

TMC may approach President to tell Sandeshkhali truth: Panja

The minister said that normally criminals go to jail but here, criminals go to BJP's washing machine

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 11 MAY

The Trinamul Congress held a press conference today highlighting how the BJP, which talks of taking action against criminals, instead harbours them. They also said that the women of Sandeshkhali are now finding courage to come out with their allegations against the BJP.

Senior leader and minister Shashi Panja said, "We knew criminals go to jail but here, criminals go to BJP's washing machine. We are surprised at the way BJP misguided the President, Droupadi Murmu. The BJP team went and lied to the President. Every day, women are showing courage and coming forward to take back their false allegations that they were made to sign under coercion. We expected the Union home minister to reprimand the state BJP leadership and question them on what they did in Sandeshkhali. He didn't



even apologise to the people."

She added, "Sandeshkhali women are still awaiting justice. They lost their respect and dignity. Their dignity was given a price. Now, the women are saying that they want to go to the President of India.

We are thinking of asking the chairperson Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek if we can approach the President of India to tell her the truth. She needs to be informed about the falsehood spread by BJP on Sandeshkhali."

TMC spokesperson Arup Chakraborty said Amit Shah spoke on Sandeshkhali yesterday but when journalists asked her about the viral videos, he didn't comment. "Gangadhar Kayal has demanded a CBI probe but on

the day the videos came to light, he accepted on record that the voice shown belongs to him, the room shown is his and the video was shot in his room but it is a conspiracy because the video was shot without taking his permission. Kayal's wife in another media network accepted that the video was shot in their room. Today, why are you asking for a CBI probe? It is because the CBI defends criminals.

Mr Chakraborty added that Bengal's mothers will teach them a lesson and Trinamul Congress will get a lead of 50,000 from Sandeshkhali and win from Basirhat by a margin of 2-2.5 lakh votes.

On arms being seized in Jeliakhali today, the TMC leader said, "They will try to divert the narrative. That robot should be sent into action again. The robot should be sent to Raj Bhavan. The woman is crying for justice. Raj Bhavan had to release the CCTV footage to the police."

Poll panel to adopt 'early action formula' in Bengal to ensure fair LS polls in next four phases

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 11 MAY

The Election Commission of India (ECI) will adopt an 'early action formula' in the forthcoming four phases of the Lok Sabha polls in West Bengal to ensure peaceful and fair elections.

Explaining this 'early action formula', a source in the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)'s office said on Saturday that this strategy will be multi-pronged.

First, the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) will not allow unnecessary assembly of supporters of political parties within a specific area in the radius of the polling stations, from the very first hour of the commencement of polling.

"This exercise will be a kind of caution for potential troublemakers that stricter punitive measures will follow in the case of habitual offenders," the source said.

Second, there will be constant monitoring of identified "influential" local politicians so that they are unable to assemble for extended periods with their associates near polling stations, as it might



result in alterations and tension in the area.

This will be implemented from the very first hour once polling begins.

Third, habitual offenders who do not take the first warning seriously will be detained for the day and will be released just an hour before the closing time of polling so that they are able to cast their votes.

As per legal provisions such preventive detentions up to 24 hours are allowed.

Insiders in the CEO's office said that these three layers of the 'early action formula' were in place to a limited extent in the third phase of the elections on 7 May, considering that two traditionally-troubled constituencies of Jangipur and Murshidabad went for polls on that day.

"From the fourth phase the same formula will be implemented more elaborately and strictly," the sources said.

Two days before polls, wife of Trinamul candidate joins BJP in Bengal

KOLKATA, 11 MAY

Two days before the May 13 Lok Sabha elections at Ranaghat in West Bengal's Nadia district, Swastika Maheshwari, the wife of Trinamul Congress candidate Mukut Mani Adhikari, joined the BJP on Saturday.

Maheshwari, who is already contesting a divorce suit against her husband, joined the BJP at a party rally at Ranaghat in the presence of megastar and BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty.

"Anyone voting for Mukut Mani Adhikari will be cheated exactly like me," she said.

The development comes as a major embarrassment concerning Adhikari, against whom Maheshwari filed a complaint just a few days after their marriage last year accusing him of cruelty against her.

Adhikari's nomination as Trinamul Congress candidate has been marred with controversy.

He was elected as a BJP legislator in the 2021 West Bengal assembly elections from the Ranaghat-Dakshin constituency, one of the seven under the Ranaghat Lok Sabha.

AGENCIES

Battleground Bengal: TMC heavily banking on perception-oriented campaigning as 4 poll phases remain

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 10 MAY

With four phases of the Lok Sabha polls in West Bengal remaining, the Trinamul Congress seems to be heavily banking on perception-oriented campaigning to tide over the anti-incumbency factor.

When the Calcutta High Court's Division Bench cancelled 25,753 teaching and non-teaching jobs in state-run schools the Trinamul Congress leadership, including Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, accused a section of the judiciary of operating in a biased manner in the interest of a particular political party.

The Trinamul Congress' General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee described the Calcutta High Court verdict as 'order-fixing' and 'court-fix-

ing'.

In fact, the Calcutta High Court's Division Bench of Chief Justice T S Sivagnanam recently admitted a petition filed by CPM Rajya Sabha member and senior advocate Bikash Ranjan Bhat-tacharya requesting the court to take suo motu cognisance of the anti-judiciary comments made by Mamata Banerjee in the last couple of days.

Political observers say that the exercise is aimed at projecting a section of the judiciary as "villains" with an understanding that the court verdict can be a major blow to the ruling party in the midst of polls.

As part of the same perception-oriented campaign, the judiciary was projected as a messiah after the apex court

Division Bench, headed by Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud, put an interim stay on the order nixing jobs by the Calcutta High Court.

The Trinamul Congress leadership, including the Chief Minister, ignored the loaded observations of the Supreme Court that pertained to "systemic fraud" in the recruitment process.

They highlighted only the interim-stay and described the order as a "great relief".

Legal minds say that this is an attempt to deliberately misinterpret the top court's order where an "interim stay" is projected as "setting aside" of the order.

Legal experts point out that the Supreme Court directed the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) to check out if there was any sec-



ondary material available to segregate valid appointments of the 25,753 people.

Legally this means that the future of the valid appointees will be secured only if the WBSSC can establish in court that it has been able to segregate the valid appoint-

ments through a justified method.

The second issue being highlighted by the ruling party is the successive sting-operation videos released recently where people can be seen and heard saying that the protests by Sandeshkhali

women against sexual harassment by a section of Trinamool Congress leaders were orchestrated by the BJP in West Bengal.

In one of the videos, a local BJP leader Gangadhar Kayal was seen and heard saying that he was assigned to persuade some local women to orchestrate the movement, by Leader of the Opposition in West Bengal Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari.

Kayal was prompt in claiming that the video was fake and modulation of his voice was done using Artificial Intelligence. He also approached the CBI seeking an investigation in the matter.

The BJP leadership even challenged the Trinamul Congress to approach the court with the video.

However, the Trinamul

Congress is heavily publicising the video to drive the perception that the Sandeshkhali protests were orchestrated by the BJP to give the ruling party and the state government a bad name.

In the second sting-operation video a couple of women from Sandeshkhali were seen claiming that they signed the sexual harassment complaints without understanding what was written there.

The Trinamul Congress is publicising that video and accusing the BJP of compromising with the dignity of women at Sandeshkhali for political gains.

While questions are being raised about the authenticity of these sting operation videos, observers point out that two important aspects are being carefully avoided by

the ruling party in this perception-oriented campaign.

The first aspect is that the Calcutta High Court had ordered a CBI probe into the complaints of sexual harassment, illegal grabbing of land and extortion at Sandeshkhali only after detailed hearing on a number of PILs filed in the matter.

Although, the West Bengal government challenged that Calcutta High Court order in the Supreme Court, the latter refused to stay the order and even questioned why the state government had come as the petitioner for protecting the interests of some private individuals.

The second aspect is that while there were a large number of women protesting at Sandeshkhali the number of women featuring in the sting-videos is few.

Bardhaman Purba: A psychiatrist fights for votes against a folk singer

KANCHAN SIDDIQUI
KATWA, 11 MAY

In the battle votes, a physician and a folk singer are trying their best to rule the minds of the electorate. In Bardhaman Purba Lok Sabha constituency. The 17.99 lakh-strong voters of this parliamentary constituency are being wooed by Dr Sharmila Sarkar, a senior psychiatrist and a lecturer has been nominated by the Trinamul Congress and the BJP candidate Asim Sarkar, the MLA from Haringhata in Nadia, who is a folk singer too.

TMC's Sunil Mondal had won the seat in 2019 defeating BJP candidate Paresh Chandra Das by 89,311 votes. The same Mondal had won the seat by 1.14 lakh votes defeating CPM candidate Ishwar Chandra Das in 2014. Mondal was however dropped by his party this year. In 2009, the Delimitation Council of India had carved out this new constituency from erst-

while Katwa constituency where the CPM had a strong-hold till 2009.

"After a considerable time, I'm back on my home turf, where I grew up. People are known to me well," said Dr Sarkar. She hails from Agradwip, near Katwa town. The BJP initially tried to tag her as an 'outsider', which didn't sustain.

Kobial (singer poet) Sarkar hails from Nadia, and is taking digs at Dr Sarkar airing his composed songs throughout his campaign trails like - 'Ore Sarkar Sharmila tui moner daktar, mon bujhle chor chinte parina' (Sharmila though you are a psychiatrist, but failed to identify the thieves). He's always been carrying a group of folk singers for his public meetings. About the BJP candidate repeatedly mocking her, Dr Sarkar said: "It's his taste and choice for personal attack. Still I enjoyed the rhythms." A disciple of Bhaba Pagla (Bhabendra Mohan Roy Choudhury),



a 20th century saint, who'd migrated from Dhaka and camped permanently beside the Bhagirathi in Kalna where Asim's father had joined.

Dr Sarkar is seen walking for miles each day to reach the voters in remote villages. She's giving a brief halt to attend the patients, in between. Her rival, BJP's Sarkar, said, "Beyond politics, I liked her gesture of social service."

"I know each family resid-



ing in Kalna and they allow me as their family member. How can this Dr lady, who can only treat mental disorders, be their kin? I'm a 'Class four-pass' man, still they come to me for a respite as they breathe my songs over the years," Asim claimed.

He's heavily banking on the Matua vote bank, staying along the Bhagirathi and Damodar riverbanks. He said, "CAA is my trump card here, which helped garner 'unex-

pected' support for BJP." He however accepted the fragile organizational strength of his party here, which incidentally has emerged as Dr Sarkar's USP.

The constituency accommodates 27.41 per cent SC population, besides 20.73 per cent minority. Highest SC presence is marked in Raina Assembly segment (37.13 per cent) of the constituency. Raina had contributed highest lead to the TMC in 2019 (by 54,849 votes) and Purbasthali (North) segment here though is having the maximum presence of the minority voters (20.73 per cent) had sponsored lowest lead margin (of 2,705 votes) to the TMC. The BJP secured a lead by 1,859 votes in Katwa segment. In 2021 Assembly election, the TMC candidates had secured their victory in the entire seven Assembly segments here, where the TMC grabbed 47.02 per cent vote share, the BJP had 40.42 per cent and the CPM had a

meager 9.85 per cent share. Purbasthali (North) again recorded the lowest lead figure of 6,706 votes, Memari registered the maximum (23,078 votes) lead margin.

"CPM this time will see a 'comeback' of its voters, which certainly is going to benefit the TMC," claimed Nirab Khan, the party's candidate for the constituency. He said, "People have seen how TMC had sponsored candidates for BJP in 2023 in areas like Sibati, Korui, Singi, Polsona, Jaganandapur, Ghazipur, here. The same BJP candidates are serving for the TMC candidate now." Rabindranath Chatterjee, TMC's district president, said, "A party that has been rejected by the masses should try to look into its own affairs first."

About BJP's singer candidate, he said: "Songs are good for mind but a singer with venom to divide people doesn't resemble divinely, harmonious people of Kalna, Katwa know it very well."

DIVINE INTERVENTION



Aam Aadmi Party West Bengal unit members visited Kali temple at Kalighat and offered prayers on Saturday in the name of AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal, after his release on bail on Friday. ■ SNS

Siliguri mayor meets people after drinking water crisis

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 11 MAY

Siliguri mayor Goutam Deb resumed his people outreach programme (manusher kache chalo) today when the people in corporation area are facing acute drinking water crisis due to emergency anti-erosion works on the bank of Teesta and other issues of Teesta Barrage Project.

After visiting the sites of Teesta Barrage area at Gajoldoba to oversee the ongoing emergency works to protect guide bandh, which was washed away due to flash floods in Sikkim and the Mahananda Barrage, an ongoing alternative permanent intake point project for lifting raw water for drinking water treatment plant at Fulbari in Jalpaiguri, mayor Goutam Deb decided to reach out to the people from Ward 42, this afternoon.

Mr Deb physically met



the people and informed them about the reason behind the present crisis of drinking water supply and alternative arrangements for providing drinking water.

According to Mr Deb, after flash floods in Sikkim, the Teesta river has changed its course, after damaging an embankment, affecting some villages at Gajoldoba.

With the permission from Election Commission of India, the Teesta Barrage Project

authorities have taken up the bank protection work before monsoon.

As a result, the Teesta Barrage Project authorities have stopped supplying required raw water for drinking treatment plants at Fulbari, which has been providing drinking water in the corporation area, North Bengal Medical College and Hospital and a part of rural areas.

The public health engineering department has

restricted the supply of drinking water owing to a lack of required flow of raw water from the Teesta Barrage.

Mr Deb has decided to visit SMC wards to keep monitoring alternative arrangements for drinking water supply during the crisis period.

Sources said at least two weeks are required to bring back the normal supply of drinking water from Fulbari water treatment plant.



THUMBNAILS

Summer safety kit for All-pore Zoo staff: Suraksha Diagnostics distributed essential summer safety kits to the hardworking staff of the Zoological Garden, Alipore. Considering the scorching heatwave gripping Kolkata, with temperatures soaring over 40 C, this humanitarian effort aims to provide comfort and support to those people tirelessly caring for the city's beloved animals. The health package includes leptospira test, X-ray for TB, sputum test for TB and anti-rabies vaccine.

SNS

Free entry to Science City

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 11 MAY

Like previous years, Science City, Kolkata, is offering free entry for its esteemed visitors on 18-19 May as a part of the celebration of International Museum Day, which was established by ICOM and celebrated annually on this day. IMD serves as a global platform to promote the role of museums in cultural exchange and development. On this day, museums worldwide join hands to organise events, exhibitions, and educational programmes centred around the theme, emphasising the invaluable contribution of museums to society.

Since 1997, Science City, Kolkata, has been serving society and catering to the varied needs of the different sections of society. "Every year, we organise various programmes and activities on the occasion of International Museum Day and offer free entry to visitors. This year also, we have planned various programmes and activities on these two days, like exhibitions, panel discussions, demonstrations, and various programmes and activities for kids," said Anurag Kumar, director, Science City, Kolkata.

Bengal campaign: Modi to hold 4 back-to-back rallies

PM will be addressing rallies at Howrah, Hooghly, Arambagh and Barrackpore on Sunday

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 11 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address back-to-back four election rallies in Howrah, Hooghly, Arambagh and Barrackpore and roadshows on Sunday.

Seven parliamentary constituencies Howrah, Uluberia, Hooghly, Arambagh, Serampore, Barrackpore and Bongaon will go for polls on 20 May.

The Prime Minister is scheduled to stay tonight at Raj Bhavan. Kolkata police have beefed up security arrangements and restricted traffic movement on several roads connecting the governor's house.

This will be his ninth visit to West Bengal since the announcement of dates for seven-phase Lok Sabha polls



in the country was made on 16 March. He will attend rallies in Panchla, Chinsurah and Pursurah under Howrah, Arambagh and Hooghly constituencies respectively and Barrackpore on Sunday.

BJP had won Hooghly, Barrackpore and Bongaon seats while Trinamul Congress had bagged Howrah, Uluberia, Serampore and Arambagh in 2019 LS polls.

Meanwhile, the saffron party had alleged that the ground, where the PM would address a public meeting in Barrackpore had been dug up by a tractor.

Arjun Singh, contesting in Barrackpore on a BJP ticket, had alleged that Bhatpara

Municipality intentionally dug it up so that the rally could not be held.

On the other hand, Howrah is all set to witness high-voltage election programmes on Sunday. Besides the PM's election rally, the Trinamul Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee is also scheduled to address an election rally in Howrah's Uluberia on Sunday (12 May) at around 4pm. PM Modi is also expected to take part in the election rally in Panchla close to Uluberia at the same time.

Political observers feel that a war of words is on the cards. In the run-up to the country's general elections, PM Modi has been accused by Mamata Banerjee of halting the state's funds under various projects including 100-day works under MGNREGA scheme.

The Trinamul Congress has already alleged that the BJP-led Centre has withheld funds worth Rs 1.6 lakh crore under various heads for Bengal.

PM Modi, on the other hand, slammed Mamata Banerjee government on corruption issues in the state. Earlier, in the first week of May, while addressing in back-to-back election rallies in Bardhaman-Durgapur and Krishnagar, PM Modi alleged that the ruling party in West Bengal is indulged in corruption and politics of appeasement.

On 26 April, while addressing an election rally in Malda, he targeted Trinamul Congress and said that the youth of West Bengal are praying for a price for 'cut-and-commission' culture.

PM said, "Those who took loans and gave them to the Trinamul Congress (to get jobs) are on the roads now."

'Former MP Sultan Ahmed died due to CBI pressure'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 11 MAY

Trinamul Congress national secretary general Abhishek Banerjee in his explosive election campaign, accused that former TMC MP Sultan Ahmed died under pressure from the CBI.

On Saturday, he campaigned in support of Trinamul candidate Sajda Ahmed, widow of Uluberia's former MP, at a Trinamul-organized event. Abhishek's explosive allegation was, "This Uluberia was always targeted by the central government due to Ahmed's presence here. He was tortured by the CBI and killed."

Following this, Abhishek said, "His widow not only seeks your support but has also come to bless and pray for BJP's destruction." Sultan Ahmed, a Trinamul MP from Uluberia, died in 2017. His name was involved in the Narada sting operation. The CBI was involved in the investigation. Mr Ahmed died during investigations

due to a heart attack. Trinamul chairperson had said that Sultan was very tense about Narada investigation. The chief minister Mamata Banerjee believed that Uluberia's MP died of a heart attack due to this pressure, not being able to bear it. Mamata alleged that the CBI's treatment of the former MP was inhumane.

Taking a step ahead from party MPs' deaths, Subrata Bakshi, the TMC leader alleged that Sultan was mentally pressured in the name of investigation by the central government. Sultans have been physically harassed for the past few months by naming him in Saradha-Narada cases. Unable to compete politically, Sultan was put under stress. As a result, he became estranged from his family and social life. This time, Abhishek also made explosive allegations during the election. When he was talking about Sultan's death, his wife, Sajda Ahmed, Trinamul's candidate, stood on stage wiping her tears.

Serampore contestants brand each other as Mr India, Miss Universe

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 10 MAY

Polls at Serampore Lok Sabha constituency is slated for 20 May but pre-poll mind games between Trinamul Congress candidate Kalyan Banerjee and CPM candidate Dipsita Dhar is gaining traction.

'Mr India' vs 'Ms Universe' on earlier occasion notwithstanding, witnessed round two, where Ms Dhar continued to address Mr Banerjee with "hardly visible" jibes, to which the senior lawyer-politician responded in jest.

Today, Mr Banerjee on a campaign trail at Serampore LS constituency in Pyrapur Muslim locality, came across Miss Dhar with her band of followers. Mr Banejee had given



right of way to the CPM procession but little later, rants of Jay Bangla rent the air, which was reciprocated in equal measure.

Dubbing Mr Banerjee as 'Mr India' yet again, Miss Dhar said, "I could not find him. I was searching for him but could not notice him. Perhaps, he is still sporting the 'Mr India' gown."

Mr Banerjee responded to the comparison by saying, "Everybody can see me. She is Miss Universe. She had studied at JNU for nine years but could not submit her thesis."

PDS scam: ED seeks active ration card count from food dept

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 11 MAY

The central investigative agency, ED (Enforcement Directorate) wants to know the number of active ration cards in the state.

Additionally, they are seeking information on the total number of ration cards before 2019 and the current count. They also inquired about the number of ration cards invalidated during the digitization process. Furthermore, they're investigating if benefits are being passed on to the card holders even after their demise or if illegal ration withdrawals are being made. They also want to ascertain if there has been any irregularity in ration distribution



The ED needs answers to several questions related to ration card issues in the state for their investigation

According to ED sources, through these questions they want to determine whether there has been any malpractice in ration distribution through ration cards. During the investigation of ration malpractices, ED investigators found instances where rice or flour was not provided as per entitlements. Moreover, there have been instances of clandestine ration transfers from suppliers to dealers. Ration has been sold to

dealers at a 10 per cent discount per transaction.

Therefore, ED seeks to ascertain if excess ration withdrawals have also occurred through bogus ration cards. The ED is already investigating allegations of corruption in the distribution of ration in the state.

The former food minister, Jyotipriyo Mallick has already been arrested in connection with the case, along with several close associates, including prominent businessman Bakibur Rahman. However, the investigation is still on. According to sources, the ED needs answers to several questions related to ration card issues in the state for their investigation.

Motorcycle accident claims life of promising actor Azad Sheikh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 11 MAY

An actor died in a motorcycle accident today. The incident occurred at Aarapach area of Sonarpur Police Station in South 24-Parganas.

According to police sources, the deceased's name is Azad Sheikh. Azad, a 35-year-old Ankush Hazra's assistant actor, had recently starred in the film Mirza. In that movie, Azad's son also played a small role. Upon receiving news of the accident, the police went to the scene and recovered the body. The news was conveyed to the deceased's family.

According to family sources, Azad was a resident of Jagdishpur in Sonarpur police station area. He had left home around 4am on Saturday to visit his uncle's house. The family informed that for some reason, everyone in the family had planned to visit Azad's uncle's house two days later. But Azad left with the bike on Saturday. His father warned him, but Azad didn't listen. Moments later, the family received news of the accident. Police and local sources reported that Azad's bike collided with a loaded vehicle.

Eyewitnesses said the bike's speed was such that it crashed into the front wheel of the vehicle, throwing Azad off the

Azad, a 35-year-old Ankush Hazra's assistant actor, had recently starred in the film Mirza

road. Azad was killed on the spot. According to family sources, Azad was involved in various activities. He was into business. Acting was his passion. Azad's family consists of his parents and a ten-year-old son. His wife had passed away earlier. Azad's son-in-law, Jiad Mallik, said, "Azad's wife died when their son was born. Just before his birthday, he lost his father." Azad had mentioned that he was teaching his son acting as well. Father and son acted in the movie Mirza. The news of Azad's death has shocked the neighborhood. After initial investigation, the police believe that the accident occurred due to over speeding. The bike lost control and collided with a loaded vehicle. The cause of the accident is being investigated.

Three drown in Hooghly

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HOOGHLY, 11 MAY

A few people, organising puja rituals, stepped onto the Hooghly for a holy dip on Friday night at Uttarpara Babughat but were caught unawares by sudden high tide. Two teenagers, aged 16 and 18, were dragged into the depths of the river by the swift water current. A 21-year-old youth dived into the river to rescue the victims but unfortunately was also dragged in the water. The disaster management team stepped in search of the dead bodies with speed boats assisting the divers.

Police said prohibitory orders were used not to step into the river during the high tide, but the devotees did not pay heed to the police instructions.

BJP's coal mafia connection out in open: TMC

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DURGAPUR, 11 MAY

Joydeb Khan, an alleged coal mafia, against whom there have been several cases, raked up a fresh controversy after receiving Union home minister Amit Shah at Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport in Andal, yesterday.

His picture, receiving the Union home minister, went viral today and created a huge stir in the political circles in the state.

This is the second time that Joydeb Khan has been part of the controversy after he personally met union coal minister Pralhad Joshi at a five star hotel during his stay at Durgapur in November 2022.

During his road show in Raniganj in favour of BJP candidate Surendrajit Singh Ahluwalia yesterday evening, Amit Shah has alleged that TMC is linked with the coal mafia.

The FIR in the illegal coal mining case in December 2020 in Bengal a few months before the Assembly polls had



rocked the state at that time. The CBI, I-T and ED jointly investigated the illegal coal mining cases in the ECL leasehold area.

BJP state president Sukanta Majumdar said that Joydeb Khan is a BJP member and never was a coal mafia, ever since joining the BJP in 2019 he has been framed in false cases. Instead Joydeb Khan has bagged tenders of railway siding, in which 400 people will get jobs, he added.

Around 16 people went to greet Amit Shah at the airport and the list was prepared by district president of BJP

Bappa Chatterjee. Narendra Nath Chakraborty, Pandaveswar MLA and district president of TMC in West Burdwan said that it seems that the coal mafia are very close to the ruling BJP ministers that's why a notorious person is seen with them.

"It is the BJP which encourages the illegal coal mining in Raniganj coalfield area. Our chief minister Mamata Banerjee has taken a strong stance against the coal mafia after she came in to power in 2011 and has arrested a number of coal mafia," he added.

The Statesman

We are hiring for our Kolkata, Delhi, Bhubaneswar and Siliguri offices

Business Development Manager

Candidates should be graduate. Well conversant in Media Marketing and sales. Minimum 10 to 15 years' experience with maximum age limit of 50 years as on 31.05.2024.

Circulation - Sales

Candidate should be Graduate in any discipline with minimum 5 to 10 years of experience in any Newspaper or daily.

Circulation - Operations Executive

Candidate should be Graduate in any discipline with minimum 3 to 5 years of experience in any Newspaper or daily in operations and billing.

Scheduling Executive

Candidate should be Graduate in any discipline with minimum 3 to 5 years of experience in any Newspaper or daily in operations with knowledge of booking advertisements, customer handling and planning of advertisements.

Designer

Candidates should be well conversant in Coral Draw, Quark and In-design with minimum experience of 5 years.

Accounts

Candidate should be B.Com(H) / M.Com with 5 to 8 years experience in the relevant field. Knowledge of Tally and Advance Excel will be an added advantage.

Reporter - Dainik Statesman-Bengali

Candidates should be Graduate in any discipline. Well conversant in Bengali language. 3 to 5 years experience in reporting. Freshers are also welcome.

Assistant Editor / Sub-Editor - Dainik Statesman (Bengali)

Candidates should be Graduate in any discipline. Well conversant in Bengali language. 5 to 10 years experience in the same field.

Last date of submitting application:
31.05.2024

Mail your CV mentioning the post at
hr@thestatesman.com

Send your CV to:

Gobinda Mukherjee
The Statesman Ltd.
4, Chowringhee Square,
Kolkata-700001

CMYK

epaper.thestatesman.com

This election is to save nation from thieves & robbers: Modi

PM said JMM & Cong have only one agenda, they will not do anything and not let anybody do work

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday the NDA will get not just “400 ke paar” Lok Sabha seats in current elections, but will also win Assembly elections, wherever they are taking place, like Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh, and form governments there with heavy majority.

Addressing a BJP election rally in Chatra, Jharkhand, he said he had just come after campaigning in Odisha, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and was confident about victories in Assembly elections also. The Congress Prince (Rahul Gandhi), he said, will get Lok Sabha seats less than his age.

The Prime Minister said wherever he goes in the country, there is only one sentiment expressed “phir ek baar, Modi sarkar” (Once again Modi government). The 2024 election is not just to elect a government,



he said, but to decide the nation's future. “This election is to save the nation from thieves and robbers and to ensure good future of your children. The nation needs to be saved from parties like the JMM, Congress and the INDI alliance. You have seen how mountains of currency

notes came out of homes of JMM and Congress people. Money was recovered from the house of a servant of a Minister's PA,” he said. But they are not ashamed of what they did, he said. It is a serious issue for the nation. “When money is found with employees, how much black money will be

with their employers, he said. As much as Rs 300 crore in cash was recovered from a Congress MP, machines failed to count,” the Prime Minister said. “Whose money is it,” he said. “When Rs 5000 is stolen from your house, you want the thief jailed. Should these people who stole the nation's

money go to jail or not. Should there be strong action against them or not? Only a person with a clean record like Modi can take that action,” he said.

Mr Modi said the JMM and the Congress have only one agenda, they will not do anything and not let anybody do work. They don't do any work without money also, and even want to stop Modi from doing good work, he said. The Congress does not want Dalits, OBCs, Adivasis to go up in life, he said. Mrs Droupadi Murmu was the Governor of Jharkhand and is today occupying the highest position in the country, commanding the three Services. “Who made her President, it was your one vote which did it,” he said.

“Are you not proud her occupying the post,” he said. But the Congress and its allies could not digest her becoming the President and insulted her, he said. In the latest incident, he said, he was narrating with pain, that she had visited Ayodhya's Ram temple for worship.

Mufti accuses administration of ‘trying to fix elections’



AGENCIES
SRINAGAR, 11 MAY

Former J&K Chief Minister and PDP President Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday alleged that the J&K administration is ‘trying to fix elections’.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mehbooba Mufti alleged that the authorities have imposed restrictions for 48 hours from 6:30 pm on Saturday under Section 144 in Pulwama, which is part of the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat going to polls on Monday.

“From 6:30 pm today, Section 144 has been imposed in Pulwama district which is unprecedented. It has not happened before that restrictions are imposed where the elections are to take place and that too till the time of the con-

clusion of the elections. They (the administration) are trying to harass the people so that they do not come out to vote,” she said.

She said that preparations are being made to commit fraud in the elections.

“The election is being fixed,” she said.

The former Chief Minister added that her party workers, who were organising meetings, have also been detained ahead of the polling.

“This is not restricted to Pulwama only. Some days back, there was an attack in Surankote (in Poonch district of Jammu). Following the attack, our 50 to 60 workers have been detained,” the former Chief Minister said.

She said that if the Election Commission of India (ECI) has to repeat the 1987

elections then why this “drama of elections” is being enacted in Kashmir?

“If they have to create Ikhwan (government gunmen) or the party of Ikhwan, their proxies whom they are supporting then they should say it. The administration is not yet openly coming out in support of their proxies as they are waiting for the elections to conclude in two seats in Srinagar and Baramulla. After that, they will declare their support in Rajouri-Poonch (part of Anantnag-Rajouri seat). The election was delayed there only because of their party, the party of suited-booted Ikhwan. They have created political Ikhwan whom they support fully, the whole government machinery supports them,” Mehbooba Mufti said.

She said that government officials are under pressure to selectively target and harass the PDP workers.

“L-G Manoj Sinha should stop this election drama. If you want to do fraud in the name of elections then tell us and we will leave and will not put the lives of our workers at risk,” she said.

‘PM cries like a child on his problems rather than wiping tears of people’

AGENCIES
NANDURBAR, 11 MAY

Launching a broadside, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of “crying like a child on his problems rather than spelling out steps to wipe the tears of the suffering masses”, here on Saturday.

Addressing a large tribal gathering during a rally in the Nandurbar (ST) Lok Sabha constituency in Maharashtra, Priyanka said it has become a norm for PM Modi to rave and rant about his problems on the dais during election rallies instead of discussing how he will resolve the peoples' burning issues.

“Modiji remembers the tribals only during elections when he comes to seek their votes. He claims to fight corruption alone -- but how can

he be a loner? He has the entire government, its machinery, and agencies behind him. Instead of talking about what the BJP government did in the past 10 years, he comes on the stage and weeps, saying people are abusing him,” she said.

The Congress leader also reminded the PM that he is in public life and should take inspiration from her grandmother (former Prime Minister late Indira Gandhi), who displayed her “Goddess Durga” strength and “chopped Pakistan into two pieces.”

“Show some courage, Modiji... Learn from my grandmother and her sacrifices. But you cannot because you label that great martyr as a ‘traitor’. Your words as a PM lack weight. The post of PM was always held in high esteem and occupied by great lead-

ers like Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Manmohan Singh... Look at the level you have reduced it to,” Priyanka said.

The Congress leader also recounted the problems faced by the tribals, Dalits, and poor families all over India, the atrocities on women in Manipur, tribal areas, and Uttar Pradesh, among others, claiming, “But at all times, Modiji chose to keep mum and even supported the perpetrators of such heinous crimes.”

“Modiji is cut off from the people... He has no inkling of how the poor are trying to survive amid the massive inflation, the horrors the womenfolk face... women who work outside the whole day, then come home and do the household chores, and look after the entire family,” she said.

Kharge promises to make India a manufacturing hub

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday vowed to make India a manufacturing hub by raising the share of the manufacturing sector from 14 per cent to 20 per cent in the GDP in the next five years if it is voted to power at the Centre.

In a post on X, the Congress chief said, “Congress resolves to make India a manufacturing hub by raising the share of manufacturing from 14 per cent to 20 per cent of GDP in the next five years. The most immediate objective will be to restore a healthy, fearless and a trustworthy climate for businesses.”

“While a Congress government in 1991 abolished industrial licensing and controls, the independent regulatory regime that was put in place has deteriorated into a system of overt and covert



controls. We will conduct a comprehensive review of the current rules and regulations and repeal or amend them in order to restore freedom to industry, business and trade,” he said.

Kharge said the Congress will aim for India attaining a position of leadership in multiple industries such as steel, metals, garments and textiles,

cement, automobiles, electronic goods, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, petroleum products, chemicals, and mining rare earths and critical minerals.

Referring to the RBI's data, he said, “According to the RBI, nearly 60 per cent of the large central government projects have been stalled or delayed and costs have risen

by nearly five lakh crores. Congress will address the problem in a mission mode and find ways and means to revive the stalled projects with the help of the private sector.”

Kharge, who is also the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, further said, “Congress will reform the production linked incentives

(PLI) scheme to target specific sectors that can create thousands of jobs by making India one of the top 5 producers in the world in that sector. We will introduce a new employment linked incentive (ELI) Scheme for corporates to win tax credits for additional hiring against regular, quality jobs.”

The Congress will create a “level playing field” for all businesses, he said.

Attacking the ruling BJP, he said: “It is thus no surprise that in the last 25 years, India's manufacturing share of GDP has been higher during the Congress rule. On the contrary, in the last 10 years (2014-24), the share of manufacturing has stagnated at just 14 per cent.” He added that the Congress is determined to make India the manufacturing powerhouse that produces goods and services for itself and the world.

Gujarat Board SSC results announced: 82.56 pc pass percentage recorded

AGENCIES
GANDHINAGAR, 11 MAY

The Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board (GSHSEB) on Saturday declared the results of the SSC examinations, and the pass percentage was recorded at 82.56 per cent.

This year's pass percentage reached an impressive 82.56 per cent, marking an increase of approximately 18 percentage points from last year's 64.62 per cent.

Despite the overall positive trends, the board also noted malpractice concerns, capturing 138 students in the act and recording about 400 cases based on CCTV footage.

The marked improvement in results has seen a rise in schools achieving a 100 per



cent pass rate, with 1,389 schools accomplishing this feat compared to only 272 in 2023 and 292 in 2022. Conversely, the number of schools with less than 30 per cent results has decreased notably, with only 264 schools this year compared to 1,084 in 2023. Students who appeared for the

Class 10 board exams can access their results on gseb.org.

Gandhinagar district led with the highest pass percentage at 87.22 per cent, while Porbandar recorded the lowest among the 33 districts with 74.57 per cent. Subject-wise, the performance in core subjects showed scores

of 753 students in Social Science, 828 in Science, and 2,660 in Standard Mathematics, scoring a perfect 100.

However, students still need to achieve full marks in Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, or Urdu.

In contrast, English and Sanskrit saw 10 and 1,905

students scoring full marks, respectively, and basic Mathematics achieving this milestone.

The performance disparities were also evident at the district level with the highest results coming from Ahmedabad, Dholka, and Bhavnagar district's Talgaajarda area, all reporting 100 per cent pass rates. The Tad center in Bhavnagar district had the lowest results at 41.13 per cent.

Girls continued to outshine boys, with an 86.69 per cent pass rate compared to 79.12 per cent for boys. The results for students in the English medium were particularly strong, at 92.52 per cent, while those in the Gujarati and Hindi mediums posted pass rates of 81.17 per cent and 75.90 per cent, respectively.

Wave of NDA in Bihar, will win all 40 seats: Bihar Deputy CM Samrat Chaudhary

AGENCIES
PATNA, 11 MAY

Exuding confidence in BJP's victory in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary said on Saturday that there is a wave of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the state and that the ruling party will win all 40 seats in Bihar.

Speaking to ANI, Samrat Chaudhary said, “NDA's wave is going on in Bihar and people want to vote for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and we will win all 40 seats of Bihar. There is no competition here, no fights. Here, Bihar will move forward with the slogan of ‘Sabka Sath, Sabka Vishwas.’”

Earlier on May 4, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a veiled attack on former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejash-



wi Yadav, called the RJD leader a ‘Shehzada’ equivalent to that of Congress leader in Delhi (Rahul Gandhi) who considers the entire Bihar as his ‘jagir’ (property).

Addressing a rally in Darbhanga, PM Modi said that he has tabled a vision for the next 25 years.

Referring to Bihar's land-for-job scam, the Prime Minister attacked Rashtriya Janata Dal and said that RJD has

always indulged in “politics of appeasement.”

Highlighting its central government achievements he said that in the last 10 years, the NDA government has provided pucca houses to 40 lakh poor people in Bihar.

Praising the leadership of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar leadership, PM Modi said, “Today, under the leadership of CM Nitish Kumar, the NDA government is working for the development of Bihar. Our inspiration is Karpuri Thakur, to whom we had the fortune of conferring with Bharat Ratna posthumously.”

Forty seats in Bihar are undergoing polls in all seven phases. In 2019, the BJP-led NDA swept the state by winning 39 out of 40 seats, while Congress won just one seat. RJD, a formidable force in the state, failed to open its account.

Congress’ OBC-BJP’s Marathavie to conquer prestigious Pune LS seat



AGENCIES
PUNE, 11 MAY

Thrilled after the knockout victory of the Congress candidate Ravindra H. Dhangekar in the Kasba Peth Assembly by-elections 15 months ago, the party has attempted to cash in on the goodwill even for the 2024 parliament polls,

The Congress has fielded the OBC leader Dhangekar for the prestigious Pune Lok Sabha seat to grapple with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s Murlidhar Mohol, its Maratha face and an ex-Mayor, in place of the late Brahmin heavyweight Girish Bapat, who died as the sit-

ting MP in March 2023.

Besides Congress' Dhangekar and BJP's Mohol, the third corner is occupied by Prakash Ambedkar-led Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA)'s Vasant More, who quit Raj Thackeray-headed Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) in March (2024) after being denied a party ticket.

Dhangekar's victory in the Kasba Peth Assembly by-polls, a BJP Brahmin bastion was impressive in many ways. The by-polls were necessitated by the death of sitting MLA Mukta Tilak – a great-granddaughter-in-law of the freedom fighter Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

The BJP did not field any member of the Tilak family or even a Brahmin but nominated a Maratha Hemant Rasane who lost to Dhangekar in the BJP's bastion. Later, local leaders attributed the BJP's loss to factors like not fielding a Brahmin and not giving a ticket to a Tilak family member to garner sympathy votes.

Rattled by Dhangekar's surprise sweep, the worried BJP did not favour the Lok Sabha bypoll after Bapat's demise and the seat remained vacant for nearly 15 months. Since 1952, a Congress fortress 10 times, the Pune Lok Sabha seat had deserted the party on at least 7 occasions, aligning with some prevalent political ‘wave’ or a prominent candidate.

The city of Peshwa has sent four union ministers from here – N. V. Gadgil, Mohan Dhar, V. N. Gadgil, and Suresh Kalmadi, besides a High Commissioner to the UK, N. G. Goray.

In the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP's Anil Shirole won the seat from the two-time Congress MP Kalmadi who came under a cloud of corruption, and in 2019, Bapat defeated Congress rival Mohan Joshi.

Despite any perceptible ‘wave’ in 2024, Mohol is gung-ho about a BJP hat-trick in the Pune Lok Sabha, but

Dhangekar and More also display supreme confidence in winning the parliamentary seat, given the changing caste dynamics in the city.

Mohol is banking on the performance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the respect for the late Bapat and the development works that have been implemented in the region.

Countering, the Congress and VBA questioned the false promises of the BJP, the divisions sought to be created on caste-communal lines, the failure to control the myriad local problems of Pune, plus the PM's reference to a ‘bhakti-atma’ in his poll campaign here.

Hoping to woo the electorate, all major political leaders have vigorously campaigned here including BJP's Modi and Nitin Gadkari, Congress' Rahul Gandhi and Nana Patole, Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Uddhav Thackeray, Aditya Thackeray and Sushma Andhare, and NCP (SP)'s Sharad Pawar, Supriya Sule.

However, this time both the Congress and BJP are wary of More's entry as in 2019, the VBA in partnership with the All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) had cut out a chunk of Congress votes. But in 2024, both VBA and AIMIM are going solo and the latter has put up a nominee Anis A. Sundake.

Battle in Telangana

Assembly election outcomes often serve as harbingers for shifts in national political landscapes. The Congress party's resounding victory in Telangana's 2023 state elections stands as a testament to this, sparking debates on whether it can replicate this success in the Lok Sabha elections. However, the extrapolation of state victories to national gains is fraught with complexities, given the multifaceted nature of voter behaviour and regional political dynamics. The stunning defeat of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in Telangana was not merely a political upset. It was a narrative of burgeoning anti-incumbency and the effective mobilisation by Congress of local discontent. Riding high on promises and spirited campaigns, Congress managed to breach a stronghold, creating a sense of political vulnerability around BRS, further exacerbated by the arrest of a key party leader and defections that followed. This scenario, at first glance, provides Congress a potent springboard to launch a robust campaign for the state's 17 Lok Sabha seats. However, to equate state election victories with a national trend would be an oversimplification. National elections in India pivot significantly on issues that transcend local grievances – issues like national security, economic policies, and the charisma of national leaders. In this context, the Modi-led BJP remains a formidable force, with its narrative tightly woven around nationalistic fervour and developmental agendas. The party's adeptness at leveraging the 'Modi factor' could offset Congress's state-level gains, particularly in a state like Telangana, where regional loyalties and national interests intersect uniquely. Moreover, the potential bipolar contest structure could reshape traditional voting blocs. The vulnerability of BRS does not automatically translate into gains for Congress. Rather, it opens a battleground for both Congress and the BJP. If BRS's traditional vote banks, particularly among Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Muslims, find the Congress's state-level performance and promises appealing, they might shift their allegiance. Conversely, a weakened BRS could see its residual vote share swinging to the BJP, especially if the national narrative sways voter perception. It is also crucial to consider the local versus national leadership perception. While Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has emerged as a significant state figure, his appeal compared to national figures like the Prime Minister will be under scrutiny.

The Congress's success will depend heavily on its ability to juxtapose its regional leadership's achievements against the national leadership of the BJP. With polling in all 17 Telangana Lok Sabha constituencies due on May 13 in the fourth phase of the general election, the Congress faces both a significant opportunity and a formidable challenge. Its ability to maintain the momentum from the state elections and effectively project its regional achievements onto the national canvas will be key. Conversely, any failure to address broader national issues or to counter the BJP's narrative effectively could limit its ability to convert its state-level victory into a broader electoral success.

Issues in AP

As Andhra Pradesh gears up to vote in the fourth phase of the general election for the simultaneous state assembly and Lok Sabha elections, the collective frustration of its educated youth echoes across the land. Amid the fervour of political rallies and campaign promises, a sobering reality emerges – the unmet promise of employment opportunities. Over the past decade, successive governments have pledged to catalyse job creation, yet the landscape remains bleak for many aspiring graduates and professionals. The disillusionment among students and professionals underscores a systemic failure to translate rhetoric into tangible opportunities within the state. Central to this issue is the absence of a robust strategy to attract investment and foster economic growth. While the ruling YSRCP touts initiatives like the YSR Pension Kanuka scheme and the recruitment of village and ward volunteers, these measures fall short of addressing the core issue of sustainable employment. Similarly, the TDP's slogans on job creation resonate with the electorate yet fail to acknowledge past shortcomings in delivering on similar promises. The youth of Andhra Pradesh are not swayed by political theatrics. Their demands are simple – access to quality jobs that reflect their qualifications and aspirations. The prevalence of educated youth seeking opportunities outside the state, in Hyderabad and Bengaluru, underscores a critical brain drain that undermines Andhra Pradesh's long-term growth prospects. On polling day, it is imperative for voters to scrutinise the efficacy of proposed employment policies. Mere assurances of competitive exams and skill development initiatives ring hollow without concrete action plans and accountability mechanisms. The electorate must demand transparency and coherence in job creation strategies, holding candidates and parties to their commitments. Moreover, the narrative must extend beyond partisan bickering to encompass a holistic dialogue on economic revitalisation. Collaborative efforts between government, industry stakeholders, and educational institutions are paramount to fostering an ecosystem conducive to innovation and entrepreneurship. By leveraging Andhra Pradesh's inherent strengths in sectors like technology and agriculture, policymakers can unlock untapped potential and generate sustainable employment avenues. The elections serve as a pivotal juncture for Andhra Pradesh to chart a new course towards inclusive growth and prosperity. It is incumbent upon elected representatives to prioritise the interests of the youth and enact policies that catalyse economic transformation. Failure to do so risks perpetuating a cycle of disillusionment and stagnation, further eroding trust in the democratic process. Amid the cacophony of electoral rhetoric, let us not forget the human faces behind the statistics – the dreams deferred, the aspirations unfulfilled. Their voices must resonate in the corridors of power, driving meaningful change beyond the ballot box. Andhra Pradesh must emerge as a beacon of opportunity and empowerment. The time for action is now.

Western Sham

An immediate ceasefire and unconditional release of all hostages, along with permanent actions towards a two-state solution, could only help to bring about long-term peace, which has been eluding for a long time. However, there seems to be no end in sight, at least in the near future, to the sufferings of Palestinians, as Israel has already launched its operation in Rafah, which is the last presumed safe haven for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and where conditions are already dire. This could turn Rafah into a zone of bloodshed and destruction that people won't be able to escape



As the people of Gaza face relentless bombardment, death, and destruction on an unprecedented severity and scale, a global coalition of more than 250 human rights and humanitarian organisations, academics, legal professionals, and students organised a “Global Day of Action” on May 2 with a particular focus on countries that are major arms exporters to Israel – the US, Canada, UK, Germany, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Australia – and to call on governments around the world to stop the transfer of all arms and ammunitions that are being used to fuel violations of international law in Gaza.

The central aim of the campaign was to sensitise the global community to the devastating impact of arms transfers on the sufferings of civilians in the Gaza Strip and hold the perpetrators of international humanitarian law (IHL) violations and atrocious crimes accountable. Israel's military offensive in Gaza in response to Hamas's October 7 attacks on southern Israel, in which more than 34,500 Palestinians have been killed and 77,700 injured, the majority of whom are women and children, and more than 70 per cent of the Palestinian territory has been reduced to rubble, has exposed the hypocrisy and double standards of the West led by the US, which always champions the cause of human rights and international law. The West has almost turned a blind eye to the enduring sufferings of the Palestinians.

Despite damning evidence of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of IHL committed by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller recently declared that it has not found Israel to be in violation of IHL, either when it comes to the conduct of the war or when it comes to the provision of humanitarian assistance.

In fact, under the National Security Memorandum on Safeguards and Accountability with Respect to Transferred Defence Articles and Defence Services 20 (NSM-20) countries that receive

US military assistance are required to give Washington “credible and reliable written assurances” that the arms will not be used in violation of IHL and human rights law.

NSM-20 also requires the Departments of State and Defence to report to Congress within 90 days on the extent to which such partners are abiding by their assurances.

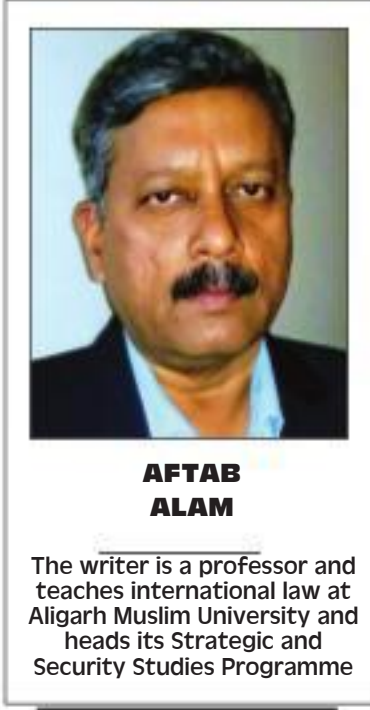
It must be noted that since October 7, the US has approved over 100 Foreign Military Sales to Israel, even using an emergency power to bypass Congressional review. Regrettably, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul and Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Jim Risch have written a letter to President Biden and Secretary Blinken urging the repeal of the NSM-20. They have argued that it erodes America's ability to provide security assistance to its key partners and allies who count on the country's security assistance, especially Israel, and threatens its ability to create and maintain partners in an era of strategic competition. Earlier in March, during the meeting of the UN Human Rights Council, the US was not only seen diplomatically shielding Israel but also justifying its actions.

Miller's statement defies the regular credible media reports and recommendations from its own State Department experts about IHL and human rights violations by the IDF in Gaza.

A recent report by an Independent Task Force on the application of NSM-20 regarding Israel also confirms such violations by the IDF in Gaza on a large scale. The report features sixteen clear, credible, and compelling incidents of such violations, along with multiple restrictions on humanitarian assistance for the period identified by NSM-20 (1 January 2023-April 2024).

In one of the worst incidents of IHL violations reported by the task force, the IDF struck Jabalia refugee camp on 9 October 2023, and destroyed several multi-story buildings, killing at least 39 people, for which the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights found no specific military objective and no reports of advance warnings.

Similarly, Human Rights Watch has also documented strikes on or near several major hospitals, including the Turkish-



AFTAB ALAM

The writer is a professor and teaches international law at Aligarh Muslim University and heads its Strategic and Security Studies Programme

Palestinian Friendship Hospital, the Indonesian Hospital, and the International Eye Care Center. Under IHL, hospitals and ambulances are protected civilian objects and cannot be targeted unless they are used by a party to the conflict to commit an “act harmful to the enemy.” The arbitrary denial and restrictions of humanitarian aid and essential supplies by Israel also violate IHL and the Roman Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which Israel seeks to justify on security grounds.

As per the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocol of 1977, intentionally starving civilians, depriving them of vital survival objects, and obstructing relief supplies are strictly prohibited.

It must be noted that the ICC is already considering issuing arrest warrants for senior Israeli political and military officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defence Minister Yoav Galant, and Army Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi, on charges related to the on-going war in the Gaza, especially the indiscriminate killing of civilians and blocking the delivery of aid to Gaza, which has led to starvation and the onset of famine.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has already held in January that Israel's campaign in Gaza ‘plausibly’ amounts to genocide. The most disappoint-

ing thing is the inability of the United Nations Security Council to act in the face of continued violations of international law applicable during armed conflicts because of the veto power used by the US in favour of Israel. The US is continuously thwarting any meaningful attempt, either for ceasefires, protecting civilians in Gaza, or holding Israel accountable for violating international law, despite broad international support for such actions.

In March 2024, following several failed attempts over six months and tremendous international pressure, the US finally allowed a ceasefire resolution to pass by the Security Council, but without any immediate effect on the ground, as Israel immediately declared that it would not abide by the decision and would continue to fight unless Hamas is completely destroyed and the last of the hostages returns home. Despite the binding nature of the Security Council resolutions, US ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield insisted that the resolution was non-binding. The question remains as to how, when, and by whom the decision of the Security Council would be enforced in the absence of US support.

An immediate ceasefire and unconditional release of all hostages, along with permanent actions towards a two-state solution, could only help to bring about long-term peace, which has been eluding for a long time.

However, there seems to be no end in sight, at least in the near future, to the sufferings of Palestinians, as Israel has already launched its operation in Rafah, which is the last presumed safe haven for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and where conditions are already dire. This could turn Rafah into a zone of bloodshed and destruction that people won't be able to escape.

Where would the Palestinians go from Rafah; they have by now been displaced multiple times by the on-going fighting? There are not many viable options for safety and shelter for them. It is hard to discern the aftermath of Israel's Rafah operation.

A life dedicated to cultural activism

“I firmly believe in the profound impact of music, dance, and acting on shaping people's thoughts and emotions. These art forms possess the power to inspire patriotism and drive social change. My experiences in Bengal and Assam have cemented this belief in my heart so deeply that despite countless attempts, I find myself unable to detach from the influence of mass culture,” Kalim Sharafi wrote in his memoirs, Smriti Amrita. This insight had been a guiding force in his lifelong cultural and political activism. This year marks the birth centenary of this icon of cultural activism.

In his youth, Sharafi delved into political ideologies such as Marxism and anti-imperialism, under the guidance of mentors and within study circles that integrated cultural and political elements.

During his time at Calcutta Madrasa as a tenth-grade student, he took part in the Holwell Monument Removal Movement under the leadership of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, in 1940. He became deeply involved in Gandhi's ‘Quit India’ movement, passionately visiting villages in his area to raise awareness, which led to his first imprisonment in August 1942.

His arrest sparked unprecedented support from villagers, who chanted slogans in his favor, deeply moving him. While in prison, rumors circulated that a Muslim youth had led a revolt involving a large group of Santal. It was



Kalim Sharafi who played a significant role in mobilizing both the locals and the Santal community in his area. Interestingly, he was the sole Muslim prisoner involved in the case.

While at Siuri Jail, Sharafi forged close bonds with fellow inmates Dinkar Kaushik, Anand Gopal Sengupta, and Pranab Guha Thakurta, the latter known for his affinity for Rabindra Sangeet. It was there that Sharafi was introduced to Rabindra Sangeet, singing alongside Pranab Guha Thakurta.

In 1943, he enrolled as a student at Krisnanath College and officially joined the Student Federation. However, Bengal was soon hit by famine, prompting Sharafi to immerse himself in relief efforts to aid the countless hungry people.

During this time, he also joined the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), a cultural movement dedicated to fostering political consciousness among the masses. IPTA quickly expanded nationwide, attracting numerous passionate artists, musicians, and playwrights. Kalim Sharafi's involvement with IPTA marked the beginning of his significant musical journey.

Through performances held across the country, he found his voice in singing patriotic and anti-imperialist songs, gaining prominence as IPTA became associated with the movement. In 1946, he was admitted to City College in Calcutta but once again abandoned his academic pursuits to fully dedicate himself to the cause, particularly amidst the dire circumstances of the recent famine, which claimed the lives of 5 million people.

Following the tumultuous events of Direct Action Day on August 16, 1946, Sharafi threw himself into organizing a painting exhibition condemning communalism. This exhibition featured esteemed Muslim artists including Zainul Abedin, Shafiuddin Ahmad, Quamrul Hassan, and Khaled Chowdhury, and was hosted at both Islamia College and the Calcutta Culture Centre.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Making waves

SIR, In the 3rd round of polling for the 18th Lok Sabha on Tuesday, over 1,300 candidates were in the fray in 93 LS constituencies across 12 States and UTs. With this, voting is over in more than half of the constituencies (283/543 seats).

One of the most watched battles was in Baramati between NCP leader Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule and Sunetra Pawar, wife of his estranged nephew and Maharashtra Dy CM, Ajit Pawar.

The BJP and the Congress-led alliance have crossed swords over the issue of reservation, offering their respective, conflicting interpretations of constitutionalism in the process.

The Opposition has accused the BJP of a conspiracy to end reservation by amending the Constitution, while offering to amend the Constitution to remove the 50 per cent ceiling on reservation.

While the Congress and its partners are aiming at a Hindu subaltern consolidation against the BJP in their favour, the ruling BJP's focus is on consolidating its Hindu base by constantly targeting Muslims.

Serious charges of sexual crimes against Prajwal Revanna, the grandson of former PM H.D. Deve Gowda, have put the BJP on the defensive. With no overwhelming wave of any kind visible, the principal opponents are struggling to create one in their favour.

Yours, etc., Vandana, Chandigarh, 8 May.

MYANMAR

SIR, This refers to the report “Civilian casualties rise in Myanmar's civil war” (10 May). Though incredible, it is true that Myanmar's army has launched a war against its own citizens and the army is killing hundreds of innocent people almost on a daily basis. The civil war has recently undergone a change in character. Common people have collectively

started resisting the army and they have been successful in many cases. This collective resistance can win this fratricidal conflict if the international community extends its helping hand. Democracy needs to be established in Myanmar.

Yours, etc., Aranya Sanyal, Siliguri, 10 May.

TATA WOES

SIR, With reference to “Mass sick leave: Air India Express cancels 70 flights”, first with Vistara and now Air India Express, the Tata group's woes are not coming to an end.

The Indian aviation market is the third largest in the world. It is bound to face some hiccups but if it is flyers who are at the receiving end on a continuous basis then airlines must introspect and do course correction.

Maintaining a balance between employees' welfare and flyers' experience is a tight rope walk but airlines must do that with a long-term picture in mind. Hand-drawn mergers has never been an

easy task, but that is where the real test of the management lies.

Aviation was one of the worst hit sectors during the pandemic and now when demand is surpassing supply, airlines can not

afford to falter. So the Tatas need to be on their toes and sit with their staff and crew members to address their concerns.

Yours, etc., Bal Govind, Noida, 9 May.

LEADER OF SUBSTANCE

SIR, This refers to your editorial “Macron's Vision” published yesterday. Emmanuel Macron was projected as the tallest leader in the European Union. It was also conveyed that Macron's bright image within the EU was justifiably acquired by him on account of slew of growth-oriented industrial policies steadfastly pursued by him and that in turn served overall interests of EU.

Europe's security, stability, and economic prosperity were directly linked to the success or failure of Macron's abilities to deliver as the top leader of EU. Macron has demonstrated markedly different leadership style not only for France and the EU, but also on wider global platforms, viz, climate conference, Paris, 2022 and on securing new levels in bilateral relations with major powers like India and China. As head of a NATO member state, Macron fulfilled the expected active role in support of Ukraine's defense against Russia. Successful organization of the summer Olympics 2024 in Paris will be a fitting centenary commemoration of the games held in Paris in 1924 and would add another feather in the cap of Macron.

Yours, etc., Kunal Kanti Konar, Kolkata, 11 May.

Impressive strides in reducing poverty

GAUTAM BHATTACHARYA

For quite some time, poverty in developing nations was measured in terms of the proportion of people who couldn't spend even one dollar in a day. The value of one US\$ in India in terms of 'purchasing power parity (PPP)' was Rs. 22.88 in 2022-23. A basket of goods that a person in the US bought with one dollar that year could be purchased in India with Rs. 22.88. Results of the survey on household consumption expenditure, recently released by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) revealed that the bottom 5 per cent of the population (ranked by monthly per capita expenditure) in rural India spends Rs. 1,373/- a month. Thus, consumption of the bottom 5 per cent of the population was around \$2 per day in 2022-23, in terms of the value of the goods and services in the domestic Indian market.

The percentage of population below poverty line (BPL) was 21.92 per cent in 2012. The result of the recent survey must be satisfying to the policy makers in the government. The results of a similar study in 2017-18 which was included in the draft report of the 75th round of household consumption expenditure, was not accepted by the government and the findings were never released allegedly because of adverse findings.

The NSSO report further indicated that India's growth story is inclusive as the gap between consumption in rural areas and urban areas have narrowed down over the last two decades. Average per capita monthly expenditure in rural areas is Rs. 3,773 and 46 per cent of that is spent on food items. Monthly per capita consumption expenditure in urban areas is Rs. 6,459 and 39 per cent of that is spent on food. Consumption in the



urban areas is thus 71.2 per cent higher as compared to the rural areas. The gap was 90.8 per cent in 2004-05 and 83.9 per cent 2011-12.

The Survey also reveals that the rural rich (top 5 per cent) of the rural population in terms of monthly consumption expenditure) consume 7.65 times of the rural poor (bottom 5 per cent) whereas the urban rich consume 10.14 times of the urban poor. These figures may not be very palatable to policy makers, though there are some silver linings in the composition of expenditure of the poor. The component of expenditure on 'cereals' reduced from 22 per cent in 1999-2000 to 10.7 per cent in 2011-12 and to less than 5 per cent in 2022-23. A reduced proportion of expenditure on cereals indicates that the poor today is better placed to spend on items other than the basic meals. Proportionate expenditure on conveyance (4.20 to 7.55 per cent) and durable goods (4.85 to 6.89

per cent) increased well as compared to 2011-12.

By and large the survey results on monthly consumption expenditure contradict the narrative that India's growth in recent decades was not inclusive. According to a recent Discussion Paper released by NITI Aayog, 'multidimensional poverty' in India declined from 29.17 per cent in 2013-14 to 11.28 per cent in 2022-23. Multidimensional poverty is a relatively new concept which according to the Aayog is more comprehensive in assessing one's deprivation. The welfare of a household depends "not only on its own spendings but also on state expenditures on people's wellbeing" viz. free education and health, shelter and sanitation, nutritional support to children and pregnant women etc.

Though in terms of specific numbers the estimate of poverty as assessed from the NSSO survey and one assessed by NITI Aayog differ, that

is understandable because the two studies are based on two different premises: whereas NSSO aims to capture household expenditure, multidimensional poverty attempts to estimate the degree of deprivation. However, both studies converge to a point that abject poverty has reduced substantially in the last two decades.

What policy of the government might have contributed most to reducing poverty? The decade of the 2010s will be remembered in the Indian economy for the big push in various welfare schemes directly aimed at the vulnerable sections of society. Such a push was initially engineered by various State governments and was subsequently adopted by the Central government. Welfare grants, pensions, and subsidies to vulnerable sections of the society played a catalytic role in raising the consumption expenditure of the poor and in reducing the gap between rural and urban India.

The economists and Human Development Reports of UNDP as early as in 1990s emphasized that developing countries should go for direct transfer of benefits in the accounts of the targeted beneficiaries, instead of providing subsidies which are often indirect and infringe logical functioning of the market forces. However, the direct transfer of benefits could not be implemented on a large scale in India as the poor hardly had bank or post office accounts and the institutions did not have the digital infrastructure to transfer money seamlessly from the nodal agency to the beneficiary accounts.

There was a paradigm shift in the development of the IT network of financial institutions in the first decade of this millennium. Subsequently, the drive to bring all eligible citizens under the formal banking network facilitated seamless transfer of money from the nodal agencies to the Aadhaar-seeded accounts of the targeted beneficiaries and that was catalytic in reducing abject poverty in the country in the last ten years.

However, the latest results of the NSSO survey also revealed certain disturbing trends. Whereas in rural Kerala, the average per capita monthly consumption is Rs. 5,924, that in Chhattisgarh (Rs.2,466) is less than 42 per cent of that. The difference of per capita consumption in urban areas is 54 per cent amongst the top (Delhi) and bottom (Chhattisgarh) states. The extent of regional imbalances is so alarming that perhaps the policy makers need to define the norm of poverty separately for each state and need to have state-specific policy prescriptions in future.

(The writer, a former civil servant, is now an independent commentator on socio-economic issues and public policies.)

POLITICAL DIARY KALYANI SHANKAR

Challenges for both BJP and Congress

The ruling BJP has already claimed victory amid the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. The current polls are crucial and significant in shaping our nation's future.

The subsequent four phases, each lasting a week, are scheduled for May 13, 20, 25, and June 1. These phases are crucial as they cover different regions of the country.

According to recent opinion polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is predicted to secure an unprecedented third-term win in these elections. BJP leaders, including Mr Modi, claim the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the BJP, will surpass 400 seats, a significant majority in the 543-member Lok Sabha. Home Minister Amit Shah claims the NDA will secure 200 of the 283 seats in the first three phases alone, indicating the party's confidence in the early stages of the election. Only once did the Congress party manage to win over 400 seats - following Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984.

The ruling party is trying to strengthen its Hindu base. However, there is no clear wave of support for either side. The political players need a game-changing strategy to tilt the balance in their favour.

To gain an advantage, the BJP has implemented four key strategies:

- Celebrity candidates fighting polls
- Appealing to minority groups.
- Exploiting redrawn boundaries to strengthen the Hindu vote in areas controlled by the opposition.
- Projecting the Modi magic.



The Congress and its allies are making a strategic move, attempting to consolidate the Hindu subaltern.

The initial stages of the election have witnessed a significant decrease in voter participation compared to previous years. As the election progresses, the focus will shift to whether voter turnout can recover or continue to decline. This underscores the crucial role of every voter in shaping the election results.

This trend of declining voter engagement could significantly impact the election results. The Election Commission of India (ECI) is disappointed with the turnout in some metropolitan cities. It points to the rigid voter apathy in high-tech cities. Last month, ECI assembled many metro commissioners in Delhi to work out a strategy to fight urban apathy.

Heat in parts of India could also reduce election turnout. Yet low turnout doesn't always hurt the ruling party; local issues can influence the outcome.

The BJP is not resting on its laurels and aims for significant electoral gains in states like West Bengal, Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. The party focuses on countering the ruling Trinamool Congress's dominance in West Bengal. In Odisha, it is trying to make inroads into the Biju Janata Dal's stronghold. In Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, the BJP aims to increase its vote share and win more seats. The party seeks to expand its vote share significantly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

However, the role of regional allies in these states remains uncertain,

which could undermine the BJP's prospects.

During a campaign rally, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi emphasised his role was spreading political activism. He told Reuters that results can never be predicted. Congress President Mallikharjun Kharge, in a post on X, remarked in Hindi, "The times are changing. Friends are no longer friends! After completing three phases of elections, today the prime minister has started attacking his friends. It is becoming clear that Modi's chair is shaking. This is the real trend of the results."

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav tweeted, "After the first two phases of voting, the condition of the BJP will be worse in the next phases." The reason people are not voting in

the BJP's favour is because of inflation and unemployment, Yadav claimed.

The Congress strategy intensely focuses on social welfare and economic empowerment. It comprehensively explains the party's policy priorities in the ongoing elections.

The Congress' main challenge is to keep its 'flock' together and deal with rebels. Since Modi took power in 2014, more than 8,000 politicians from Congress and other parties, including prominent state leaders, have defected to the BJP. The BJP has given tickets to some of them. How voters treat these turncoats remains to be seen.

Internal disputes are one of the critical issues plaguing Congress today. There are allegations that some leaders have close connections with rival parties, which raises questions about their loyalty.

Between 2016 and 2020, 170 Congress MLAs and 7 Rajya Sabha members switched parties, impacting Indian politics. Notably, Congress spokespersons who joined the BJP now speak for their former adversary. The recent confusion in Indore, Surat, and Banswara indicates a lack of clarity, planning, and control within the Congress.

The satta bazaar predicts the BJP's chances of winning 330-335 seats at Re. 1, 350 at Rs. 3, and 400 at Rs. 12-15. The odds for the NDA to get 400 seats are Rs. 4-5. India's stock benchmarks fell by 1.5 per cent last Tuesday as investors cut their bets, expressing concern that the BJP may not get as many seats as projected in the general election.

On June 4, the voters will decide the winner.

NOW AND AGAIN

Mother's Day memory

BISWANATH BHATTACHARJEE

Mother's Day takes me back to my early schooling days from the mid-1970s to 1980s. The time and event are reminiscent of different members of an avian family taking shelter in a railway bungalow veranda in our then residence in Burdwan district, close to the railway station.

The railway bungalows made by the British had (they still exist) had spacious and airy rooms with high ceilings. A wide veranda generally encircled almost the entire building. A garden with one or two swings was the centre of attraction of these bungalows, with flower-bordered long walkways from the main entrance of the bungalow leading to the gate.

It was a short walk from our gate to the main road that connected the Railway Station and the G T Road. A few tea stalls and two or three thatched-mud-walled hotels on both sides of the main road frequently visited by rickshaw pullers, peddlers and railway porters, kept the road busy from dawn to dusk. There was one or two rice-sellers who had their makeshift shops in front of the bungalow-gate. The bungalow-veranda was their occasional storehouse when it rained. Sacks filled with rice and wheat invited the birds, especially the sparrows, to fill their bellies and satiate their hunger.

The main wooden door of the bungalow had slatted blinds. It allowed us to watch, especially, the sparrows feeding on the grains of corn. There was also a second wood-panelled door – juxtaposed with the first one – fitted with glass panes. At times, my siblings and I would watch the members of the avian families through these glass panes. A cane-spun basket was at times made stationary, half-opened, at a conducive angle, using a small stick tethered to a long thread to pull from a distance. Corn was scattered inside the basket to lure the sparrows. In this way, one or two sparrows were trapped while they fed, and later released. This was almost a game for me on a day of heavy downpour.

The feathered endothermic vertebrates taking shelter in the veranda varied from sparrow to pigeon to dove. The care of the mother-birds to nourish and feed their new-borns was worth watching. The ventilators of the veranda and shallow recesses in the ceiling were homes for pigeons and doves during incubation. The older bird was seen policing the freshly laid eggs and then its babies throughout the day perching on occasional pegs on the wall.

With the march of time, the new-born birds learnt to fly, following the Darwinian Theory of Biological Evolution and the mother-bird left along with the babies only to be replaced by a new family the next season. Many springs have elapsed since then, but this maternal bond of love, duty and responsibility is an indelible memory.

100 YEARS AGO

PIONEER'S RECORD

SEVENTY YEARS AS A LAY PREACHER

SEVENTY years a lay preacher fifty-five years a Bible-class conductor and 60 years a Sunday School teacher, is the record of Mr. John R. Chart, who has died at Mitcham, Surrey in his 87th year. He was a pioneer of Sunday-School excursions.

He passed away in the little old wooden cottage in which he was born, and in which his fathers before him had lived for over 200 years. It faces the famous fair green, and Mr. Chart was proud of the fact that he had seen every Mitcham Fair for 86 years. He was carried to his first as a baby in arms, and saw the last to be held on the historic spot.

Mr. Chart was widely known for his Sunday School excursions to Brighton, which ran from 1883 till the outbreak of war "without a break or a breakdown," as he used to say. Nearly 2,000 children were taken every July, mainly out of funds earned by himself as a lantern lecturer and concert promoter. The day schools had to close on "Chart's Excursion Day."

He was a Mitcham councillor for 25 years, and headed the poll for years in succession. With his wife, who survives him, aged 79, he was a Sunday School teacher for 60 years.

In 1926, on the celebration of Mr. and Mrs. Chart's golden wedding, Mitcham and Brighton (where they were secretly married) united to honour them with a public presentation. A thousand children who owed their first sight of the sea to Mr. Chart, subscribed a penny each. Sir H Mallaby-Deeley, several bishops, and other distinguished men of all shades of opinion joined in the testimonial to an unique personality. By trade he was an undertaker and corn chandler.

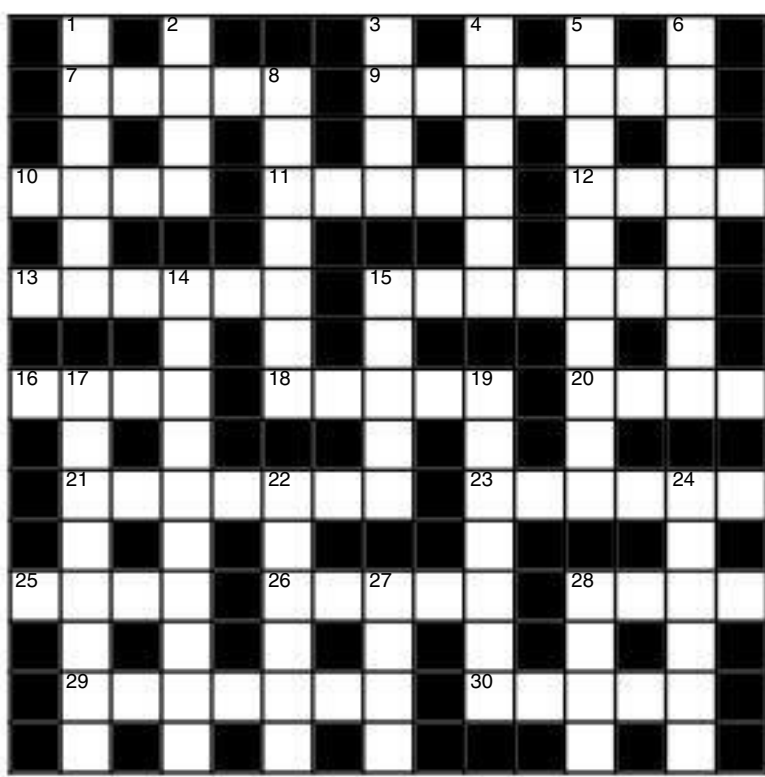
RIDING ASTRIDE LESS SECURE VISITORS

LONDON riding masters are this season discouraging their women pupils from riding astride and predict that the side-saddle is coming into its own again.

A aiding master told a Daily Mail reporter that riding astride was now only encouraged in girls from 10 to 14 years old. "Women are finding that the sidesaddle gives them more, grace and security," he said. "Astride riders must be prepared to spend anything from six to eight hours a day in the saddle before they are really proficient, and even then only exceptionally muscular girls ever completely master this way of riding. Women who dance do not want their figures to attain the muscularity which astride riding is bound to give them in time. Hunting women also have given up riding astride."

CROSSWORD

NO-292777



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

GOOD FOR NOTHING
ERR TO VEE C
TRANSLATE YOUTH
O TH DRERE
NOISY HILARIOUS
E O OY DNT
SANTIAGO GAZEBO
O N S A H F
WRETCH INFLAMED
N P R H G A R
BRIDEWELL TOSCA
A T M A T O C W
CLOVE VACILLATE
K M N E A L R R
RESTIONONESOARS

ACROSS

- Church member, for a spell (5)
- Riotous glee in a family (7)
- Party's broadcast censored (4)
- May perhaps squirm on the inside (5)
- Occasionally overlooked illegal parking in spring (4)
- Key of D sounding top-class (6)
- Cast's concern (7)
- Part of Georgia is actually to the west of here (4)

- Group is finally close to a discovery (5)
- Vessel I'm not sure we included (4)
- India dividing NATO partners Greece and Turkey? (7)
- Recall evening in Paris, eating at ten to seven, or 8:30? (6)
- Case of diamonds, say (4)
- After hearing shot, beat the first two in race (5)
- Urges Republican to be refused cases (4)

- A stupid old oaf delivers this much codswallop (1,4,2)
- Rubbish head of state and others from the Right (5)

DOWN

- Overact manically: spectator finally bailing in interval (6)
- Give applause (4)
- Family in Copenhagen on vacation touring city (4)

- And cut those people rendering God Save the Queen, perhaps (6)
- A plan with merit? Not usually in this chamber (10)
- Quite a few bits and pieces of battery storing energy (8)
- Representatives in places about to be eliminated (7)
- Joy at Texan oil production (10)
- Form of halogen as source of salt (5)

- Odd fish perhaps not sharks (8)
- A missing eardrum, curiously, signified the first crimes (7)
- Wild coast hiding first sign of danger for boat crews? (6)
- Lots of dogs pee in the auditorium unobserved (6)
- Provided Force with unknown suspect (4)
- Ring friend about Emilia's debut (4)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)

THUMBNAILS

Bajaj Auto launches Pulsar NS400Z: Bajaj Auto launched the Pulsar NS400Z powered by a 373cc liquid-cooled engine with a 6-speed gearbox, delivering 40 PS power, 35 Nm torque, ride-by-wire electronic throttle, and four ride modes. Available in 4 colours the all-new Pulsar NS 400 is priced at Rs 1,85,000 ex-showroom (Delhi).

Indian legal award: Malabar Gold and Diamonds, one of the largest jewellery groups, received the country's prestigious 13th annual Legal era-Indian Legal Awards in the legal category. The company has been awarded the coveted 'Compliance and Risk Management Team of the Year 2023-24' award, underscoring its commitment to legal excellence and ethical business practices.

NDMC resumes Panna Diamond Mining Project: IG Drones, one of the premier drone service providers in India, has announced that it has secured a substantial work order for conducting a comprehensive drone survey based on Photogrammetry and LiDAR at the Diamond Mining Project in Panna, Madhya Pradesh. This significant contract spans three financial years, covering 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27 is awarded by NDMC.

Japanese delegates visits NIFTEM: Japanese delegates visited the NIFTEM in Kundli, Haryana to explore the possibilities of collaboration in the food processing sector between NIFTEM-K and Japanese Universities. The meeting aimed at strengthening participation and exploring the possibilities of collaboration in the food-processing sector between NIFTEM-K and Japanese Universities especially for research and academia. JICA and NIFTEM will jointly in the villages under the Village Adoption Programme of NIFTEM to promote food processing and entrepreneurship among rural populations.

MSDE, Mahindra & Mahindra sign MoU: Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., one of the leading farm equipment companies, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) to conduct two pilots under the Drone Didi Yojna. Under the partnership, Mahindra and MSDE will conduct two pilots at National Skill Training Institutes (NSTI) in Hyderabad and Noida to skill 500 women in exclusive batches of 20 women only.

Amazon India helps to employ 6,000 differently-abled: In collaboration with Sarthak Education Trust, Amazon India launched the Global Resource Center (GRC) to empower people with disabilities. GRC provides training, mentorship, and job placement services. The joint effort by Amazon and Sarthak has already trained over 10,000 people with disabilities and provided employment opportunities to over 6,000 in the last 6 months.

Sahitya Akademi Fellowship award: Sahitya Akademi's highest honour ~ the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship ~ was awarded to eminent English writer and scholar Ruskin Bond. Due to his ill health, this honour was given to Bond by Sahitya Akademi president Madhav Kaushik and Sahitya Akademi Secretary K Sreenivasarao, at his Mussoorie home. Bond's son was also present on the occasion. Born on 19 May 1934 in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, Ruskin Bond has been active in the world of writing for more than 50 years and has written in various genres of literature. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1992 for his story collection Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra. He was also honoured with Padma Shri in 1999, Padma Bhushan in 2019, and the Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya in 2012.

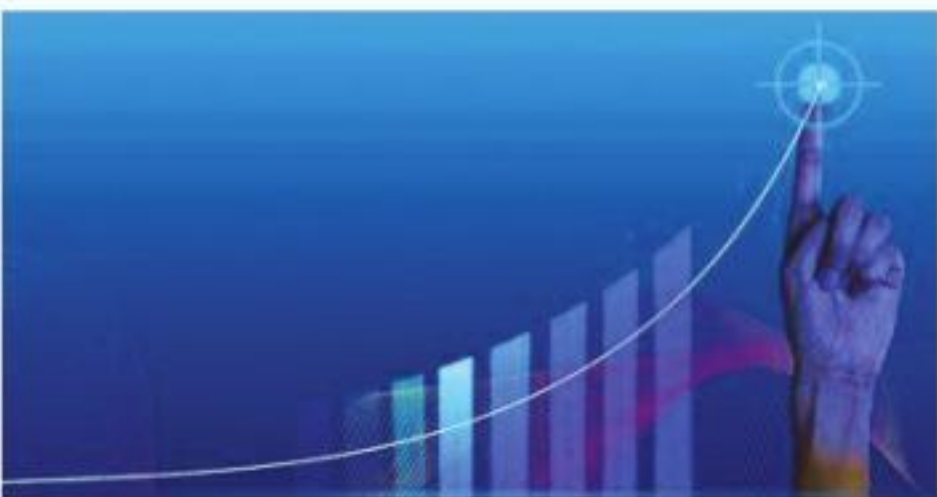
India geared up for next phase of growth in tech: Industry leaders

Tech has revolutionised the business landscape in India, redefining job roles and transforming industries

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

As India embarks on its journey to become a global technology powerhouse under various schemes launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government in the last 10 years, the National Technology Day is the occasion for the country to reflect on achievements and also look at the challenges ahead in the artificial intelligence (AI)-driven era, industry leaders said on Saturday.

It was former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee who announced May 11 as National Technology Day, to commemorate the Pokhran nuclear tests conducted by the Indian Army in Rajasthan in 1998. In the last 10 years under PM Modi, the country has seen tremendous growth across parameters -- be it a thrust on local manufacturing, new semiconductor plants, AI, 5G, startups, innovation and production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes for various sec-



tors, while skilling the workforce and creating lakhs of new jobs.

"As we celebrate this day, it's crucial to acknowledge the role of education, mentorship, and entrepreneurship in nurturing a generation capable of innovation and leadership," said Kunal Purohit, Chief Digital Services Officer, Tech Mahindra.

A. Gururaj, Managing Director, Optimus Electronics, commented that India is progressing forward towards creating local product development strengths in multiple segments through startups and other entities in the electronics segment.

"We will continue to work towards developing the electronics ecosystem in India in line with the government's vision towards creating an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat,'" he added.

In the last decade, ever since PM Modi launched the 'Make in India' programme in September 2014, lakhs of new jobs have been created.

Nearly 12 lakh new jobs have been created in electronics manufacturing alone, which has crossed \$100 billion. "We believe that the next decade will be marked by unparalleled technological progress in AI, cloud and connectivity, presenting new

opportunities for India to strengthen its foothold in the global technology landscape," said Tarun Chhabra, Country Manager, Nokia India.

PM Modi recently laid the foundation stone for three semiconductor plans worth Rs 1.25 lakh crore.

The day is not far when Indians will travel in a bullet train. The first bullet train is set to run in one section (Mumbai and Ahmedabad) in 2026. Anil Sethi, Vice President, Infrastructure Solutions Group, Dell Technologies India, said that with a pool of 5 million digitally-skilled workforce, national science and technology missions, and a robust startup ecosystem that values emerging technologies like AI, cybersecurity, 5G/edge, and quantum computing, among others, "we are truly witnessing India's next phase of growth in technology".

"New-age disruptive technology such as generative AI, will be the key factor that will drive new possibilities in digital transformation enabling busi-

nesses to make the right decision while building customer trust," he mentioned.

Technology has revolutionised the business landscape in India, redefining job roles and transforming industries.

"To remain competitive and thrive in this dynamic landscape, industries must embrace innovation and equip their workforce with the necessary skills to adapt to emerging technologies, drive operational efficiencies, and unlock new growth opportunities," said Ashish Modi, President, Honeywell India.

According to Anku Jain, Managing Director, Mediatek India, the IT industry in the country has emerged as a thriving force, driving the country's GDP, employment opportunities and overall growth of the economy.

"Organisations must focus on upskilling and reskilling the workforce to enable them to develop competencies and tap into significant development opportunities across different sectors," he noted.

India under PM Modi a global case study on how to become a resilient economy: Rajeev Chandrasekhar

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Union Minister and BJP candidate from Thiruvananthapuram, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, said on Saturday that India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has become a global case study on how to emerge as a resilient economy amid myriad of challenges.

Taking on X social media platform on the anniversary of the 1998 Pokhran nuclear tests, Chandrasekhar said that technology is the medium for empowering people.

"It is the mainstay of making India 'Atmanirbhar'. On this day in 1998, India achieved a major milestone in 'Atmanirbharta' by successfully conducting the Pokhran nuclear tests," said Chandrasekhar. The historic test conducted by the then NDA government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, signalled to the world about India's scientific prowess and sovereignty.

"India firmly conveyed its commitment to the 'No First Use' policy and advocated the concept of 'equal and



legitimately adequate security' for all nations. NDA governments have always prioritised national security," said the minister. In India's 'Techade' under PM Modi, the country has been witnessing robust growth across economic parameters and has become a formidable force in innovation and tech-focused exports.

"India under the leadership of PM Modi has certainly become a global case study on how we navigated through challenges of pandemic, economy, conflict and terror and emerged as a resilient and world's fastest growing economy," Chandrasekhar com-

NEWSFEED

INDIAN COAST GUARD, HINDALCO INDUSTRIES SIGN MOU



A Memorandum of Understanding between the Indian Coast Guard and Hindalco Industries, a flagship company of the Aditya Birla Group, signed for manufacturing and supply of indigenous marine grade Aluminum. The MoU was signed by DDG (Material & Maintenance) IG HK Sharma, TM, Indian Coast Guard and Nitesh Koul, CEO Downstream Aluminum Business, Hindalco in the presence of Additional Director General Indian Coast Guard.

IGL announces Q4 and annual financial results of FY 2024

Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL), the largest CNG distribution company of the country, operating city gas distribution (CGD) networks across 30 districts in eleven geographical areas across four states of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan on May 7, announced impressive results for the quarter ending March 2024 and Annual Financial Results of FY'24.

Delivering a stellar performance, IGL has declared net profit of Rs 382.80 crore in Q4 of FY23-24, showing an increase of 16% over Rs 329.75 crore recorded in the corresponding quarter of the year FY22-23. The overall net prof-

it in FY23-24 was Rs 1748.08 crore as compared to Rs 1445.02 crore in the previous financial year, showing a growth of 21%.

The turnover of IGL in Q4 of FY 23-24 was Rs 3949.17 crore as compared to Rs 4042.57 crore in the corresponding quarter of 2022-23. The sales volume in the quarter increased from 8.25 MMSCMD in Q4 of 2022-23 to 8.73 MMSCMD in Q4 of FY'24 showing a volume growth of 7%.

While CNG registered sales volume growth of 5% during the period, PNG showed overall sales volume growth of 11% during this quarter.

Faridabad unit Youth Hostel Association of India celebrates 75th anniversary



Youth Hostel Association of India, Faridabad Unit celebrated its 75th anniversary with its life members and their family members. Prashant Bhalla, Chairman, Manav Rachna International University graced the occasion as special guest.

On the occasion, association members and their family members gave cultural pre-

sentations. The programme was conducted by Maninder Singh and Kamlesh Dhiman.

Chairman of Faridabad unit of the association PC Vaish, consultant Amit Gupta, president Tariq Badar, vice president Harish Bhatia and Amit Chandra Seth, Treasurer Dinesh Bhat and other officials were present in the programme.

IIPI reduces membership fee

Pursuant to its commitment to strengthen the insolvency ecosystem in the country and make it more inclusive, Indian Institute of Insolvency Professionals of ICAI (IIPI) has reduced the membership fee for Insolvency Professionals (IPs) and Insolvency Professional Entities (IPEs) enrolled as Juristic IPs, by 50% from the current financial year.

Further, 'Authorisation for Assignment' (AFA) akin to certificate of practice, which was previously not chargeable, has been made subject to an annual fee.

SCOPE organises 'health talk-cum-health screening camp'



Prioritising wellbeing and fitness in the Public Sector, Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE) organised a 'Health Talk-cum-Health Screening Camp' at SCOPE Convention Centre, SCOPE Complex, New Delhi.

Anul Sobti, DG, SCOPE; Siba Prasad Mohanty, CMD, HURL addressed the participants and Dr Puneet Girdhar, Principal Director & HoD - Spine Surgery, BLK-Max Hospital delivered a health talk on 'Lifestyle Modification to Pre-

vent Lower Back Pain.

The health screening camp comprising of eye check-up by a team of Dr. Shroff Charity Eye Hospital, Consultation by Spine Specialist from BLK Max Hospital and various health check-ups were organized as part of the event. Employees from various PSEs attended the health talk and availed the benefit of the health screening camp.

The health talk was organised in association with Dr. Reddy's foundation for health education and as part of SCOPE's month-long Public Sector Day celebrations.

POWERGRID gets anti-bribery management system certification

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) a Maharatna CPSU under Ministry of Power, has been awarded Anti-Bribery Management System (ABMS) IS/ISO 37001 certification by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in a program held on 8 May at POWERGRID Corporate Centre, Gurugram.

The ABMS certificate was handed over by Lalthan Pari, Director, Management System Certification (Central), BIS to



Dharmendra Kumar Madan, Chief Vigilance Officer, POWERGRID in the august presence of Ajay Tewari, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Power

RK Tyagi, CMD, Abhay Choudhary, Director (Projects), G Ravisankar, Director (Finance), Dr. Yatindra Dwivedi, Director (Personnel), Ashish Tripathi,

Kolkata Metro logs 38 pchike in non-fare revenue earnings

Kolkata Metro Railway's non-fare revenue increased to a great extent. With such concerted efforts, Metro Railway has earned Rs 2.72 crore in the month of April, 2024 as Non-Fare Revenue (NFR).

In 2023-24 Metro had earned Rs 1.97 crore as NFR during the same period. This is an increase of 38%.

P Uday Kumar Reddy, General Manager, Metro Railway has expressed his satisfaction as Metro has been able to show such a performance.

He expressed his hope that in this fiscal too Metro will be able to fulfil the expectations of Railway Board.

N Rly GM Shobhan Chaudhuri visits USBRL project in J&K

Shobhan Chaudhuri, General Manager, Northern Railway conducted a detailed inspection of the prestigious National Project of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla new BG Rail Link Project on 10 May. The inspection was accompanied by Chief Administrative Officer/USBRL and other senior officers of Northern Railways and KRCL.

Shobhan Chaudhuri started his inspection from Sri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra station yard by motor trolley up to Chenab Bridge. He inspected Tunnel number 33, 34, Anji Bridge, tunnel number 35, Reasi Yard, Tunnel number 36 and Chenab Bridge.

Balance activities for com-



pleting work of Tunnel T-33 was thoroughly discussed with engineers of Northern Railway and KRCL.

The General Manager expressed satisfaction at the pace of progress but impressed upon the project authorities to closely monitor all the activities and augment resources to expedite the work. He also inspected the bridge instrumentation provided at Bridge number 220 in Reasi Yard and Bridge number 224 in Bakkal Yard.

Bangiya Gramin Vikash bank net profit up by 782 pc

Bangiya Gramin Vikash Bank on 3 May reported a 782% jump in its net profit in FY 2023-24, complemented by a decline in bad loan and rise in interest income. Operating Profit grew by 20.76% during the year under review. On the Asset Quality side the Bank's GNPA reduced by 423 BPS.

Net NPA also came down to 1.22% as on 31 March 2024 from 2.79% as on 31 March 2023.

Provision Coverage Ratio increased to 88.35% as on 31st March 2024 compared to 82.05% as on 31 March 2023.

PNB announces financial results

Punjab National Bank announced its financial results for the quarter and year ended 31 March 2024.

The Board of Directors have recommended a dividend of Rs 1.50 per equity share (75%) for the year ended March 31, 2024 subject to requisite approvals.

Net Profit increased Y-o-Y by 159.8% and Q-o-Q by 35.4% to Rs 3,010 crore in Q4 FY'24 from Rs 1,159 crore in Q4 FY'23 and Rs 2,223 crore in Q3 FY'24.

During FY'24, Net Profit rose to Rs 8,245 crore recording a robust growth of 228.8% against Rs 2,507 crore posted during FY'23.

Return on Assets (RoA) improved to 0.77% in Q4 FY'24 from 0.58% in Q3 FY'24 and 0.32% in Q4 FY'23.

THDCIL director (personnel), inaugurates Int'l conference on Mathematics in Rishikesh



Reinforcing THDC India Limited's commitment as a leading Power Sector Enterprise dedicated to the holistic development of the Nation, RK Vishnoi, Chairman and Managing Director, THDC India Limited conveyed that apart from its vision to provide

clean and affordable Power Supply 24x7, THDCIL remains steadfast in its support as an active player in the development of the Nation, with special emphasis in the State of Uttarakhand.

Shallinder Singh, Director (personnel) THDC India Lim-

ited inaugurated a 3-day International Conference on Non-linear Analysis and Applications (ICNAA 2024) & Symposium on ancient Indian Mathematics organised by the Department of Mathematics at Pandit Lalit Mohan Sharma Campus, Dev Suman

Uttarakhand University, Rishikesh on 10 May. A host of eminent faculty members from several countries, including Japan, South Africa and Nepal, addressed the conference, sharing their expertise with a diverse group of participants.

AAI launches internship programme ~ Pradipti for students

Airports Authority of India, the largest airport operator and sole air navigation services provider in the country launched its Internship Program-Pradipti on 10 May at Indian Aviation Academy, New Delhi.

The event took place in presence of Sanjeev Kumar, Chairman, AAI and Board Members of AAI.

Large number of educational institutions, Airport Directors of AAI airports also participated in the event



through physical and virtual mode.

On the occasion, chairman, AAI said, "The programme has been designed to give students firsthand experience of functioning of the airports in particular and in

aviation industry at large apart from igniting passion in them for furthering their interests. The idea behind this initiative is to bring students from institutes to explore their field of interest, providing them the industry experi-

ence through participation in project implementation at airports." An MoU has been prepared by the AAI which will be signed between the respective educational institutions and AAI that would help in facilitating the Internship implementation process. Till date, over 120 institutions have signed the MoU in the vicinity of AAI airports across the country for their students undergoing graduation/post-graduation/ professional degree courses.

Eastern Railway's Sealdah Division received commendation for its commendable efforts in advancing safety standards.

DG, safety, Railway Board lauded the exemplary practices across all divisions of the Eastern Railway, acknowledging their commitment to safety enhancement.

Brij Mohan Agarwal, Director General (safety) Railway Board, convened a significant safety meeting on May 10, with Milind K Deouskar,



General Manager of Eastern Railway, along with the esteemed presence of Shri Sumit Sarkar, Additional General Manager, and other senior Officers Railways.

The primary agenda of the meeting underscored the non-negotiable stance on safety issues concerning train operations.

DG, safety, railway Board emphasised the imperative of maintaining safety standards at the highest level and urged for stringent adherence to safety protocols.

Furthermore, the meeting delved into strategic measures to enhance safety practices, including comprehensive counselling sessions for loco-pilots regarding breaking distances and the implementation of extensive field training for staff involved in safety operations.

If INDI alliance comes to power, era of terrorism will revive: Yogi

'PM Narendra Modi has served the nation tirelessly, without pause, fatigue, or retreat'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KANPUR, 11 MAY

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said that if the INDI alliance comes to power, the era of terrorism and Naxalism will be revived in the country.

Yogi said that the Congress, which is spreading the rumours of Constitutional amendments to scare people, was the first to trample the freedom of expression by amending the Indian Constitution.

While addressing a public meeting for Kanpur and Akbarpur Lok Sabha seats, the Chief Minister took potshots at the Samajwadi Party and said, "The SP's agenda did not include development of Ayodhya, but rather withdrawing cases against terrorists who attacked Ayodhya."

In a bid to garner public support for BJP candidates Ramesh Awasthi from Kanpur and Devendra Singh Bhole from Akbarpur, Yogi remarked that Mother Ganga has blessed Kanpur with prosperity and entrepreneurship. "Reputed for being the land of revolution, Kanpur also serves as the powerhouse for

IOC seeks support for INDI alliance candidates
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, 11 MAY

Claiming that Rahul Gandhi is the only hope for the country, the Indian Overseas Congress have appealed to the people of the country to support every candidate of the INDI Alliance to strengthen the country and protect the Constitution.

Talking to media here on Saturday, Indian Overseas Congress president Mohinder Singh said that the world is closely watching the 2024 general elections in India due to the continuous erosion of India's democracy over the past decade.

"The social harmony here is being dismantled and the government is seeking to abolish reservations for Dalits and backward classes by amending the Constitution," he alleged.

Singh said the people are fortunate that Rahul Gandhi is contesting from here and in true sense, he is the sage of today's politics.

Other members of the organisation said the whole world has seen how the current government is increasing discrimination in society. Dalits, backward classes, and minorities are being continuously oppressed. The constitutional institutions of the country have been turned into slaves. This is truly an emergency.

"This government is anti-women. PM is promoting a Member of Parliament who has committed rape with hundreds of women and then the government sent him abroad to protect him. This was not the first case. Before this, the government fully protected the BJP MP accused of sexual harassment of athletes, Brijbhushan Singh, and now by giving a ticket to his son, it is clear what their thoughts are towards women," they alleged.

Singh said this government is also anti-farmer and anti-youth. While schemes like Agniveer are ending the dreams of youth, preparations are being made to hand over the land of farmers to corporates. To eliminate the interests of farmers and capture their land, this government brought three black laws for farmers. Thousands of our farmers have lost their lives.

people and soldiers used to be martyred in terrorist attacks in the country. Now, this cannot happen because the Modi government has struck at the core of terrorism. This new India does not provoke, but if someone provokes, it doesn't spare them either," Yogi added.

brought about changes in the lives of citizens, especially for the welfare of the poor."

Continuing his diatribe against the INDIA bloc, Yogi said that the alliance was losing its credibility due to its negative politics.

"They are more concerned about Pakistan's interests. Instead of addressing the issues of terrorism and Naxalism, they encourage terrorists by withdrawing cases against them. They worked towards preventing the construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya at all costs."

"Before 2014, innocent



Devotees arrive at the Kedarnath Dham as its portal opens for 'Darshan', in Rudrapurayag on Saturday. ■ ANI

UP: Fourth phase of polling in 13 LS seats crucial for BJP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, 11 MAY

The fourth phase of polling in 13 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh on May 13 will be crucial for the ruling BJP.

With the entry of stalwart SP president Akhilesh Yadav from Kannauj, the upcoming fourth phase of polling in 13 Lok Sabha seats in UP on May 13 holds significant importance, especially considering the BJP's sweeping victory in these constituencies during the 2019 polls.

Now in 2024, it will be a Herculean task for the BJP to retain these seats, especially since in most places, BJP candidates are aiming for a hat-trick of victories in the upcoming polls.

Mishrikh: Starting from the lesser-known Mishrikh Lok Sabha seat going to polls in the 4th phase, the BJP has once again nominated Ashok Rawat, the current MP from the Mishrikh region, as its candidate. Ashok Rawat contested elections from the Mishrikh parliamentary constituency in 2004 and 2009 on a Bahujan Samaj Party ticket before winning in 2019 on a BJP ticket and securing a seat in Parliament.

Hardoi: The BJP is making a bid for a hat-trick on this seat by fielding MP Jai Prakash once again. If Jai Prakash wins this time, he will go to Parliament for a record fifth time. Having previously served as an MP from the BJP in 1991, 1996, and 2019, as well as representing the Congress in 1999, Jai Prakash is now eyeing a record fifth victory.

The opposition has laid a tight cord on to block his path as the SP has fielded Usha Verma, who has been MP thrice, while the BSP has fielded Bhimrao Ambedkar.

Dhaurahra: Rekha Verma, the national vice president of the BJP and co-incharge of Uttarakhand, is once again contesting from here on the party ticket. This marks her third consecutive candidacy for the seat.

On the other hand, former MLC of Sitapur Anand Singh Bhadauria, one of the close confidants of Akhilesh Yadav from SP, is in the fray.

Kannauj: The electoral race has become more complicated with the entry of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav into the political arena of the perfume city.

There is a direct fight between Akhilesh and BJP MP Subrat Pathak, who defeated Akhilesh's wife Dimple Yadav in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, in this seat. The BSP has also prepared the ground for a triangular contest by fielding Imran Bin Zafar. PM Modi has already addressed a rally in Kannauj.

Unnao: The BJP has made Dr Sachchidanand Hari Sakshi Maharaj its candidate for the third time.

Groom among 4 dead in road mishap in UP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JHANSI, 11 MAY

In a tragic incident, a bridegroom going for his wedding along with 3 others were burnt alive when their car caught fire after getting hit by another vehicle on Jhansi Kanpur highway late Friday night.

Police here on Saturday said the groom's car carrying a wedding procession was hit from behind by a speeding DCM in a road accident on Parichha over bridge under Baragaon police station on Jhansi-Kanpur Highway.

The car caught fire in the accident in which the groom, his brother, nephew and the driver were burnt alive.

Two people also traveling in the car were somehow saved and have been admitted to the medical college.

According to the incident, Akash (23), a resident of Bilati village was going to Chhapar village for his wedding. Akash, his brother, nephew Ishu (7) and Ashish (20) and other family members were traveling in his car. As soon as his car reached near Parichha Over Bridge at around 12 o'clock on Friday night, a DCM coming from behind hit the car hard.

'Love jihad will be eliminated if NDA wins over 400 seats'

AGENCIES
PATNA, 11 MAY

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has claimed that if the NDA secures over 400 seats in the Lok Sabha polls, love jihad will be eliminated from the country.

While addressing a rally in support of BJP candidate Giriraj Singh in Begusarai, Sarma said: "Terrorists from Pakistan were coming to India and exploding bombs. Now, no one is coming here

after PM Narendra Modi threw two bombs on Pakistan. Similarly, love jihad will be eliminated from the country if the NDA wins more than 400 seats." "We need Narendra Modi's government to end whatever wrong things are happening in the country," he said.

"Religion and sect have always been an issue in our

country. Our country was also divided on the basis of religion. When the country becomes Sanatan, unemployment will also go away on its own," Sarma stated.

Referring to a recent report, Sarma asked which community's population is increasing today? Whose population has increased by 45 per cent? Hindus have not increased. If the country becomes Hindu then many of the problems will automatically be solved.

Manipur govt mobilises initiative to rebuild lives

AGENCIES
IMPHAL, 11 MAY

A primary health centre was also operationalised in PPP mode at the Palace Auditorium in Imphal, in collaboration with the Manipur government and Apollo Hospital Enterprise, Hyderabad, utilising telemedicine facilities.

well-being.

Justice Gita Mittal, the first woman chief justice of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, inaugurated a Skill Training Programme for 2000 displaced youths, along with a Youth Coach Level-1 certificate programme aiming to train 300 youths as coaches

in multiple sports disciplines including football, table tennis, badminton, judo and weightlifting.

Additionally, a primary health centre was also operationalised in PPP mode at the Palace Auditorium in Imphal, in collaboration with the state government and Apollo Hospital Enterprise, Hyderabad, utilising telemedicine facilities.

Justice Mittal, heading the three-member committee of former women judges of high courts appointed by the Supreme Court in August last year to oversee relief and rehabilitation of the affected people of the Manipur ethnic violence.

During impromptu media interaction after launching the programme, Justice Mittal emphasised that while the state administration has effectively provided facilities for displaced persons, the primary challenge remains ensuring their safe return home.

The predominant desire among the displaced individuals is to reunite with their families and return to their homes, she said.

Justice Mittal highlighted the prompt addressing of various issues, from transportation to healthcare, including specialised facilities for pregnant women in

Imphal East.

"However, the overarching challenge lies in reuniting families and facilitating their return, reflecting the ongoing endeavour of the government and state administration."

These proactive initiatives underscore the government's commitment to not only addressing immediate challenges but also to fostering long-term solutions for the betterment of society, said the former Chief Justice of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

Officials supervising the newly launched programme said.

Rahul, Akhilesh to hold joint rally in Rae Bareilly-Amethi on 17 May

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
RAE BAREILLY/AMETHI, 11 MAY

In addition to Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's 24x7 campaigning in this twin Lok Sabha constituencies since 6 May, now Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav will hold a joint rally here on 17 May.

Congress sources here on Saturday said

Rahul-Akhilesh will hold joint public meetings in Rae Bareilly and Amethi on 17 May.

Kishori Lal Sharma, who is close to the Gandhi family, has been made the Congress candidate in Amethi



and Rahul Gandhi himself is the candidate in Rae Bareilly.

In the 2019 elections, BJP's Smriti Irani defeated Rahul Gandhi by about 55,000 votes. Once again there were speculations that Rahul Gandhi would be the candidate for this seat but Rahul filed his nomination from Rae Bareilly.

In the last elections, Sonia Gandhi had won in Rae Bareilly.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD

1 Down

2 Across

3 Down

4 Across

5 Down

6 Across

7 Down

8 Across

9 Down

10 Across

11 Down

12 Across

13 Down

14 Across

15 Down

16 Across

17 Down

18 Across

19 Down

20 Across

21 Down

22 Across

23 Down

ACROSS

1 Disastrous (4)

4 Take hold of (5)

8 Garden enhancement (5,7)

10 Immoderate (7)

11 Mistake (5)

12 Culpable (6)

14 Remain beyond the expected time (4,2)

17 Misbehave (3,2)

19 On horseback (7)

21 Small square of material (12)

22 Eagle's nest (5)

23 Unclothed (4)

DOWN

2 Not fitting (5)

3 Himalayan mountain (7)

4 Make gentler (6)

5 Furious (5)

6 Royal attendant (7)

7 Boldness (7-2)

9 School subject (9)

13 Strongly felt (7)

15 Temper (7)

16 Come out (6)

18 Card game (5)

20 Thick woollen cloth (5)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Loo, 3 Style (Loose title)

7 Gift shop

8 Keel

9 Irresolute

10 Surgical

11 Rascal

12 Separation

13 Outside

14 Sanctum

15 Abyss

16 Tomb

17 Fry

18 Charisma

19 Whip out

20 Sanctum

21 Outside

22 Separation

23 Abyss

By arrangement with The Independent

Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker

WE'RE ENTERING THE AGE OF ROBOTS

SOME DAY THE WHOLE ARMY WILL BE ROBOTS

I'M GONNA MISS YOU GUYS

GOODBYE MORT WALKER

RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson

COME AND GET IT, REDEYE

OR DOES IT HAVE TO COME AND GET YOU?

TWANG

I HATE SHISH KEBAB!

DADDY DAZE/John Kovalski

WHAT'S WITH THE MITT?

BA BA BA BA

EVEN IF THERE WAS A SCHEDULED STOP IN THE KITCHEN, THAT STILL WOULDN'T WORK FOR CATCHING A BUS.

NEED TO KNOW

Ambulance

FD Block Association (Amb)

9830452536, 9830181296

Happy Calcuttans 24400160

City Point Nurses Centre

2567-4113, 9831142623

People's Relief Committee

2280-4943/9444

24 hrs Medical Oxygen Delivery

BOC India Ltd. 9831277777

Blood Banks

Ashok Laboratory 24720333

Central Blood Bank 23510619

Life Care 2284-6940

Peoples Blood Bank

2455-5164/5557

RK Mission Seva Pratishthan

2475-3636/39

Police/Fire

Lalbahar (Police Control Room) 22143230

S.P. (North 24-Pgns)

25423005

S.P. (South 24-Pgns) 2479-3333/1311

Bhawani Bhawan

24791761/9, 24791933

Fire Service Station Salt Lake: 2357-5293;

Howrah 2666-8111; Behala 2497-6285

Civic Services

Kolkata Municipal Corporation: 2286-1000

Water: 2543-1602

Calcutta Telephones

Changed Number Announcement

1951,1952,1953

Taxi Refusal

SMS 575756: Complaint and registration

Police Toll Free No. 1073

Transport Deptt. No. 6451-6718

CESC Fault Reporting

1912 and 4403-1912

Trains

Howrah Station Old Complex

1331/1332 (Auto Telephone Numbers), 1310, 2638-7412/2542/2581 (manual).

Sealdah: 2350-3535/3537

Shalimar Station: 2668-1121, Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway: 139.

SCRABBLE® GRAMSI

PAR SCORE 215-225

by JUDD

Instructions: Make a 7 to 10 letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Official Scrabble Players Dictionary (Merriam-Webster) and OJDW Official Scrabble Words (Chambers). Judd's solution bonus: 10-25-12

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

9 4 6 5 6 9

2 3 5 4 8

6 2 4 3 8

1 7 9 8 6

3 5 7 9 8

1 3 9 6

9 6 2

Difficulty Level ★

answer to previous puzzle

epaper.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Sai Sudharsan needs to be spoken about a bit more, says Graeme Smith: After Gujarat Titans' B Sai Sudharsan slammed his maiden IPL century alongside fellow centurion Shubman Gill in the side's 35-run win over Chennai Super Kings, former South Africa skipper Graeme Smith said the left-handed batter needs to be talked about a bit more in the cricketing circles. At the Narendra Modi Stadium on Friday night, Sudharsan, opening the batting after veteran wicketkeeper-batter Wriddhiman Saha was ruled out due to a niggle, slammed five fours and seven sixes at a strike-rate of 201.96 to make a fantastic 103, his maiden IPL century. He also shared a 210-run opening partnership with Gill, and equalled the record for the highest IPL opening stand held by Quinton de Kock and K.L. Rahul, who added exactly 210 runs for the first wicket against Kolkata Knight Riders in IPL 2022. Sudarshan is now the fourth-highest IPL 2024 run-getter with 527 runs in 12 matches, averaging 47.91. "I thought Mathew Wade would open the innings and Sudharsan would stay at three, but it turned out to be a fantastic move. The partnership was excellent, Lefthand - Right-hand combination, they ran between the wickets well; they picked their targets, and their matchups were just outstanding." "Sudharsan is so under the radar, he is the leading run-scorer for GT this season, the fastest Indian to a thousand IPL runs with a difference of six innings, and a brilliant, brilliant hundred by him. He needs to start being spoken about a bit more," said Smith on JioCinema. He also lauded Gill, who hit nine fours and six sixes at a strike-rate of 189.09 to hit 104, his fourth IPL hundred in Ahmedabad. "He is not having the best of seasons, but he really showed his best here. He picked up straight away, there was a totally different attitude with the bat." "You could get a sense of his intent when he went down the wicket and hit Santner for a four down the ground in the very first over.

RR will remain your team, will make sure we have our space in N-E: Barthakur

Barthakur said that the motive behind promoting Guwahati as an IPL venue is because he expects at least 20 players from the region to feature in the lucrative league in the coming years

TRIDIB BAPARNASH
GUWAHATI, 11 MAY

Gearing up for their final two 'home' games in Guwahati, Rajasthan Royals' chairman Ranjit Barthakur on Saturday took stock of the preparations at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium in the city, and said that the team is looking forward to playing more than just a couple of games in the North-eastern city from the next edition of the Indian Premier League.

Barthakur, who was joined by BCCI joint secretary Devajit Lon Saikia, expected the team's fan base to shoot to newer levels on its return to its second home base for a second successive time. The Rajasthan Royals will open their Guwahati leg with a match against Punjab Kings on May 15 before finishing their league stage assignments against table-toppers Kolkata Knight Riders on May 19.

"Last year we (Rajasthan Royals) were a bit tentative as we were playing in Guwahati for the first time, but the kind of response we received was truly overwhelming, which is why we are really looking forward to the next couple of home games in Guwahati. It's not about homecoming, but we are here to stay," commented Barthakur.

"In the next two years, whether you have another IPL team or not, Assam should try and pitch for hosting five to seven IPL games. For RR side, we will play three matches here, we will manage the logistics, that shouldn't be a concern," he insisted.

Appreciating the wicket at the Barsapara Stadium, Barthakur cited Rajasthan Royals finisher Shimron Hetmyer, who had slammed his career's third ODI century in West Indies colours at the stadium in 2018, and RR head coach Kumar Sangakkara, both of whom had praised the track.



"Hetmyer had praised the Guwahati pitch as the best in the country, and even our coach Kumar Sangakkara called it a neutral one. So in terms of infrastructure and conditions, Guwahati can be a perfect venue for hosting more IPL games," he said.

Barthakur said that the motive behind promoting Guwahati as an IPL venue is because he expects at least 20 players from the region to feature in the lucrative league in the coming years. He went on to cite the example of the team's leading run-scorer Riyan Parag, who has finally

come of age in IPL 2024 after a few underwhelming seasons, while assuring that the Royals are committed to back talents from the region.

"Look at the way Riyan is performing this season, especially after a couple of poor seasons. We had to work on his health, and his batting at our centre in Nagpur, and his performances reflect the kind of work our team has put behind. We are here to back our players, and now Riyan is a role model. But I don't want to focus only on him, the idea to get used to playing alongside international crick-

eters help develop our domestic talents. It also helps in the overall growth of cricketers from the region," he explained.

"If we continue to work in that direction, we can expect at least 20 players from the region playing in the IPL. Next year there could be 12 teams in the IPL, it doesn't matter whether the NE region gets an IPL team, the Rajasthan Royals will remain your team. We will make sure we will have our space in the Northeast," he assured.

Barthakur also spoke on the Royals' initiative of providing solar energy to a nature-neutral village, inhabited by people of the Mising tribe near Balipara besides appreciating Saikia's suggestion of extending an helping hand to Assam cricket's endeavour to promote women's cricket. "We are in the process of finalising it, it's a nature neutral village near Balipara, if we can give energy to such places where there is no electricity, it will be beneficial for the people there.

We will give out more details on it in the coming days," he said while adding, "But I like the idea suggested by Saikia with regards to promotion of women's cricket in the region, and the Rajasthan Royals will support the cause, as it's been our motto, 'Aurat hai toh Bharat hai'."

Jay Shah, Roger Binny expected for RR v KKR match. Saikia, who has been at the forefront in bringing IPL games to the city, thanked the Royals for considering the city as their second home. He also said that Guwahati was set to host three IPL games this season but had to be satisfied with two due to the general elections, and the logistical and security challenges associated with it. Expressing his gratitude to Jay Shah, Saikia said that the BCCI secretary is keen on developing cricket in the rest of the North-eastern states besides Assam and Tripura, and has been working towards bringing those states at par with the rest

of the cricketing power-houses in the country.

"Jay Shah has been visiting Assam and the rest of the NE states quite often, he is keen on developing the cricket infrastructure across the other states and bringing them at par with the other cities. Simultaneously, the BCCI is committed to take women's cricket along, and are looking at all avenues to promote women's cricket across the region. In Assam, when we started the Kanaklata Trophy three years back we were a bit skeptical about the response, but we were pleasantly surprised to find 18 teams participating, and the numbers continue to grow each year," Saikia commented. Saikia, also the Advocate General of the state, revealed that both Shah and BCCI president Roger Binny will be in attendance for the final IPL league stage game between Rajasthan Royals and Kolkata Knight Riders in Guwahati on May 19.

Diamond League: Neeraj Chopra finishes second in Doha, misses top spot by 0.2m



AGENCIES
DOHA, 11 MAY

Olympic and World Champion Neeraj Chopra started his outdoor season on Friday, finishing second in the javelin throw discipline of his first Diamond League event of the

year here on Friday.

With his back against the wall, the Indian star came up with his best throw in his sixth and final attempt in Doha but missed the top spot by just 0.2 metres. Chopra had a best throw of 88.36 metres, ending behind Jakub Vadlejch of the

Czech Republic, who finished first with a best effort of 88.38.

The 27-year-old Chopra, who is one of the biggest stars of the Diamond League 2024 in the Olympic year, started with a foul throw on his first turn before hurling the javelin to 84.93m and followed it up with 86.24.

After throws of 86.18m and 82.28m, the Asian Games gold medalist, Chopra, who had a personal best of 89.94 metres, came up with his best effort of 88.36 in his sixth and final effort.

Jakub Vadlejch came up with his best throw of 88.38 in his third turn before fouling the fifth and sixth chances.

Meanwhile, Kishore Kumar Jena, the other Indian in the fray, finished ninth among 10 participants with a below-par effort of 76.31. He managed 75.72 in his first throw and then fouled the second before ending the competition with a 76.31-metre effort.

Premier League: Title race nears conclusion as Arsenal face tough Old Trafford test

AGENCIES
MANCHESTER, 11 MAY

Mikel Arteta's Arsenal will be making the trip to Old Trafford on Sunday to face Manchester United in their penultimate game of the season. It is that time of the season where any points dropped would result in the Gunners conceding the league to Manchester City.

The stakes have never been higher for the North London side who are hoping to lift their first league title in 20 years. The Gunners rose back to the top of the premier league in the 2022/23 season and saw their title run falter against one of the best sides in English football history, Manchester City who are hoping to become the first team in history to win four consecutive Premier League titles.

Arsenal have only won



one of their last 16 trips to Old Trafford, a poor record which also includes ten defeats. Manchester United have been struggling through the entirety of the season and will be giving their all against Mikel Arteta's side as they still hope to qualify for the Europa Conference League.

The importance of this

match cannot be emphasized enough as Manchester City will have already played their game against Fulham and are likely to have reached the top of the table by the time the match commences. The 'Citizens' also travel to the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on Wednesday to play their game in hand against the

Spurs, a side that they have certainly struggled against in recent times. If both sides were to win all their remaining games, it will be the blue side of Manchester who will lift the ultimate prize at the end of the season.

"We are on the journey to try to catch them and be better than them, which is the aim and what we have to do. It's an inspiration to have this level of opposition and it makes you better if someone challenges you to go further and further. The history of City, they were winning trophies and winning the Premier League. They've been on an unbelievable journey over the last 10 to 15 years, but we want to change that. We're trying to do everything that we can to improve and get better and better," said Mikel Arteta in the pre game press conference when asked about their fellow title race rivals.

West Indies to host SA, England and Bangladesh in 2024

AGENCIES
ST JOHN'S, 11 MAY

West Indies will host South Africa, England and Bangladesh between May to December, 2024 for a multi-format series.

The home tours begin with a visit from South Africa, for three T20 Internationals (T20Is) at Sabina Park from May 23, prior to the start of ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

The Proteas then return to the region, after the West Indies Test Tour to England in July, with a two (2) Test Match Series to be played in Trinidad and Guyana, followed by a second three (3) match T20I Series at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Trinidad, ahead of the Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL).

After a white-ball tour in Sri Lanka in October, West Indies will host England from October 31 for three ODIs and five T20Is which will be



played across Antigua, Barbados and St Lucia.

Bangladesh will then visit the Caribbean shores between November 22 and December 19 for an all-format tour which starts with two Test

Matches to be played in Antigua and Jamaica, three ODIs in St. Kitts & Nevis, and three T20Is in St Vincent. West Indies will be returning to the Arnos Vale Ground in St Vincent for the first time since

2014. Bangladesh will also play a warm-up game before the Tests in Antigua.

CWI Chief Executive, Johnny Grave, said, "We are delighted to announce our West Indies Men's Home Series for

the remainder of the year that will welcome South Africa, England and Bangladesh to eight of our host countries in the West Indies, including Saint Vincent for the first time since 2012. With significant improvements being made to the National Stadium in Grenada and Windsor Park in Dominica we were unable to host International cricket there this year, but we are already looking forward to returning to both venues in 2025."

"Fans can purchase tickets online from today for the first Series against South Africa in Jamaica and with our official travel partners for the England Tour later this year, with all other tickets expected to go on sale in July after the ICC Men's T20 World. We urge fans to rally behind our Men in Maroon as we strive for a historic third T20 World Cup title and seek to secure all important points in the ICC World Test Championship."

'He won't..!' Stubbs reveals DC teammate Kuldeep refuses to bowl to him in nets

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Delhi Capitals all-rounder Tristan Stubbs has revealed that Kuldeep Yadav does not bowl to him in the nets.

"He won't bowl to me, I have tried a few times to go face him but he won't bowl to me," said Tristan Stubbs to The Grade Cricketer podcast.

The South African youngster has made a name for himself during the 2024 IPL and has been a major reason behind the Delhi Capitals' recent resurgence into the top four race. In 12 games played so far, the middle order batsman has scored 318 runs at an average of 53 whilst boasting an impressive strike rate of 188.17.

When asked on the podcast about facing Kuldeep Yadav's trademark wrong-un

delivery, Stubbs went on to reiterate that despite repeated attempts India's star left arm spinner refuses to bowl to him.

"I think he's trying to keep it a mystery, so I can't tell you I have tried to face him but he's not having it," he said.

Stubbs will playing his first major ICC tournament could prove to be a key player for South Africa during the T20 World Cup

Stubbs was also asked whether he wanted to face Kuldeep in order to prepare himself for the upcoming T20 World Cup in case a Indians South Africa situation is to present itself in the knockout stages of the tournament to which the 23-year-old replied, "I think it's quietly not been said but I think so yeah."

Golf: Korea's Im stays with the pack at Wells Fargo Championship

AGENCIES
CHARLOTTE, 11 MAY

South Korean star Sungjae Im fought hard to stay in the title mix with a second straight 3-under 68 at the Wells Fargo Championship on Friday as overnight leader Xander Schauffele maintained a firm grip on the PGA TOUR's US\$20 million Signature event.

The 36-year-old Im produced a superb fightback after dropping two shots in his opening three holes at Quail Hollow Club as he traded six birdies against three bogeys for 6-under 136, leaving him in tied fourth place and five back of 36-hole leader Schauffele.

Schauffele, who is seeking an eighth PGA TOUR title, leads by four strokes over world No. 2 Rory McIlroy and Jason Day following a near-faultless 67 for 11-under. McIlroy, a three-time winner of the event, and Day, victorious in 2018, shot 68 and 67 respectively for tied second place on 7-under.

Byeong Hun An, who is eighth on the FedExCup standings, posted a 68 for T7 as he continued his pursuit of a maiden PGA TOUR victory, although he will need to go low over the weekend to reel in the in-form leader.

After struggling to an opening 73, Tom Kim, a three-time TOUR winner, bounced back with a 69 to climb to T33 on 142, one ahead of his fellow Korean star Si Woo Kim, who carded a 73.

Im, a two-time PGA TOUR winner, turned in 37 before coming alive on the back nine by birdieing the third, fourth, seventh and eighth holes.

James Anderson to retire following England's first Test against West Indies at Lord's

AGENCIES
LONDON, 11 MAY

England's veteran fast-bowler James Anderson has announced he will retire from international cricket after the first Test of their upcoming home summer against West Indies at Lord's, starting on July 10.

Anderson, 41, became the third bowler after Shane Warne and Muttiah Muralitharan to reach the landmark of 700 Test wickets - the most by any fast bowler - earlier this year during England's fifth and final match of their India tour at Dharamshala.

But reports emerged in various sections of the British media on Friday that Brendon McCullum, England's Test coach, has asked for Anderson, the country's leading wicket-taker in Tests, to

retire to build a team for the future, especially with Ashes happening in 2025-26.

"Hi everyone. Just a note to say that the first Test of the summer at Lord's will be my last Test. It's been an incredible 20 years representing my country, playing the game I've loved since I was a kid."

"I'm going to miss walking out for England so much. But I know the time is right to step aside and let others realise their dreams just like I got to because there is no greater feeling," said Anderson in his Instagram post on Saturday.

Anderson made his Test debut against Zimbabwe in 2003 and has earned 187 caps so far in the format, which is also an England record. He sits in second position on the all-time list of Test appearances behind only the legendary bat-



ter Sachin Tendulkar, who played 200 Tests for India.

"I couldn't have done it without the love and support

of Daniella, Lola, Ruby and my parents. A huge thank you to

them. Also, thank you to the players and coaches who have made this the best job in the world."

"I'm excited for the new challenges that lie ahead, as well as filling my days with even more golf. Thank you to everyone who has supported me over the years, it's always meant a lot, even if my face often doesn't show it. See you at the Test, Go well, Jimmy," he added.

Anderson also played 194 ODIs and 19 T20Is for England but became a Test-match specialist fast-bowler in 2015. Anderson had been in patchy form during last year's Ashes, taking only five wickets from four games, following which he signed a new one-year central contract in October 2023.

On this year's Test tour of India, which England lost 4-

1, Anderson picked 10 wickets from four matches. It is not clear whether Anderson will continue to play for his country side Lancashire.

"I don't think we'll ever see a bowler to match Jimmy again. It has been an honour as an England fan to watch him, and to marvel at his skill with the ball. To still be bowling at the top of his game at 41 is remarkable, and he is a true inspiration and role model for peers and younger generations alike," said Richard Thompson, ECB Chairman.

"His final Test promises to be an emotional one and having been there for his first Test in 2003, it will be an honour to watch his final one at Lord's in July. English cricket owes Jimmy Anderson a send-off like no other," said Thompson.

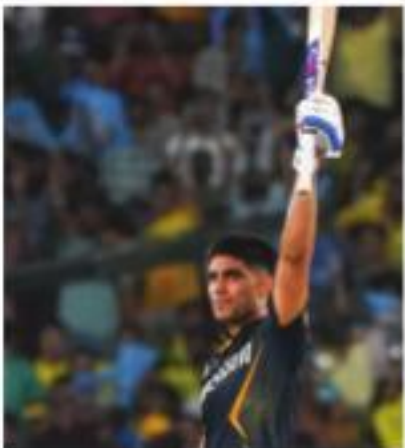




For more updates www.thestatesman.com

PAKISTAN PLAYERS "PRIORITISING PERSONAL GOALS"
Following Ireland's historic win over Pakistan in the first of three T20 internationals, former wicketkeeper batter Kamran Akmal has accused the players of the national side of "prioritising personal goals" over the team's collective good. Seasoned Andy Balbirnie top scored for Ireland with a 55-ball 77, studded with 10 fours and two sixes, as they successfully chased down the target of 183/5 with a ball to spare after restricting Pakistan to 182/6 in their 20 overs. This Pakistan team is coming off an awkward series that saw them draw 2-2 against a second string New Zealand side at home.

THUMBNAILS



GT skipper Gill penalised for maintaining slow over rate against CSK: Gujarat Titans skipper Shubman Gill has been fined 25 per cent of his match fees after 'maintaining a slow over rate during their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 match against Chennai Super Kings at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Friday night. "As it was his team's second offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over rate offences, Gill was fined INR 24 lakhs," the BCCI/IPL statement read. "The rest of the members of the Playing XI, including the Impact Player, were each individually fined either INR 6 lakhs or 25 percent of their respective match fees, whichever is lesser." Captain Shubman Gill and B. Sai Sudharsan unleashed an outstanding assault on Chennai Super Kings bowling attack by slamming centuries each to power Gujarat Titans to a comfortable 35-run win over Chennai Super Kings.

RR look to return to winning ways against CSK

The Super Kings are currently fourth in the standings with 12 points but the loss against GT has put pressure on them

TRIDIB BAPARNASH
New Delhi

The IPL can be a cruel affair, more so for a team hoping to stay alive in the race to the playoffs but has less than 48 hours turnaround time, especially after suffering a loss. Defending champions Chennai Super Kings find themselves in the tricky situation when they host a frustrated Rajasthan Royals, smarting after two consecutive losses, in Sunday's afternoon match at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai.

The Royals, on the other hand, are second with 16 points but two successive defeats against Sunrisers Hyderabad, which was by just a run, and Delhi Capitals, did not allow them to cement their stay in the top two positions. While they are under no pressure of missing the playoff spot, but the Sanju Samson-led side will be eager



to return to winning ways at the earliest. However, the pressure will definitely be on the home side, hoping to resurrect their topsy-turvy campaign and what better opportunity than to do it at Chepauk. For that, CSK will be hoping to address their top-order concerns, with both Ajinkya Rahane and Rachin Ravindra putting up a flop show against the Titans. Ruturaj Gaikwad would be eager to get back to his usual opening position and retain one between Rahane and Ravindra, and that ploy could at least hold things up from one end, thanks to Gaikwad's

red-hot form. While CSK would be pleased to see Daryl Mitchell and Moeen Ali scoring half centuries in the previous games, they would be concerned with the form of Shivam Dube, who has been a pale shadow of his aggressive best ever since he was selected to the Indian team for the upcoming T20 World Cup. Coming to CSK's bowling, Tushar Deshpande once again fired against the Titans while Shardul Thakur came up with an economical spell. Also the lack of dew in the afternoon game could work in favour of the home spin unit, comprising Ravindra



Jadeja and Mitchell Santner. On the other hand, Rajasthan Royals will be desperate to break the losing streak, and for that the onus will once again be on the skipper Sanju Samson to lead from the front. He has been in prolific form with the bat and behind the stumps this IPL, that led to his World Cup selection, and would be hoping that fellow WC-bound Yashasvi Jaiswal also gets some crucial runs under his belt before travelling to the US and the Caribbean. Jos Buttler has also blew hot and cold, and would be expected to come up with another impactful knock,

even as the rest of the batting lineup comprising Riyan Parag, Shimron Hetmyer and Rovman Powell could be expected to build on the platform set by the top order. On the bowling front, Ravichandran Ashwin, who took three wickets in the last tie against DC, will fancy his chances on return to his home track, and along with Yuzvendra Chahal, the RR spin unit looks a potent attack. RR would expect their pace battery comprising the likes of Trent Boult, Aves Khan and Sandeep Sharma will be expected to put up a collective show against the unsteady home batting unit.



Big pay hikes announced for Sri Lankan cricketers with 100% boost for Test cricket: To boost the country's cricket ahead of the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) have announced a big pay hike for the country's cricketers. The SLC officially announced on Friday that "fees for all categories of Sri Lanka's international players have been increased, with immediate effect". "Accordingly, 41 players will be offered new contracts under six categories, namely, A1, A2, B2, C1, C2, and 'A' Team," SLC announced. Though the announcement has come ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup which will be held in the Caribbean and the United States, the biggest pay hike was for Test cricket with 100% on a merit basis. There will be different payment structures for a Test match 'won', 'drawn' or 'lost', SLC stated. The match fees for Tests will increase from the original \$7500 to a maximum of \$15,000 for winning a match. A 66% pay hike will be awarded if the Test ends in a draw, making the payout \$12,500 while for a defeat is \$10,000 with a 33% increase. The decision was to sustain the red-ball format of the game with the increasing popularity of white-ball games, especially the T20 format.

Italian Open: Djokovic makes first round winning return against Moutet



AGENCIES
ROME, 11 MAY

Novak Djokovic made a winning return to Tour after beating French lucky loser Corentin Moutet to reach the third round of the Italian Open. The Serbian, playing in his first match since the Monte-Carlo semifinals last month, overcame a sluggish start to win 6-3, 6-1 in Rome. Following an hour and twenty-six minutes, Djokovic overcame a 1-3 hole in the opening set and effectively countered Moutet's court craft in the second set to win.

In their second Lexus ATP head-to-head match, Djokovic hit consistently against Moutet, forcing the Frenchman to take chances with his retrieval abilities. According to ATP Stats, the 98-time tour-level champion broke Moutet's serve six times to advance to an 18-0 lead in the first round of play in Rome. "Match play is different to practise sets," Djokovic said.

"I played a lefty and I have not practised with a lefty in a while, so it took me a little time to adjust to the different rotations of the ball. The first four games were quite bad from me. A bad start. I lost both my services games. "But then I played well. I only lost one game from 1-3 down. Corentin is a very talented player. He has great hands and is very unpredictable. You don't know what comes up next, so I had to stay focused, which I did and it is a good opening match." The top-ranked player in the PIF ATP Rankings, who last won the ATP Masters 1000 event in 2022, is a six-time Rome champion. With his victory over Moutet taking him to 1099, Djokovic is chasing his first trophy of the season and his 1100th match win in the Italian capital. "You always have doubts," Djokovic said when asked if he had any ahead of his return to Tour. "Every single match. It is just the manner of how you deal with them and how long they stay there. How long they overwhelm your whole being and mind. It is an internal battle always more than an external battle. If you win that battle the external battle becomes a little bit more likely for you to win."

Neymar out of Brazil squad for Copa America

AGENCIES
RIO DE JANEIRO, 11 MAY

Neymar has been left out of Brazil's squad for the Copa America as he continues his recovery from a serious knee injury, the country's football confederation said on Friday. Neymar has not played since suffering a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament and meniscus of his left knee in October and the 32-year-old was given little chance of being fit for the tournament in the United States, which begins on June 20, reported Xinhua. Manchester United midfielder Casemiro and Tottenham Hotspur forward Richarlison also missed out, having struggled with poor form and injuries at their respective clubs. As expected, manager Dorival Junior named Real Madrid-bound Palmeiras teenager Endrick in his 23-man squad. The forward, who will join Real Madrid when he turns 18 in July, scored for Brazil in a 1-0 win over England at Wembley Stadium and in a 2-2 draw against Spain at the Santiago Bernabeu in March. Brazil will begin their Copa America



campaign against Costa Rica in Los Angeles on June 24 and will also meet Paraguay and Colombia in the group stage. Brazil squad: Goalkeepers: Alisson (Liverpool), Ederson (Manchester City) Bento (Athletico Paranaense) Defenders: Danilo (Juventus), Yan Couto (Girona), Guilherme Arana (Atletico Mineiro), Wendell (Porto), Beraldo (Paris Saint-Germain), Marquinhos (Paris Saint-Germain), Eder Militao (Real Madrid), Gabriel Magalhães (Arsenal) Midfielders: Andreas Pereira (Fulham), Bruno Guimarães (Newcastle), Douglas Luiz (Aston Villa), Joao Gomes (Wolverhampton), Lucas Paqueta (West Ham) Forwards: Endrick (Palmeiras), Evanilson (Porto), Gabriel Martinelli (Arsenal), Raphinha (Barcelona), Savinho (Girona), Rodrygo (Real Madrid), Vinicius Junior (Real Madrid).

Kylian Mbappe confirms Paris Saint Germain exit

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The 2022 FIFA World Cup top scorer Kylian Mbappe officially confirmed via social media that he will play his last game for Paris Saint Germain this Sunday (Monday as per IST) against Toulouse. "I will not extend and the adventure will come to an end in a few weeks. I will play my last game at the Parc des Princes on Sunday," said the 25 year old on Instagram. Kylian made a name for himself in 2016 while leading a solid Monaco side to their first league title in 17 years. He then signed for PSG on loan with a mandatory purchase option of 180 million Euros which was made permanent the following summer. Over the course of his time in France, Mbappe played 245 games in Ligue 1 scoring an astonishing 190 goals and providing 74 assists in the process as well. "It's a lot of emotions, many years where I had the chance and the great honour to be a member of the biggest French club, one of the best in the world which allowed me to arrive here, to have my first experience in a club with a lot of pressure, to grow as a player of course, by being alongside some of the best in history, some of the greatest champions, to meet a lot of



people, to grow as a man as well with all the glory and the mistakes I've made," added Kylian Mbappe. Many consider Mbappe's time in the Ligue 1 as bitter-sweet as although the young Frenchman was handed the captain's armband and even went on to star in 6 league title winning campaigns for the most successful club in French football, he was not able to replicate the same heroics in the UEFA Champions League. "Despite everything that can happen on the outside, all this media hype that surrounds the club sometimes, there are some real club lovers who want to protect it and make it shine, and it's great, and I know that with all these

people, this club is in great hands. It's hard, and I never thought it would be this difficult to announce that, to leave my country, France, the Ligue 1, a championship I have always known but I think, I needed this, a new challenge, after seven years." A new challenge awaits for one of the most hyped prodigies in world football, it is highly likely that his latest ventures will see him travel to Madrid to play for European powerhouses, Real Madrid. Although it has not been announced it is believed that both Mbappe and the Los Blancos are waiting for the season to end to make a special announcement for one of the biggest transfers in the history of football.

Capitals jolted by Pant's one-match ban ahead of virtual knockout tie against RCB

TRIDIB BAPARNASH
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Delhi Capitals' chances of qualifying for the IPL 2024 playoffs suffered a massive setback after their captain Rishabh Pant was suspended for one match for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct after his team maintained a slow over-rate during the match against Rajasthan Royals in the national capital on May 7. As a result, Pant will miss the crucial fixture against Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Sunday. Additionally, Pant has also been fined Rs 30 lakh while the rest of the members of the DC playing XI of that game, including the Impact Player, have also been individually

fined either Rs 12 lakh or 50 percent of their respective match fees, whichever is lesser. This was Pant's third over-rate breach this IPL. According to a BCCI statement, DC filed an appeal challenging the ruling of the match referee as per Article 8 of the IPL Code of Conduct, following which the appeal was referred to the BCCI ombudsman for review. The ombudsman conducted a virtual hearing and affirmed that the match referee's decision remains final and binding. Along with Pant, DC's director of cricket Sourav Ganguly, head coach Ricky Ponting and CEO Sunil Gupta appeared on behalf of the team for the hearing. In the appeal, DC cited multiple reasons for the delay, including that RR batters had hit 13 sixes on the day and that

the controversial Sanju Samson dismissal decision had consumed extra time. However, it was ruled that there was no statistical information submitted explaining exactly how much time was additionally consumed by these events. Each team in the IPL is allowed 85 minutes (4.25 minutes per over) to complete their 20 overs of the innings. In the match against RR, DC took 117.82 minutes to complete their 20 overs, which was in violation of the minimum over-rate requirements under the Code of Conduct. The Capitals are currently fifth in the IPL points table and need to win all their remaining two fixtures to be in contention for a playoff spot, and will be up against a resurgent RCB, who are on a roll after recording convincing



victories in their last four games. In the absence of Pant, DC will expect some of their senior players to collectively lead the side to a win and keep them in the hunt. It surely won't be a cakewalk for the visitors as Pant has been



a driving force behind the team's success, and thus the onus will be on the likes of Jack Fraser-McGurk, Abhishek Porel and Tristan Stubbs to do the heavy-lifting in the batting department. McGurk, who has teed off to make 309 runs from seven

matches at an impressive strike-rate of 235.87, ever since replacing the veteran David Warner, whose 167 runs from 7 matches at a strike rate of 135, has made a huge difference in the overall outcome. With shorter boundaries at the Chinnaswamy, the RCB bowlers could be at the receiving end of McGurk's fury, and that could be lethal to the home team's outside chances of making the top four. The other DC opener Abhishek Porel too has made runs at 157 strike rate, but will be expected to add more consistency to his game. Stubbs too have been among runs and in Pant's absence, he will be the key factor in adding meat to the DC total. In the bowling department, DC will bank on the spin twins — Kuldeep Yadav and

Axar Patel, who share 24 wickets among them while maintaining impressive economy rates of 8.2 and 7.3 respectively. Their combined eight overs will have a massive say in the match, as the pace battery comprising Khaleel Ahmed (14 wickets, 9.68) and Mukesh Kumar (15 wickets, 10.94) have been largely inconsistent. On the other hand, the RCB are currently on a roll after recording four straight wins but can't afford to sit on their past performances against an unpredictable DC. The Faf du Plessis-led outfit are currently seventh with 10 points from 12 matches, and will bank on yet another collective effort to keep them alive. Both Faf and his opening partner Virat Kohli are in good nick, with the latter, the leading run-getter in this IPL with 634 runs but, more

importantly, those runs have come at a brisk rate of 153, giving RCB early momentum while setting or chasing targets. Along with the opening combo, the likes of Rajat Patidar, Cameron Green and Dinesh Karthik have provided their bowlers, who have responded to the call splendidly, with a cushion. The bowling unit has also shown considerable improvement in their last four outings with Mohammed Siraj regaining his peak form finally. This also augurs well for the T20 World Cup-bound Indian team as Siraj is one of the only three frontline pace options. He has been complimented well by the likes of Yash Dayal and left-arm spinner Swapnil Singh in the last few games, and the RCB management will hope they continue in the same vein against DC.

Desktop doodles

1. Photos courtesy of The Statesman archives and Internet stock images
2. A Statesman window:
photo by Dola Mitra



Jogesh Chandra Chaudhuri College Principal speaks to The Statesman
Page 16



Teenage: The storm of stubbornness

Might makes (or breaks) right

KOLI MITRA



I was really struck by a recent local news item here in New York. Some young people vandalised an equestrian statue of General William Tecumseh Sherman in Grand Army Plaza in midtown Manhattan. They yelled slurs and slogans that suggest they believed Sherman to be a racist oppressor and a KKK sympathiser. But General Sherman was a hero of the American Civil War, leading Union troops in decisive battles which defeated the breakaway southern Confederate States and helped end slavery. Similar incidents have taken place all over the city as political protests have given way to vengeful destruction of many of the symbols of America's heritage. The widely beloved World War I soldiers memorial at Fifth Avenue, for example, was defaced with demeaning graffiti, festooned with a foreign banner while the American flag was thrown on the ground and set on fire. It's hard to imagine what the men honoured by this monument could have done to earn this treatment. They were the 107th Regiment, local New York boys, who fought for their country over a century ago, many of them gave their lives. People are understandably incensed.

So much of these attacks on historical sites is utterly incoherent as well as being deeply hurtful to those who understand these artefacts, which have nothing to do with any issues underlying the current agitations. What motivates people to do this? I'm starting to have a theory. And it's related to something else I've been preoccupied with lately: the old adage "might makes right." I'll explain what I mean...

Let me start by saying: nobody ever says "might makes right" and means it. Many people BEHAVE like they mean it. Tyrants, thugs, bullies, and crime bosses, who force their will on others because they can. But even they don't go around claiming that might makes right. They invent justifications after the fact, or they don't bother making moral arguments

of any kind. They just do what suits them.

So, when we say "might makes right" it's an accusation or an attempt at objective description. Either way, we say it to ascribe a worldview to others, not ourselves. Millennia before the modern aphorism was coined, Thucydides suggested that moral questions are only meaningful between people of equal strength, recognising that the weak have no way to enforce a moral proposition. But his was an empirical observation, not a normative or prescriptive one. Plato wrote stories with characters who said that strength is synonymous with virtue, only to be shown the error of their thinking by Socrates, the perennial hero of Plato's stories.

Still, "might makes right" does seem to touch on something fundamental reflected in long standing behavioural codes. Most traditional concepts of "legitimate" authority are essentially allocations of force, ritualised threats of violence by the strong and the corresponding ritualised surrender by the weak, to avoid further injury.

Not surprisingly, this behaviour is prevalent throughout the animal kingdom, and we are animals, after all. But for us, it didn't remain a mere practical arrangement. At some point, we bought into the myth of legitimacy in what are just assertions of power. Questions of "honour" were settled by duelling or other ritual combat. Religions used punishment to enforce their notions of piousness. Kings and emperors ruled by right of conquest and victory in battle, yet accepting their authority and pledging fealty to them became considered virtuous. Even now, democratic governments assert their power over citizens, and most of us consider it not just necessary and expedient, but RIGHT, to comply with the legitimately constituted authorities.

"Ah, but that's different!" you say. In a democracy, the strong don't force their will on the weak. We all partake in the process! The majority rules, but we all have a chance to be in the majority.

But is it really so different? If the electoral victors get to gang up on the electoral losers, and enforce their will through the literal threat of violence and imprisonment, is it not functionally the same as the strong enforcing their will? Only, in this case, the "strong" and "weak" are defined collectively.

When modern constitutional republics were established, their founders (having recently overthrown monarchy and/or imperialism) anticipated this problem. There is even a term for it: "tyranny of the majority." To protect against this, many constitutions have



large areas of personal freedom and self-ownership that are never supposed to be violated, even by the democratic will. But, over time, we seem to have lost sight of those safeguards and caveats, as more and more encroachments of the collective will against individual freedoms seem to be accepted, even advocated, in the name of some "common good" and sometimes, perversely, even in the name of defending specialised concepts of freedom against some perceived oppression.

But in this new version of "might makes right" there's a twist: it is informed and animated by the assumption that might makes WRONG, or more precisely, that WEAKNESS makes right. Perhaps it's because we've all been taught that it's bad to think "might makes right" (and for the record, I do think it's bad!), that many people have adopted the extreme opposite position, even though it's patently absurd. This is a common fallacy, this habit of thinking that "X is false" necessarily means "negative-X is true." I like to call it the "what-ever-is-not-forbidden-is-required" mindset (as if it doesn't occur to us that we could possibly choose from the vast spectrum of options in-between the two polar opposites).

While current trends in idealism and social activism tend to tolerate (even demand) the use of collective force against individuals or groups perceived to be in the wrong, the underlying moral presumption is that whoever is stronger or more successful is inherently evil and wrong and whoever is weaker or less fortunate is inherently morally superior. And the stronger/weaker assessment isn't just about the people directly involved, but derived from their membership in demographic groups.

History, usually a very distorted reading of history, is called upon to decide which among the various demographic characteristics you possess is associated with a group that is the most oppressed or unfortunate, and your moral standing is determined by weighing that against countervailing elements in your group-identity profile. Your moral competency—and even your moral worth—is judged by that.

Friedrich Nietzsche sort of keyed into this when he said that all morality is an attempt by the weak to subjugate the strong. It's a tantalising insight, though I disagree with his ultimate position. Yes, morality is an attempt to get people to moderate their impulses and to refrain from certain uses of their strengths,

strike me as salient. Similar antics played out during the BLM protests of 2020, when statues of Union commander in chief Ulysses S. Grant and President Abraham Lincoln—two men almost universally credited with the biggest contributions to ending slavery in the United States—were defaced, ostensibly to protest the legacy of slavery! Demands were made to remove or destroy the monument, in Columbus Circle, to Christopher Columbus, the first European explorer to reach the New World, who is regularly the target of stunningly anachronistic bouts of moral outrage.

Perhaps the saddest of this type of incident during the 2020 riots was the deprived and sustained assault (complete with blood, faeces, and a noose) on a statue of the 19th Century abolitionist Matthias Baldwin, who dedicated his life to fighting slavery and improving life for Black Americans, and advocating racial integration in American society as early as the 1840s! Black lives actually mattered to him and he put his time and money where his mouth was. But he was a white man, and that was enough to make him evil, apparently.

Matthias Baldwin used his wealth and influence—his "might" if you will—to pursue what was right. And that's the key. Might doesn't make right. It also doesn't make wrong. "Right" is the moral value we want to achieve or preserve. "Might" is just a tool we use, either to defend or to destroy that value.



but it applies universally. We ALL must refrain from aggression, abuse, or subjugation of others, even if we have the ability—the "strength"—to do so.

In other words, for moral purposes, it's important not to assume "strong" and "weak" as absolute traits, but recognise that they are contextual; we can all potentially take on the role of "the strong" and morality helps navigate that. For instance, I may be poorer than you, but if I'm using greater physical strength to beat you up, then clearly, it no longer makes sense to treat me as the "disadvantaged" party. Or I may be physically weaker than you, but if I bring a gun and an entourage, then suddenly I'm "stronger."

There are a lot of social and political upheavals in the world right now where people are (hopefully) grappling with these questions. But incidents like the monument vandalisms



The author is a lawyer, writer and editor based in Manhattan, New York. (Photographs by the author)

Golden moments: The significance of Akshaya Tritiya

MANJIRA MAJUMDAR

Much of our Hindu celebrations are tied up with nature and the change of seasons. In Bengal, Akshaya Tritiya was a day when fruits were offered to deities before mortals could enjoy them wholeheartedly. Naturally, the seasonal fruits, especially the summer tropical ones, reigned supreme.

The norwester had ceased, and the raw mangoes, which had not fallen off the tree in the storm or had been plucked to make sour dal and chutney or pickles, were left to ripen. The spells of rain accompanying the thunderstorm helped ripen fruits fully, the foremost being the mango. The delicious sweetness was fit for the gods.

With the course of time, various other practices crept in to celebrate this date, considered very auspicious and the "third day of unending prosperity" by Hindus and Jains. It became part religious, part social, and, if one may add, even commercial. On this date, new ventures, marriage engagements, housewarming, investments in gold, and property started to be initiated.

Similarly to dhanteras, which became synonymous with buying gold and silver, a day before Diwali, on Akshaya Tritiya, jewellery buying goes up tremendously. What was once the practice on Poila Baishakh, or Bengali New Year, started shifting to this date.

"There are several reasons for this," explains Kaushik Sen, zonal marketing head of a reput-

ed chain of jewellers in Kolkata. "Earlier, small family-owned jewellery stores opened new accounts, or halkatha, with their clients, for which ledgers were used. Now greater transparency is maintained as many of the well-known establishments have become corporatized, and leading Indian jewellery manufacturers have also joined the fray."

Like dhanteras, earlier signified buying something new for the house has spilled to big-time spending, which includes gold and diamond jewellery, electronics, and maybe even vehicles. Jewellery establishments in the city offer heavy discounts and waivers on making charges on Akshaya Tritiya. "You can put it down to a certain marketing hype that is being created," Sen adds.

Brinda Sirkar, belonging to another reputed jewellery house in the city, throws light on jewellery buying during this time, which is not directly connected with weddings. "We make exclusive jewellery by highly skilled craftsmen, so the orders take time. Those planning wedding trousseau like to place their orders in advance."

Brinda Sirkar has designed stunning ranges of jewellery inspired by our rich heritages, ranging from the ancient Mughals and Nizams of Hyderabad and Rajput to Bengal art. Her bidri range is noted for bringing Hyderabad (though this silver inlay work originated in Bidar, Karnataka) craftsmanship to match with Bengal's handcrafted gold jewellery.



According to her, she is not partial to any age group, like young, middle-aged, or elderly ladies. "Indian women like jewellery, and many like to flaunt it while also keeping its value in mind."

Therefore, new designs make sense, like fashion statements elsewhere in the world. Not for her, the jewellery that is light, machine-made, and can be bought off the counter.

Today, it is up to the women to make that choice - whether to go for lighter or heavier jewellery, as gold is an expensive metal. The main issue is that they are financially independent and can spend and save money as they wish. They no longer depend or should depend on their families to only provide for them. And if creativity continues with odes to our legacy of workmanship and artistry by our goldsmiths, these reasons are good enough for a celebration.



After days of waiting for the rain, she finally arrived. In style. First came the howling winds and crackling thunder as a storm swept through the city. This was followed by lashing rain. Our photographer Moul Mondal captured the various stages of the much anticipated seasonal shower. Here a young man and woman admire the graying sky at Kolkata's Maidan area; A tree sways in the Kaal Baishaki storm and a delighted man and woman celebrated the coming of rain as they walk over the iconic Howrah bridge.



Jogesh Chandra Chaudhuri College also offers PGD.M courses with placements: Principal

ASHOK CHATTERJEE



With most of the colleges in the 1950s and 1960s established in Kolkata with an intention of providing education to the downtrodden and the underprivileged, Jogesh Chandra Chaudhuri College on Prince Anwar Shah Road was no different.

The college started functioning in 1965 by the eminent barrister Ranadeb Chaudhuri, who was the son of Jogesh Chaudhuri. Ranadeb Chaudhuri was also one of the key persons, who drafted the Companies Act, 1956.

Jogesh Chaudhuri, initially secretary to educationist and nationalist Surendranath Bannerjee, later became his son-in-law.

The law college, with which the institution shares its space, started in 1970.

Luminaries of the time, such as Prof Satyendra Nath Bose, physicist and mathematician; Prof Triguna Sen, former education minister; Prof Jnan Chandra Ghosh, former vice-chancellor of Calcutta University; Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Dr J N Mukherjee, former vice-president ISI and Sankardas Banerjee, barrister-at-law were also associated with the institution.

But with the changing times and new courses incorporated in the educational programme, Jogesh Chandra Chaudhuri College too has included many new-age courses in its curriculum. It has tied up with Netaji Subhas Open University for distance education courses in 10 subjects. In December 2023, the first batch was inducted. The list of postgraduate subjects includes English, history, Bengali, political science, public administration, library and information sciences, commerce, education. Library and information sciences course is also available at the undergraduate level.

Dr Pankaj Kumar Roy, principal of the college, said, "There are 15 major and minor courses under the NEP (National Education Policy 2020) in all the regular streams of science,

arts and commerce. Apart from that, we also offer 19 add-on courses like preparing for competitive exams, filmmaking, digital journalism, stenography, data management analysis etc. We are looking for more enrollments."

The college has tied up with Pune Institute of Business Management for offering PGDM courses.

The college launched postgraduate diploma programmes in finance, marketing and artificial intelligence. These courses are in hybrid mode with some of the classes being held in the city and a few in Pune. "There is campus placement



with packages starting from 4 lakh. So what you spent in your course in a year you can earn double of it in the first year of your work," says the principal.

Mr Roy added, "We also have MoUs with 50 different institutions for undergraduate courses with student exchange programmes, teachers exchange programmes, class exchange programmes etc. We have space constraints. Our college is situated on 0.63 acres of land and we have been dealing with the problem for the last 50-55 years. Last year, we managed to acquire 4 kottah of land nearby. We have planned to shift our labs there. We can also start new courses there, once the building is ready."



The college with student strength of 1,400, enjoys B++ from NAAC.

Principal Roy, a PhD in business management, has 12 publications and 50 articles to his credit. He said, "After my taking over in 2015, I started a placement cell and got tremendous response from it. We started the cell much ahead of Calcutta University.

The head of the institution says he is trying to make the campus poster-free and has solar panning on its rooftop to generate electricity. "This is an effort to reduce our carbon footprint and we have managed to cut our power bill by almost 40 per cent," said Dr Roy. He also had a plantation drive with specific trees, which helped in creating a butterfly garden as the principal feels that everyone should plant three trees to make the planet sustainable.

The college now also boasts of a few smart classrooms and digital cataloging of the books in its library.

The college has judiciously utilised its old spiralling staircase to showcase the history of freedom movement through lights, in association with history dept of Kalyani University.

The principal adds that he has had



full support for his new initiatives from the MLA Debashis Kumar, who is the president of the governing body of the college.

Talking about the NEP implementation, the principal says the major challenge will be space. "There could be a space crunch in 2026-27, but by that time we will have our second campus ready," he said, adding, "I have

also spoken at a webinar how the administrative structure of the academic institutions will change with the NEP. Even the UGC has a new structure in tandem with the NEP" he said.

He said the revision was much needed as there have been a lot of changes in the education system since the last revision happened in 1985. "There has been sea change in the way the world is now being educated.

The college organizes excursions, seminars on-demand and holds yoga classes on a daily basis. One of the highlights of the college, the principal said, is the parent-teacher meetings.

To overcome space crunch, the institution bifurcated the height of the building to create more rooms as the principal said vertical expansion is the only way out for him.



Value creation in the digital economy

PEEYUSH SAMARIYA

In the world of investing, traditional value investors have long adhered to well-established financial metrics to guide their investment decisions. These metrics, such as the price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio, have served as reliable indicators for assessing the value of companies in sectors like manufacturing, retail, and services. However, with the ascent of the technology sector and the emergence of cryptocurrencies, these conventional tools often fall short of providing a clear understanding of their market dynamics and potential. This disconnect has led many value investors to steer clear of tech stocks and virtual assets, viewing them as enigmatic and inherently risky.

New-tech companies, particularly those in their growth phases, frequently report sustained losses and may have negative earnings for extended periods, yet they can still command staggering market valuations. For instance, companies like Amazon and Facebook spent years in the red, focusing on growth and market expansion rather than immediate profitability, challenging the traditional investment paradigms that prioritise short-term earnings. This scenario presents a conundrum for value investors who rely on positive earnings and stable P/E ratios as hallmarks of investable assets.

Cryptocurrencies further compound this complexity. With no physical assets or traditional cash

flows, cryptocurrencies represent a new asset class that defies the foundational principles of value investing. The valuation of these digital assets often hinges on market sentiment, technological adoption, and speculative futures rather than historical financial metrics. As a result, traditional value investors find it difficult to determine their intrinsic value, leading to scepticism and aversion.

Smarak Swain, in his new book "Digital Fortunes: A Value Investor's Guide to the New Economy," addresses these issues head-on. Swain, who has years of experience in negotiating international tax and regulatory standards for the digital economy, argues that value investors are missing out on substantial opportunities by applying outdated analytical tools to understand sectors that are fundamentally different from their traditional counterparts. According to Swain, the key to unlocking the potential of tech stocks and cryptocurrencies lies in understanding the concept of "network effects."

Network effects occur when a product or service becomes more valuable as more people use it. This phenomenon is central to the business models of many successful tech companies and digital platforms, where the value created by user growth can far outweigh the immediate financial returns seen in traditional businesses. For example, social media platforms grow in value with each additional user,

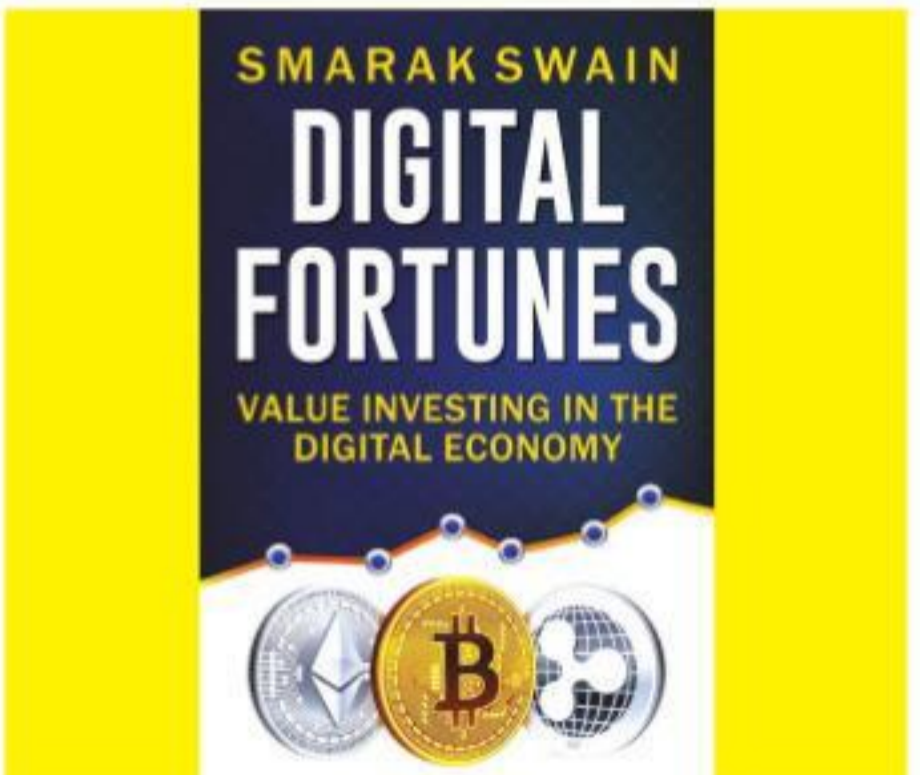
enhancing user engagement and attracting more advertisers, thereby creating a cycle of increasing value that may not be immediately apparent through traditional valuation metrics.

Swain's book guides value investors on how to adapt their strategies to capitalise on the growth of the digital economy. He provides insights into distinguishing potentially lucrative investments from less promising ones by evaluating the strength and potential of network effects. This approach offers a new lens through which to view high-growth tech companies and virtual assets, allowing investors to identify opportunities where others see only volatility and risk.

As we move deeper into what is often termed

"Digital Fortunes" serves not only as a guide to investing in new tech and virtual assets but also as a primer for rethinking investment strategies in the context of a rapidly evolving global economic landscape.

For value investors willing to adapt and learn, the digital economy offers unprecedented opportunities. By moving beyond traditional metrics and embracing new valuation frameworks like network effects, investors can discover potential in areas once considered beyond their realm. Swain's insights provide the necessary tools to navigate this new terrain, aiming to bridge the gap between traditional investment wisdom and the demands of the new economy.



the Industrial Revolution 4.0, characterised by digitalisation and technological integration across all sectors of the economy, understanding these dynamics becomes crucial.

The writer is an IAS officer, and currently works as Inspector General of Registration & Stamps Department, government of Rajasthan. The views expressed are personal.

Teenage years: The storm of stubbornness

ANWESHA SANTRA

... your mama's waiting up
And you're thinking he's the one
— Taylor Swift, *Fifteen*



When you are young, they assume you know nothing
— Taylor Swift, *Cardigan*



Ah, the teenage years—the time when rebellion becomes a rite of passage and parental wisdom feels more like an ancient relic than a guiding light—a spectacle as predictable as it is perplexing. It's like watching a sitcom where the characters insist on rewriting the script while it's airing.

The know-it-all phenomenon: You're a seasoned sailor navigating the choppy waters of life, armed with experience and wisdom. But to your teenage offspring, you might as well be steering a dinghy in a kiddie pool. Why? Because they suffer from a chronic case of 'I-know-better-it-is'. Symptoms include eye-rolling, exasperated sighs, and an uncanny ability to Google-fu their way out of any argument.

The fashion fight: Ah, the swirling vortex of trendy attire, makeup marvels, and accessory overload on social media—a tantalising playground for the adventurous teen spirit. But here's the kicker: Want to offer some sage advice? Save your breath, because chances are, they're too busy perfecting their

contour to hear you out.

The curfew conundrum: The curfews—the bane of every rebellious teenager's existence. It's a battle as old as time itself: parents setting strict curfews, and teenagers pushing boundaries like a bulldozer in a china shop. Negotiations resemble a high-stakes diplomatic summit, complete with impassioned pleas for "just five more minutes" and promises of eternal gratitude (which are promptly forgotten the moment the front door closes).

The technology tango: With smartphones practically glued to every teen's palm, their world is as wide open as a buffet at a food festival. Instead of hitting the books before exams, you're more likely to

catch them choreographing dances for their reels or perfecting their pout for selfies. Priorities, am I right? Attempts to pry them away from their devices are met with fierce resistance, as if you're asking them to part with a limb.

The partner problem: The world is their oyster, and they're sampling every pearl in sight. But, when it comes to matters of the heart, don't hold your breath for a name drop—chances are they'll return home with a shattered heart and lips sealed tighter than a vault at the safest bank.

Amitabha Ghoshal, a mental health counsellor, in a conversation with The Statesman, said, "Teenagers love to push buttons, stirring up trouble with

teasing, defiance and more. But the key to keeping your cool? Don't take the bait. Stay calm, respond with empathy and avoid micromanaging. Give them space to grow—within reason, of course."

The primary strategy when dealing with difficult teenagers is to maintain composure. By staying composed in the face of provocations, individuals can better exercise sound judgement in managing the situation. "In instances of mild difficulty, demonstrating empathy by avoiding excessive reactions can be beneficial. Responding with a smile rather than a scowl and adopting a light-hearted attitude, such as internally acknowledging the situation with humour, helps maintain perspective and focus on addressing the issue constructively," Ghoshal added.

Overbearing behaviour risks positioning oneself as an adversary rather than a supportive figure. Instead, offering reasonable latitude for the teenager to navigate their experiences fosters a sense of agency and promotes healthier interactions.



I was born and brought up in Kolkata, New Alipore, and now reside in Tanzania, East Africa. I am a regular reader of The Statesman epaper. Apropos article dated 5 May, "Restoring the lost glory of fountain pens", I wish to thank the youngsters of Pen Club for organising a pen mela as well as for this innovative idea to revamp the glory of fountain pens in this artificial intelligence era.

I myself am a lover of fountain pens and have a collection of Hero brand fountain pens used by my father and older sister. Camel brand fountain pen ink was used by us, and we had several bottles of red, blue and black ink in Kolkata.

I bought a fountain pen for my son when he started holding a pen for the first time in his life during his Class V session here in East Africa. I taught him that refillable cartridges of fountain pens are eco-friendly as compared to plastic waste from disposable pens and also exert less pressure on fingers than gripping a ball pen.

Moreover, for us, it is a tradition that we have passed on from one generation to the next for the past 100 years.

Yours etc., Rajesh Agarwal
Tanzania, East Africa, 6th May

