen it all under the sun, from temple chariots to demolition of old houses and from construction to road accidents."

The flower-vendors persist, offering the most delicate-looking blooms, despite hardships. Even when you are reluctant, sometimes, they slide an extra paneer rose into your jute bag and some carry spare hairpins, too. Perhaps, the grandeur of the ordinary lingers beyond the passing of the day.



Celebrating a saint:
Members of Jain Mahasangh take out a procession to celebrate the Mahavir Janma Kalyanak Mahotsav on April 21. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

A slew of festivals marks the month of April in Chennai

Over 20,000 Jains gathered at Sri Jain Dadavadi at Ayanavaram on April 21 to celebrate the 2623 Janam Kalyanak Mahotsav of Bhagwan Sri Mahavir. Sri Ramanavami, the birth of Lord Rama, was also celebrated with fervour and discourses last week

FESTIVALS OF CHENNAI

Deepa H. Ramakrishnan

Over 20,000 Jains gathered at Sri Jain Dadavadi at Ayanavaram on April 21 to celebrate the life and teachings of Bhagwan Sri Mahavir, the 24th Theerthankara, on the occasion of His 2623 Janam Kalyanak Mahotsav (birth anniversary).

Addressing the gathering at Dharam Sabha, Muni Samarpnprabh Vijay said it was important for the Jains to stick to the principles of Jainism and put them into practice. He said victory came only if one kept at a task. He also said it was up to people to create a value for themselves.

In her speech, Sadhwி Gaveshnashri said Bharat (India) had given birth to four Maha Purush (great personalities) – Lord Ram, Sri Krishna, Sri Buddha, and Sri Mahavir – who were showing the world the right path.

Renewal of vows

According to businessman and former director of Jito-Apex Ranjit Kantilal Jain, Mahavir Jayanthi is a day that brings all sects of Jains together. "We renew our vows of non-violence, stressing the truth and other teachings of Bhagwan Mahavir. The Dadavadi sees thousands of people and apart from special prayers, Prasad is distributed, and food is also served to all who come on that day."

Pannalal Singhvi, convener, Jain Mahasangh, said a large procession, with floats depicting the life and teachings of Sri Mahavir, was taken out from Binny to the Dadavadi. The event at the Dadavadi was held from 10 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. Special prayers were held at all the 125 Jain temples in the city that day.

A large procession, with floats depicting the life and teachings of Sri Mahavir, was taken out from Binny to the Sri Jain Dadavadi at Ayanavaram

The city saw another celebration last week: Sri Ramanavami, the birth of Lord Rama. Since the festival falls in the summer, people celebrated the day by offering 'paanagam' (a blend of dry ginger, jaggery, and lime juice with water), 'neer more' (buttermilk with salt, coriander leaves, and asafoetida), and kosmari or kosambari salad. The salad is made of cucumber, soaked Moong dal ('Paasi Paruppu'), coriander leaves, chopped green chillies, and salt.

Temples across the city, including the Sri Parthasarathy Perumal Temple at Triplicane and the Erikaatha Ramar Temple at Madurantakam, celebrated the festival with fervour. At Madurantakam, where according to the legends Lord Rama and Lakshmana saved the village from flooding during heavy rain, special *Thirumanjanam*

(abhishekam) was performed to the utsava idols of Lord Rama, Lakshmana and Sita Devi on all nine days. Lord Hanuman has a separate sannidhi in this temple and is not placed along with these idols.

Temple under renovation

"Since the temple is under renovation and the *Balalayam* is being performed, the celebrations were subdued this time. The special pujas and alankarams were performed for the utsava idols since the *sanctum sanctorum* is under renovation. The idols are kept in the room of mirrors ('kan-naadi arai'). The usual procession of the utsava idols was not held this time since they should not be brought out during *Balalayam*," said a source associated with the temple. A Ramayana upanyasam by Damal Ramakrishnan and Perundevi was held on the last day. At the Triplicane temple, the idols of Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana were taken out in procession.

Religious exponent Tiruchi Kalyanaraman, who delivered a 10-day upanyasam on *The Ramayana* in the city, said it was customary in temples to have nine-day celebrations during which abhishekam is performed to the deities and *The Ramayana* is read for people. "The celebration of Sita Kalyanam and the performance of *Pattabhishekam* in the Namasankeerthanam style were also held. *The Ramayana* can be recited at all times. It is believed that Luv and Kush recited *The Ramayana* to Lord Rama. It is said that Yasodha told *The Ramayana* to Lord Krishna when He was a child. *The Ramayana* is also the story of an immortal deity who was feared – and in the end praised – by His enemies, including Ravana, Vaali, and Kumbhakarna. Rama accepted everyone, including Guha, Vibhishana, Ahalya and others, who showed true devotion to Him, said Mr. Kalyanaraman.



Special occasion: Sri Ramanavami was celebrated at the Erikaatha Ramar Temple at Madurantakam. *Thirumanjanam* was performed to the utsava idols on all nine days.

Can is not enough



Summer blues:

A worker in the employ of the National Highways Authority of India drinks water from a can on Maduravoyal Bypass Service Road on Sunday. The summer has started peaking in Tamil Nadu.
M. VEDHAN

MTC buses skip the stop near Metro Rail station at Nanganallur on GST Road

READERS MAIL

Commuters using the Nanganallur Metro Rail station on GST Road find the bus stop right next to it useless as no buses stop there. As the buses, mostly bound for the interior parts of Nanganallur and Pazhavanthangal, do not stop here, the commuters have to take a long walk. A few buses bound for Nanganallur from Broadway (18R), T. Nagar (M18C), and Poona-mallee (154B) do not halt here. To go to the Metro station, commuters have to use their vehicles or pay ₹120 for autorickshaws.

T. Raghavan,
Nanganallur



In disuse: The MTC bus stop near the Nanganallur Metro Rail station on GST Road. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

MTC responds

A senior official of the MTC says that bus stops, once located far away from the Metro Rail stations, have been brought closer to them. But the crew skip the designated bus stops at some places. The crew will

be asked to halt at the Nanganallur bus stop from the coming week.

LPG safety checks

Under the new safety rules issued by the gas companies, those who deliver the gas cylinders have to check

the Suraksha tube for wear and tear. If the tube is damaged, they have to recommend its replacement. They have also been asked to do a few more checks and feed the data in a mobile phone application. However, many delivery boys do not check the seal and weight of the cylinders and skip the leak detector tests, as they have not been given the weighing scale and the accessories needed for leak detection. In these circumstances, the new rules will remain only on paper.

V.S. Jayaraman,
T. Nagar.

Readers can write to this column at readersmail-chennai@thehindu.co.in

Monday, April 29, 2024
CHENNAI
Prajwal sex scandal case: JD(S) lauds SIT probe

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A day after Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the alleged sex scandal involving Janata Dal (Secular) MP Prajwal Revanna, the party on Sunday welcomed the government's decision. With the pressure now on the party, senior leaders are expected to decide on the possibility of action against the MP, who is the grandson of H.D. Deve Gowda.

"If there is any wrongdoing, action should be taken. We welcome the investigation by the government. We are open to any kind of investigation," JD(S) senior party leader G.T. Deve Gowda told mediapersons.

Asked if the family or the party was not aware of the videos before the ticket was given, he claimed, "Neither the family nor the party knew about it." Asked why Mr. Prajwal had sought court's injunction last year against airing of videos pertaining to him, Mr. Gowda skirted around the question. Mr. Gowda added, "We respect women. We will discuss the issue in the party forum and decide on the action."

JD(S) leader H.D. Revanna and his son Mr. Prajwal were booked for sexual harassment and criminal intimidation. The father-son duo has been booked under Sections of 354(A), 354(D), 509 and 506 for criminal intimidation of the IPC.

Rahul insulted great kings, queens of this country: Modi

PM says Congress has no guts to speak against Sultans, Nawabs, and Badshahs; adds that the killing of Neha Hiremath on a college campus in Hubballi is also an outcome of 'vote-bank politics'

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing a public rally in Belagavi on Sunday, alleged that Rahul Gandhi had "insulted the great kings and queens of India such as Shivaji Maharaj and Kittur Chennamma". He said the "shehzada" (referring to Mr. Gandhi) did not dare speak of the "atrocities committed by the Nawabs, Nizams, Sultans, and Badshahs, over several centuries".

Speaking at a campaign rally for BJP candidates Jagadish Shettar and Anna Saheb Jolle, Mr. Modi furthered the Hindu-Muslim narrative of his recent speeches: "The Congress prince has said that the Rajas and Maharajas of the past were brutal rulers who snatched the properties of the common people. He said they routinely exploited their subjects." Offering his interpretation of the statement, Mr. Modi claimed, "What does this mean? It only means that he has insulted great kings like Shivaji Maharaj and queens like Kittur Chennamma."

What Rahul said

Speaking in Vijayapura on April 26 at a rally, Mr. Gandhi said, "We should not forget that people have got all their rights from the Constitution. Before that, rajas and maharajas used to rule India. Today, if the



Eyeing victory: BJP leaders and supporters welcoming Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his campaign for the Lok Sabha election in Belagavi district of Karnataka on Sunday. P.K. BADIGER

common people, the poor, the Dalits, the tribals have a voice, it is because of our Constitution. We have to protect it at all costs."

Mr. Modi said in Belagavi, "I want to ask the shehzada, you insult and criticise kings and queens, but you do not speak of the atrocities committed by Nawabs, Nizams, Sultans, and Badshahs, over several centuries? Is that because you do not know about the contribution of the kings and queens, or is it because you want to indulge in appeasement politics?"

Mr. Modi asked if Mr. Gandhi knew the contribution of the benevolent kings of Mysuru. "The good governance and patriotism of kings and queens are historical and inspiring. Banaras Hindu

University would not have been built without the support of the King of Banaras. It was Queen Ahalyabai Holkar who reconstructed temples. It was the King of Baroda who recognised the talent of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and invited him to his court. The king sent him to foreign countries for higher studies. Does the Congress prince know any of this?" he asked.

Appeasement politics
Mr. Modi said the Congress's "appeasement politics" is reflected not only in its governance but also in its representation of history. "All that is because of vote bank politics. Neha, a young girl, was killed on her college campus in Hubballi. What encouraged the accused to do that? It is because they know that they will be saved by those who are hungry for vote-bank politics. Will you forgive such parties that indulge in vote-bank politics?" he asked.

"Unlike the Congress, we are inspired by Kittur

Chennamma. The NDA government has opened various wings of the Army for women. It has allowed girl students in Saik school. There is a Saik school named after Sangolli Rayanna in Belagavi. The number of women in Central police forces has doubled," he said.

In Sirsi, Mr. Modi referred to the killing of Neha Hiremath in Hubballi also as an outcome of "vote-bank politics". "Neha, a young girl, was killed on her college campus in Hubballi. What encouraged the accused to do that? It is because they know that they will be saved by those who are hungry for vote-bank politics. Will you forgive such parties that indulge in vote-bank politics?" he asked.

Kottayam witnessed a record-breaking maximum temperature of 38.5 degrees Celsius, the highest ever recorded in April. Alappuzha matched its all-time highest temperature for the month of April since 1987, with the mercury hitting 38 degrees Celsius on Sunday.

Since the first week of March, temperatures have crossed the 40 degrees Celsius mark in many places in the State as per the readings from the automatic weather stations.

Two die of sunstroke in Kerala; IMD issues alert

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Sunstroke claimed two lives in Kerala on Sunday. Authorities confirmed the death of a 90-year-old woman in Palakkad and a 53-year-old man in Kannur, even as the blazing sun and heatwave left people scrambling for shelter in many parts of the State.

The IMD issued a heatwave alert for Kollam, Thrissur and Palakkad districts on Monday. The maximum temperature in Palakkad is likely to be around 41 degrees Celsius. Kollam and Thrissur may touch 40 degrees Celsius, while the temperatures will be around three to five degrees Celsius above normal in most districts of the State, except Wayanad and Idukki.

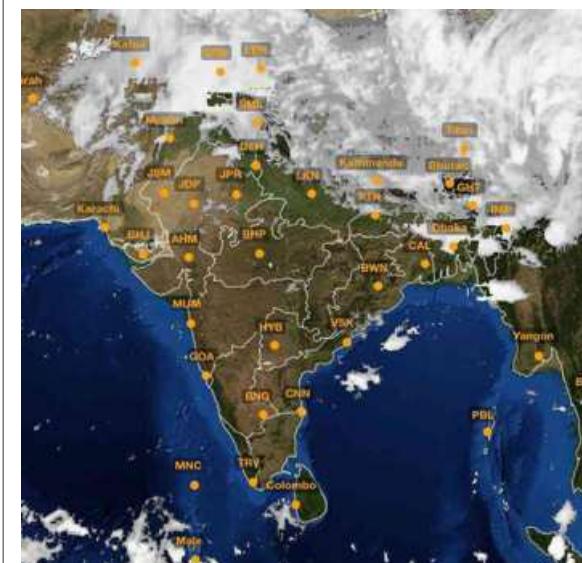
On Sunday, Palakkad recorded the highest temperature of 41.6 degrees Celsius in the manual observatory, around 5.3 degrees Celsius higher than the normal temperature.

Kottayam witnessed a record-breaking maximum temperature of 38.5 degrees Celsius, the highest ever recorded in April. Alappuzha matched its all-time highest temperature for the month of April since 1987, with the mercury hitting 38 degrees Celsius on Sunday.

Since the first week of March, temperatures have crossed the 40 degrees Celsius mark in many places in the State as per the readings from the automatic weather stations.

WEATHER WATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



Forecast for Monday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning, gusty winds, and hailstorm very likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Heat wave to severe heat wave conditions very likely over West Bengal and Bihar. Heat wave conditions in isolated pockets Tamil Nadu and Telangana.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	37.6	28.2	Kozhikode	—	37.9	28.9
Ahmedabad	—	42.8	26.8	Kurnool	—	45.2	30.3
Aizawl	—	35.5	27.4	Lucknow	—	40.8	24.5
Allahabad	—	42.6	26.8	Madurai	—	39.5	27.5
Bengaluru	—	38.5	23.4	Mangaluru	—	34.9	27.6
Bhopal	—	39.8	24.0	Mumbai	—	34.4	27.6
Bhubaneswar	—	43.4	27.0	Mysuru	—	—	—
Chandigarh	—	35.9	22.7	New Delhi	—	38.0	22.4
Hubballi	—	40.2	27.4	Patna	—	41.3	28.7
Hyderabad	—	41.8	28.7	Port Blair	—	34.2	26.3
Imphal	—	31.7	20.1	Puducherry	—	35.8	25.4
Jaipur	—	38.4	26.2	Pune	—	43.3	27.6
Kochi	—	34.4	29.8	Raipur	—	36.2	27.8
Kohima	—	25.7	16.4	Ranchi	—	38.7	26.5
Kolkata	—	41.0	23.8	Shillong	—	27.1	17.8
Port Blair	—	34.2	26.3	Shimla	—	22.6	9.0
Puducherry	—	35.8	25.4	Srinagar	—	31.0	8.5
Pune	—	43.3	27.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	36.9	27.4
Raipur	—	36.2	27.8	Tiruchi	—	39.1	26.6
Ranchi	—	38.7	26.5	Vijayawada	—	41.3	27.8
Shillong	—	27.1	17.8	Visakhapatnam	—	35.4	28.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	.10	.52	.9	.246	.178	■
Bengaluru	.27	.6	.87	.120	.100	■
Chennai	.11	.14	.92	.28	.28	■
Delhi	.41	.291	.89	.164	.135	■
Hyderabad	.6	.58	.43	.500	.500	—
Kolkata	.8	.16	.4	.89	.75	■
Lucknow	.4	.57	.22	.270	.149	■
Mumbai	.8	.28	.58	.213	.136	■
Pune	.8	.17	.14	.83	.96	■
Visakhapatnam	.13	.53	.23	.69	.114	■

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Causes respiratory illnesses, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

A vote for Naidu means end of welfare schemes'

The Hindu Bureau
ANANTAPUR

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSRCP president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said that "a vote for Jagan" will ensure continuation of all existing welfare schemes, while a vote for N. Chandrababu Naidu will result in termination of all such programmes.

Addressing an election meeting in Anantapur district on Sunday, Mr. Reddy said that the elections were not only to elect MLAs and MPs, but also for continuation of the positive accomplishments of the YSRCP government and uplift of the underprivileged.

He said that his government fulfilled 99% of the promises made in the manifesto, which he considered as the Bible, Bhagavad Gita, and Koran.

"Your child has pressed the button 130 times for the direct benefit transfer (DBT) schemes. The government has disbursed a total of ₹2,70,000 crore to the beneficiaries. I am seeking your blessings by showcasing my achievements. When the current government took office, there were four lakh vacant jobs. In the past five years, my administration provided jobs to 2,31,000 people, resulting in employment in village secretariats, new schools, and hospitals," he said.

He said that he had allocated 80% of available jobs to the SCs, STs, BCs, and minority groups. "We have been providing services at the doorstep of beneficiaries in every village and town. I have not only upheld social justice but also took the initiative for its realisation," he said.

Congress leader seeks EC probe into 'terribly mismanaged' polls in Kerala

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly V.D. Satheesan has demanded a "comprehensive inquiry" by the Election Commission (EC) "into the terrible mismanagement" of the Lok Sabha election held in the State on April 26.

The move comes close on the heels of Congress leaders, including party general secretary K.C. Venugopal, accusing the ruling CPI(M) of using its heft among Left-leaning service organisations to delay polling in booths where the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) enjoyed an upper hand.

Mr. Venugopal had accused the CPI(M) of hijack-

ing the election machinery. In an open letter to the EC, Mr. Satheesan articulated the UDF's frustration by stating that the "most important festival of democracy" was anything but "free, fair and seamless".

The delay between exercising the franchise and recording the vote electronically was notably long. EVM malfunctions, delays in repairing or replacing the voting machines, and general official inefficiency led to voters waiting in long queues in the sweltering heat in front of polling stations. This resulted in several persons, including senior citizens, being forced to return home

without casting their votes. Mr. Satheesan said scores of voters, who reached polling stations before 6 p.m., were unable to exercise their franchise. The Congress leader said poll officials refused to extend voting time in booths where faulty machines had delayed balloting.

State Chief Electoral Officer Sanjay Kaul said the surge in voters after 5 p.m. caused some delay in specific booths, mostly in Vadalakara. Mr. Reddy said the reor-

ganisation should not be done in haste or without proper planning as the previous government did and only a judicial commission would be the right way to give a new shape to the present districts. He had earlier said that some of the districts were created to suit political needs and some to satisfy some people rather than the genuine needs of the State.

Telangana was formed

with 10 districts, but the BRS government increased them to 33 with some of them so small that their population was less than a town. Districts such as Jayashankar-Bhupalpally and Mulugu have populations less than six lakhs.



Turnout and tropes

Voter turnout has been lower in most States compared to the 2019 election

A comparative assessment of polling in the second phase of the general election on Friday, for 88 seats from 13 States/Union Territories, shows that high turnout (more than 70%) in the East and the North East (Assam, Manipur, Tripura, and West Bengal) and low turnout (less than 60%) in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have followed earlier trends. The turnout seems to be lower in Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan too, but any parsing of the reasons should wait for comprehensive post-poll surveys. That said, voter turnout has indeed reduced in comparison to 2019 in the first phase as well, compelling the Election Commission of India to look into whether the heat-wave conditions in many States were responsible. That could be a factor but one cannot rule out the notion that voters seem to be less compelled about their choice this time in comparison to 2019. Considering the fact that the BJP won a comfortable majority and its highest vote share in 2019 coinciding with the higher voter turnout, a lower turnout could be a sign of worry for it, even if, conventionally, a higher turnout has generally been a message about anti-incumbency in earlier polls before the BJP became the pole of the Indian party system.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the lynchpin of the BJP, and whose leadership of the party and the Union government is marshalled by the party as a key campaigning tool, had taken recourse to coarse communal rhetoric and criticising the Congress party's manifesto. This suggests a two-pronged ploy. To whip up the sentiments of the ardent support base of the party who believe in the Hindutva agenda and to seek higher participation in voting by these sections. And, to discredit the Congress's studied pivot to the agenda of social justice (although it hinged on an idea of recognition made possible by a caste census) and expanded welfare (through neo-Keynesian policies). The Congress lost its base in the Hindi heartland to the parties that favoured "Mandal" politics of intermediate and lower caste-based mobilisation and patronage since the 1990s. The BJP, then, successfully managed to upend these parties by mobilising sections of the OBCs, who felt left out due to the hegemony of select intermediate castes in the Mandal parties, besides using Hindutva to form a solid base of support. Now, the Congress seeks to revive itself in alliance with the Mandal parties who also seek a new resurgence. This has led the BJP and Mr. Modi to take to slandering the grand old party's manifesto, particularly its emphasis on welfare, using familiar communal tropes. It remains to be seen whether the electorate will be emotionally swayed by this rhetoric or logically match it against its expectations of better jobs and livelihoods. This will decide the course of the election as it moves on to the next phases.

Towards green growth

The RBI must assess the impact of climate change on economic stability

A notable feature of the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) latest Monetary Policy Report (included in its April Bulletin) is the primacy given to "extreme weather events" and "climate shocks" affecting not only food inflation but also likely having a broader impact on the natural rate of interest, thereby influencing the economy's financial stability. Natural, or neutral, rate of interest refers to the central bank's monetary policy lever, which allows it to maintain maximum economic output, while keeping a check on inflation. The report mentions a "New-Keynesian model that incorporates a physical climate risk damage function" being used to estimate the "counterfactual macroeconomic impact of climate change *vis-à-vis* a no climate change scenario". The report's authors go on to warn that the "long-term (economic) output" could be lower by around 9% by 2050 in the absence of any climate mitigation policies. They ominously add that "if inflation hysteresis gets entrenched, it may lead to a de-anchoring of inflation expectations, and the undermining of the central bank's credibility would warrant higher interest rates to curb inflation, leading to greater output loss".

Beginning with its July 2022 discussion paper on 'climate risk and sustainable finance', the RBI has made incremental progress to address the transition to a green economy, even while admitting that India requires over \$17 trillion to achieve its net zero ambitions by 2070. Its peers in advanced economies, most notably the European Central Bank, have aided the formulation of a green taxonomy for the entire Eurozone's economic value chain. A green taxonomy is a framework to assess the sustainability credentials and possible ranking of an economic activity. The RBI and the Finance Ministry could take inspiration from the developing world, especially the ASEAN region, where a layered green taxonomy as a living document keeps getting updated with sectoral views of possible sustainable trajectories. While the issuance of ₹16,000 crore worth of Sovereign Green Bonds and expanding the resource pool by allowing Foreign Institutional Investors to participate in future green government securities are welcome steps, the RBI must undertake a thorough-going assessment on the quantitative and qualitative impact on economic and financial stability due to climate change. It must encourage administrative consultation to begin populating a layered green taxonomy that is reflective of India's fragmented developmental trajectories. The effort should be to mitigate the transitional risks to the financial system as the economy moves towards a sustainable future.

In March 2018, Benjamin Netanyahu was asked in an interview what the three greatest threats Israel was facing were. "Iran, Iran, Iran," responded the Prime Minister. "Iran is building an aggressive empire in the Middle East," he added. Mr. Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving Prime Minister, has never minced words about Iran. His opposition to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, brokered by the Obama administration and unilaterally destroyed by Donald Trump, was hardly a secret. He projected himself, to both his voters at home and allies abroad, as a tough leader who could stand up to the Iran threat. Yet, it was on Mr. Netanyahu's watch that Iran launched a massive barrage of drones and missiles on Israel on April 14 – the first such attack on the Jewish nation by a state actor in over three decades.

Iran crossed a red line when it launched a direct attack on Israel. It shattered the Jewish nation's deterrence. The United States still reined Israel in. And Israel's response to the Iran attack was rather "feeble", as Mr. Netanyahu's National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir himself called it. After the first round, when both sides step back from the brink, the multi-dimensional crisis reinforces Iran's growing risk appetite in an increasingly volatile and violent West Asia, America's strategic reluctance and Israel's near-total dependency on the United States for its security.

The Biden doctrine

Ever since Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel, the Biden administration's focus has been on preventing the Israel-Hamas conflict from escalating into a regional war. President Joe Biden offered his full support for Israel's military operation in Gaza, but at the same time unleashed a diplomatic initiative to keep tensions low between Israel and its neighbours. This approach, however, faced two challenges. One, while the Biden administration successfully kept Israel-Arab ties stable, Washington had little leverage over Iran. Two, Israel fought its war in two theatres – one in Gaza and the other in its neighbourhood where it sought to roll back Iranian influence. This set the path for a potential Israel-Iran confrontation open.

When Israel bombed the Iranian embassy compound in Damascus on April 1, 2024, killing senior Revolutionary Guard officers, this became a plausible scenario. The U.S. knew Iran would retaliate and had leaked its intelligence to the press. Mr. Biden realised that if Iran carried out a successful attack and Israel retaliated, it would lead to a regional war from which the U.S. could not stay out. A war with Iran and its proxies is not in America's interests. The U.S. has other immediate strategic priorities, in Eastern Europe



Stanly Johny

and in the Indo-Pacific. So, the U.S. and its allies helped intercept "99%" of Iranian projectiles, averting a disaster on Israeli soil. And then, Mr. Biden told Mr. Netanyahu that the U.S. would not participate in any Israeli retaliation against Iran. The message from Washington was clear: de-escalate.

A shadow war has been going on between Israel and Iran for years. In recent years, Israel has carried out over 400 air strikes in Syria alone, targeting Iranian interests. It has also carried out operations inside Iran, including the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, a senior nuclear scientist, in November 2020. These operations were relatively cost-free as Iran never responded forcefully, emboldening Israel further. In other words, Israel kept drilling tiny holes into Iran's deterrence.

After October 7, Israel has stepped up this shadow war. On December 25, it killed Sayyed Razi Mousavi, a senior Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps adviser, in a strike in Syria. Once again, Iran's response was muted. When the Israelis got the intelligence that Mohammed Reza Zahedi, a top IRGC commander, was present in the embassy compound in Damascus, Israel went ahead with the strike. Israeli officials later told American media that they did not expect Iran to launch a direct attack when they carried out the Damascus strike.

Iran's retaliation has left Mr. Netanyahu in a dilemma. He has always favoured force against Tehran. The Iranian attack, many argued, gave him a perfect opportunity to hit the Mullahs hard. But the strategic reality in which Iran carried out its strike was not favourable to Mr. Netanyahu. While Mr. Netanyahu favoured force against Iran, his plan has never been to fight Iran alone. He wanted America's lead, participation and support. But when Mr. Biden told him that the U.S. would not join Israel's retaliation, it limited Mr. Netanyahu's options. He could still have gone ahead testing America's will to stay out of a direct Israel-Iran war. But Israel's war in Gaza remained unfinished and it wanted Mr. Biden's continued support in the offensive. So, Mr. Netanyahu resorted to a largely symbolic strike inside Iran, targeting a radar system, according to the American media, and did not even claim the attack. This was a rare victory for the Biden administration as it reined in its ally to avoid a regional war. But from an Israeli point of view, it was a weak response that did little to bolster its deterrence.

The Ayatollah's calculus

For years, Iran has shown strategic patience in its shadow war with Israel. That was also because Iran had taken a long-term view of its growing presence in the region. It has lost a host of senior

officers and scientists in the shadow war, but the Israeli strikes have hardly scuttled Iran's influence. Its nuclear programme continues to expand and its proxies continue to strengthen their muscles. But the Israeli bombing on its embassy annex seems to have altered the strategic thinking in Tehran. After the attack, Iran has decided to impose a cost on Israel's continuing strikes on its officials. While the embassy attack was the trigger, a host of other factors seem to influence the change. Iran today has better strategic ties with Russia and China. While its relationship with China is largely economic, the strategic partnership with Russia is multilayered, especially after Iran started supplying drones to Russia to fight the Ukrainians. Iran has also rightly assessed that the U.S. has a low appetite to get involved in another prolonged war in West Asia, at a time when China and Russia are directly challenging America's leadership of the world.

And in West Asia, after six months of fighting Hamas, Israel is far from meeting its objectives, i.e., dismantling Hamas, releasing hostages and strengthening its deterrence. Israel's vengeful use of massive force on Gaza, which has destroyed northern and central Gaza, killed 34,000 people, and turned nearly the entire population of Gaza into refugees, has triggered an international uproar. There is a genocide case against Israel in the International Court of Justice. Iran's view was that the October 7 attack and the subsequent war on Gaza have substantially weakened the state of Israel in a region where the U.S. security commitments are no longer as "iron clad" as Washington claims it is. This has allowed Iran to change the rules of the game by launching an open attack on Israel. And despite the collective defence of the U.S., the United Kingdom, France, Jordan and Israel, some Iranian ballistic missiles still hit Israel proper.

Israel's meek response and its refusal to claim its attack, along with the call for restraint from its allies in the West, all suggest that Iran's risk assessment was relatively accurate. This is likely to embolden Tehran further. As of now, Iran is the only country in West Asia to have launched missile/drone attacks against the U.S. and two of its closest allies. In 2019, drones attacked two Saudi oil facilities, knocking off half of the kingdom's output for days; in 2020, Iran launched 12 ballistic missiles at America's As-Sadd air base in Iraq in retaliation against the killing of General Qassem Soleimani. And on April 14, it attacked Israel. On all three occasions, Iran walked free, or with a tap on its wrist, which speaks volumes of the new strategic reality of West Asia.

stanly.johny@thehindu.co.in

Inequality can no longer be ignored



Dipa Sinha

is a development economist

The Congress's party's election manifesto, the Nyay Patra, has triggered a debate on inequality, concentration of wealth and the measures to address these. The Prime Minister, with his misleading comments on what the Congress manifesto contains, has also managed to provoke a discussion on wealth redistribution. There is ample evidence to show that inequality in India has been rising. The World Inequality database found that in 2022-23, 22.6% of the national income went to the top 1%, the highest ever since 1922. Wealth inequality is even more stark with the top 1% population having 40.1% share in wealth. It is clear that inequality can no longer be ignored and justified as a collateral to growth. The cost of such unequal growth must be interrogated.

As an election issue is welcome
The unfairness of some people and a few corporates doing so well while most of the population continues to struggle for decent employment opportunities is becoming more and more obvious. The logic of trickle down and of supporting 'wealth creators' so that more jobs are created and prosperity spreads has failed time and again not just in India but across the world also. The futility of continuing to depend only on economic growth even at the cost of increasing inequality, for improving the lives of people, is a core political economy question facing countries today. That it is finally becoming an election issue in India must therefore be welcomed, irrespective of what the election outcome in 2024 will be.

The public discussion, especially on social media platforms, has so far mostly been confined to direct redistribution measures of the 'Tax the rich, subsidise the poor' nature. These are very relevant in the Indian context. After all, India not only has a low tax-GDP ratio compared to other middle-income countries (India's tax-GDP ratio is 17% compared to 25% in Brazil) but also a regressive taxation structure, where indirect

taxes contribute to almost two-thirds of all tax revenue collection. Furthermore, even direct taxes are not very progressive. For example, the effective tax rate (tax to profit ratio) according to the Receipt Budget 2023-24 was 19.14% for companies that had more than ₹500 crore profit before taxes compared to an effective tax rate of 24.82% for companies in the group of 0-₹1 crore profit.

Welfare spending is low

On the other hand, spending on welfare and the social sector is very low compared to other countries. Public spending on health for instance is still around 1.3% of GDP whereas the National Health Policy (NHP) targets achieving 2.5% of GDP by 2025. Despite COVID-19, we have not seen any such massive increases in health expenditures, and going by the current trend, we will not achieve this target. A number of other major budgetary allocations of the Union Government such as for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), education, budget for children, show a decline as a proportion of the total expenditure or of GDP. Hence, improving revenue mobilisation in a progressive manner while also increasing spending on areas that directly affect lives of the poor is very much a relevant issue and needs to be paid attention to.

However, addressing inequality is also about questioning the nature of growth itself. In a situation where the major source of livelihood for people is through employment, how far can growth that does not generate jobs contribute to development? The kind of growth we have experienced recently has been one that has been accompanied by joblessness as witnessed by a declining employment elasticity of output. Further, there is a rise in profit shares and stagnant real wages. The discussion, therefore, has to be on generating employment – not distress self-employment but decent jobs with adequate remuneration. For this, we have to

Addressing inequality is also about questioning the nature of growth itself – which is now unequal – and ensuring that jobs are generated

focus attention on more equitable growth where the purchasing power of people also increases. Governments can play a role in this by spending on programmes such as the NREGA and the Public Distribution System. Cash transfer schemes such as the Mahalakshmi scheme proposed in the Congress manifesto can also contribute to this.

Job creation

At the same time, governments can also contribute to directly creating jobs by filling up all existing vacancies and expanding much needed public services in health, education, nutrition and social security. The quality of jobs, such as of anganwadi workers, accredited social health activists and other frontline workers, also need to be improved with adequate wages and improved work conditions. These direct job creation efforts will not only create employment opportunities for many, especially women, but also contribute to improving human development outcomes and reduce the burden of unpaid care work on women and free them up for other employment. Further, they can also address the inequality in opportunities and the intergenerational inequality that gets perpetuated due to the unequal access to services such as pre-school education and nutrition during childhood.

An employment-centered growth pattern will be one where government policy focuses on supporting small and medium enterprises that are more labour-intensive in nature, promoting skill training and overall human capital (health and education) along with enabling women to participate in the labour market through measures such as maternity entitlements, childcare, transportation, safe and affordable accommodation and so on. It is only when we address the employment issue that we can address inequality in earnest. On the other hand, as long as growth is of the nature where profits for few is the priority, the employment issue is also likely to remain unaddressed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Delayed relief

Financial matters have always been a bone of contention between the Centre and States for long (Page 1, April 28). It is unfortunate that the Union government has released ₹3,730.32 crore towards "relief assistance for natural calamity" from the National Disaster Response Fund to Tamil Nadu and Karnataka only after these States

moved the Supreme Court of India. People should not be caught in the silly politics between Centre and States.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao, Hyderabad

The move fails to satisfy anyone because the funds have arrived too late and only after the States having approached the top court. The speed and spirit in

which assistance was extended to a favoured State in the north is jarring, strengthening the perception of the apathy that the Union government has towards non-BJP-ruled States. Such a policy and attitude will impact the federal structure.

A.G. Rajmohan, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh

It is unfortunate that States

affected by natural calamities have had to approach the Supreme Court for release of relief funds by the Centre. The objective of disaster relief is to enable States to overcome a crisis. The delay in releasing funds by the Centre points to a sour, strained relationship with some States.

Balasubramaniam Pavani, Secunderabad

'The bloc and PMs'

One is really at a loss to fathom as to where Prime Minister Narendra Modi was able to scoop the information that should the INDIA bloc be voted to power, it plans to have five PMs over five years (Inside pages, April 28). The top leader's ingenuity seems to know no bounds! After 'vanishing mangalsutras' and 'x-rays being used to

peer into household safes', his spinmasters seem to be in overdrive compiling fanciful stories. We might have more yarns being spun till the entire election campaign draws to a close!

C.V. Aravind, Bengaluru

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Making space for migrants in manifestos

An election manifesto is a public document outlining a political party's vision, intention, and promises. For the first time, the BJP and Congress have expressed concern for migrants, in their manifestos for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdowns brought attention to migrants and made them visible to the state and policymakers. There are an estimated 600 million internal migrants in India and they contribute significantly to the economy. Yet, they remain highly vulnerable and disenfranchised. In this context, it is important to examine the promises made by the two main political parties to effectively include the huge migrant population.

The BJP's manifesto
Under the heading, 'Modi ki Guarantee for Shramik Samman', the BJP in its manifesto, Sankalp Patra, has made two specific promises for internal migrants and others that will indirectly benefit them. The first is to reach out to migrant workers registered on the e-Shram portal. It is due to the lack of documentation and registration that migrants were rendered 'invisible'. This was a critical contributor to the crisis during and after the lockdowns. After the Supreme Court directed the Central government to build a national database of unorganised workers, the e-Shram portal came into existence in 2021. More than 295 million workers are registered on the portal so far. Creating a credible database of migrants is a pre-requisite for their meaningful inclusion, but identifying migrants among registered unorganised workers is a significant challenge. The manifesto has rightly identified the need to disaggregate the database. However, issues of e-Shram, such as Aadhaar seeding and technical and infrastructural problems, have not been addressed. The manifesto ensures the benefits of various welfare



S. Irudaya Rajan

is Chair at the International Institute of Migration and Development, Kerala



Kuldeep Singh Rajput

is Senior Research Fellow at the International Institute of Migration and Development, Kerala

programmes to workers registered on e-Shram. We found in a study we conducted many misconceptions among migrant workers regarding e-Shram: for instance, some believed that after registration, money would be deposited into their bank accounts. There is still no clarity from the government regarding the benefits for workers after they enrol on the portal, other than the accident insurance.

The second is to enhance the Special Train Services for migrant workers. Last year, the Railways Ministry said it was planning to run regular non-AC trains to connect major migration corridors in India. Given the high degree of inter-State migrants, these special trains should run throughout the year and not just seasonally.

The BJP's manifesto also ensures a periodic review of the National Floor Wages considering the minimum living standards of workers. This could be effective as most migrant workers are daily wagers. However, critics are concerned that it could push workers further into exploitative conditions. Also, different floor-level wages for different regions will trigger skewed migration towards the places where wages are higher, as is the case with Kerala now. Sankalp Patra also states that post office savings, accident and life insurance, and social security measures for workers will be implemented using digital technologies. However, without digital literacy, skills, affordability, and infrastructure, the technology will exacerbate the divide. The manifesto ignores women, children, and young migrants who all face unique challenges. In 2021, NITI Aayog had prepared a draft National Migrant Labour Policy, but the manifesto is silent on its implementation. The BJP pushes a 'city-centric development' approach and is silent on sustainable village development.

This can consequently trigger distress migration to cities. It also promises implementation of 'One

While the BJP and Congress have both made promises to migrants in their respective manifestos, they have overlooked some critical areas

Nation, One Election', but that may deprive migrant votes.

The Congress' promises

In its manifesto, Nyay Patra, the Congress has promised to enact a law to regulate the employment of migrant workers and ensure their fundamental legal rights and social security. It assures it will update ration card holders, expand Public Distribution System (PDS) coverage, allocate sufficient funds to PDS and the Integrated Child Development Service, and launch a mid-day meal scheme that would benefit migrants. However, it is silent on the portability of PDS. The party's promise to increase the wage under MGNREGA to ₹400 per day and keep the same amount as the national minimum wage is crucial for rural migrants. The availability of employment in a locality reduces distress out-migration.

The party has also promised to launch an urban employment scheme for the urban poor, which could eventually be helpful for urban migrants too. The promise of enforcing the principle of 'Same Work, Same Wages' to prevent gender-based discrimination is significant. The manifesto focuses on women's welfare and promises to build sufficient night shelters for migrant women workers and safe and hygienic public toilets for women in towns and cities. However, the manifesto would have been more effective if it had addressed the specific challenges faced by migrant women. It has also missed the opportunity to identify the range of issues faced by internal migrant workers, including the exploitative informal labour market, fragmentation, and forced labour conditions.

While it is good that migrants have found space in the manifestos, both the parties have overlooked critical areas such as public health inclusion, education of migrating children, housing, water, sanitation, and legal aid and dispute resolution. Only political will can only change the lives of migrants and their families.

Tracking the flow of cash

To tackle bribery, officials need to do more than just seize cash and freebies

STATE OF PLAY

M. Rajeev

rajeev.madabhushi@thehindu.co.in



Telangana
wise reports only of the 2023 elections," Chief Electoral Officer Vikas Raj said.

Before the 2023 Assembly elections, there was a meteoric rise in the quantum of seizures; it crossed ₹750 crore. While political parties distributed cash and liquor in the past, the distribution of drugs/narcotics and precious metals has been increasing since the 2018 Assembly elections. Notably, 'other freebies' such as laptops, cell phones, sarees and two wheelers and four wheelers too form a significant chunk of seizures now.

In the 2023 Assembly elections, the enforcement agencies seized more than ₹155 crore between March 1 and the third week of April. This includes ₹60.96 crore of cash, liquor worth ₹29.35 crore, drugs and narcotics worth ₹23.87 crore, precious metals worth ₹18.36 crore, and 'other freebies' worth ₹23.12 crore. In contrast, in 2014, ₹34.38 crore of cash was seized before the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in united Andhra Pradesh. Of the seizures this time, the highest amount of cash was seized from Hyderabad district (₹16.73 crore) and then Mahbubnagar (₹6.34 crore).

The seizures had increased by the 2018 Assembly elections when enforcement agencies became more vigilant on the borders and in certain sensitive areas in the State. Then, ₹145 crore was seized, with the police department reporting ₹103.89 crore and the Income Tax (IT) department reporting ₹34.19 crore. Before the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, ₹84.26 crore including ₹46.4 crore by the police and ₹29.14 crore by the IT department was seized. Senior officials said the election authority has details of the total amounts seized in the 2018 and 2019 elections, but not cohort-wise reports as they were not maintained/monitored. "We have cohort-

ment of inducements. This has resulted in seizures of huge quantities of cash and other allures. Officials were also alerted by the confessional statements of the accused in the phone-tapping case in 2023. In their statements, the accused said that money was transported in government and police vehicles. The CEO said steps have been initiated to ensure that there is no scope for such developments this time around.

The secretary for the Forum for Good Governance, M. Padmanabha Reddy, contended that the money meant for inducing voters has been reaching them in spite of the seizures by the election authorities. The phone-tapping case is under investigation by the police. "The accused have admitted that they have transported huge amounts of cash from one place to other during the elections," he said.

Given the huge amounts of cash and other freebies that have been seized even before the last date of filing nominations, officials have been checking government and police vehicles too as a precautionary measure. Though more and more seizures are being made, no cases have been registered against the candidates contesting, who are responsible for the distribution of cash, liquor, and freebies.

In the 2023 Assembly elections, the enforcement agencies seized ₹317.58 crore of cash, liquor worth ₹128.24 crore and drugs/narcotics worth ₹41.71 crore. Gold, silver and other precious metals worth ₹186.97 crore were also seized. There were allegations that a major chunk of these belonged to jewellers and traders, but the attempts to lure voters with these items has not been ruled out.

Other freebies such as laptops, cookers, sarees and even rice were seized in some areas in the 2023 Assembly polls. These freebies meant to induce voters amounted to ₹85.54 crore in that election and has reached close to the ₹25 crore mark in the current Lok Sabha polls.

The CEO said officials have kept a keen eye on the move-

Little correlation between higher temperatures and lower turnout

Many seats had lower turnouts despite lower temperatures while some saw high voting despite more heat

DATA POINT

Srinivasan Ramani

So far, 189 out of 543 constituencies have voted in two phases in the Lok Sabha elections. We do not have the overall turnout in phase 1 and phase 2 as the Election Commission of India (ECI) has not provided updated figures or electors' information for all the seats that went to the polls in these two phases. But the ECI has provided seat-by-seat voter turnout data. The numbers suggest that turnout has fallen somewhat in both phases compared to the 2019 elections. Overall, voter participation or the turnout rate increased or stayed the same in only 32 of these 189 seats compared to the 2019 elections; the rest have seen a decrease in turnout. In the 2014 elections, 60 seats saw an increased turnout and 129 saw a decreased turnout (Table 1).

One of the key reasons prodded for the lower turnout is the ongoing heat wave across many States. The ECI has taken note of the heatwave and is trying to find ways of tackling it. India is a predominantly tropical country with many States, including in the Gangetic plains, the central, western, eastern plains, and the peninsular regions, experiencing a relatively hot summer this year.

Did higher day temperatures result in subdued voting across constituencies in India? A look at constituencies in the aforementioned regions (172 seats overall) show that there was an increase in temperature in 118 seats compared to 2019 and a decrease only in 54 seats. In 2014, there was an increase in temperature in 142 seats and a decrease in 30 seats compared to the previous elections.

Did the turnout fall because of an increase in temperature across these constituencies? Not necessarily. The correlation between the change in temperature and that of

the turnout compared to the 2019 election is almost negligible (0.016) for the seats in the aforementioned region. So is the correlation (-0.048) for corresponding figures in comparison with the 2014 elections (Table 3).

The reasons are not difficult to fathom. In some States such as Chhattisgarh, and to some extent Karnataka, turnouts increased despite the increase in temperature, while in some States such as Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, the turnouts decreased despite a decrease in temperature in a number of seats. The lack of uniformity in decrease in turnouts corresponding to increases in temperature and vice-versa has led to little correlation in these two variables (change in temperature versus change in turnout).

When we look at semi-urban and urban seats (largely metropolitan areas), there is a slightly higher and non-zero negative relationship. This means an increase in temperature has coincided marginally with a decrease in turnout. These figures hold true for changes from both the 2014 and 2019 elections. When we consider only urban (metropolitan) seats that have gone to the polls, the relationship gets a bit stronger between higher temperatures and lower turnouts but even then, the correlation coefficient is only -0.3 in the case of differences between the 2014 and 2024 elections and -0.16 corresponding to changes from the figures in 2019.

It is suffice to say that for a section of voters, rising mercury is not the sole reason to stay away from elections. The answers for the relative increase in voting apathy can only emerge from post-poll surveys. But it must be said that both the 2014 and the 2019 elections saw relatively higher voter turnouts compared to earlier elections. That was a consequence of both greater awareness due to the work by the ECI and the fact that a large chunk of the voters turned up to favour the BJP.

Much ado about the heat?

The tables are constructed using past election data from LokDhaba, and past temperature data using IMDLIB

Beating the heat: An elderly woman walks with the aid of a stick as she arrives to cast her vote at Morakkal in Chalakudy Lok Sabha constituency on Friday. THULASI KAKKAT

Table 1: The table shows temperatures and turnouts in seats on the days when polling was held in 2019 and 2024

State	Count of seats	Average temperature difference with 2019* (°C)	Average turnout difference with 2019 (Percentage points)	Average temperature in 2024 (°C)	Average temperature in 2019 (°C)	Seats in which turnouts decreased from 2019	Seats in which temperature increased from 2019
Tamil Nadu	39	1.04	-2.69	38.49	37.46	35/39	35/39
Rajasthan	25	-3.97	-4.77	38.37	42.34	22/25	1/25
Kerala	20	2.37	-6.63	35.10	32.73	20/20	20/20
Uttar Pradesh	16	4.38	-6.24	39.09	34.71	16/16	16/16
Karnataka	14	1.59	0.84	36.52	34.93	4/14	13/14
Maharashtra	13	0.57	-0.14	41.71	41.14	8/13	6/13
Madhya Pradesh	12	-2.25	-8.08	40.41	42.66	12/12	0/12
Bihar	9	5.76	-3.84	40.49	34.72	9/9	9/9
West Bengal	6	3.34	-3.46	34.12	30.78	6/6	6/6
Chhattisgarh	4	2.20	1.41	40.89	38.69	0/4	4/4
Tripura	2	1.62	-1.44	32.82	31.21	2/2	2/2
Puducherry	1	0.90	-2.34	35.96	35.06	1/1	1/1
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	1	0.43	-0.99	33.00	32.57	1/1	1/1
Assam	10	0.3	-3.36	36.77	36.47	6/10	4/10

* The averages are for the temperature/turnout differences across seats in States

Table 2: The table shows the seats with the most turnout and the least turnout in select States as of phase 2

State	Most turnout	Least turnout
Tamil Nadu	Dharmapuri (81.2%)	Chennai Central (53.96%)
Rajasthan	Barmer (75.93%)	Karaoli - Dhaulpur (49.59%)
Kerala	Vadakara (78.41%)	Pathanamthitta (63.37%)
Uttar Pradesh	Saharanpur (66.14%)	Mathura (49.41%)
Karnataka	Mandy (81.67%)	Bangalore South (53.17%)
Maharashtra	Garhchiroli - Chimir (71.88%)	Nagpur (54.3%)
Madhya Pradesh	Chhindwara (79.83%)	Rewa (49.43%)
Bihar	Katihar (63.76%)	Nawada (43.17%)
West Bengal	Jalpaiguri (83.66%)	Darjiling (74.76%)



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 29, 1974

Bhutto keen on ties with India

Islamabad, April 28: Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Z.A. Bhutto, said to-day he hoped diplomatic relations between his country and India could be restored by the end of this month or the beginning of next month. "I don't see why we should not restore diplomatic relations - the sooner the better," he told UPI in an interview.

Mr. Bhutto said he saw no difficulty in Mrs. Indira Gandhi's acceptance of his informal invitation to her to visit Pakistan.

"So, at the appropriate time I expect the Indian Prime Minister would visit Pakistan," he said.

On Pakistan's difficult relations with neighbouring Afghanistan, Mr. Bhutto said, "Afghanistan, on its own, does not pose a problem to us."

He acknowledged Pakistan would be in deep trouble if Afghanistan received "physical support" from outside for an attack on Pakistan. He pledged that Pakistan would "never commit aggression

From Page One

Man killed, 3 injured in gunfights in Manipur

Security officials said that during the day, firing had also spread to villages near Koutruk such as Kadangband and Senjam Chirang, also lying along the boundary between Imphal West and Kangpokpi districts. While the Manipur Police are investigating the latest incident, Central security forces are conducting joint area domination exercises, sources said. The police are yet to issue an official statement on the firing.

The deceased has been identified as 44-year-old Lamman Kipgen of L. Molsang Village in Kangpokpi district. The Kuki Students' Organisation (KSO) in Kangpokpi said that Mr. Kipgen was with other Kuki-Zo village defence volunteers when they started facing gunfire in the Leimakhong area. Mr. Kipgen was shot and killed around 2:30 a.m. on Sunday, the KSO said.

It added that the funeral for Mr. Kipgen, who is survived by his wife and five children, will be held on Sunday at the Martyrs' Cemetery in Kangpokpi's Phajang.

The ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur has left over 220 people dead since it began on May 3 last year, injuring thousands of others, and internally displacing tens of thousands of residents.

While there was a short lull in the violence in the weeks after the Election Commission announced the Lok Sabha election, the most recent spate resumed just days before the polls, when one Kuki-Zo village volunteer was killed and his body mutilated by armed miscreants.

NHRC accreditation status faces review test

The decision over whether the NHRC is given an A or B rating will affect its ability to vote at the UN Human Rights Council and some UNGA bodies.

The meeting of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the UN-recognised Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) worldwide will be held on May 1, official sources told *The Hindu*, as part of the five-year peer review for each member of the 114-member alliance.

While the NHRC Chairperson, retired Supreme Court judge Justice Arun Kumar Mishra, had travelled to Geneva last year for the GANHRI SCA meeting on India, this year, the NHRC is expected to attend the review meeting on Wednesday online. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is understood to have reached out to various countries involved in the review process to make its case through diplomatic channels.

This is the second time the Modi government is facing a possible listing downgrade. Since being accredited in 1999, India had retained its A ranking in 2006 and 2011, while its status was deferred in 2016 and restored after a year. According to a six-point submission by the SCA in March 2023, the NHRC has failed to create conditions required to be "able to operate independent of government interference". In the submission, the committee had slammed India for the involvement of police officers in its investigative process, calling it a "conflict of interest".

In its response, the NHRC had said that the presence of government officials, including the Secretary-General and CEO, NHRC – former Gujarat cadre IAS officer Bharat Lal, adds to the "effectiveness" of the body.

The SCA also cited the lack of "pluralism" and "gender representation". The SCA had also pointed out that the composition of the committee should reflect the "diversity of the society" it operated in, indicating the lack of any member representing India's largest minority religions. In addition, local civil society activists have pointed out that most members are politically affiliated with the ruling party, with five of the 10 members belonging to the BJP or RSS.

When asked about Wednesday's meeting, the sources said although the government is confident of having its A status restored, it was not focused on "external certifications" of India's human rights record.

Indian Navy aids Panama tanker after Houthi attack

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy has guided a Panama-flagged crude oil tanker with 30 crew members, including 22 Indians, out of troubled waters after the vessel came under missile attack from Houthi militants.

Indian Navy destroyer INS Kochi responded to the attack on MV Andromeda Star on April 26, officials said, adding all crew members were safe.

The U.S. Central Command said militants launched three missiles in the vicinity of merchant vessels Maisha and Andromeda Star. The latter reported minor damage.

India's Chinese import bill up 2.3 times in 15 years

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's imports from China crossed \$101 billion in 2023-24 from about \$70 billion in 2018-19, and the country's share of India's industrial goods imports has risen from 21% to 30% over 15 years, says a report by the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) which reckoned that Chinese imports will rise sharply in coming years.

Goods imports from China have risen 2.3 times faster than India's total imports over 15 years, the GTRI study noted, adding that China is the top supplier in eight major industrial sectors, including machinery, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and textiles, bellying the general perception that Chinese imports are high only in

CRPF attacked to draw govt. attention to Manipur: officials

They say attackers hoped to target the police assuming that CRPF troops had vacated the camp in Bishnupur; such violence will continue till a political solution is found to the crisis, they add

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

A day after two Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed in Manipur by unidentified militants, a senior government official said on Sunday that the target seemed to be Meitei members of the State police.

The CRPF unit stationed at the camp had withdrawn a few days ago while a platoon stayed back. The militants mistook the personnel at the camp for State police forces, officials said, adding that such attacks and violence were expected to continue if a political solution was not arrived at.

The camp at Naranseina in Bishnupur district belonged to the India Reserve Battalion (IRB) of the Manipur Police.

Kuldeep Singh, Security Adviser, Manipur government, said investigation was on and the police would be able to catch the culprits soon. A day ago, he said that this was one of the first instances when Central security forces, considered to be "neutral" by both communities, were attacked by militants since the violence began



CRPF personnel carry a coffin containing the body of their colleague who was killed in Saturday's attack in Bishnupur. REUTERS

last year. Over 200 people have been killed in Manipur since May 3, 2023, when ethnic violence between the tribal Kuki-Zo and the majority Meitei people erupted in the State.

Buffer zones have been carved out in the hill and valley areas of the State where Kuki-Zo and Meitei populations are located. Central security forces and the Army are deployed in the buffer zones to keep the warring communities from attacking each other.

Due to the Lok Sabha election, around 5,000 Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) or paramilitary personnel were withdrawn from Manipur in the first week of April. In the wake of the election, the Central forces were reor-

ganised for deployment at polling booths and patrolling. Around 36,000 personnel from the Army and CAPFs were deployed in the State with a sizeable presence in the buffer zones. One of the other reasons being attributed for the attack was the thinning of the Central forces.

Seeking a solution'

"A series of incidents have been reported in the past one month ahead of the big event [election] in the State. The most recent was on April 24 when an explosion occurred on a bridge in Kangpokpi, two days ahead of the second phase of polling. We understand that the attack on vital installations was being done to draw the attention of the

Central government to find a political solution," the official said.

Kuki-Zo civil society groups and the insurgent groups or the SoO (Suspension of Operations) groups that had been negotiating peace talks with the Union Home Ministry since 2008 have demanded a separate administration for the community after the ethnic violence.

While addressing a political rally in Imphal on April 16, Home Minister Amit Shah said that "no one will ever have the courage to break Manipur apart".

Another government official said that five to seven militants armed with sophisticated weapons were involved in the attack at the camp of security forces on Saturday. "They must have thought that CRPF personnel had withdrawn and only local police were there. At the time of the attack, there was no electricity at the camp due to storm and rain. The attackers first fired at the sentry post, injuring personnel. Other CRPF personnel retaliated and tried to chase them away. The exchange of fire continued for around 40-45 minutes," the official said.



Mohan Bhagwat

reservation should continue as long as it was necessary for those who needed it, provided it was for reasons of backwardness and lack of parity in terms of living or social standing.

"Reservation should remain in place as long as discrimination is not eliminated," he added.

Fake video'

"A video is being circulated on social media platforms claiming that the [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] Sangh is against reservation.... and that we can't say this in open. I am visible taking a meeting in the video.... I say that the video is fake and that I have never said this," Mr. Bhagwat said at the opening of a Vidya Bharati Vignana Kendra in Hyderabad.

He said the RSS had always stood for reservation as sanctioned and guaranteed under the Constitution, and that the organisation believed that

Congress leader and Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy had recently said that if the BJP secured 400 seats in the Lok Sabha election, it would change the Constitution to make India a country without reservation for any caste.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had also accused the BJP and the RSS of attempting to destroy the country's diversity.

14 Pakistanis held off Gujarat coast, 86 kg of narcotics seized

The Hindu Bureau

Arvinder Singh Lovely quits as Delhi Cong. chief

NEW DELHI

Centre permitted 50,000 tonnes of onions to be exported to Bangladesh, 14,400 tonnes for the UAE, and around 5,000 tonnes for Bhutan, Maldives and Bahrain. This month, an additional 20,000 tonnes have been approved for the UAE and 10,000 tonnes for Sri Lanka.

All these exports must be channelled through the National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL). However, white onion exports have been permitted without NCEL's involvement, and without specifying a destination country.

"Once again, Maharashtra faces injustice from the BJP, only to benefit Gujarat. Why can't both States be given equal treatment? Why is BJP so anti-Maharashtra?" Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aditya Thackeray had said in a social media post on Saturday.

Congress also questioned the "arbitrary export ban".

In early March, the



Maharashtra is the largest producer of onions in the country.

six countries already announced over the past two months. "There is no new notification or fresh export window. In any case, just about 6,000 tonnes of onions have actually been shipped from the 99,150 tonnes allowed so far through various notifications," a Maharashtra-based exporter told *The Hindu*.

The ban on onion exports has been in place since December and was extended indefinitely last month. In early March, the

Senior Congress leader Arvinder Singh Lovely on Sunday resigned from his post as president of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee saying that he had found himself "handicapped and unable to continue" as all decisions taken by the Delhi Congress had been unilaterally vetoed by AICC general secretary (Delhi in-charge) Deepak Bararia. He made it clear that he was only resigning from his post and not quitting the party.

In a four-page letter to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Mr. Lovely highlighted a string of issues the local unit was up against in the run-up to the Lok Sabha election, including the alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and selection of "outsiders" as candidates.



Bid foiled: Indian Coast Guard personnel with 14 crew members of a Pakistani boat after apprehending them from Indian waters. PTI

Mahesh Langa

AHMEDABAD to some unidentified persons from Tamil Nadu.

The inputs further revealed that the radio call sign of the Pakistan boat Al-Raza was "Ali" while the unidentified Indian handlers had the radio call sign "Haider". Acting on the tip-off, a joint team of the ATS, Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and NCB during their joint operation exercise intercepted the suspected boat about 180 nautical miles off Porbandar coast on April 26.

The authorities arrested all 14 persons, who are Pakistani nationals.

The officials said the consignment was meant to be delivered to some unidentified handlers in Tamil Nadu, from where it was to be smuggled to Sri Lanka for final delivery.

Gujarat Director-General of Police Vikas Sahai said the case has been handed over to NCB for further investigation.

Officials said the ATS received intelligence inputs that a Pakistani fishing trawler headed towards India would be handing over a consignment of narcotics.

In the mid-sea face-off, Nazir Hussain, identified as the captain of the trawler, sustained a bullet injury in his right hand. He is under treatment.



Government of Telangana HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD
O/o. Chief General Manager (Engg), Transmission Circle, Kharibatad, Hyderabad - 04, Telangana State.
e-Tender Notice No. EP. No. 11, 12, 13 & 14/GM/ETC/T/08&09/DivXVII/2024-25, Date : 27.04.2024.
Name of Work : M.S.D.C and testing of 3 MLD Capacity micro filter WTP with all accessories and pump sets, M.S. Specials, cubical panels, power cables, control valves and 15 KL SS tank including civil works of platform, shed etc under O&M Div No. XVII at Kokapet, Puppalguda, Budvel & Gandipet.
Ranging (approx.) : Rs. 140.04 Lakhs & Rs. 140.04 Lakhs.
Bid document download start date : 29.04.2024 @ 10.30 AM. The Tenderers are requested to upload the information on the Zip format preferably. Further details can be seen on www.eprocurement.gov.in
S/o. Chief General Manager (Engg), Transmission Circle, Kharibatad, Hyd - 04, T.S.

Lion's share

The table lists commodities imported by India, where China accounts for the largest share in total imports

Commodity	China's share in imports
1 Electronics/ telecom/ electrical products	43.9%
2 Machinery	39.7%
3 Textile and clothing	38.2%
4 Chemicals and pharmaceuticals	26.8%
5 Automobiles	26%

Source: GTRI
Data as of 2022

the electronics sector.

Trade deficit concern

"Growing trade deficit with China is a cause of concern," the think tank said in its report analysing India's growing industrial imports from China. Between 2018-19 and 2023-24, India's exports to China have stagnated around \$16 billion annually while imports have surged, resulting

in a cumulative trade deficit exceeding \$387 billion over six years, it said.

Earlier this month, the Commerce Ministry had said that India's exports to China have increased in the past year in as many as 90 principal commodities out of the total 161 items shipped to the country. These 90 commodities accounted for 67.7% of India's export basket to China, while the number was 38.4% for electronics, tele-

communications and electrical components.

China also accounted for 29.2% of chemicals and pharmaceuticals imports into India, 25.8% of plastic product imports and 23.3% of automobile sector inbound shipments. A lower dependence on China was seen in the case of iron, steel and base metal imports, with just a 17.6% share of inflows coming from the nation.

The strategic implications of this dependency are "profound" and affect not only economic but national security dimensions, the study said, mooting a reassessment of India's import strategies. "This is imperative not only to mitigate economic risks but also to bolster domestic industries and reduce dependency on single-country imports," it said.

ELECTIONS 2024



Pawar says BJP walking on path of dictatorship

from earlier ones since it will decide "by which method the country will work".

"The Chief Minister of Delhi [Arvind Kejriwal] is put behind bars. They [BJP] are walking on the path of dictatorship and are destroying democracy. Therefore, to save our nation we need to defeat them," he said.

"The nation should run as a democracy but we are worried. They [BJP] want more than 400 seats to make changes in the Constitution," he said. PTI

Nationalist Congress Party (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday said the BJP wants to win more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha election in order to make changes in the Constitution.

Addressing a rally in Pune's Saswad tehsil, Mr. Pawar said this year's election is different



EC asks AAP to modify its campaign song

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday said the Election Commission (EC) has "banned" its Lok Sabha campaign song "Jail Ka Jawab, Vote Se Denge", but officials said the party was asked to modify the contents of the song. Sources from the Delhi Chief Electoral Office

said the song was not banned but the party was asked to resubmit the proposal, in accordance with the Advertising Codes prescribed under the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 and EC guideline/norms circulated through a letter dated August 24, 2023, for the certification. They said certain images and phrases are "slanderous" and "criticism of the ruling party based on unverified facts." AAP leader Atishi accused the EC of becoming a "political weapon of the BJP". PTI



Does Mamata want to win poll with threats: BJP

BJP president J.P. Nadda on Sunday asked if West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wants to win the Lok Sabha elections by scaring and threatening people as he hit out at her government over the seizure of arms and ammunition by the CBI in Sandeshkhali. PTI



Your CM is a *sher*. Nobody can break him. As a daughter of India, I appeal to you to vote against dictatorship and save democracy

SUNITA KEJRIWAL
Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal's wife



Battle on: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Goa CM Pramod Sawant, candidates for the Lok Sabha polls, and other leaders at an election rally on Saturday. ANI

In Goa, frenetic campaign on by BJP, Congress for two seats

Shoumojit Banerjee

PUNE

The inscription *Aiz Maka, Falea Tuka* (Today, me; Tomorrow, you!) on the gate of the graveyard of St. Thomas Church at Aldona in North Goa sounds like the title of a Spaghetti western. Yet, this aphorism accurately encapsulates the see-saw politics of rapidly shifting fortunes often played out in the verdant coastal State of Goa as both the North and South Goa Lok Sabha constituencies go to the polls on May 7.

The BJP and the Congress remain the major players in the State with an electorate of a little more than 11 lakh and 16 candidates from six parties in the fray.

Since its victory in the 2022 Assembly election, a dominant BJP, led by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, faces a severely weakened Congress, which was dealt a body blow by the defection of eight of its 11 legislators to the saffron side in 2022.

The smaller parties, namely Viji Sardesi's homegrown Goa Forward Party (GFP) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), are backing the Congress as part of the INDIA bloc to combat the BJP.

The BJP, which has won the North Goa Lok Sabha seat since 1999, is now going all out to snare South Goa – a traditional Congress bastion which includes the Catholic-dominated Salcette region.

For the first time in the saffron party's history in Goa, it has fielded a woman candidate – Pallavi Dempo for the South Goa Lok Sabha seat with an eye on Catholic Christian votes. Ms. Dempo, who is new in politics, is the wife of businessman Shrinivas Dempo, chairman of the Dempo group, with interests in sectors ranging from football to real estate and shipbuilding.

The Congress, in a surprise move, has dropped its sitting MP Francisco Sardinha, a four-term MP from South Goa, and fielded a former naval officer, Capt. Viriato Fernandes.

For North Goa, the BJP has renominated its five-time incumbent Shridip Naik. The Congress has fielded old warhorse and former Union Minister Ramakant Khalap.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent rally in the State underscored the BJP's promises of developing Goa as an international conference tourism hub along with development of fisheries.

Poll issues

While issues of environmental protection and resumption of mining remain the Congress's major concerns, the matter that has sparked Goan politics ahead of the election are recent remarks made by Capt. Fernandes about the Indian Constitution being allegedly forced upon Goa since its liberation in 1961.

As a challenge to both the BJP and the Congress, the home-grown Revolutionary Goans (RG) party has entered the fray as the third challenger. RG chief Tukaram 'Manoj' Parab, with his mission to sweep away the 'old, corrupt order of Goan politics', is contesting the North Goa seat while Robert Pereira is fighting from South Goa.

With political machinations in full swing, the land of *Susegad* (relaxed or laid-back) is galvanised as frenetic poll campaigning reaches a crescendo on May 7.

Do-or-die battle for all key players in A.P.

With both Assembly and Lok Sabha polls to be held on May 13, turnout will be a key factor; YSRCP faces some anti-incumbency, but is banking on welfare schemes, especially in rural and tribal areas; TDP-JSP-BJP combine, which has flagged inflation, unemployment has an edge in urban areas

OVERVIEW

Sumit Bhattacharjee

VISAKHAPATNAM

The simultaneous Assembly and Lok Sabha elections to be held in Andhra Pradesh on May 13 is being called the "mother of all elections", with a mix of revenge politics, alliance dynamics, family drama, populist schemes and the evergreen caste factor adding spice to the contest.

It's a do-or-die battle for most major players in the State, including the ruling YSR Congress (YSRCP) as well as the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Jana Sena Party (JSP), both constituents of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). For any of these regional parties, unlike for the BJP, it will be hard to sustain themselves in the Opposition for the next five years. The Congress is eyeing a nascent revival and hopes to play spoiler in some areas.

The fight is evenly poised between the two main opponents. There is some anti-incumbency sentiment against the YSRCP and voter turnout will be a key factor. While the YSRCP appears to have an edge in rural and tribal areas due to its welfare initiatives, the NDA seems to be doing better in the urban segments.

Since Telangana was carved out of united Andhra Pradesh, the residual

Poll profile

Andhra Pradesh goes to the polls on May 13. A look at the voter demography and other electoral facts about the State



State of A.P. has been left with 25 Lok Sabha seats, each of which is being keenly contested between the YSRCP and the NDA. Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has converted each of these Lok Sabha constituencies into a district, applying the principle of decentralisation. Earlier, there were only 13 districts in the State.

In the first decades since its inception, Andhra Pradesh was predominantly a Congress-ruled state. However, after the launch of the TDP by matinee idol N.T. Rama Rao in 1984, the power centre shifted towards the regional party, which is said to have one of the largest cadre bases among the regional outfits in India.

The Congress and the TDP have fought pitched electoral battles in the past, with the reins of power flipping between the two. However, this election promises to be a singularly

high-octane contest; it will not be easy for the NDA to breach Mr. Jagan Reddy's citadel, which is fortified by his government's welfare schemes, but it's a matter of political survival for the TDP's N. Chandrababu Naidu and his party.

In 2014, immediately after the bifurcation of the State, the TDP had joined hands with the BJP and the JSP to fight the YSRCP, which was then making its electoral debut. Mr. Naidu won that election, with the TDP snagging 102 out of 175 Assembly seats, while its alliance partner, the BJP, won four seats. The JSP did not join the poll fray, though it lent outside support. Mr. Jagan Reddy made an impressive debut with about 70 seats. In the Lok Sabha as well, the TDP-led alliance won 16 seats, leaving nine for the YSRCP.

Mr. Naidu's fortunes crashed, however, when he broke off from the NDA just before the 2019 polls, miffed over the BJP-ruled Union government's refusal to grant a Special Category Status to the State on account of its bifurcation, though it did promise a special package.

Flying solo, Mr. Naidu lost the 2019 election badly, securing just 23 Assembly seats, while the TDP's Lok Sabha seat count dropped from 15 to three. The BJP saw its vote share drop from 4% in 2014 to less than 1% in 2019.

A decade after its success in 2014, the TDP-JSP-BJP combination is back together again, but the question of whether it can recreate its old magic looms large over the 2024 poll campaign.

Congress seeks revival
Another question is whether the Congress, which had pretty much lost its relevance in the State post-bifurcation, can make a mark, given the recent ap-

pointment of Y.S. Sharmila, the CM's sister, as the State party chief. Ms. Sharmila's entry into the Congress has brought the family's feud into the open, and she is leaving no stone unturned to point a finger at her brother for the brutal murder of their uncle and former MP Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy in Kadapa in 2019.

She is contesting the Kadapa Lok Sabha seat, taking on Y.S. Avinash, one of her cousins who is also one of the accused in the murder of her uncle. The Sharmila-led Congress is expected to split the YSRCP vote, as a number of the ruling party's leaders have their roots in the Congress.

The NDA is also taking advantage of the family drama, and the murder case has become one of the key poll issues.

The issues grabbing the spotlight include the State's demand for Special Category Status, cases booked against Mr. Naidu in relation to various alleged scams, the recent stone throwing and attack against the CM and his controversial decision to have three capitals.

At a broader level, the ruling YSRCP is banking on its welfare schemes, while the NDA is highlighting the State government's failure to usher in overall development, and the rise in both essential prices and unemployment.

As always, caste equations play a role in the poll calculus. The Reddys and Kammas are the two dominant castes that have held sway over the political narrative in the State, accounting for 15 of the 19 Chief Ministers.

When it comes to actual votes, however, the deciding factor has always been the Kapu community that constitute about 20% to 22% of the electorate, and the Other Backward Classes which make up half of all voters. All political parties are busy wooing the voters from these two segments, and the JSP's Pawan Kalyan considers himself to be the champion of the Kapus as he hails from the community.

Big fights
The Assembly seat of Kupam in Chittoor district, where the TDP chief and former CM is seeking re-election, is one of the constituencies to watch. Mr. Naidu, who has not lost since 1989, will take on K.S. Bharath of the YSRCP.

Mr. Jagan Reddy is pitched against the TDP's M. Ravindranath Reddy, known as B.Tech Ravi, in the Pulinveludu seat in Kadapa.

In Pithapuram in East Godavari, JSP chief Mr. Kalyan will contest against Vanga Geetha of the YSR Congress.

Among the Lok Sabha constituencies, apart from Visakhapatnam and Kadapa, Vijayawada is said to be a seat to watch. Two brothers – Kesineni Srinivas of the YSRCP and Kesineni Sivananth of the TDP – are pitched against each other.

Calcutta HC order on school jobs termination emerges as a key electoral issue in West Bengal

Shiv Sahay Singh

KOLKATA

The Supreme Court on Monday is likely to hear the special leave petition of the West Bengal government challenging the Calcutta High Court order on termination of jobs of 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staff in State government-sponsored and aided schools.

These appointments were made through the State-level Selection Test in 2016 and a Division Bench of the Calcutta High Court on April 22 declared the selection process "null and void."

The corruption in the school jobs has been rocking the politics of the State since July 2022, when former Education Minister Partha Chatterjee was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate after more than ₹50 crore was recovered from the residence of his close aide.

However, the High Court order amid the Lok Sabha election has turned the campaign in Bengal on

its head. Not only the sheer magnitude of termination of 25,753 employees but the years of protests of job aspirants who have been taking to the streets for the past two years demanding fresh recruitment has emerged as a key issue of the poll campaign.

Braving allegations of corruption in the recruitment process, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has been targeting the BJP and accusing everyone from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to lawyers of the CPI (M) and a section of judiciary for the termination of jobs. "These are people who eat away their jobs. The Prime Minister here only did a drama and said it is because of the Trinamool Congress. This is the Prime Minister who takes away jobs," the Chief Minister said, addressing an election meeting at Kalighat on Sunday.

The Trinamool Congress chairperson went on to accuse the BJP of controlling the court, and said those behind the job losses are lawyers of the CPI(M) who have support of the Congress. The High Court, in its order, also directed the employees to return the salaries with 12% interest.

Before the Calcutta High

Court order, Sandeshkhali unrest and allegations of sexual assault and land grab were the key issues of the Opposition parties but now allegations of corruption are dominating the political rhetoric.

Despite the Calcutta High Court order, the State government has gone ahead with the deployment of dismissed employees in the election process. Thousands of teaching and non-teaching staff, whose jobs have been terminated, have been employed in the poll process. Sources said the State government has given its nod to credit full salary to these employees.

The State government is likely to highlight the deployment of terminated employees in the ongoing election process to seek a stay on the Calcutta High Court order, when the matter comes before the Supreme Court. The termination of employees has become an election issue and the Trinamool is going to use the ongoing polls to seek a stay on the order.



School teachers and other staff whose jobs were terminated on an HC order writing petitions to the Supreme Court. DEBASISH BHADURI

Arun Govil's post leaves supporters in suspense

The Hindu Bureau

GAZIABAD

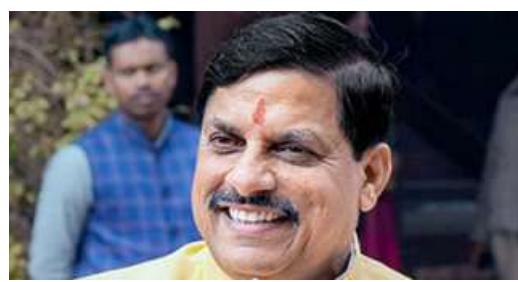
A cryptic social media post of the BJP's Meerut candidate, Arun Govil, created a buzz in political circles on Sunday when he wrote on his X handle that he was anguished for believing a double-faced person. The post was later deleted.

Written in Hindi, Mr. Govil had said, "When someone's duplicitous character comes to light, one feels angry towards oneself as to how we trusted such an individual with closed eyes. Jai Shri Ram!"

Mr. Govil, who left for Mumbai a day after the voting on Friday, neither responded to those who asked the name of the person he was referring to in the post nor clarified the reason for deleting it.

However, in the evening, he posted another message thanking everybody for the support during the campaign, and said he had returned to Mumbai on the BJP's direction.

IN BRIEF



Priyanka is exploiting the 'fake' Gandhi surname: Yadav

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has attacked Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and the Gandhi family for exploiting the "fake" Gandhi surname to garner votes. Ms. Gandhi Vadra had earlier said that her mother, Sonia Gandhi, had sacrificed her *mangalsutra*, in a reference to her father and former PM Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. "As per our tradition, as soon as the daughter gets married, she adds her in-laws' surname. But these hungry-for-votes people are forgetting their surname and using Gandhi even today. They all are fake Gandhis. They just want to gather votes in the name of Gandhi," Mr. Yadav said.

BJP will face its biggest defeat in Sambhal, says Akhilesh

Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday in Sambhal said the people of Sambhal had made up their minds that the biggest defeat the BJP would face in the country in the ongoing Lok Sabha election will be in the Sambhal seat in Uttar Pradesh. In Sambhal, the SP's candidate, Zia Ur Rehman Barq, is locked in a three-cornered contest with the BJP's Parmeshwar Lal Saini and the Bahujan Samaj Party's Shaulat Ali.

Women are top contenders for the Guwahati seat, again

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Three women have represented the Guwahati seat in the Lok Sabha since the first post-Emergency election in 1977.

A former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, Mira Borthakur Goswami, believes she can still be a trendsetter – as the first woman from the Congress to get a berth in Parliament from a seat associated with the largest urban centre in the Northeast. She has been one of the strongest critics of the BJP, the party she was expelled from in 2018. She has also been one of the most visible leaders of the Congress, which she joined in 2021.

The only hurdle before Ms. Goswami is the 45-year-old Bijuli Kalita Medhi of the BJP because six other contestants – all males, including a former Colonel – are unlikely to put up a fight. Both Ms. Goswami and Ms. Medhi are debutants.

"The people want to

give the Congress a chance as they are fed up with the lies the BJP have sold them in the name of guarantees. Women are bearing the brunt of the BJP's misrule," Ms. Goswami said.

More visibility' Her campaign has been buoyed by the support from members of 15 political parties in the Congress-led United Opposition Forum Assam, the State avatar of the INDIA alliance. This was not the case in 2019 when Congress candidate Bobbeeta Sharma lost to the BJP's Queen Oja by more than 3.5 lakh votes.

"Mira has more visibility than the BJP candidate, who is not known much despite having been the Deputy Mayor (of Guwahati in 2016)," Ms. Sharma told *The Hindu*.

"As a convent-educated dedicated party worker, Ms. Medhi is known to those who matter – the common people comprising the backbone of the BJP. We expect her to win by a good margin," BJP leader Dhrubajyoti Moral said.

The first woman to win the seat was Renuka Devi Barkakati of the Janata Party in 1977. The second was the BJP's Bijoya Chakravarty, a former Union Minister, in 1999.

Ms. Chakravarty wrested the seat from Kirip Chalisa of the Congress in 2009 and retained it in 2014 before the BJP replaced her with Ms Oja.

Guwahati has more than 20.19 lakh votes. The constituency goes to the polls in the third phase on May 7 along with Barpeta, Dhubri, and Kokrajhar.

With candidates, slogans and social media focus, SP steps up outreach towards women

Anuj Kumar
GHAZIABAD

Those who love to scroll political reels are surprised to find Aditi Yadav, daughter of Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, trending in the digital space with the videos of the 21-year-old canvassing for her mother Dimple Yadav in Mainpuri finding traction on the Internet. Old men could be seen putting a *pagdi* (a symbol of succession) on Ms. Aditi's head. This soft approach is new for the followers of the party where earlier videos of Netaji (Mulayam Singh), Mr. Yadav, and Chacha Shivpal Singh Yadav, set to muscular music, used to do the digital space.

While Juhie Singh, party spokesperson and national president of the party's Mahila Sabha, described Ms. Aditi's tour "as a young student spending her summer holidays in a meaningful fashion", observers see it as part of the party's calibrated approach to take on

Aditi Yadav, the daughter of Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, being felicitated while campaigning in Mainpuri. ANI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's continued outreach towards women voters.

The SP president is countering it in his speeches by saying that the A in his PDA pitch stands not just for *Alpsankhyak* (minority) but also *aadhi abadi* (half-population for women). His speeches are laced with slogans like *aadhi aabadi, poora haq* (half population, total rights). Mr. Yadav is making a concerted attempt to reach out to a vote bank that has eluded the party in the

past, by raking up the PM's silence on Manipur.

Responding to Election Commission data that the gender gap not only vanished in the 2019 general election but women's poll participation exceeded men's, the SP think tank has fielded 10 women candidates out of 59 candidates announced so far. The SP is contesting 62 seats in Uttar Pradesh. The BJP has shown faith in several women candidates so far on the 72 seats out of 74 that it is contesting. The SP

also carries the baggage of its ambivalence on women's reservation Bill.

After initial flip-flops,

the party made some interesting choices in the cow belt that belie its patriarchal image. Ruchi Verma managed to get over the inner turmoil over her candidature and the party feels she would retain Moradabad. Iqra Hasan led a spirited campaign in Kairana. With a stole on her head and the education of girls as a priority, the London-returned law professional found access into the non-Muslim households. In Meerut, a general seat, Dalit candidate Sunita Verma attempted the improbable task of shifting the Jatav vote of the Bahujan Samaj Party towards the SP to make it a direct contest with the BJP's Arun Govil.

Its campaign managers

are also subtly underlining the Rawat (Rajput) identity of *bahu* (daughter-in-law) Dimple into the realpolitik to offer an alternative to the Thakurs miffed with

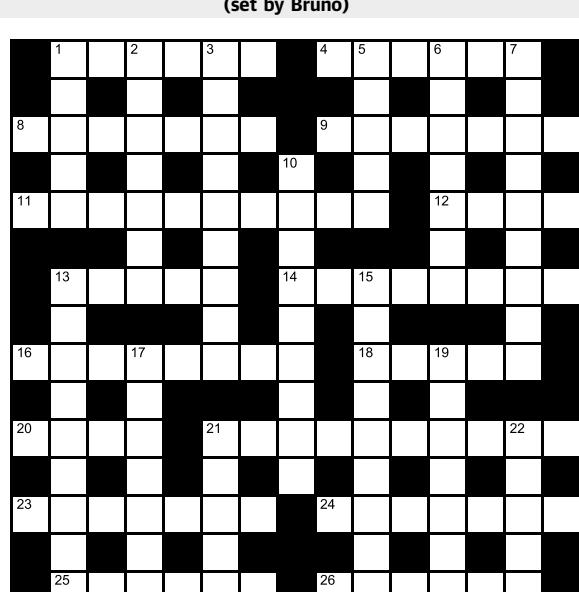
the BJP's focus on Jats and Gurjars this time. The BJP has countered it by fielding Thakur Jaiveer Singh in Mainpuri.

Interestingly, Mr. Yadav's erstwhile partner Chaudhary Jayant Singh of the Rashtriya Lok Dal, who has two daughters, is also pushing for an image shift. Drawing from the BJP playbook, Mr. Singh, in his rallies, quoted from the National Family Health Survey to underline the importance of financial inclusion of women. "Mahila jo faise leti hai woh dharatal se jude hote hain. [The decisions that women take are rooted in ground reality]. Give them a chance," he would say. In a first, his wife Charu Singh led a roadshow in Baghpat.

Come to think of it, the future of two seemingly patriarchal parties in the Hindi heartland could be female while Mayawati, who once survived an atmosphere of toxic masculinity to rule the State, has picked a male heir.

TH CROSSWORD (set by Bruno) 14161

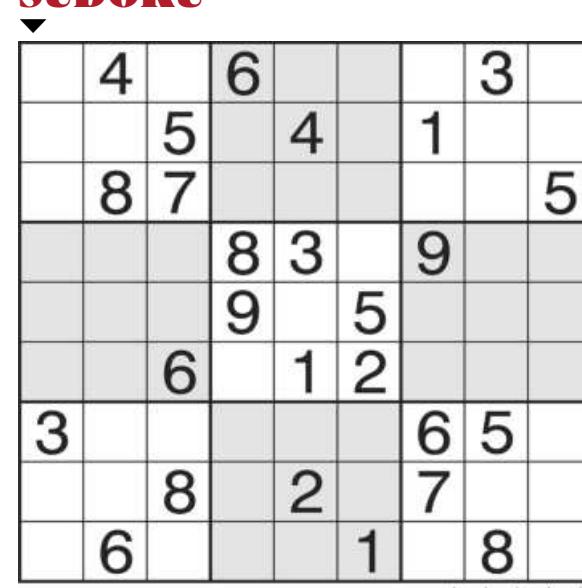
To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. <https://qrqo.page.link/1jpTn>



Across
1 Understated caption - it's released (6)
4 Small vehicle going around Hollywood that lacks direction (6)
8 Value of ammos? Double, often at America (7)
9 Send Tom batting last (7)
11 Random ancient philosopher drinks & drinks...mainly tequila (10)

12 Cut one's shaft (4)
13 Meeting place for mostly getting drink (5)
14 After second act, musical drama's filled with power, a bit of sadness, and vitriol (8)
16 Precision of account office (8)
18 Problem of mass lacking time (5)
20 Radical's also returning to base (4)
21 Unbroken fake money - dubious bid to run off (10)
23 Mathematical operator kids essentially turn to cover (7)
24 Dynamic family name recalled (7)
25 Husband part of surprisingly great group (6)
26 Insect starts to lay eggs behind vegetable (6)
Down
1 Discharge fourth slip after second wicket (5)
2 Ball - one can get you thrown out? (7)
3 Cancer of ileum and colon mainly - cadaver regularly needs to be dissected (9)
5 No introduction needed for legendary figure (5)
6 Story about alcoholic drink and non-alcoholic drink (7)
7 Suspend while turning it in saucer with tea, mainly while stirring (9)
10 Mail describing aunt's ultimate rotten and unpleasant death (6,3)
13 Mathematical operation to get information on gasket (9)
15 Prudish one on TV - starting to expound about settler like a barbarian (9)
17 Straighten out idiot following peacemaker by sticking a little sense in (7)
19 Boss and a specialist scholar (7)
21 Selected carbon pipe (5)
22 Couple has free sex on the counter (5)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle									Solution to yesterday's Sudoku								
A	W	S	S	B	I	M	E		7	1	9	5	3	8	2	4	6
									4	5	3	2	1	6	9	8	7
									8	7	4	6	5	3	1	2	9
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											6	1	8	7	4	3	2
												3	8	2	7	6	5
												6	1	8	7	4	3



PREMIUM QUALITY INCENSE

Sandal
With Sandalwood Oil



FAITH

Sant Ramadas' bhakti

Sri Rama Trayodasakshari is the most powerful mantra. Translating as Sri Ram, Jaya Ram, Jaya Jaya Ram, the mantra was given to mankind by Sant Ramadas, the spiritual leader who inspired devotees and showed them the path to true devotion, said Suchitra Balasubramanian in a discourse.

Born in the Chaitra (Chittirai) month as Narayana, he sought initiation into spiritual life early but was considered too young for it by his older brother. His mother fixed his marriage. However, when the priest announced the arrival of the auspicious moment, the adolescent treated it as a wake up call, bolted from the marriage ceremony, and reached Panchavati. He undertook severe penance on the banks of a tributary of Godavari.

He recited the Gayatri mantra and Surya appeared before him. However, the Sun God refrained from initiating him but offered to send Hanuman. The latter too declined, stating that since Narayana had been born with a tail-like appendage, initiating him with Rama namam would be like serving a mirror image, which would invalidate the entire process. Narayana continued to meditate and Lord Rama appeared before him and initiated him. Narayana took the name of Ramadas, and dedicated himself to spreading the tenets and ethics of the Hindu faith.

IN BRIEF



Priyanka is exploiting the 'fake' Gandhi surname: Yadav

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has attacked Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and the Gandhi family for exploiting the "fake" Gandhi surname to garner votes. Ms. Gandhi Vadra had earlier said that her mother, Sonia Gandhi, had sacrificed her *mangalsutra*, in a reference to her father and former PM Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. "As per our tradition, as soon as the daughter gets married, she adds her in-laws' surname. But these hungry-for-votes people are forgetting their surname and using Gandhi even today. They all are fake Gandhis. They just want to gather votes in the name of Gandhi," Mr. Yadav said.

BJP will face its biggest defeat in Sambhal, says Akhilesh

Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday in Sambhal said the people of Sambhal had made up their minds that the biggest defeat the BJP would face in the country in the ongoing Lok Sabha election will be in the Sambhal seat in Uttar Pradesh. In Sambhal, the SP's candidate, Zia Ur Rehman Barq, is locked in a three-cornered contest with the BJP's Parmeshwar Lal Saini and the Bahujan Samaj Party's Shaulat Ali.

Women are top contenders for the Guwahati seat, again

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Three women have represented the Guwahati seat in the Lok Sabha since the first post-Emergency election in 1977.

A former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, Mira Borthakur Goswami, believes she can still be a trendsetter – as the first woman from the Congress to get a berth in Parliament from a seat associated with the largest urban centre in the Northeast. She has been one of the strongest critics of the BJP, the party she was expelled from in 2018. She has also been one of the most visible leaders of the Congress, which she joined in 2021.

give the Congress a chance as they are fed up with the lies the BJP have sold them in the name of guarantees. Women are bearing the brunt of the BJP's misrule," Ms. Goswami said.

More visibility' Her campaign has been buoyed by the support from members of 15 political parties in the Congress-led United Opposition Forum Assam, the State avatar of the INDIA alliance. This was not the case in 2019 when Congress candidate Bobbeeta Sharma lost to the BJP's Queen Oja by more than 3.5 lakh votes.

"Mira has more visibility than the BJP candidate, who is not known much despite having been the Deputy Mayor (of Guwahati in 2016)," Ms. Sharma told *The Hindu*.

"As a convent-educated dedicated party worker, Ms. Medhi is known to those who matter – the common people comprising the backbone of the BJP. We expect her to win by a good margin," BJP leader Dhrubajyoti Moral said.

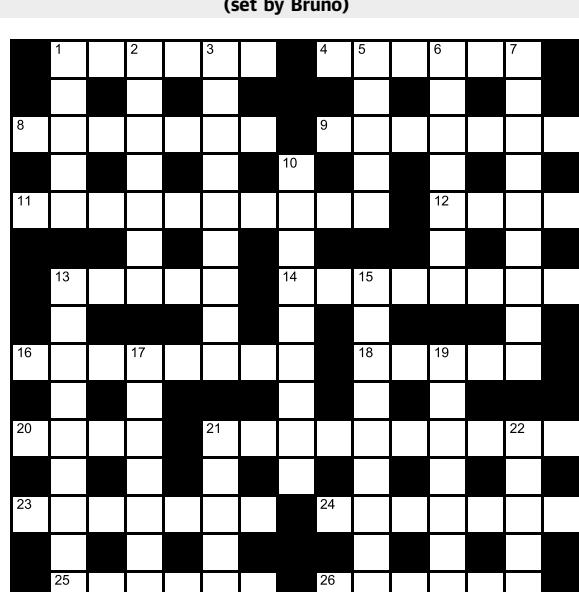
The first woman to win the seat was Renuka Devi Barkakati of the Janata Party in 1977. The second was the BJP's Bijoya Chakravarty, a former Union Minister, in 1999.

Ms. Chakravarty wrested the seat from Kirip Chalisa of the Congress in 2009 and retained it in 2014 before the BJP replaced her with Ms Oja.

Guwahati has more than 20.19 lakh votes. The constituency goes to the polls in the third phase on May 7 along with Barpeta, Dhubri, and Kokrajhar.

TH CROSSWORD (set by Bruno) 14161

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. <https://qrqo.page.link/1jpTn>



12 Cut one

ASKUS

K. NITYA KALYANI

Q I am almost 90 and my wife, 84. We have two sons who are U.S. citizens now. I have no immovable property and all my assets are in the form of deposits with banks and NBFCs. We have tentatively decided to divide the above equally between our sons. The problem is how can my sons get their shares repatriated to the U.S. after my time if I name them nominees on the deposits. I will, of course, prepare a will. Is this sufficient? My sons do not have any bank accounts in India. I asked them to get OCI cards. Is this sufficient? Need your guidance.

K. B. IYER

A Since you now hold assets as financial investments transmission is simpler. Whether FDs with banks or NBFCs, please ensure all of them are duly nominated furnishing all necessary information. Get written acknowledgements of the nominations from the financial institutions and file them carefully. Meanwhile, please ensure you have made the appropriate provisions for your wife to access funds after your time or for yourself if she pre-deceases you. For this, please get specific advice from bank/ NBFC on mode of operation of the FDs (former or survivor, either or survivor etc.) and also nomination options if the investment is single holding or joint.

Please maintain an updated list of all investments with details like constitution (joint/ single) mode of operation, date of maturity and nomination for easy reference. Tell your family where you have kept them.

When the nomination takes effect, the bank or NBFC will make the payout to the nominee after verification.

For this, it would be simpler for your sons to have bank accounts in India. You can add them to your savings bank accounts as joint holders and/ or they should open Non-Resident Ordinary Rupee (NRO) Accounts. Please get your bank's advice on this. The OCI card is needed as identity (KYC) document. Repatriating the money is a matter of procedure.

There could be annual or other limits depending on the law at the time of repatriation. Coming to the will, a will supersedes any nomination.

So, please ensure there are no anomalies or ambiguities between the two. A will also needs to be probated by the beneficiaries in court for a financial institution to give it effect and make the payout. Probate process takes 6 to 12 months, some effort and some expenditure on court fees and lawyers' fees. If handled correctly, proper nominations should achieve your objective in a simpler manner.

Q I refer to "Covernote" in the issue of January 29. The article leaves me confused. In the case under discussion, is it the demat account or the RBI bonds which did not have a nomination? My specific follow up question is as follows:

I have a demat account with a depository participant (DP) with nomination. The account has shares of different companies. They do not have individual nominations.

Am I to understand from the article, the demat account nomination is not enough to get the shares in the demat account transferred to my nominee on my demise, and that each of these shares have to have separate nominations? A clarification will be greatly appreciated.

K.R.MENON

A In the article of January 29, I emphasised on reviewing your nominations to be thorough. The example discussed there was RBI bonds purchased in demat form which did not have a nomination.

The demat account itself did. Our mistake was in thinking the latter would suffice. However, apparently, RBI bonds are not covered by the nomination in the demat account and each bond purchased has to be nominated offline using a hard copy application and getting an acknowledgment.

The case of shares in a demat account is different and their transmission is covered by the nomination in the demat account. In other words, there is no nomination for individual shares. If the shares are in material form, laws of succession apply.

(The writer is business journalist specialising in insurance, corporate history)

MONEYWISE



Watchful eye: Lower credit risk also leads many lenders to offer personal loans at lower interest rates. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Key factors that can affect a personal loan proposal

The absence of collateral in personal loans increases the credit risk for lenders, thereby leading them to exercise a more stringent loan-evaluation process

CREDITWORTHY

Sahil Arora

Minimal paperwork, quicker disbursal, absence of collateral and zero curbs on end use of loan proceeds make personal loans a preferred option for those requiring quick loan disbursals. However, the absence of collateral in such loans raises credit risk for the lenders, thereby leading them to exercise a more stringent loan-evaluation process. Here are factors lenders mull while considering loan applications:

Credit score

Banks and NBFCs use credit score as one of the first filters for assessing personal-loan applications. Applicants with a credit score of 700 and above are considered as more financially disciplined and thus, reduce the credit risk for the lenders. This raises the chances of getting personal-loan applications approved. Lower credit risk also leads many lenders to offer personal loans at lower interest rates. On the contrary, applications by those with lower credit scores are either rejected or approved at higher interest rates to compensate for the higher credit risk.

As the need for a personal loan can arise anytime, it is crucial to work towards a higher credit score for credit readiness. Following healthy credit practices such as repaying EMIs



Applicants with a credit score of 700 and above are considered as more financially disciplined thereby reducing the level of credit risk for the lenders

by due dates, avoiding multiple loan/credit card applications within a short span of time, monitoring loans guaranteed/co-signed by you, etc. would help improve credit score.

Also fetch and review credit report at regular intervals. This will allow you to take corrective measures for improving credit score and help identify clerical errors or incorrect information, if any, in the credit reports and then, report to the credit bureaus for correction. A rectified credit report will automatically improve credit score and the chances of your personal loan approval.

Repayment capacity

Lenders usually prefer individuals whose total monthly repayment obligations, including the EMI of the proposed loan, are within 50-55% of the monthly income. Those exceeding this threshold usually have lower chances of personal loan approval. As longer tenures lead to lower EMIs, applicants exceeding the 50-55% limit should select longer tenures to cut monthly EMIs and improve the chances of loan approval. While se-



Lenders usually prefer salaried employees over non-salaried employees because of the higher income certainty associated with those drawing a salary

lecting optimal EMI and loan tenures, applicants must also factor in monthly contributions towards crucial financial goals. Ignoring these for higher EMIs may adversely hit long-term financial health.

Occupation profile

Many lenders consider the employment profile of loan applicants while evaluating loan applications.

For example, lenders usually prefer salaried over non-salaried staff because of the higher income certainty associated with the former. Among the salaried applicants, those employed with public sector or reputed private sector corporates are usually preferred over others. Many lenders also maintain a list of approved employers for granting loan approvals.

Such lenders may reject the loan application of those whose employers or occupation profiles are not included in the list of approved staff/occupation. Among the non-salaried individuals, professionals like doctors and chartered accountants have higher chances of securing loan approvals. With lenders increasingly adopting risk-

based pricing methods for setting the interest rates of loan applicants, many lenders are also factoring in the employer/occupation profiles of applicants.

Job stability

Lenders also consider job stability of salaried applicants while evaluating the loan applicants. Many lenders also require them to have a total work experience of at least 1 year while a few require longer tenures for availing the loans. Also, some lenders require loan applicants to have worked for a pre-determined period in the current organisation. Thus, individuals planning to apply for a personal loan should try to avoid job switches till loan disbursal.

Banking relationship

Many banks prefer lending to existing customers, especially those having good credit profiles and/ or those maintaining significant deposits or investments with the banks. Some banks also offer pre-approved personal loans to existing customers, at preferential interest rates. Thus, existing customers planning to avail the loan, should first contact the respective bank or NBFC with whom they maintain deposits and/ or have availed loans.

They can also use the loan features offered by such lenders as a benchmark for comparing the loan offers provided by other banks and NBFCs.

(The writer is Chief Business Officer of Unsecured Loans, Paisabazaar)

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%)				
	Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure	
Small Finance Banks					
AU Small Finance Bank	8.00	6.50	7.50	7.25	
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.20	8.00	7.25	
ESAF Small Finance Bank	8.25	6.00	6.75	6.25	
Jana Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.75	8.25	7.25	
Northeast Small Finance Bank	8.50	7.75	8.00	6.25	
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.65	6.85	8.60	8.25	
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.25	7.20	7.20	
Unity Small Finance Bank	9.00	7.85	8.15	8.15	
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.00	8.50	7.50	
Private Sector Banks					
Axis Bank	7.20	6.70	7.10	7.00	
Bandhan Bank	7.85	7.85	7.25	5.85	
City Union Bank	7.00	6.75	6.50	6.25	
CSB Bank	7.75	5.00	5.75	5.75	
DBS Bank	7.50	7.00	6.50	6.50	
DCB Bank	8.00	7.15	7.60	7.40	
Federal Bank	7.40	6.80	7.00	6.60	
HDFC Bank	7.25	6.60	7.00	7.00	
ICICI Bank	7.20	6.70	7.00	7.00	
IDFC First Bank	8.00	6.50	7.25	7.00	
IndusInd Bank	7.75	7.75	7.25	7.25	

Home Loan Interest Rates

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)		
	Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
(In %)			
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India	8.50-9.85	8.50-9.85	8.50-9.85
Bank of Baroda	8.40-10.65	8.40-10.65	8.40-10.90
Union Bank of India	8.35-10.75	8.35-10.90	8.35-10.90
Punjab National Bank	8.45-10.25	8.40-10.15	8.40-10.15
Bank of India	8.40-10.85	8.40-10.85	8.40-10.85
Canara Bank	8.50-11.25	8.45-11.25	8.40-11.15
UCO Bank	8.45-10.30	8.45-10.30	8.45-10.30
Bank of Maharashtra	8.35-11.15	8.35-11.15	8.35-11.15
Punjab and Sind Bank*	8.50-10.00	8.50-10.00	8.50-10.00
Indian Overseas Bank	8.40-10.60	8.40-10.60	8.40-10.60
Central Bank of India	8.45-9.80	8.45-9.80	8.45-9.80
(In %)			
Private Sector Banks			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	8.70*	8.70*	8.70*
ICICI Bank	8.75*	8.75*	8.75*
Axis Bank	8.75-13.30	8.75-13.30	8.75-9.65
HSBC Bank	8.45*	8.45*	8.45*
South Indian Bank	9.84-11.24	9.84-11.04	9.84-11.69
Karur Vysya Bank	9.00-11.05	9.00-11.05	9.00-11.05

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)		
	Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
(In %)			
LIC Housing Finance	8.35-10.35	8.35-10.55	8.35-10.75
Bajaj Housing Finance	8.50*	8.50*	8.50*
Tata Capital	8.75*	8.75*	8.75*
PNB Housing Finance	8.50-14.50	8.50-14.50	8.50-11.45
GIC Housing Finance	8.80*	8.80*	8.80*
SMFG India Home Finance	10.00*	10.00*	10.00*
Aditya Birla Capital	8.60*	8.60*	8.60*
ICICI Home Finance	9.20*	9.20*	9.20*
Godrej Housing Finance	8.55*	8.55*	8.55*

*Onwards Rates as on April 24

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MOSCOW

Russia threatens West with severe response if its assets are touched



Russian officials threatened the West on Sunday with a "severe" response in the event that frozen Russian assets are confiscated, promising "endless" legal challenges. Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Russia would never cede territories seized from Ukraine in exchange for the return of frozen assets. REUTERS

JERUSALEM

Yemen's Houthi rebels claim downing U.S. Reaper drone



Yemen's Houthi rebels on Saturday claimed shooting down another of the U.S. military's MQ-9 Reaper drones, airing footage of parts that corresponded to known pieces of the unmanned aircraft. A U.S. Defence Department spokesperson acknowledged on Saturday that "a U.S. Air Force MQ-9 drone crashed in Yemen". AP

BANGKOK

Thai King taps former energy official Pichai as Finance Minister



Thailand's King has approved former corporate energy executive and bourse chair Pichai Chunhavajira as Finance Minister, taking over the role from Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, the official Royal Gazette said on Sunday. Mr. Pichai, 75, who has been Mr. Srettha's adviser, was the chair of the board of Bangchak Corp. REUTERS

MANILA

Schools closed, warnings issued as Asia swelters in extreme heatwave



South and Southeast Asia braced for more extreme heat on Sunday as authorities across the region issued health warnings and residents fled to parks and air-conditioned malls for relief. A wave of exceptionally hot weather has sent the mercury as high as 45 degrees Celsius, forcing schools to tell students to stay home. AFP

Only U.S. can halt Israel's attack on Rafah, says Abbas

Israel, which has threatened for weeks to launch an all-out assault on the neighbourhood saying its goal is to destroy Hamas's remaining battalions there, stepped up air strikes on Rafah last week

Reuters
RIYADH

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said on Sunday only the United States could stop Israel attacking the border city of Rafah in Gaza, adding that the assault, which he expects within days, could force much of the Palestinian population to flee the enclave.

"We call on the United States of America to ask Israel to not carry on the Rafah attack. America is the only country able to prevent Israel from committing this crime," Mr. Abbas told a special meeting of the World Economic Forum in the Saudi capital



Desperate plea: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas attends the World Economic Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on Sunday. REUTERS

Riyadh.

Israel, which has threatened for weeks to launch an all-out assault on the neighbourhood saying its goal is to destroy Hamas's remaining battalions there, stepped up air strikes on Rafah last week.

Israel's seven-month long assault on much of the rest of Gaza.

"What will happen in the coming few days is what Israel will do with attacking Rafah because all the Palestinians from Gaza are gathered there," Mr. Abbas said, adding that only a "small strike" on Rafah would force the Palestinian population to flee the Gaza strip.

Mr. Abbas reiterated that he rejects the displacement of Palestinians into Jordan and Egypt and said he is concerned that once Israel completes its operations in Gaza, it will then attempt to force the Palestinian population out of the West Bank and into Jordan.

Hezbollah says it fired missiles at Israel

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah movement said on Saturday it had targeted northern Israel with drones and guided missiles after cross-border Israeli strikes killed three people, including two of its members.

A statement from the group said it "launched a complex attack using explosive drones and guided missiles on the headquarters of the Al Manara military command and a gathering of forces from the 51st Battalion of the Golani Brigade". The Israeli Army said its Iron Dome air-defence system "successfully intercepted a suspicious aerial target that crossed from Lebanon into the area of Manara in Israel".

Hamas says it will respond to Gaza truce plan today

Agence France-Presse
GAZA

A senior Hamas official said on Sunday that the group would deliver its response to Israel's latest counterproposal for a Gaza ceasefire on Monday in Egypt.

"A Hamas delegation headed by Khalil al-Haya will arrive in Egypt tomorrow... and deliver the movement's response" to the Israeli proposal during a meeting with Egyptian intelligence officials, said the official who declined to be named.

Mediator Egypt had sent its own delegation to Israel this week to jump-start stalled negotiations even as fighting in Gaza rages.

U.S. news website Axios, citing two Israeli officials, reported that Israel's latest proposal includes a willing-



Relatives and supporters of hostages taken captive by Palestinian militants protesting for their release, in Tel Aviv. AFP

ness to discuss the "restoration of sustainable calm" in Gaza after hostages are released.

Thousands of Israeli protesters meanwhile have stepped up pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to strike a deal that would see the remaining hostages freed.

The Israeli army says 129 hostages are still held captive in Gaza, including 34 it says are dead.

Dubai plans to build 'world's largest' airport

Agence France-Presse
DUBAI

Dubai announced on Sunday that work had begun on a new terminal at Al Maktoum International Airport, which the Gulf emirate's ruler said will become "the world's largest" at a cost of almost \$35 billion.

"We approved the designs for the new passenger terminal at Al Maktoum International Airport, and (are) commencing construction of the building at a cost of AED 128 billion (\$34.85 billion)," Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al

Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, said on X.

Once fully operational, the airport will "handle a passenger capacity of 260 million annually", the government said in a statement.

Mr. Sheikh Mohammed said it will have "the world's largest capacity" and be "five times the size of the current Dubai International Airport", which is one of the world's busiest air hubs. Dubai International Airport has a capacity of up to 120 million passengers annually.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar appointed as Deputy Prime Minister

Press Trust of India
ISLAMABAD

In a surprise move, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar was on Sunday appointed as the country's Deputy Prime Minister. Mr. Dar, 73, a chartered accountant and a veteran politician, belongs to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party.

According to a notification issued by the Cabinet Division, the appointment was made by Prime Minister Sharif "with immediate



effect and until further orders".

The announcement was made when both Prime Minister Sharif and Foreign Minister Dar were away in Saudi Arabia to attend a

World Economic Forum's moot. It was clear what specific responsibilities Mr. Dar would perform as Deputy Prime Minister as traditionally, all powers are concentrated in the Prime Minister, who is the head of the government.

He has served as Finance Minister in two previous governments.

Finance expert

Despite being the party's go-to finance expert for decades, he was surprisingly made the Foreign Minister when Prime Minister Sharif shaped his Cabinet in

March.

It is not the first time a Deputy Prime Minister has been appointed. Chaudhry Parvez Elahi served as Deputy Prime Minister during the tenure of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) from June 25, 2012, to June 29, 2013. His role at that time was mostly symbolic as he was rewarded by then-President Asif Ali Zardari for supporting the PPP government.

Mr. Elahi is currently president of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and is in jail due to allegations of corruption.

Russian forces take over village near Donetsk

Reuters
MOSCOW

Russian forces have taken over the village of Novobakhmutivka in Ukraine's Donetsk region, close to Ocheretyne, which has become a focal point of fighting in recent days, the *Interfax* news agency cited Russia's Defence Ministry as saying.

Russian forces also repelled a series of Ukrainian counter-attacks near Chasiv Yar, the Ministry said, another key point in the region where the sides have clashed repeatedly.

Russian drones early on

Sahal's strike puts Bagan in final

ISL

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

'Super Sub' Sahal Abdul Samad turned superhero for the 62,000-strong home fans by scoring Mohun Bagan Super Giants' match-winner in injury time at the Salt Lake Stadium on Sunday.

The League Shield winner remained in the hunt for a double as it reached the final of ISL-10 with a 2-0 win over Odisha FC in the second leg of semifinal 1. The Kolkata giant won 3-2 on aggregate.

Bagan will meet the winner of the other semifinal between Mumbai City FC and FC Goa in the summit clash here on May 4.

Needing to win by a



The moment: Super sub Sahal scores the decisive goal. ISL MEDIA

two-goal margin, Bagan found the lead in the 22nd minute when Jason Cummings slotted home a rebound after Odisha goalkeeper Amrinder Singh had blocked Dimitri Petros' powerful shot.

Though Odisha, which won the opening fixture

before Bagan defender Hector Yuste cleared from the line.

Twist to the tale

As the match looked headed for extra-time with the teams tied 2-2 on aggregate, Manvir Singh made a searing run through the left and fired a cross that Amrinder failed to clear.

The ball rebounded off the Odisha goalkeeper, hit Sahal's head and moved towards the goal.

The Bagan midfielder, who replaced Anirudh Thapa in the 72nd minute, rushed and used his body to guide the ball into the target much to the delight of the faithful.

The result: Mohun Bagan Super Giant 2 (Cummings 22, Sahal 90+3) bt Odisha FC 0 (MSBG won 3-2 on aggregate).

Sport

India women claims 4x400m crown



Golden glow: The Indian team won the women's 4x400m relay.

Sports Bureau

India won the women's 4x400m gold on the concluding night of the 21st Asian under-20 athletics championships in Dubai on Saturday.

The team, comprising Anushka Kumbhar, Kanista Teena, Sai Sangeetha Doddla and Sandramol Sabu, clocked 3:41.50s.

The Indian 4x400m men's relay team of P. Abiram, Navpreet Singh, Nikhil Dhake, Aman Chaudhary clocked 3:09.36 for the silver while the 4x100m men's relay team won bronze in a new junior national record time of 40.01s.

India finished third in the table with 29 medals (seven gold, 11 silver, 11 bronze).

The Indian women's 4x100m relay team of P. Abiram, Navpreet Singh, Nikhil Dhake, Aman Chaudhary clocked 3:09.36 for the silver while the 4x100m men's relay team won bronze in a new junior national record time of 40.01s.

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City down Forest, keep pressure on Gunners

Agence France-Presse
NOTTINGHAM

Manchester City overcame Nottingham Forest 2-0 on Sunday to go within one point of Premier League leader Arsenal and keep the destiny of the title race in its own hands.

Mikel Arteta's team beat Tottenham 3-2, briefly moving four points clear of City. But the champion saw off a spirited Forest with goals from Josko Gvardiol and Erling Haaland.

The results: Premier League: Aston Villa 2 (Cucurella 4-0, Rogers 42) drew with Chelsea 0 (Madueke 62, Gallagher 81);

Everton 1 (Gueye 60) bt Brentford 0; Bournemouth 3 (Senesi 13, Unal 52, Kluivert 87) bt Brighton 0; Tottenham 2 (Romero 64, Son 87) bt Arsenal 3.



Haaland. REUTERS

(Højbjerg 15-0, Saka 27, Havertz 38); Nottingham Forest 0 lost to Manchester City 2 (Gvardiol 32, Haaland 71). **Serie A:** Inter Milan 2 (Calhanoglu 56, 60+pen) bt Verona 0; Atalanta 2 (Zaccagni 27) bt Napoli 2 (Olivera 64, Osimhen 84+pen) drew with Roma 2 (Dybala 59+pen, Abraham 88). **LaLiga:** Atletico Madrid 3 (De Paul 15, Correa 52, Simon 80-0g) bt Athletic Bilbao 1 (Williams 45).

M-CH-CH

BALL MAGNET

Mitchell equals record for most catches by non-keeper in a match



SPORTSPICS/IPL

Daryl Mitchell's five catches in the Chennai Super Kings-Sunrisers Hyderabad match on Sunday is the joint-highest for a non-wicketkeeper in the Indian Premier League. The New Zealander equalled the record set by Mohammad Nabi for SRH against Mumbai Indians in 2021.

150 AND COUNTING

Unconquered Dhoni reaches a new milestone in IPL victories



B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

M.S. Dhoni became the first player in IPL history to feature in 150 victories after CSK's win on Sunday. The Super Kings legend has remained unbeaten in all his seven visits to the crease in nine matches this season. He has scored 96 runs so far with nine fours and eight sixes at an incredible strike-rate of 259.45.

HITTING BACK

I know my game better: Kohli on criticism about his strike-rate



VIJAY SONEJI

Virat Kohli dismissed the constant talk over his strike-rate against spin in the middle overs. "There's a reason why you do it for 15 years. For me, it's just about doing my job. People can talk anything they want to, they can talk about me not being able to push on and not playing spin well. But you yourself know the game better," said Kohli.

PERFECT PARTNER

Spending time with Kohli in the middle a huge feeling: Jacks



VIJAY SONEJI

Will Jacks said batting with Virat Kohli gave him confidence. "Amazing feeling right now. I struggled early on, but Virat kept his intensity. To spend some time (with Kohli) in the middle is a huge feeling. It just gave me some confidence to hit my first six. I needed to be more adaptable at the beginning... got lucky today," he said.

Super Kings steamroller Sunrisers, move to third

After the classy Ruturaj, Mitchell and Dube power the Chennai outfit to 212, the home attack, led by Deshpande, skittles out Cummins' team for 134 for a fifth victory of the season

IPL-17

S. Dipak Ragav

CHENNAI

Ruturaj Gaikwad might have missed a well-deserved second consecutive ton, but the Chennai Super Kings skipper regaled the sell-out crowd with a scintillating 98 (54b, 10x4, 3x6) to set up a commanding 78-run win for his side over Sunrisers Hyderabad at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium here on Sunday.

The skipper was well supported by Daryl Mitchell (52, 32b, 7x4, 1x6), who finally found form as they combined to forge a 107-run stand for the second wicket. Later, Shivam Dube (39 n.o., 20b, 1x4, 4x6) gave the innings the final flourish as the Super Kings posted 212 for three.

Stuttering start

In reply, Sunrisers' chase stuttered from the beginning with Tushar Deshpande's triple strike in the PowerPlay. Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma picked two sixes off his first three balls off the pacer, but Deshpande came back strongly to remove Head and Anmolpreet Singh off successive deliveries. In the next over, he dismissed Abhishek, caught by Mitchell at deep-point, to rattle the visitors. Deshpande went on to return figures of four 27.

During the middle overs, Ravindra Jadeja dried up the runs with a miserly spell (one for 22). When Matheesha Pathirana pegged Aiden Markram's middle-stump back with a searing yorker in the 11th over, SRH slumped to 85 for five from which it could never recover and was bowled out for 134.



Oozing class: Ruturaj's brilliant 98 was the cornerstone of the CSK innings. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

SCOREBOARD**CHENNAI SUPER KINGS**

Ajinkya Rahane c Shahbaz b Bhuvneshwar 9 (12b, 1x4), Ruturaj Gaikwad c Nitish b Natarajan 98 (54b, 10x4, 3x6), Daryl Mitchell c Nitish b Unadkat 52 (32b, 7x4, 1x6), Shivam Dube (not out) 39 (20b, 1x4, 4x6), M.S. Dhoni (not out) 5 (2b, 1x4); Extras (b-1, lb-2, w-6); 9; Total (for three wkts. in 20 overs): 212.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-19 (Rahane, 2.5 overs), 2-126 (Mitchell, 13.3), 3-200 (Ruturaj, 19.2).

SUNRISERS BOWLING

Bhuvneshwar 4-0-38-1, Nitish 1-0-8-0, Shahbaz 3-0-33-0, Natarajan 4-0-43-1, Unadkat 4-0-38-1, Cummings 4-0-49-0.

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

Travis Head c Mitchell b Deshpande 13 (7b, 1x4, 1x6), Abhishek Sharma c Mitchell b Deshpande 15 (9b, 1x4, 1x6), Anmolpreet Singh (Impact Player in place of Natarajan) c Moeen b Deshpande 0 (1b), Aiden Markram b Pathirana 32 (26b, 4x4), Nitish Reddy c Dhoni b Jadeja 15 (15b), Heinrich Klaasen c Mitchell b Pathirana 20 (21b, 1x6), Abdul Samad c (sub) Rizvi b

SHARDUL 19 (18b, 1x4, 1x6), SHAHZAB AHMED c MITCHELL b MUSTAFIZUR 7 (5b, 1x4), PAT CUMMINS c MITCHELL b DESHPANDE 5 (7b, 1x4), BHUVNESHWAR KUMAR (NOT OUT) 4 (3b), JAYDEV UNADKAT c MOEEN b MUSTAFIZUR 1 (2b); EXTRAS (NB-1, W-2); 3; TOTAL (IN 18.5 OVERS): 134.**FALL OF WICKETS**

1-21 (Head, 1.5), 2-21 (Anmolpreet, 1.6), 3-40 (Abhishek, 3.5), 4-72 (Nitish, 8.5), 5-85 (Markram, 10.5), 6-117 (Klaasen, 15.5), 7-119 (Samad, 16.2), 8-124 (Cummins, 17.3), 9-132 (Shahbaz, 18.2).

SUPER KINGS BOWLING

Chahar 3-0-22-0, Deshpande 3-0-27-4, Mustafizur 2.5-0-19-2, Jadeja 4-0-22-1, Shardul (Impact Player in place of Dube) 4-0-27-1, Pathirana 2-0-17-2.

Toss: Sunrisers; PoM: Ruturaj. CSK won by 78 runs.**Next assignment**

CSK: May 1 vs PBKS Chennai, 7.30 p.m.

SRH: May 2 vs RR Hyderabad, 7.30 p.m.

SCORING

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

Ajinkya Rahane c Shahbaz b Bhuvneshwar 9 (12b, 1x4), Ruturaj Gaikwad c Nitish b Natarajan 98 (54b, 10x4, 3x6), Daryl Mitchell c Nitish b Unadkat 52 (32b, 7x4, 1x6), Shivam Dube (not out) 39 (20b, 1x4, 4x6), M.S. Dhoni (not out) 5 (2b, 1x4); Extras (b-1, lb-2, w-6); 9; Total (for three wkts. in 20 overs): 212.

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No total 'safe' as Knight Riders, Capitals lock horns

Y.B. Sarangi

KOLKATA

With 200-plus totals becoming the norm and power-hitters pushing boundaries, Kolkata Knight Riders and Delhi Capitals will look for another runfest during their IPL game at the Eden Gardens here on Monday.

Narine impressive KKR's bowling needs attention. Narine has been impressive but he requires support from other bowlers, such as Harshit Rana, Andre Russell and Varun Chakravarthy.

If Mitchell Starc, who has recovered well, returns, it will be beneficial.

Besides the destructive Jake Fraser-McGurk and

cess of its batters, will continue to depend on its opening pair of Phil Salt and Sunil Narine to seize the initiative.

Others, including captain Shreyas Iyer, Venkatesh Iyer, Andre Russell, Rinku Singh and Rama-deep Singh, will be keen to carry it forward.

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If Mitchell Starc, who has recovered well, returns, it will be beneficial.

Besides the destructive Jake Fraser-McGurk and

skipper Rishabh Pant, DC has other capable hands, including Shai Hope, Tristan Stubbs and Axar Patel, who can go on run hunting.

Pacers Mukesh Kumar and Rasikh Dar Salam and spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Axar can create problems for any opposition.

After consecutive wins

over Gujarat Titans and Mumbai Indians, DC, with 'Prince of Kolkata' Sourav Ganguly in its camp, will be upbeat about avenging its loss.

The bowlers, led by Renuka, delivered the goods to limit the hosts to 101 for eight. Skipper Nigar Sulta-

na (51) waged a lone battle for Bangladesh.

Earlier, Smriti Mandhana departed for just nine but Shafali Verma scored a

22-ball 31. Yastika (36, 29

IN BRIEF



Velavan wins Batch Open Challenger Tour squash

India's S. Velavan won the \$12,000 Batch Open Challenger Tour squash in Paris, beating France's Melvil Scianimanico 11-6, 11-9, 11-6 in the final.

Afridi bowls Pakistan to series-levelling win over NZ

Shaheen Shah Afridi (four for 30) led Pakistan to a series-levelling nine-run win over New Zealand in the fifth and final T20I in Lahore on Saturday.

The scores: Pakistan 178/5 in 20 overs (Babar Azam 69, Fakhar Zaman 43) bt New Zealand 169 in 19.2 overs (T. Seifert 52, Shaheen Shah Afridi 4/30).

Maheswari wins Olympic quota place in women's skeet

Maheshwari Chauhan won the Olympic quota with a silver in women's skeet in the Shotgun Olympic qualification championship in Doha on Sunday. It was the 21st Olympic quota for India.

FIDE invites bids for hosting World championship match

FIDE has opened the bidding procedure for the World Championship match between Ding and Gukesh, provisionally scheduled between Nov. 20 and Dec. 15. According to its website, the minimum total budget for the event is \$8.5 million which includes a minimum prize fund of \$2.5 million and a FIDE fee of \$1 million.

ENGAGEMENTS

Basketball: Rising Star BC State-level men's & women's tournament, Venkatanarayana ground, T. Nagar, 4.15 p.m.

Cricket: TNCA first division league, final, Alwarpet vs Jolly Rovers, day one, SSN College, 9.30 a.m.; GRCA u-16 tournament, Reddy's Sumangali 'B', Santhosapuram, 8 a.m. & 1 p.m.



Terrific trio: The troika of Tarundeep, Dhiraj, and Pravin celebrate their success. XG@INDIA_ARCHERY

Indian men win recurve gold

Tarundeep, Dhiraj, and Pravin stun Korea to take the honours in a WC stage after 14 years

ARCHERY WC

Sports Bureau

The Indian recurve men's team, comprising Tarundeep Rai, B. Dhiraj and Pravin Jadhav, upset top-ranked Korea for the first time ever to win the gold medal, while Deepika Kumari, returning to a global event after her motherhood in December 2022, took an individual silver in the Archery World Cup Stage-1 in Shanghai on Sunday.

Tarundeep, Dhiraj and Pravin defeated the Korea's World and Asian Games champion team consisting of Lee Wooseok and Olympic champions Kim Je Deok and Kim Woojin 5-1 (57-57, 57-55, 55-53) in the final to help India win the men's team event in a World Cup stage after 14 years.

The achievement will boost the trio's confidence ahead of the last Olympic qualifier in Antalya in June.

It will also enhance India's ranking points, placing it in a stronger position to qualify through the world rankings in case the team is not able to make it to Paris through the qualifier.

The Olympic-qualified Dhiraj, who combined with Ankita Bhakat to bag the mixed team bronze by beating Mexico (Matias Grande, Alejandra Valencia) 6-0 (35-31, 38-35, 39-37), said, "We will win more medals and get stronger for the Olympics."

Deepika, who got past Korean Jeon Hunyong 6-4 in quarterfinals, outclassed another Korean, debutant Nam Suhyeon, 6-0 (29-28, 29-27, 28-26) in the semifinals before falling to Lim Siheyon of the same country 6-0 (27-26, 29-27, 28-27) in the title clash.

Shooting without the assistance of a coach after India was penalised for a goof-up, Deepika shot a seven in the first set and an eight in the second to slip in the contest.

Rovers meet Alwarpet in I div. final from today

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

The three-day final of the TNCA first division league, for the Raja of Palayamatti Shield, will be played between Alwarpet CC and Jolly Rovers at SSN College from today.

In the semifinals, the former defeated UFCC (T. Nagar) while the latter got the better of Vijay CC.

Summer cricket camp at St. Bede's from May 1

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Chennai St. Bede's Sports Foundation (CSSF) will conduct a summer cricket camp at St. Bede's grounds from May 1 to 31 for boys in the age group of 6 to 19.

Registration forms are available at the St. Bede's grounds. For more details, contact 9840070486, 9841227966.

LIVE TELECAST

Thomas & Uber Cup: Sport 18-3 & JioCinema, 7 a.m.

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.

ISL: (semifinal, second-leg), Sports 18-1 & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.

Serie A: Sports 18-1 & JioCinema, 12.15 a.m. (Tuesday)

LaLiga: Sports 18-1 & JioCinema, 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday).

SNAPSHOTS

India in Uber Cup semifinals

CHENGDU (CHINA): Isharani Baruah and Anmol Kharb shone bright as the Indian women's team entered the quarterfinals of the Uber Cup badminton with a 4-1 win over Singapore in the second tie of Group A here on Sunday.

India is now second behind China in its group. The two teams will clash on Tuesday to decide the group topper.

The result: India bt Singapore 4-1

(Ashmita Chalih lost to Yeo Jia Min 15-21, 18-21; Priya Konjengbam & Shruti Mishra bt Xiao En Heng & Yu Jia Jin 21-15, 21-16; Isharani Baruah bt Insyirah Khan 21-13, 21-16; Simran Singh & Ritika Thaker bt Lai Yi Ting Elsa & Michelle Zan 21-8, 21-11; Anmol Kharb bt Lee Xin Yi Megan 21-15, 21-13).

Mwaniki and Kasait run to glory in TCS 10K

BENGALURU: Kenyan runners Peter Mwaniki (28:15) and Lilian Kasait (30:56) cruised to the international elite men's



Easily done: Isharani won in straight games against Insyirah. X@BAL_MEDIA

Das 34:13, 3. Preenu Yadav, 34:24.

Mumbai City ready for Goa challenge

MUMBAI: Mumbai City FC is set to host FC Goa in the second leg of the ISL 10 semifinal with a one-goal advantage here on Monday. The first leg ended with trailing behind despite being ahead by two goals for the majority of the game, after MCFC scored three goals in seven minutes including additional time.

and women's titles respectively in the 16th edition of the Tata Consultancy Services World 10K Bengaluru on Sunday.

The results (top three):

Elite men: 1. Peter Mwaniki (Ken) 28:15, 2. Hillary Chepkwony (Ken) 28:33, 3. Hagos Eyob (Eth) 28:39;

Best Indian elite men: 1. Kiran Matre 29:32, 2. Ranjeet Patel 29:35, 3. Dharmendra 29:45.

Elite women: 1. Lilian Kasait (Ken) 30:56; 2. Emmaculate Achol (Ken) 31:17; 3. Lemilem Hailu (Eth) 31:23. **Best Indian elite women:** 1. Sanjivani Jadhav 34:03; 2. Lilli

UDHAGAMANDALAM: J.E. McKown-trained Nezhia (Hindu Singh) up the first division of the Mishriff Handicap (1.400m), the feature event of the races held here on Sunday (April 28). The winner is owned by Mr. Marthand Singh Mahindra, Mr. Joydeep Datta Gupta, M/s. Deciding Factor & Mr. SP. Thirunavukkarasu & Mrs. Rina Mahindra.

3. NILGIRIS COLLECTOR'S CUP: SUMMER SONG (B. Dharshan) 1, Royal Chivalry (C. Brisson) 2, Aarini (Hindu Singh) 3 and Ewin (R.S. Jodha) 4. 5-3/4, 5-1/4 and 1/2, 1/2, sink and 3-1/4, Im, 26.72s. Owner: Mr. M.A.M. Ramswamy Chettiar of Chettinad Charitable Trust. Trainer: R. Foley.

4. MISHRIFF HANDICAP (DIV. II): NEZIAH (Hindu Singh) 1, Pink Jasmine (Ashish Asbar) 2, Royal Icos (M.S. Deora) and Priceless Ruler (Parid Ansari) 4. 3-1/4, nk and shd, Im, 26.98s. Owners: Mr. Marthand Singh Mahindra, Mr. Joydeep Datta Gupta, M/s. Deciding Factor & Mr. SP. Thirunavukkarasu & Mrs. Rina Mahindra. Trainer: J.E. McKown.

5. MISHRIFF HANDICAP (DIV. I): NEZIAH (Hindu Singh) 1, Pink Jasmine (Ashish Asbar) 2, Royal Icos (M.S. Deora) and Priceless Ruler (Parid Ansari) 4. 3-1/2, 3 and 1/2, 1/2, sink and 3-1/4, Im, 26.72s. Owner: Mr. M.A.M. Ramswamy Chettiar of Chettinad Charitable Trust. Trainer: R. Foley.

6. RAHY'S SERENADE HANDICAP (DIV. IV): DARK SON (C. Brisson) 1, Sensibility (M.S. Deora) 2, Choice (Hindu Singh) 3 and Key To The Mint (S. Imran) 4. 3, Hd and 7-1/4, Im, 15.18s. Owner: Mr. M.A.M. Ramswamy Chettiar of Chettinad Charitable Trust. Trainer: Sebastien.

7. RAHY'S SERENADE HANDICAP (DIV. II): BRILLIANT LADY (Hindu Singh) 1, Windsor Walk (Koshi Kumar) 2, Danny's Girl (L.A. Rozario) 3 and Rube (A.S. Peter) 4. 2-1/2, 3 and 1, Im, 15.34s. Owners: Mr. Teja Gollapudi, Mr. Hatim A Lakdawala, Mr. Aditya Prakash Apte, Mr. Aril Saraf, Mr. Deepesh Narredu. Trainer: D. Narredu.

Nezhia claims the feature event

Parmar.

5. MISHRIFF HANDICAP (DIV. II): SUPREME GRANDEUR (Farid Ansari) 1, Ruling Star (S.A. Amit) 2, Speculation (Hindu Singh) 3 and Rays Of Sun (Surya Prakash) 4. 1-1/2, sink and 3-1/4, Im, 26.72s. Owner: Mr. M.A.M. Ramswamy Chettiar of Chettinad Charitable Trust. Trainer: R. Foley.

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MARUTI SUZUKI

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CM YK

I firmly believe that you are served what you can handle: Valerie Adams

The legendary shot putter had words of advice for Neeraj Chopra – 'India was not known to produce champions in javelin, but he changed all that. He has grown the sport so very well in India. He has the potential to win another gold, as long as he sticks to his plan'



SUDHAKARA JAIN

INTERVIEW

Valerie Adams

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Valerie Adams took great offence to being asked if she squats around 120 kg. "The guys assume I squat 120 kg. That is less than what I bench. I bench 160, squat 240, clean 140. All in kg, not pounds!" Adams, the TCS World 10K Bengaluru 2024 event ambassador, said. Towering over the room at 6'4" and fit as a fiddle, it is tough to argue with Adams' claims of strength.

There is also no disputing the fact that at her peak, the New Zealand shot putter was an unstoppable force. A four-time World champion, four-time World Indoor champion, two-time Olympic winner and three-time Commonwealth Games champion, Valerie has done it all.

In a media interaction, the now retired 39-year-old spoke about her incredible career, the scourge of doping in track and field, and much more. Excerpts:

Q: Tell us about the start of your shot put journey.

A: The start of my journey was unique, but quite hard. I was 14 when I took up shot put, and at 15, I lost my mother. The inspiration came when I watched the opening ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympics next to the bed of my mother in the hospice. The next day, she passed away in my arms. At that moment, I told myself that I want to carry on in athletics and make my mother proud. In 2001, I won the World Youth Championships, and in 2002, I became the world junior champion. It was an incredible yet tough time.

You were bullied in school for being very tall...

It was a tough time. Having lost my mother so young, I had grown up very quickly. I was bullied because I was very tall. I wish I had accepted and embraced my size and my whole

being. It is beautiful to be tall – it has taken me high places. I have a daughter who is likely to be very tall, and I want her to be proud too.

Your daughter was diagnosed with autism.

My baby girl is on the autism spectrum. My son has Type 1 diabetes. I'm a single mom, which is not easy. I firmly believe that you are served what you can handle. I've been through so much in my life, but I must find a way. It gives me courage to know that my children have all the right support, and that they are doing well.

Your half-brother Steven Adams plays in the NBA. He is known to be the physically strongest player in the league...

Steven is 7 feet; he is a big, strong boy. There are video compilations of him pulling off screens in matches, where his opponents bump into him and collapse to the floor. It comes from the amount of work he has put into his fitness. Us Tongan people are strong. But as strong as he is, I can still beat him up. Let's get that straight! Steven is an NBA veteran now. He has done so much for the sport in New Zealand. There is increased participation in basketball back home because of him.

You won back-to-back gold medals at the Beijing and London Olympics. Do you have any advice for Neeraj Chopra, who will defend his gold medal at Paris?

There will be pressure on Chopra from the federation, the country and from himself. He should continue to stay in his lane and shut out as much outside noise as possible. India was not known to produce champions in javelin, but Chopra changed all that. He has grown the sport so very well in India. He has the potential to win another gold, as long as he sticks to his plan. My own dream was to win a third straight gold at Rio, but I finished second. I was very happy with silver, because I had major surgeries in the lead up to Rio. Nobody saw it that way; all they saw was that I did not win gold. That is okay. All I could do was to give it my all.

The World Athletics governing body now offers prize money to Olympic gold medallists. Is this a good move?

It is great. This is progress. Track and field athletes do not make a lot of money, unlike cricketers or rugby players. Our sport is taking the lead, and I hope that others will follow.

But no other sports federation pays prize money at the Olympics...

Well, then other federations need to work harder to find ways to offer prize money. You cannot punish one sport because other sports cannot make it work. Hopefully this announcement will act as a driving force for other federations to look for sponsors.

Is enough being done to combat doping in track and field?

I myself have been impacted by a drug cheat. At London 2012, I won silver,

but it was found later that the gold medallist (Nadzeya Astapchuk) failed a drug test. So I won gold, but she took that winning moment away from me. We are definitely headed in the right direction in terms of combating doping. The testing requirements have been tightened. Doping is a rat race – the testers are forever chasing dopers. Dopers will always try to find the next best thing.

Should punishments be stricter for dope cheats?

I believe that if you are caught once, you should be kicked out forever. Once a cheater, always a cheater. Just get out of the sport. Nadzeya, for example, was banned only after three strikes.

Apart from Tokyo, where you won a bronze despite a life-threatening medical scare, what do you consider your best achievement?

I would rate the gold at 2008 Beijing



My baby girl is on the autism spectrum. My son has Type 1 diabetes. I'm a single mom, which is not easy. It gives me courage to know that my children have all the right support, and that they are doing well.

highly, only because everything worked perfectly. I was ranked third in the world at the time, and my win was a fairytale.

In my first Olympics, Athens 2004, I had an appendicitis surgery just before the Games. I still turned up and finished ninth.

Over the years, many who placed higher than me have been caught for doping, so now I'm in the fifth spot.

Who knows, there is time still for me to get an Athens medal!



SCIENCE

Anticyclones, hanging even now over India, link warming to heat

The record warming of 2023 has so far not been fully explained since it was much warmer than expected just from the superposition of El Niño on global warming. But the impact of the El Niño during its pre-monsoon demise on the IEJ tends to produce a stronger and more persistent anticyclone and thus longer lasting and intense heat waves

Raghuram Murtugudde

The complexities of the ways in which global warming manifests in local weather continue to underscore the need to model globally but predict locally. The waning phase of the strong El Niño of 2023 brings the expected warm temperatures across the globe – while cooler temperatures spread from Pakistan across India to West Bengal during March. This band remained cool throughout 2023 even as record temperatures made relentless headlines.

What do the heat waves have to do with global warming?

Global warming also creates unique features locally that modulate heat waves on top of cool background temperatures. Heat waves over India have been of special concern this season because of the general elections. Some persistent circulation patterns have been creating heat waves and this pattern should serve as another focal point for improving predictions.

It was apparent in March that the anticyclonic circulations over the North Indian Ocean were the drivers of unusual rainfall over Odisha. An anticyclone has winds moving in a clockwise direction, with air sinking down in the middle of it. As this air hits the ground, it is compressed and warmed and can create a high pressure heat dome. An anticyclonic circulation could also explain the historic Dubai floods of April 17.

And these anticyclones exist over the North Indian Ocean and the Indian subcontinent even now.

What links anticyclones to heat?

The persistence of the anticyclones is not unusual in and of itself. During the pre-monsoon season, the upper-level Indian Easterly Jet (IEJ) begins to take shape in the upper atmosphere, at around the 10 degrees N latitude, across the Arabian Sea, peninsular India, and the Bay of Bengal. A strong westerly jet exists to the north around 30 degrees N, and the two together can generate an anticyclonic pattern over the Indian Ocean and the Indian subcontinent.

An easterly jet refers to strong winds coming from the east while westerly jets come from the west. These are natural seasonal features. The westerly jet is pushed north during the monsoon season and the IEJ dominates the Indian subcontinent. During the pre-monsoon season, a strong anticyclone can bring dry and hot weather over many parts of India while a weak anticyclone produces milder weather.

The key question then is whether the anticyclone is strong this year and if that



A man covers his head with cloth to protect himself during a heat wave in Bhubaneswar. BISWARANJAN ROUT

is related to global warming and, thus, the heat waves.

How are heat waves amplified?

The pre-monsoon season is India's summer and heat waves are to be expected. The focus is always on predicting them accurately and providing early warnings to save lives. The background drivers of the duration, intensity, and frequency of heat waves are helpful to identify the hotspots of heat waves at the timescales relevant to the evolution of the weather and the climate.

The record warming of 2023 has so far not been fully explained since it was much warmer than what we expected just from the superposition of El Niño on global warming. But the impact of the El Niño during its pre-monsoon demise on the IEJ tends to produce a stronger and more persistent anticyclone and thus longer lasting and more intense heat waves.

So, the heat wave season this year is consistent with the warmer temperatures due to the El Niño itself as well as the 'steroids' being added by the unexplained warming of 2023.

This background state of cool seasonal temperatures but a strong and persistent anticyclone is important. It can help the India Meteorological Department ensure predictions are done with accurate background conditions and build the early warnings accordingly.

Stages of early warnings

Returning to the local manifestation of



Some persistent circulation patterns have been creating heat waves and this pattern should serve as another focal point for improving predictions.

global warming: accurate early-warning systems take a three-step approach called the 'ready-set-go' system, under the so-called 'Subseasonal-to-Seasonal Predictions' project of the World Climate Research Program under the World Meteorological Organisation. India is part of this project, has invested heavily in S2S predictions, and has made impressive progress in improving the accuracy of predictions.

Preparing the system and guiding the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) requires this three-step approach to function efficiently and effectively. Considering there are more than 1.2 million polling stations for the general elections this year, the optimal use of resources to prepare for, mitigate, and recover from extreme events requires location-specific information at each step.

The 'ready' step provides a seasonal outlook – where the background state, or the external factors (such as global warming and the El Niño), are used to maximise the accuracy of longer-lead forecasts. The 'ready' step allows the NDMA, its local agencies, and all local governments to ready their disaster

response systems.

The subseasonal predictions refer to the extended range of weeks two to four, which contribute to the 'set' step. Resource allocations and identifying potential hotspots to move resources including personnel ensure disaster-preparedness is set to go.

The 'go' step is based on short- (days 1-3) and medium- (days 3-10) range forecasts. At this step, everything hits the road to manage a disaster, including rescue efforts, hydration centres, heat shelters, etc.

Preparedness and recovery

All evidence suggests India's prediction system and early warning systems continue to improve and the NDMA has worked these details well into its 'ready-set-go' system.

The remaining challenges are to build resilience for the future by better predicting the trajectory of the weather at *every location* over India. This is a significant challenge but budding efforts for predictions at 10-year timescales have shown promise.

The coordination from national to neighbourhood levels and early-warnings from days to a decade are taking shape. Governments, their departments, and the people at large need to be trained and engaged with to make this a sustained success. India's dream of sustained economic development depends on this.

(Raghuram Murtugudde is a visiting professor at IIT Bombay and an emeritus professor at the University of Maryland.)

BIG SHOT



The old sunken town of Pantabangan in Nueva Ecija province, Philippines. Due to a severe drought in the Philippines, a settlement submerged since the 1970s has reemerged. This is the sixth appearance of the 300-year-old ruins, including parts of a church and tombstones, since the construction of a dam. The reservoir's water level has dropped nearly 50 meters below normal as the country faces extreme heat exacerbated by El Niño conditions, leading to official drought declarations in about half of the country's provinces.

WHAT IS IT?

Combustion: a question of fuel

Vasudevan Mukund

Internal combustion engines are everywhere, yet they are not a common sight. They power most cars and motorcycles by combusting a fossil fuel like petroleum (although these vehicles are slowly being replaced by electric vehicles).

Combustion is a type of chemical reaction called a redox reaction, short for 'reduction-oxidation'.

Here, one substance loses electrons and the other gains them. The losing substance is called the oxidant. (Historically, the oxidant was a substance that provided oxygen atoms in a reaction. Over time chemists generalised the term to include all substances that participated in a chemical reaction the way oxygen did, by donating electrons.) The gaining substance is called the reductant. During combustion, the fuel is the reductant.

All combustion reactions release energy. Sometimes, the heat energy in this release will vaporise the fuel, producing a flame. The combustion reaction also releases a gaseous mix of highly oxidised matter called smoke. Combustion science is the branch of science devoted to studying combustion.

The combustion of fossil fuels in internal combustion engines and industrial processes is an



Combustion is a type of chemical reaction called a redox reaction. CULLAN SMITH/UNSPASH

important cause of global warming. Combustion scientists study the reaction in different ways – including in space – to understand the different ways it can be controlled and the reaction products made cleaner.

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Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Share of women candidates in the first two phases of LS polls

8 in percentage Only 235 candidates of the total 2,823 candidates in the first two phases of the Lok Sabha (LS) elections were women, with political activists saying it reflects a deeper issue of gender bias and that talk of women's empowerment rings hollow. PTI

The rise in market valuation of the six most valued firms

1.3 in ₹ lakh crore. The combined market valuation of six of the top-10 most valued firms increased over ₹1 lakh crore last week, with SBI and ICICI Bank emerging as the biggest gainers in line with an overall positive trend in equities. PTI

Amount FPIs pulled out from Indian equities in April

6,304 in ₹ crore. Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) pulled out domestic equities in April on concerns over tweaks in India's tax treaty with Mauritius and sustained rise in U.S. bond yields. PTI

The surge in number of phone users while driving in Delhi

149 in percentage. There has been a major surge of over 100% in prosecutions related to mobile phone usage while driving in Delhi since January 1, as compared to the year-ago period, traffic police data revealed. PTI

Infrastructure projects hit by cost overruns from Oct. to Dec.

448 Infrastructure projects, each entailing an investment of ₹150 crore or above, were hit by cost overrun of more than ₹5.5 lakh crore during the October-December quarter of 2023. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The significance of carrier aviation

Why is the success of the INS Vikrant important? Who were involved in the development of DMR-249 steel? Is India on its way to get a 'third' aircraft carrier? Why is it important that the country should have a strong naval presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)?

EXPLAINER

Dinakar Peri

The story so far:

In March 5, both aircraft carriers of the Indian Navy, INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant, showcased "twin carrier operations" with MiG-29K fighter jets taking off simultaneously from both and landing cross deck as Defence Minister Rajnath Singh looked on from onboard one of them. This demonstrated an ability that only a handful of nations can boast of. Further one of the carriers, INS Vikrant is indigenously designed and constructed. Commissioned in September 2022, INS Vikrant has been fully operationalised and integrated into the operational cycle in record time. As the two carriers sailed, they were joined by a flotilla of frontline warships of the Indian Navy, a combined tonnage of around 1,40,000 as well as aircraft.

What does INS Vikrant signify?

A carrier is a floating city. The design work on the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC-I), later christened Vikrant, began in 1999; however 2005-2006 were probably the most crucial years for the carrier and for India's war shipbuilding. The crucial decision was on the warship grade steel, which till then was procured from Russia. After much brainstorming, it was decided that it would be developed and produced in India, a collaborative effort between the Steel Authority of India, the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy. The decision on the development of DMR-249 steel was a commercial decision, Madhu S. Nair, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) said speaking to *The Hindu* shortly after the commissioning of Vikrant. DMR-249 steel is now being used for the construction of all warships in the country.

The construction also ushered in several new processes and spin-offs benefiting the shipbuilding industry at large. For instance, in 2002, 3-D modelling was introduced for the first time in India and a joint team of 200 personnel from the Navy's Warship Design Bureau and CSL began work. The keel of Vikrant was finally laid in 2009, launched into water in 2013 and went through extensive user acceptance trials between August 2021 and July 2022 before its eventual commissioning.

What is the composition of INS Vikrant?

Delays notwithstanding, Vikrant is an engineering marvel. It has a total area in excess of 12,450 m² which equals to about two and a half hockey fields. The 262m long and 62m wide ship is powered by four General Electric LM2500 engines generating 88 MW of power giving it a maximum speed of 28 Knots and an endurance of 7,500 nautical miles. Built at an overall cost of around ₹20,000 crore and 76% indigenous content, the ship has around 2,200 compartments, for a crew of around 1,600 that include specialised cabins to accommodate women officers and sailors. Vikrant houses two galleys which cater to all onboard, preparing upto 4,500-5,000 meals every day. The galleys start operation at 3 am every morning and continue for almost 20 hours a day, an official said. "It is equipped with state of the art automatic chapati making machines, capable of making 6,000 chapatis per meal, large cooking boilers capable of preparing 4,00 kgs of rice, dal, vegetables and other dishes." Additionally, in order to cater for



Ready for action: Aircraft carriers INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant in formation.

a variety of items on the menu, it is also fitted with combi-steamer, a dosa machine and ovens for preparing, idlis, dosa, breads and other bakery items.

Noting that among manufacturing activities, shipbuilding has one of the highest employment multipliers of 6.48, the Economic Survey 2022-23 said that Vikrant alone engaged approximately 500 MSMEs, 12,000 employees from ancillary industries, and 2,000 CSL employees.

What are its capabilities?

Vikrant can operate an air wing of 30 aircraft comprising MiG-29K fighter jets, Kamov-31, MH-60R multi-role helicopters, in addition to indigenous Advanced Light Helicopters and Light Combat Aircraft (Navy). It uses the STOBAR (Short Take-Off but Arrested Recovery) method to launch and recover aircraft for which it is equipped with a ski-jump to launch aircraft, and three 'arrestor wires' for their recovery. About 200 men start the day by preparing the flight deck for flying operations. "First we clean the entire flight deck of any debris or left overs. Simultaneously, the pilots are briefed for the missions in the briefing room," one official onboard explained. "After all the aircraft are started up, the entire deck vibrates and generates noise in excess of 200 decibels."

The flight deck has an independent lighting system to assist for bad weather and night operations. Once the aircraft finishes the mission, they are safely vectored back to the ship and guided for a precision landing, the official stated. "The fighters which have a hook under the belly pick up one of the three arresting gear wires on flight deck. The aircraft with a speed of more than 250 kmph is stopped within a distance of just 90m in just 2-3 seconds." Vikrant has larger deck space and visibly larger hallways compared to previous carriers including Vikramaditya, which is of similar size. India is currently negotiating with France for the purchase of 26 Rafale-M carrier jets as the MiG-29Ks are in short supply while an indigenous twin engine deck-based fighter is currently under

development. Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar had expressed confidence that they will receive it by 2034 or so.

While the present Vikrant was the first carrier built in the country, India has had a long history of operating carriers. The erstwhile 19,500 tonne Vikrant was India's first carrier purchased from the U.K., which arrived in 1961 and played a vital role in the 1971 war. Then came the 28,700 tonne INS Viraat commissioned in 1987, formerly HMS Hermes, also from the U.K. INS Vikramaditya procured from Russia and commissioned in 2013 is India's third carrier.

After Vikrant, what next?

An aircraft carrier is fundamental to command, control and coordination of operations from the sea and to project combat power ashore, over the seas or in the air, Adm Kumar told *The Hindu*, noting that the fragile maritime security situation across the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and India's stature as the largest resident naval power necessitate a strong and robust Navy. "Aircraft carriers play a pivotal role in this and concurrent availability of two Carrier Battle Groups facilitate credible presence and preparedness on both Western and Eastern seabords." The Navy has already moved a case for a second Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC-II), a repeat of a Vikrant-like carrier. The proposal was cleared by the Defence Procurement Board last September and has since been forwarded for approval by the Defence Acquisition Council, expected to be taken up once it meets after the elections.

The IAC-II displacing 45,000 tonnes will see some modifications and newer technologies incorporated in the original design of the Vikrant and will also be manufactured by CSL. It will take around eight to 10 years to build a new carrier. Mr. Nair said recently, as long as the basic design, engines and propulsion are kept intact. The Navy has shelved its earlier plans for a 65,000 tonne carrier given the whole new technology cycle involved and the resultant cost and timelines. The proposed IAC-II has often been

referred to as India's third aircraft carrier. However, that is not entirely right. Design, construction and operationalisation of a carrier takes a long time and the IAC-II, if it comes in time, will be a timely replacement for INS Vikramaditya. Adm Kumar acknowledged this last year. "We are of the view that we will go for a repeat order with improved capabilities and in the meantime we will study whether we need to go for a larger carrier. Till a third aircraft carrier gets ready and is commissioned, the life of INS

Vikramaditya may also come to the end of its lifetime. Then we would need to build another carrier," he said on the sidelines of Aero India 2023. Therefore effectively, for the foreseeable future, the Indian Navy will have only two aircraft carriers in operation while it has long envisioned a force structure around three carriers, two at sea while one is in maintenance. Any delay in decision making could risk India losing its expertise of building and operating carriers, reminiscent of the submarine debacle of the 1980s.

While debate around carriers versus submarines continue, there is a renewed global interest with several countries now going for carriers of varying sizes. The U.S. is fielding new super carriers, and the U.K. has induced new carriers while France and Russia have announced plans to build new ones. Japan has begun converting its helicopter carriers to operate F-35 fighter jets. Last month, China announced that it is building its fourth aircraft carrier, likely a nuclear-powered super carrier. From commissioning its first carrier, Liaoning, in 2012, launching second carrier Shandong in 2017, third carrier Fujian in 2022 and the fourth to be unveiled soon, China's pace is absolutely unprecedented.

It is not an either/or between carriers and submarines. Each has its merits in naval warfare with profound ability to influence wars. The current global trajectory shows that, the growing carrier targeting missiles and drones notwithstanding, the days of carrier aviation seem to be bright for the foreseeable future.

THE GIST

The design work on the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC)-I, later christened Vikrant, began in 1999. One of the crucial decisions with respect to Vikrant was on the warship grade steel, which till then was procured from Russia. After much brainstorming, it was decided that it would be developed and produced in India.

Vikrant can operate an air wing of 30 aircraft comprising MiG-29K fighter jets, Kamov-31, MH-60R multi-role helicopters, in addition to indigenous Advanced Light Helicopters and Light Combat Aircraft (Navy).

The Navy has already moved a case for a second Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC-II), a repeat of a Vikrant-like carrier.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

How the Hindutva project handles caste dynamics

The key question during the 2014 general elections was whether Hindutva will triumph over caste. There are at least three factors, as relevant as ever, clearly nudging politics towards Hindu consolidation

Varghese K. George

With election campaigning in full throttle, the Bharatiya Janata Party has defaulted to using Islamophobic rhetoric for a supposedly united 'Hindu' identity to appeal for votes. In this article, dated March 26, 2014, Varghese K. George analyses how the Sangh has been trying to mould a singular Hindu identity against a constantly otherised Muslim identity.

If the numerous public appearances by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi over the last year or so, two have been strikingly inconceivable. Both happened in Kerala, often projected as a politically progressive State. In February 2014, Mr. Modi addressed a meeting of Pulayas, a Dalit community that has been for years a bedrock of support for the Communist parties. In April 2013, Mr. Modi was chief guest at the Sivagiri Mutt, founded by Kerala's legendary social reformer, Sree Narayana Guru who led the backward Ezhava community to social awakening. The Ezhavas too have been largely supporters of the Left. At both the platforms – events separated by more than a year – Mr. Modi made a similar pitch. "Social untouchability may have ended, but political untouchability continues," he said, referring to the continuing isolation that he faces from various quarters.

"The next decade will belong to the Dalits and the backward classes," he said, emphasising his own lower caste origins, at a rally in Muzaffarpur in Bihar on March 3. That event too was significant as he was sharing the stage with Lok Jansakti Party chief Ram Vilas Paswan, who returned to the saffron fold 12 years after he quit it over the Gujarat riots. And there is more to it. Dalit leader Udit Raj, who has been fashioning himself as the new age Ambedkar, joined the BJP. So did Mr. Ramkripal Yadav, who has for years been a shadow of Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Lalu Prasad Yadav, a champion of backward class politics in Bihar.

The BJP's efforts to overcome caste barriers in its project to create an overarching Hindu identity are showing signs of success, though it is still far from being a pan-Indian phenomenon. "Mr. Modi has broken the stranglehold of caste. The affinity of these Dalits and backward leaders for the BJP is a clear indication of his acceptance among them," says Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan, BJP general secretary.

The issue of caste identity

Among the several factors that slowed down Hindutva politics in India, caste identity has been prominent. Politically empowered sections of the backward classes and Dalits viewed the Sangh project of a unified Hindu society with suspicion, as its insistence on traditions implied sustenance of the hierarchical social structure that disadvantaged them. One of the most pronounced examples of this was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who concluded that Dalit emancipation would not be possible while they remained within the Hindu social order. In turn, Baba Saheb – portrayed with considerable fulmination in Arun Shourie's book, *Worshipping False Gods* –



bulwark against Hindutva in U.P. and Bihar for the last two decades is showing signs of unravelling.

The Dalit participation in the Muzaffarnagar riots in U.P., and the numerous Yadav versus Muslim skirmishes in Bihar over the last two years have strained the solidarity among the poor and the disadvantaged. Lower caste movements that challenged caste structures have also had a streak of Sanskritising aspirations that seek a better place within the Hindu hierarchy. When the image of the "other" is clearer, this streak becomes prominent.

Willingness to concede leadership

The lower caste sympathy towards the Hindutva project has been matched by a willingness among the upper castes to be content under the leadership of the lower. The turning point was the 2005 Assembly election in Bihar, when the BJP-JD(U) alliance sought a mandate, with Mr. Nitish Kumar being declared as the chief ministerial candidate. Only six months prior to that, when the alliance vacillated over projecting him – because the upper caste segments were not comfortable with the idea of a backward caste CM – it could not win and there was no clear majority for any formation. In 2007, the upper castes voted for Dalit leader Ms. Mayawati in U.P. who won a clear majority, the first for any since the Ayodhya movement. In 2010, the rainbow caste coalition voted for Mr. Nitish Kumar again; in 2012, another variant of the coalition voted for backward caste leader Mr. Akhilesh Yadav in U.P.

This change in the upper caste attitude can dramatically turn round the fortunes of the BJP. The BJP has been responsive to the leadership ambitions of the backward classes and Dalits, but the upper caste support to leaders such as Mr. Kalyan Singh and Ms. Uma Bharti has been tentative. "We have the so-called backward classes and lower castes standing up and wanting to be counted as Hindus. Sangh has empowered them. Even the communist movements could not accommodate these sections of the society in their leadership," says Mr. Ram Madhav, senior RSS leader. "In 1998, the BJP had 58 MPs who were SCs and STs, possibly the highest for any party ever as a proportion of its strength," he says. With Mr. Modi at the helm and the change in upper caste attitudes, the Sangh's efforts have got a major fillip.

Media-propelled popularity

A third factor that has developed over the last decade is the dramatic popularity achieved by several lower caste gurus, aided by the visual media. To cite two examples, both Swami Ramdev, who was born a Yadav in Haryana and Mata Amritanandamayi, born in a fisherman's community in Kerala, have attained such a huge following that their caste origins have been eclipsed. TV evangelism, as opposed to scriptural Hinduism controlled by priests, has enrolled a large section of poorer and lower caste people into thinking as Hindus. This may be a rerun of how TV serial "Ramayan" contributed to the Ayodhya movement; and lower caste Hindu gurus are not unprecedented. What makes it all extremely potent is the context of a certain level of economic prosperity among the lower castes, media penetration and the Sangh propaganda.

The terms of engagement between the state and the poor, between the upper and the lower castes, and between Hindus and Muslims could change further in the emerging scenario. "Lalu and Mulayam had managed to command backward castes support with the promise of share in power. Mr. Modi's politics for backwards and Dalits is not based on doles and welfare schemes, but overall development," says Mr. Pradhan.

has been a villain in the Sangh discourse. But in 2013, an article in the *Organiser*, the mouthpiece of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), portrayed the Dalit icon as someone who contributed to Hindu unity.

The Hindutva project tried a combination of aggressive integration, sometimes accommodating Sanskritising demands from below and constantly working on the fear of an "Other." But until they hit upon the idea of replacing a mosque in Ayodhya with a temple, all of this could not gather enough strength for the BJP to win a majority in any region of India. But coinciding with the Ayodhya movement was also a great upsurge of backward classes, triggered by the implementation of the Mandal Commission report. Subsequently, caste and religion alternated as the prime moving force of politics, depending on the particularities of the time and place, in parts of northern and western India. The BJP gained power in several States. But except in Gujarat, the debate has not been settled conclusively in favour of Hindutva.

The question, therefore, in this election is whether Hindutva will triumph over caste. There are at least three factors clearly nudging politics towards Hindu consolidation.

Debate on Muslim reservation

Hindutva politics in Gujarat rode on violent anti-reservation agitations spearheaded by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) in the 1980s. Though the agitation was against the reservation for backward classes, the targets were Dalits. Almost immediately after the agitation, Hindutva politics struck roots, co-opting vast sections of the lower castes into its fold, even as a rising portrayal of Muslims as the "other" unified them. But the trajectory in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar that together elect 120 members of Parliament has been different, as strong backward politics suspected the RSS on the question of reservation and found Muslims as allies. Ironic as it is, quota politics is dividing them now. The lower castes see the demand for Muslim quotas as detrimental to their interests. The case for affirmative action for Muslims is strong, no doubt, but the politics over it has played out much to the advantage of the Hindutva project. A social coalition that has been a

PTI

THE DAILY QUIZ

From April 28, the biennial international badminton championships for the prestigious Thomas & Uber Cup starts at Chengdu. Here is a quiz on these two events

Soorya Prakash. N

QUESTION 1 Which country has won the Thomas Cup the most times?

QUESTION 2 Which is the only country to have participated in the final stages of the Thomas cup in all 32 times? It also happens to be the only European/non-Asian country to have won the Thomas Cup?

QUESTION 3 India, the defending

QUESTION 4 Champion of the Thomas Cup, has hosted the Cup only once. When and where?

QUESTION 5 Which country has won the Uber Cup the most times?

QUESTION 6 Which is the only non-Asian country to have won the Uber Cup so far?

QUESTION 7 How many times has India qualified for the semi-finals in the Uber Cup?



Visual question: Identify this player who won all his six matches in the 2022 Thomas & Uber Cup. AFP

Questions and Answers to the April 26 edition of the daily quiz

1. Some students got together in the University of Munich to form this organisation to actively resist Hitler's government. **Ans:** **The White Rose**

2. In 1962, at Rangoon University, the military regime killed more than 100 students for protesting against this issue. **Ans:** **The new military regime of General Ne Win, Burma (now Myanmar)**

3. The rhyming chant used by the students at the Athens Polytechnic in 1973 against the Greek military junta. **Ans:** **Bread-Education-Liberty!**

4. In 1998, in this incident, Indonesian soldiers opened fire on student protesters killing four, which led to this Indonesian president's resignation. **Ans:** **Trisakti shooting; President Suharto**

5. In 2015, this movement started in South African universities against the increase in student fees. **Ans:** **#FeesMustFall**

6. In 2014, students of Jadavpur University, Kolkata started this movement against sexual violence on campus. **Ans:** **The Kokrob Movement**

Visual: This was a rally of this movement. **Ans:** **Anti-Hindi agitation**

Early Birds: K.N. Viswanathan| Rajmohan. V

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

She looked as neat as a pin yesterday

They were rambling about in the city when I met them. They looked exhausted but happy

S. Upendran

"Did you and Sridhar go for breakfast?"

"We couldn't. He had some work. So, we went out for dinner, instead. Saw his new apartment. It's amazing!"

"And being a fussy individual, he makes sure the place stays neat as a pin."

"Neat as a pin? Does it mean that everything is in order?"

"That's right! It's an expression frequently used in American English to mean clean and tidy. Here's an example. Look at the mess you've made in the kitchen. I'll give you an hour to make sure that it's neat as a pin again."

"Sridhar is very well organised. Even his bookshelves were neat as a pin."

"That sounds like Sridhar, all right! It's also possible to say 'as neat as a new pin'. Another expression that is sometimes used is 'clean as a new pin'. Rahul spent a couple of hours cleaning his old car. When he'd finished, it was as clean or neat as a new pin."

"The two girls took time getting dressed for the event. When they emerged from their room, they were both clean as a new pin. Do you know what the origin of the expression is?"

"There's a question mark about that! Nobody is really sure about the origin. Some people believe that the pin in the expression refers to a safety pin."

"That makes sense! A new safety pin looks really nice! It's shiny and"

"True, but many others believe that the pin refers to the fancy ornamental hairpin that women used to wear to keep their hair in place."

"I see. Are you planning to take a break and go somewhere during the summer?"

"I most certainly do! Plan to take a week off during May and spend some time in my village."

"Your village? What will you do there? Won't you get bored?"

"Of course, not! I always find it relaxing. Sleep a lot, eat great food, ramble in the fields, play..."

"Ramble in the fields? Doesn't ramble mean to talk in a confused way? You keep jumping from one topic to another and the listener has no clue as to what it is you're trying to say."

"Yes, you're right! That is one of the meanings of the word ramble. You can ramble in your speech. The Vice Chancellor rambled for half an hour and put everyone to sleep."

"I enjoy talking to Sujatha because unlike her brother, she doesn't ramble."

"You're right! The word 'ramble', however, can be used to refer to one's style of walking as well. When you ramble in the countryside, you walk for pleasure. You walk around aimlessly for a long time without having a destination in mind."

"In other words, you're walking for pleasure. You're enjoying the outdoors."

"I guess you could say that. Here's an example. We spent a couple of hours rambling through the woods."

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Fulmination:

thunderous verbal attack; the act of exploding with noise and violence

Synonym:

diatribe

Usage:

His fulminations frightened the children.

Pronunciation:

bit.ly/fulminationpro

International Phonetic Alphabet:

/fʌl'mɪneɪʃən/, /fʊl'mɪneɪʃən/

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