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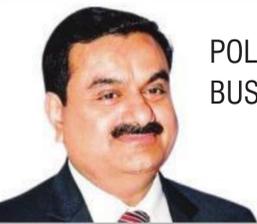


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KOLKATA | NEW DELHI | SILIGURI | BHUBANESWAR

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



POLITICS AND
BUSINESS

P6



'FUTURE OF VARUN
WILL BE DECIDED
AFTER ELECTIONS'

P5



SWITZERLAND'S NEMO
WINS 68TH EUROVISION
SONG CONTEST

P9

CSK KEEP PLAYOFFS
HOPES ALIVE WITH
FIVE-WICKET WIN



P12

WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky. Rain/Thundershower with gusty wind likely. Maximum and minimum temperatures likely to be around 33 °C and 24 °C respectively.

RAINFALL: 2.0mm

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max. 93 % Min. 56 %

TEMPERATURE

Max: 32.7°C (-3.1) Min: 23.3°C (-3.7)

SUN RISES 04:58 hrs SUN SETS 18:8 hrs

MOON RISES 08:25 hrs MOON SETS 22:35 hrs

FULL MOON ON 25 MAY

THUMBNAILS



Assamese girls wearing traditional attire during Faat Bihu celebrations at Mughuli Chapori in Lakhimpur district, Assam, on Sunday. ANI

Modi is the worst PM India has ever seen: Bengal CM

Modi comes to Bengal to speak lies and lies only, says Mamata Banerjee at Uluberia rally

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 12 MAY

Out of sheer desperation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is talking lies and has taken recourse to divisive politics, Trinamul Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee said today.

She was addressing a rally in Uluberia this afternoon. Mrs Sajda Amhed, the party's nominee is fighting from the seat. Earlier, Miss Banerjee addressed another rally in North 24-Parganas that falls under Barrackpore parliamentary seat. Partha Bhowmik is the Trinamul nominee from the seat.

Miss Banerjee said: "Modi comes to Bengal to speak lies and lies only. He is the worst Prime Minis-



ter India has ever seen. He talks divisive politics," she said, adding, "In the name of CAA, NRC and Uniform Civil Code BJP will withdraw the reservations for the SC, ST and Muslims. He said the Muslims will eat into the reservation of the SC and ST people. Is that possible? The rights of the SC, ST and OBC have been guaranteed by the Constitution. Why

always attack the Muslims?" she questioned. Miss Banerjee said: "Modi is still talking about Sandeshkhali, where the sting video has now been circulated. Modi said the country is watching Sandeshkhali. This is because you have purchased the media who are forced to show your lies," she said. In Sandeshkhali the BJP had forced women to sign

on blank paper which were later filled up by BJP leaders, she said. "I have never seen such a heinous crime in my life," Miss Banerjee said, adding, "In UP women had been raped and then murdered. But not a single word has been said by Modi on crime against women in UP."

She said Mr Modi did not have money to pay the dues of 59 lakh job card holders under the MGN-REGA. "However, he had money to give advertisements to spread canards against me. He calls me corrupt, BJP is the most corrupt party. Go to UP and Bihar to understand corruption."

Slamming the BJP for its allegation that in Bengal, Mamata Banerjee did not allow Durga Puja, she said: "This is the biggest lie.

The state government supports the clubs with financial assistance. We observe Saraswati puja. We observe Christmas and Eid. We believe that religion is individual but festival is for all. BJP believes in divisive politics. They let loose one community against the other, one religion against the other. They believe in divisive politics."

She said: "Modi is so shameless that he continues to speak lies.

She reiterated her pledge that houses under Awas Plus scheme will be built from December. She also noted that in Uluberia several industries have come up. A growth centre has come up in Uluberia. She urged people to vote for Trinamul Congress to continue the all-round development.

Devote time to vote time!



Amul
Loved by all!

PM: Nobody can overturn SC verdict on Ram Mandir, stop CAA implementation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 12 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday addressed as many as four election rallies in West Bengal in a whirlwind campaign, during which he attacked the Trinamul Congress government on the issues of corruption, appeasement politics and the turmoil in Sandeshkhali. He also gave 'five guarantees' for the state, among them vowing that nobody can stop the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in Bengal.

Speaking at a rally for BJP candidate Arjun Singh in Bhatpara, Mr Modi said: "Today, I want to give Bengal five guarantees. The first guarantee is that there will be no compromise on the basis of religion. The second guarantee is that as long as Modi is here, no one can end the protection of tribal communities. The third guarantee is that no one can obstruct the observance of Ram Navami and Ram Puja. The fourth guarantee is that as long as Modi is here, no one can change the Supreme Court's decision on the Ram temple. And the fifth guarantee is that no one can repeal the CAA. And Modi's guarantee is the guarantee of fulfilling guarantees."

Referring to the opposition to the CAA, Mr Modi said, "This law is meant to give citizenship to persecuted refugees. No one's citizenship will be



taken away. But parties like Congress and Trinamul are speaking falsehoods about it. They are against giving citizenship to persecuted minorities." "It's because of the politics of vote banks that laws like the CAA have been turned into villains," Mr Modi said.

Taking the TMC to task on the issue of corruption, Mr Modi said: "A few years ago, in a CAG report, it was stated that the Trinamul government did not provide any account of Rs 2 lakh 30 thousand crore." Mr Modi said: "One of the examples of the corruption of the Trinamul government is the corruption in teacher recruitment. Here, the OMR sheet has been burnt. Fake interviews have been conducted."

Speaking about Sandeshkhali, Mr Modi said: "What's happening in Sandeshkhali, the whole country is witnessing. Trinamul is making all sorts of efforts to protect the culprits. But I guarantee, no oppressor will survive."

Mr Modi also addressed rallies in Howrah and Chinsurah and Arambagh in Hooghly district.

(More reports on Pg 2)

Ten 'Kejriwal Guarantees' for polls

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 12 MAY

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday announced ten 'Kejriwal Guarantees' of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for the Lok Sabha elections, including 24-hour electricity supply, free education, and better healthcare.

The AAP's national convenor said if the Opposition INDIA bloc comes to power, he would make sure that these promises are fulfilled. "This (the announcement) was delayed due to my arrest but it still has relevance... I have not discussed it with the rest of the INDIA but this is like a guarantee that no one would have any problems with it. I give this guarantee that after the INDIA alliance comes to power, I will make sure that these guarantees are implemented," he said at the AAP headquarters.

Elaborating, he said: "Of the 10 guarantees, the first is that we will provide 24-hour electricity in the country. India has the capacity to generate three lakh MW of electricity while



only two lakh MW is generated. Our country can produce more electricity than the demand. We have done it in Delhi and Punjab, we will do it in the country... We will provide up to 200 units of free electricity to all the poor."

Mr Kejriwal said: "Today, the condition of our government schools is not good. Our second guarantee is that we will arrange good and excellent free education for everyone, be it a child belonging to a poor or a rich family."

Promising better healthcare, Mr Kejriwal said: "Today, the

condition of our government hospitals is not good, hence the guarantee for better healthcare. We will ensure good treatment for everyone. Mohalla clinics will be opened in every village, every locality." Every citizen will get free treatment, he said.

Asserting that the land occupied by China will be freed, he said: "Our fourth guarantee is 'Nation first'. China has occupied our land but our Central government is denying it... All the land of the country that has been occupied by China will be freed. For this, efforts will be made at the diplomatic level on the one hand and the Army will be given complete freedom to take whatever steps it wants to take regarding this on the other."

He also said the Agniveer scheme will be withdrawn and the old method of military recruitment reinstated.

The AAP also promised that farmers would get full prices for their crops based on the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission. The AAP also vowed to get Delhi the status of a full state.

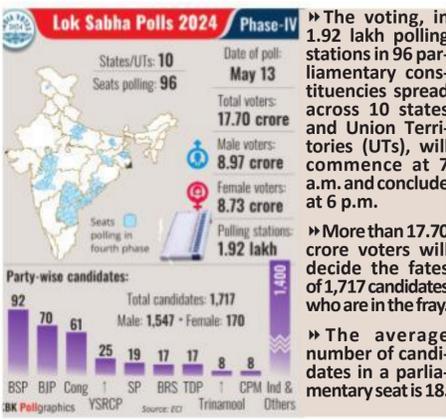
4th phase: Stage set for electoral battle

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 12 MAY

Another round of electoral battle between the BJP-led NDA and the Opposition INDIA bloc takes place in the fourth phase of voting in the Lok Sabha elections on Monday. The voting, in 1.92 lakh polling stations in 96 parliamentary constituencies spread across 10 states and Union territories (UTs), will commence at 7 a.m. and conclude at 6 p.m.

Of the 96 Lok Sabha seats going to polls in the fourth phase, 25 are in Andhra Pradesh, 17 in Telangana, 13 in Uttar Pradesh, 11 in Maharashtra, eight each in Madhya Pradesh and Bengal, five in Bihar, four each in Jharkhand and Odisha and one in Jammu and Kashmir.

More than 17.70 crore voters will decide the fates of 1,717 candidates who are in the fray. Prominent contenders among the candidates from the BJP are Union ministers, Giriraj Singh (Bhugusarai, Bihar), G Kishan Reddy (Secunderabad, Telangana), and Madhavi Latha



(Hyderabad, Telangana). Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury (Baharampur, West Bengal) and Congress' Andhra Pradesh chief YS Sharmila (Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh) are in the fray from the Congress. Other key candidates are Samajwadi Party chief and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav (Kannauj), AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi (Hyderabad)

and Trinamul Congress leader Mahua Moitra (Krishnanagar). Elections will also take place for all 175 seats of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly and 28 seats of the Odisha Legislative Assembly on Monday. The Election Commission said that as per IMD forecast there is no significant concern regarding hot weather conditions for tomorrow's polling.

Hardeep Nijjar killing: Canadian Police arrest fourth suspect

AGENCIES
OTTAWA, 12 MAY

The Canadian Police has arrested a fourth suspect over his alleged involvement in the killing of the designated terrorist, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, Canada-based CBC News reported. Nijjar was killed outside the Gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia, on 18 June.

The arrested man has been identified as Amandeep Singh (22). According to Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) in British Columbia, Singh was already in the custody of Peel Regional Police in Ontario for unrelated firearms charges. "IHIT pursued the evidence and gained sufficient information for the BC Prosecution Service to charge Amandeep Singh with first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder," the police statement said.

The police said that Singh is an Indian national, splitting his time in Canada in Brampton, Ontario; Surrey, British Columbia, and Abbotsford, British Columbia, as reported by CBC News. Investigators haven't

The arrested man has been identified as Amandeep Singh (22), an Indian national

given any further details of the arrest, citing ongoing investigations and court processes.

This comes days after the Canadian police arrested three Indian nationals - Karan Brar, Kamalpreet Singh and Karanpreet Singh - in Edmonton. The trio was charged with first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder in relation to the homicide.

Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was designated a terrorist by India's National Investigation Agency in 2020, was shot and killed in Surrey in June last year.

The attack was described as 'highly coordinated' and involved six men and two vehicles. Notably, the Canadian police have not given any evidence of any link to India. Nijjar's killing triggered diplomatic tensions between Canada and India after Mr Trudeau alleged India's hand in the killing - a claim New Delhi has rejected.

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'A strong Bengal can show the path to the nation'

The time has come to bring back the lost glory of Bengal, the Prime Minister said while addressing a mammoth gathering in Chinsurah

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE HOOGHLY, 12 MAY

Addressing a mammoth gathering at Chinsurah this afternoon, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recalled the glorious days when Bengal showed the way to the entire nation and lamented that today Bengal is known for misrule, corruption, lawlessness and atrocities on women.

The time has come to bring back the lost glory of Bengal, the Prime Minister said.

The vote bank politics and appeasement policies started by the Congress, then carried forward by the Left Front and now carried on by the TMC have ruined Bengal, the PM said. The entire development policy is guided by vote-bank politics and appeasement, he said.

Mr Modi said the nation is shocked by the heap of currency notes recovered from the houses of TMC leaders. "The Sandeshkhali incident has caused anxiety for the women



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public meeting for the Lok Sabha Polls, in Hooghly on Sunday. ■ SNS

of Bengal. They feel insecure and are under constant fear of TMC-backed goons. The people are deprived of their constitutional rights. TMC is now well known as gondogol

party (trouble making party), Jomi dakhol and Ghore Bomb, even children are not safe at home. TMC have destroyed the society," Mr Modi said.

The prime minister added the central government beneficiary schemes if properly implemented in the state can bring development in every sector, benefitting peo-

ple from the grassroot level but TMC is power and vote hungry. It does not respect the true mandate of the people. It instills fear and terror among the people to grab their votes, he said.

The prime minister urged the people to punish the TMC by voting in favour of BJP since a strong Bengal can ensure a strong stable BJP government at the Centre.

Mr Modi said a strong BJP in Bengal will bring back its glory days, industrial and agricultural development, jobs for youth, cottage industry for women and safety and security for all.

The PM urged the BJP party workers to ensure word of Modi's guarantee reaches every door step.

Mr Modi from Chinsurah headed towards Arambagh to address another election campaign meeting.

The BJP has four MLAs in Arambagh Sub-Division and is pulling out all the stops to win the Arambagh Lok Sabha constituency.

We worship our Mother...365 days a year: Mother's portrait brings smile on PM Modi's face in Hooghly

AGENCIES HOOGHLY, 12 MAY

On the occasion of Mothers' Day on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was gifted a portrait of his mother Late Heeraben Patel during his public rally in Hooghly, West Bengal and said that the people in West celebrate this day as Mother's Day but in India we worship our Mother 365 days a year.



A BJP supporter holds a portrait of PM Narendra Modi's mother late Heeraben Modi, which he received as a Mother's Day gift, during the public meeting for the LS polls, in Hooghly. ■ ANI

While addressing a public meeting in Hooghly, PM Modi asked the Special Protection Group (SPG) commandos to collect the portrait of his mother (brought as gifts) from two young people.

"The people in the rally are here who made the picture of my mother. The people in 'West' celebrate this day as Mother's Day, but in India, we worship our Mother, Ma Durga, Ma Kaali and Bharat Mata, 365 days a year. I request SPG com-

mandos to collect the pictures. Please mention your addresses at the back of the paper. SPG people take photos of my mother from both people. I want to thank both of you," PM Modi said on Sunday.

Meanwhile, in the first picture, the Prime Minister was sitting on the floor, while his hands were on his mother's lap.

In the second picture, PM Modi and his mother were seen sitting together and her mother's hands were on his son's (PM) shoulder.

Mother's Day annually falls on the second Sunday of May. This year, it is being celebrated on May 12. Mother's Day honours mothers and mother figures around the globe.

PUBLIC OUTREACH



Mr. Sudip Banerjee, TMC candidate of North Kolkata, campaigning at Barabazar area. ■ SNS

158 centenarian voters in East Burdwan

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE BURDWAN, 12 MAY

As many as 161 centenarian voters will exercise their franchise in this year's Lok Sabha election in East Burdwan district tomorrow.

The district has two Lok Sabha constituencies - Bardhaman-Durgapur and Bardhaman Purba.

Bardhaman-Durgapur constituency along with its neighbouring Bardhaman Purba constituency has as many as 158 voters aged between 100 and 109 years and 19,449 voters aged above 85 years, a database prepared by the District Election authorities indicates.

One of the voters is 120 year old who's residing in Katwa. Two voters are aged between 110 to 119 years

in the district and both are female voters.

Among the senior most voters, 122 are female and 36 male voters.

Bardhaman-Durgapur constituency has 18.51 lakh voters and Bardhaman Purba seat has 18.01 lakh voters in aggregate. Bardhaman Durgapur seat covers seven Assembly segments.

Of them Durgapur-Paschim Assembly segment has highest voter strength (2.76 lakh) and Monteswar has the lowest number of voters (2.48 lakh).

Bardhaman Purba includes seven Assembly segments. Of them Katwa segment has the highest (2.76 lakh) voters and Jamalpur segment has the lowest number (2.41 Lakh) of voters.

Freedom of speech is at stake in Bengal: PM Modi

AGENCIES KOLKATA, 12 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday claimed that the "freedom of speech" in West Bengal is at stake under the current Trinamool Congress government.

"The opposition voices in West Bengal are being suppressed in West Bengal. The freedom of speech of common people is at stake. In West Bengal, a person is threatened even for sharing a cartoon," the Prime Minister said while addressing a rally at Arambagh Lok Sabha constituency in Hooghly district in support of the party candidate Arup Kanti Diger.

The Prime Minister was referring to the former professor of Jadavpur University, Dr Ambikesh Mahapatra, who was arrested by police in 2011 for sharing a cartoon of Chief Minister



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a public meeting for the Lok Sabha Polls, in Hooghly on Sunday. ■ ANI

Mamata Banerjee.

Prime Minister said that Trinamool Congress leaders feel that they enjoy the monopoly on the culture of West Bengal. "But this is the

land of Maa Durga and Maa Kali. In Bengal, censorship has been put on people's faith. Taking the name of Lord Ram is a crime here," the Prime Minister said.

He said that it is unfortunate that the condition of women and education are constantly deteriorating in the land of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar.

"The contribution of personalities like Shyama Prasad Mukherjee is being undermined in West Bengal for appeasement politics and keeping the dedicated minority vote bank happy. The Trinamool Congress leaders are constantly insulting the people coming from scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes," the Prime Minister said.

He also said that the Trinamool Congress would not be able to stop the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act.

This was the third rally addressed by the Prime Minister in the day, the first two being at Barrackpore and Hooghly.

Strawberry Festival in Kurseong on 18 May

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE SILIGURI, 12 MAY

The Sunday Haat, a Siliguri based voluntary organisation that promotes organic produce, traditional arts and crafts of North Bengal and the North-East region, celebrated Mother's Day today by dedicating the celebration to Mother Nature and the Soil.

To mark the Mother's Day, Sunday Haat organised several programmes here today and announced 'Himalayan Strawberry Festival', the first of its kind of agro-tourism festival, at Chimney Village under Kurseong Sub Division in Darjeeling district on 18 May.

A group of farmers especially from Kurseong and Sonada in Darjeeling associated with the Sunday Haat, will coordinate the Strawberry Festival.

On this occasion of International Museum Day on 18 May, the heritage of the area like forest museum and the



chimney remains will be highlighted along with agro-produce, handicrafts and handlooms in the festival.

Besides, there will be Strawberry recipe competition,

cultural programme and fashion show. The local people will participate in several activities related to Agro-Tourism.

Today's Mother's Day was

dedicated to Reba Bose in the presence of guests from different fields, including from the Confederation of Indian Industry and from Nepal. The event began with cake

cutting by host Reba Bose, Chief Guest Arjun Karki from Green Generation Jhapa, Nepal and Special Guest Sanjit Saha from CII, Siliguri, India.

FINE DAY



Chilling out on a Sunday afternoon. ■ MOUL MONDAL

ON THE POLL TRAIL



All India Trinamul Congress (TMC) from South Kolkata Mala Roy flashes a victory sign during an election campaign for the Lok Sabha Polls, in Kolkata on Sunday. ■ SNS

Mansadeep Ramakrishna Mission school gets higher secondary building

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 12 MAY

Swami Bimalatmanandaji Maharaj, one of the vice presidents of Ramakrishna Math and Mission, inaugurated the newly constructed higher secondary building at Mansadeep Ramakrishna Mission on Friday morning.

Maharaj had laid the foundation stone in 2020. The centre was hit by natural calamities like Yash, Ailah and Amphan. Though a Higher Secondary section was introduced in the school in 1976, the building could not be constructed due to financial constraints.

Swami Tattvaivanandaji, one of the assistant general secretaries of Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Mr Bankim Hazra, state minister for Sunderbans Affairs department and a former pupil of this school, president of the organizing committee Mr Samir



Ranjan Giri were present at the function.

Coal India has donated Rs 2.05 crore to set up the building from its CSR Project. Komotsu, a firm has donated Rs 12 lakhs to procure the high benches while many people had donated gener-



ously to set up the Physics Lab.

Classes will be held at the building from the 2024 academic year. Mathematics, Physics, Life Science, Chemistry, Geography and Computer Science will be introduced with 100 students in the

stream.

Slowly the number of students will go up and in 2026 Arts faculty will be introduced.

Surenranath Shasmal, a landed aristocrat, had donated 100 bigha land at Magra Chadipur village in Sagardeep. Swami Isthannandaji set up a primary school in 1928 to propagate education among the backward people of the area.

In 1967 the school was elevated the status of higher secondary. Majority of the students of the school come from economically challenged background. Many students are first generation learners. In addition to running the school, the centre carries out large scale social service following the initiative of Swami Stabapriyanandaji, secretary of the centre. Manshadeep is situated in the Sagar Island and the area is often affected by storms and other natural calamities.

THUMBNAILS



Naka checking on the eve of fourth phase of the Lok Sabha election. ■ BISWAJIT GHOSHAL

Special signage put up at old Esplanade Metro station



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 12 MAY

After installing special indicative footprints at old Esplanade Metro station as well as new Esplanade Metro station's concourse area, the authorities of Kolkata Metro Railway have now made arrangements for similar signs at the platforms of old Esplanade Metro station. Green footprints have been installed on the platforms of old Esplanade Metro station. Aiming to help commuters switch smoothly from one corridor to the other at Esplanade, special Blue arrow signs have also been installed on the ceiling of the inter-connecting passage of these two corridors as well as the concourse area of Blue Line.

Election in 8 key LS seats today

Mahua Moitra, Adhir Ranjan Choudhury and Dilip Ghosh are among those in the fray

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 12 MAY

Eight Lok Sabha seats in south Bengal will go for polling tomorrow which is the fourth phase of the general election.

Of the eight seats, five seats are currently with the Trinamul Congress while BJP got two seats and Congress one seat in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

Two actor-turned-politicians, a doctor and two cricketers of international repute are on the ballot in the election tomorrow.

Elaborate arrangements have been made to ensure peace during the election. The polling will start at 7.30 a.m. and continue till 5 p.m. There will be central forces, police observers and general observers to ensure free and fair election. There will be Quick Response Teams (QRT) along with state police personnel.

The polling, presiding officers and workers left for the respective polling stations



with Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) this afternoon under heavy police protection. The EVMs will be kept in the strong rooms. Before the election starts, they will be demonstrated before the representatives of different political parties.

Baharampur Lok Sabha seat is likely to witness a stiff fight between the sitting Congress MP Adhir Chowdhury and Trinamul Congress nominee, internationally renowned cricketer Yusuf Pathan. Over the years, the vote bank of Congress in the seat has witnessed erosion. In the 2019 election Chowdhury had won by 65,000 votes. In 2021 Assembly election, the Baharampur seat went to the BJP while Trinamul Congress had won all the six remaining seats falling within the Parliamentary constituency.

In Ranaghat, Dr Mutkumani Adhikari who recently joined the party from the BJP is the Trinamul Congress nominee. In 2019, Jagannath Sarkar of BJP had won the election from the seat. The Matua vote will play a major role in the election both in Krishnagar and Ranaghat.

In East Burdwan Trinamul Congress has fielded Dr Sharmila Sarkar. The party's organisation is strong in East Burdwan.

Burdwan-Durgapur is likely to witness a close fight between the BJP and Trinamul Congress. The BJP has fielded Dilip Ghosh who was the MP from Kharagpur and

replaced the sitting MP SS Ahluwallia who is contesting from Asansol.

Trinamul Congress has fielded ace cricketer Kirti Azad against Mr Ghosh. Trinamul's organisation network is very strong. Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee held meetings and road shows in favour of Mr Azad.

Actor-turned-politician and the sitting Trinamul Congress MP Shatrughan Sinha will fight against SS Ahluwallia in Asansol Lok Sabha seat. Mr Sinha had won by over 3 lakh votes in 2019 Lok Sabha election. In Bolpur and Birbhum actor-turned-politician Shatabdi Roy, three time MP, and Asit Kumar Mal are contesting from the seats. Both the seats are under Trinamul Congress. This is for the first time that the absence of Anubrata Mondol, the party's district president, who is now in jail, will be felt in the Lok Sabha election.

It is to be seen whether Trinamul Congress can increase its seat tally or retain them in the elections tomorrow.

Responsible and progressive INDIA govt will come to power in Delhi: Abhishek



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 12 MAY

Coming down heavily on the BJP, Trinamul Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee said the leaders of the saffron party come to Bengal to speak lies about CAA and other schemes which will be implemented if they come to power.

He said that a responsible, sensitive, progressive and secular INDIA bloc will come to power in Delhi and pro-people schemes will be introduced and skyrocketing of the prices of essential commodities will be addressed.

He was addressing a gathering at Bongaon in support of the party's nominee, Biswajit Das. In 2019 BJP candidate Shantanu Thakur was elected from the seat. The seat will vote on 20 May.

Mr Banerjee said in 2019, BJP leaders had come to the area and said unconditional citizenship will be given to the Matuas. Now, they are saying the Matuas will have to fill up a form, he said, and warned that once they do it they will be sent to detention camp like 12 lakh Hindus who have been sent to the detention camp in Assam.

"If Narendra Modi and Amit Shah declare that there will be no NRC, I will be the first person to support them. But they cannot announce this," he said.

He said BJP leaders have said they would provide Rs 3,000 a month to women of the state under Lakshmir Bhandar. "BJP is rulling in 17 states. If they can give Lakshmir Bhandar to 10 crore women in UP another 3 crore women in Rajasthan and 2 more crore women in Gujarat I will not come to you to ask for vote. This is all hoax. Mamata Banerjee had

He urged people to vote for Trinamul Congress for the area's uninterrupted development

announced to introduce Lakshmir Bhandar before the election and it was introduced. Now, 2.12 crore women in Bengal are getting the benefit. The money which they receive has also been enhanced," he pointed out.

Mr Banerjee said the BJP does not have any respect for Matua deities Harichand Thakur and Guruchand Thakur. "When Mamatabala Thakur had gone to Delhi to be sworn in as a member of Rajya Sabha, she took the names of Harichand Thakur and Guruchand Thakur at the swearing in ceremony. The Chairman of Rajya Sabha stopped her from uttering the names of Harichand Thakur and Guruchand Thakur. This is BJP. They have no respect for them but comes here to ask for votes."

He said if BJP is voted into power this time they will introduce one nation election and thereby take away the rights of the people of this country. "Now, people elect their candidates in three-tier Panchayat Raj, civic bodies, Assembly and Parliament but everything will go and their right will be taken away," he said.

Mr Banerjee said if Mr Das wins, the Bongaon Assembly seat will fall vacant. "I will come again in July and through secret ballot, people will decide who they want as their candidate from Bongaon Assembly seat," he said.

He urged people to vote for Trinamul Congress for the area's uninterrupted development.

BJP supporters thrash youth in Sandeshkhali

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 12 MAY

Trouble erupted again in Sandeshkhali when some BJP supporters beat up a youth alleging that he had made a fake video distorting the facts of the unrest in the area. Women supporters of the BJP raided the youth's house and beat him up.

The trouble between Trinamul Congress and BJP resumed after Trinamul Congress uploaded a video where two mandal presidents of BJP were heard saying that false cases of rape were filed with the police. Mrs Rekha Patra who had organised the women to protest against illegal activities in



Sandeshkhali is fighting the Lok Sabha election from Barasat on a BJP ticket.

Meanwhile, Trinamul Congress has written a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner against Rekha Sharma, chairperson National Women Commission (NWC) and other BJP leaders whom it alleges conspired to disturb the peace in Sandeshkhali. Trinamul Congress lead-

ers requested the CEC to take steps to restrain the BJP from making further false, unverified allegations against Trinamul Congress leaders.

In the letter, Trinamul leaders alleged that a woman alleged that Mrs Sharma and Mrs Piyali Das had forced her to sign on a blank paper without knowing its purpose. When she had gone to the police station, the BJP leaders had threatened her with dire consequences.

Both Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee during their addresses at political rallies today came down heavily on the BJP for engineering false narratives at Sandeshkhali to malign the state.

1,165 booths declared critical in Burdwan West by ECI

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE DURGAPUR, 12 MAY

The Election Commission has designated a total of eleven hundred and sixty five booths spread over nine assembly constituencies of West Burdwan district as critical.

Seven assembly seats fall under Asansol Lok Sabha seat while two assembly segments fall under Burdwan-Durgapur Lok Sabha seat.

As many as 81 companies of central forces have been deployed by the Election Commission of India in these constituencies.

Out of the 1,165 booths declared critical, 930 booths fall under the Asansol Lok Sabha seat while 230 booths fall under the Burdwan-Durgapur Lok Sabha seat.

Around 5472 state police personnel will also assist the Central Armed Police Forces.

The voting will take place from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. tomorrow. The District Electoral Office has announced a helpline number for assistance - 0341-2250324.

There are a total 2498 booths in nine assembly con-

stituencies in West Burdwan District. Seven assembly constituencies which falls under Asansol Lok Sabha seat are Asansol North, Asansol South, Barabani, Kulti, Raniganj, Jamuria, Pandaveswar and two assembly constituencies which fall under Burdwan-Durgapur Lok Sabha seat are Durgapur East and Durgapur West. There are two heavyweight ministers from the district - law, judiciary and labour minister Moloy Ghatak from Asansol North and panchayat minister Pradip Mazumdar from Durgapur East seat.

The West Bengal-Jharkhand border will remain sealed and all liquor shops will remain closed in West Burdwan district tomorrow.

While former cricketer Kirti Azad is contesting against Dilip Ghosh, former state president of BJP, and Sukrit Ghoshal, former professor of Burdwan Raj College of the CPM in Burdwan-Durgapur, in Asansol Shatrughan Sinha of the TMC is contesting against Surendrajit Singh Ahluwallia of the BJP and Jahannara Khan of the CPM.



The Statesman

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GENERAL ELECTIONS TO LOK SABHA, 2024
IMPORTANT NOTICE

In the General Elections to Lok Sabha 2024, votes are being taken through Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs & VVPAT) today i.e. 13th May, 2024 (Monday) in 8 Parliamentary Constituencies.

The Schedule of Poll for Phase 4 is as follows :

No. & Name of Parliamentary Constituency	Voting Date & Timing
10 - Baharampur, 12 - Krishnanagar, 13 - Ranaghat (SC), 38 - Bardhaman Purba (SC), 39 - Bardhaman Durgapur, 40 - Asansol, 41 - Bolpur (SC), 42 - Birbhum	13 th May, 2024 (Monday) 7 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Under instructions of Election Commission of India, all the electors shall produce Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) for the identifications. If any elector is unable to show the EPIC, any one of the 12 identification original documents with photographs mentioned below shall be shown for identification.

Alternative Photo Identity Documents

1. Aadhar card
2. MNREGA Job Card
3. Passbooks with photograph issued by Bank / Post Office
4. Health Insurance Smart Card issued under the scheme of Ministry of Labour
5. Driving license
6. PAN Card
7. Smart Card issued by RGI under NPR
8. Indian Passport
9. Pension Document with photograph
10. Service Identity Cards with photograph issued to employees by Central/ State Govt/ Public Limited Companies
11. Official Identity Cards issued to MPs/MLAs/MLCs
12. Unique Disability ID (UDID) card, M/o Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India



Voter Helpline 1950
Voter Helpline App
SMS for information on voters' list
SMS<E>CI>space>EPIC NO.> & send to 1950

Issued in public interest by Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal



Lalu Yadav was in jail and hence he doesn't remember that work is going on to restart 14 sugar mills by the Modi government that were closed... This is the effect of PM Modi and CM Nitish Kumar.

BIHAR DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER SAMRAT CHOUDHARY AT A PRESS BRIEFING

Fourth phase: T'gana goes to polls for 17 seats, 525 candidates in fray

Polling will also be held for the by-election to the Secunderabad Cantonment Assembly constituency

AGENCIES HYDERABAD, 12 MAY

A little over 3.17 crore voters are eligible to cast their votes in Telangana as the stage is set for the polling in all 17 Lok Sabha constituencies on May 13.

The Election Commission has made elaborate arrangements for the peaceful and smooth conduct of the elections.

Polling will also be held for the by-election of the Secunderabad Cantonment Assembly constituency in Hyderabad.

A total of 3,17,17,389 voters are eligible to exercise their franchise across the state. They comprise 1,58,71,493 men, 1,58,43,339 women and 2,557 third gender.

As per the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Vikas Raj, 20,163 voters have availed the facility of home voting. More than 1.88 lakh employees on poll



duty have used postal ballot voting.

A total of 35,809 polling stations have been set up across the state.

After collecting the polling material from distribution centres, the staff will reach their respective polling stations by Sunday evening.

A total of 2.94 lakh personnel including nearly a lakh security personnel will be on poll duty.

As many as 525 candidates are in the fray for all Lok Sabha seats in the state, which

Secunderabad. BJP National General Secretary and sitting MP from Karimnagar, Bandi Sanjay Kumar is contesting again from the same seat. BJP national Vice President D. K. Aruna is in the fray from Mahabubnagar.

AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi is seeking re-election for a fifth consecutive term from Hyderabad.

In the 2019 elections, BRS had won nine seats while BJP had bagged four seats. Congress could win three seats while AIMIM had retained the lone seat.

Polling will be held from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. in 106 Assembly segments. The polling hours were earlier fixed at 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Following representations made by the political parties and considering the heat wave conditions, the Election Commission on May 1 announced the decision to extend it by one hour.

However, in 13 Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected segments under five Lok

Sabha constituencies the polling will conclude at 4 p.m.

Telangana had recorded a turnout of 71.34 per cent during the Assembly elections held in November 2023.

In the 2018 Assembly elections, 73.73 per cent of voters had cast their votes. However, in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the turnout dropped to 62.11 per cent.

As part of the massive security arrangements for the polling, 160 companies of central forces have been deployed.

The CEO said 72,000 personnel from Telangana, 20,000 personnel drawn from the neighbouring states and 4,000 personnel of other uniformed services will be deployed.

Sharing details of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), he said 1,05,019 Balloting Units (BUs) have been arranged. A total of 44,569 control units (CUs) and 48,134 VVPATs have also been deployed.

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AIMIM chief Owaisi bats for Congress in Telangana Lok Sabha elections

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD, 12 MAY

Batting for Congress candidates in Telangana, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi reminded the minority voters that this was not an election for 'Mamu' (KCR) but one to get rid of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Reports from the ground suggest that the minority votes in Telangana have consolidated in favour of Congress in the past few days. Although the candidate for the Hyderabad parliamentary seat did not mention Congress specifically, he gave a broad hint to the people in his last speech to ensure that his message percolates down to the grassroots level.

In earlier elections, including the last Assembly elections, Owaisi said that the minorities must vote for 'Mamu' (former chief minister and BRS supreme K Chandrashekar Rao) in the constituencies where the AIMIM does not have a candidate.

Congress has always accused Owaisi of being the 'B' team of BJP. However, his relations with Congress



improved after the grand old party came to power in Telangana and made overtures by addressing civic issues in the AIMIM bastion - the Old City area. "This Parliament election is not for Mamu (KCR) but is to defeat Modi. If you are not able to understand even this, then I say this more clearly ensure the fat man's (Danam Nagender) victory in Secunderabad, in Nizamabad vote for the one who has more grey hair (Jeevan Reddy), and in Chevella (Ranjith Reddy) vote for the thin one. Do you get it? In Hyderabad, there is the kite (AIMIM) and in Telangana wipe out the BJP. In Mahabubnagar particularly, Chevella, Secunderabad, Malkajigiri, Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Adilabad all the leaders of MIM and people of those

areas please pay attention to my words."

Owaisi made a special mention of Mahabubnagar, a constituency where Congress candidate Challa Vamsi Chand Reddy is locked in a fierce battle with DK Aruna of BJP. Since Mahabubnagar is the home district of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, it has become a prestige seat along with neighbouring Chevella. The state has nearly 14 per cent minority voters which split between the BRS and Congress in the last election.

BRS complains against Congress: Meanwhile, the BRS complained to the ECI after photographs and videos of the chief minister wearing an "INDIA" jersey and playing football at Hyderabad Central University did the rounds on social media platforms.

The KCR party called it a violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during the silent period before the day of polling. They also took umbrage at the chief minister, who as the PCC president livestreamed Priyanka Gandhi's rally through his social media handles.

YouTuber 'Savukku' Shankar detained under Goondas Act

AGENCIES CHENNAI, 12 MAY

The Greater Chennai Police in Tamil Nadu has invoked the Goondas Act against the YouTuber 'Savakku' Shankar, an official said on Sunday.

Chennai Police, in a statement, said that detention orders under the Goonda Act have been served to Shankar who is in judicial custody in the Coimbatore Central Prison.

The detention order was served to him at the Coimbatore Central Prison by the Inspector, Cyber Crime Wing, Central Crime Branch, Chennai. The Greater Chennai City Police Commissioner Sandeep Rai Rathore ordered the detention of 'Savakku' Shankar under the Goondas Act. "There are seven cases registered against Shankar in the CCB/Cyber Crime PS of the Greater Chen-

Shankar, a popular YouTuber and whistleblower, is in judicial custody in a case related to making improper comments about women police officers

nai Police (GCP) out of which three cases are under investigation. Charge sheets have been filed in two cases and two cases are under trial," the police said. Shankar is a popular YouTuber and whistleblower and has brought out several social issues before the public.

He is under judicial custody in a case related to making improper comments against women police officers during an interview with another YouTuber Felix Gerald. Both Shankar and Gerald are now in judicial custody.

Evenly poised battle in Andhra Pradesh

ANINDITA CHOWDHURY HYDERABAD, 12 MAY

Andhra Pradesh's ruling party YSR Congress and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) are locked in a neck-to-neck battle in the simultaneous elections to the state Assembly and Lok Sabha scheduled on 13 May.

Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) is facing anti-incumbency and a stiff challenge from the TDP-JSP-BJP alliance in 175 Assembly segments and 25 Lok Sabha constituencies.

Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSRCP, which had wrested power from Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in 2019 with a landslide majority, is banking on welfare schemes while the alliance led by TDP ran the campaign with the slogan to save Andhra Pradesh from 'destructive' rule of YSRCP.

This is the third election after the bifurcation of unit-

ed Andhra Pradesh and it will be interesting to see whether this will set the trend of voting out incumbent.

The tripartite alliance appears to have bolstered the prospects of the opposition. After biting the dust in previous elections, the TDP, Jana Sena Party (JSP) led by actor-politician Pawan Kalyan and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have come together again to take on YSRCP.

For TDP supremo N. Chandrababu Naidu, who turned 74 last month, this electoral battle is crucial for the future of his party. Eying another term as the Chief Minister, the senior politician did not hesitate to join hands with his friend-turned-foe BJP.

It was Pawan Kalyan who took the initiative to forge an alliance with the TDP late last year when Naidu was arrested and jailed in a corruption case. The actor later convinced the BJP to join hands



with them to avoid a split of anti-incumbency votes. Hesitant to trust Naidu once again, the BJP joined the alliance at the last minute.

Among the NDA partners, TDP is contesting a majority of Assembly and Lok Sabha seats. Out of 175 Assembly seats, it has left 21 seats for Jana Sena and 10 for BJP. Naidu has also allotted two Lok Sabha seats to the Jana Sena and six to the BJP.

Though the Congress, which drew a blank in the 2014 and 2019 elections, is trying to revive its fortunes by naming Jagan Mohan Reddy's sister Y. S. Sharmila as the state party chief, it is not likely to yield any major gains for the party. Political analysts say the party may marginally improve its vote share and cut into YSRCP votes in the few constituencies.

The Congress has also left 16 Assembly seats and two Lok

Sabha seats for its allies CPI and CPM.

Sharmila, who fell out with her brother when he ignored her after becoming the Chief Minister in 2019, caused him embarrassment by joining the Congress.

The YSR family suffered a vertical split in its stronghold Kadapa district with Sharmila entering the fray from Kadapa Lok Sabha seats against her cousin and YSRCP candidate Y. S. Avinash Reddy, who is seeking re-election for a third consecutive term.

Sharmila questioned Jagan's move to field Avinash Reddy once again despite the CBI naming an accused in the murder of their uncle Y. S. Vivekananda Reddy.

The former minister was murdered at his house in Pulivendula in Kadapa district a few days before the 2019 elections and the sensational case has seen many twists and turns during the last

five years.

Vivekananda Reddy's daughter Sunitha Reddy, who has been fighting for justice in the case, extended full support to Sharmila. They made an appeal to people to defeat Jagan Mohan Reddy and his party for shielding the murder accused.

Jagan blamed Naidu for using his sisters for his conspiracy against him. The two women, however, rubbished the allegation.

Jagan also tried to gain public sympathy by accusing the opposition parties of gang-apping up as they were unable to face him alone.

"Jagan Anna is like a lion, he will come alone, and he will come roaring," he declared at an election rally.

He also cautioned people that if Naidu came back, he would stop all the welfare schemes implemented by YSRCP during the last five years.

EC orders action against Nandyal SP following Allu Arjun episode

AGENCIES AMARAVATI, 12 MAY

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has ordered action against the Superintendent of Police Raghuvver Reddy in Andhra Pradesh's Nandyal for failing to implement the election code of conduct.

The poll panel had asked Andhra Pradesh Director General of Police to file charges against the SP.

It also ordered a departmental inquiry against the SP, SDPO Ravindermath Reddy, and CI Raja Reddy.

The police chief has been asked to inform the ECI about the action taken against the three officials.

The poll panel took serious note of Saturday's incident, where actor Allu Arjun visited Nandyal without obtaining permission from



the authorities concerned. A large number of fans of the actor gathered to see him. The police failed to control the crowd despite Section 144 being in force.

The police on Saturday registered a case against Allu Arjun and Nandyal MLA and YSR Congress candidate Silpa Ravi.

The actor of "Pushpa" fame visited the house of the

MLA's house to show his support on the last day of the campaigning. On learning about his visit, a large number of his fans gathered outside the MLA's house to see him. The actor appeared on the balcony with the MLA and his family members and waved at the huge crowd gathered outside.

Silpa Ravi, whose real name is Singareddy Ravichandra Kishore Reddy is seeking re-election as the candidate of the ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) in the May 13 elections.

Allu Arjun, in a social media post, thanked the people of Nandyal for the warm reception. He also thanked Silpa Ravi for the hospitality. "Wishing you the very best in the elections and beyond. You have my unwavering love and support," he posted on X.

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Allu Arjun visited the

TN Police soft-peddling honour killing case: Dalit activists

AGENCIES CHENNAI, 12 MAY

Activists and relatives of a Dalit youth who was allegedly killed for marrying an intermediate caste girl have charged the Pallikaranai Police of Tamil Nadu of soft-peddling the murder case.

Praveen (26), a Dalit mechanic and a resident of Ambedkar Street in Pallikaranai, Chennai was in a relationship with Sharmila (22) who was from an Other Backward Class (OBC) community and hailing from Jalladipattai.

After the family of Sharmila opposed their marriage, they got married in December and Praveen brought her to his home.

On February 23, 2024, Sharmila's brother Dinesh and four of his accomplices waylaid Praveen and hacked him to death using sharp weapons.



Pallikaranai Police registered the case and arrested Dinesh (24) and his accomplices Sriaram (18), Jothilingam (25), Vishnuaraj (24) and Stephan (24).

Sharmila attempted suicide on April 14, 2024 and on April 22 she succumbed to death.

Dalit activist K.R. Murugan while talking to IANS said that Pallikaranai Police is soft-peddling over the case. "We suspect a deliberate

attempt by the police to delay the chargesheet so that the accused gets statutory bail if the chargesheet is not filed after 90 days," Murugan said.

Murugan said that the police are delaying filing the chargesheet as the father of Sharmila, Durai Kumar was a DMK functionary and that the ruling party was putting pressure on the police.

However, DMK State Organ-

ising Secretary R.S. Bharathi told IANS that no party leader had intervened in the probe and added that stringent action must be taken in the case without considering any political affiliations.

Chennai Dalit activist U.V. Krishnaveni told IANS that Sharmila demanded the arrest of her parents and another brother which the Police did not accept it and her suicide attempt and her subsequent death were due to the inaction of the police. She demanded stringent action without falling to pressure from the ruling party leadership. G. Chithra, the mother of Praveen, filed a complaint with the Tambaram Police Commissioner stating that her daughter-in-law had committed suicide after the police failed to take action against her parents as well as her elder brother.

RMP leader KS Hariharan's sexist remark against KK Shailaja, Manju Warriar triggers political row in Kerala

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 12 MAY

Revolutionary Marxist Party (RMP) leader KS Hariharan (photo) has courted controversy after making a derogatory statement against CPI-M leader and LDF Vatakara Lok Sabha candidate KK Shailaja while commenting on the alleged morphed video of the LDF Vatakara candidate.

Refuting allegations that the UDF had spread the alleged morphed porn video of KK Shailaja, also called Shailaja Teacher, Hariharan at a United Democratic Front (UDF) function in Vatakara on Saturday asked "Who will make 'porn videos of the teacher?'"

"Will someone make a porn video of the teacher? It would be understandable



if it was Manju Warriar's porn video," said Hariharan while addressing an event inaugurated by opposition leader VD Satheesan in Vatakara on Saturday.

By his blatant sexist remarks, the leader of the RMP, which is a constituent in the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) in the state, has not only insulted one woman but two -- Shailaja Teacher and actor

Manju Warriar. After the incident sparked much outrage and criticism, Hariharan later issued an apology through his Facebook account. "It was pointed out to me by friends and journalists that I made an inappropriate comment in a speech in Vatakara today. I sincerely apologise for making the inappropriate statement."

Vadakara MLA and RMP

leader KS Hariharan publicly rejected Hariharan's anti-women remarks. Rama told the media that Hariharan's remarks were inappropriate.

"Such remarks or a single word against women should not come from anyone. It is something we are constantly discussing about. But we still see many people continue to make such remarks. These kinds of remarks are very painful in a progressive society," said Rama. Opposition leader VD Satheesan had said that the UDF does not accept KS Hariharan's controversial statement. The misogynist remarks should not come from anyone.

Political leaders should always set an example for others while speaking in public, he said.

"You can express politi-

cal disagreement with women, but cannot abuse them personally," said Shafi Parambil MLA, the UDF candidate in Vatakara.

Meanwhile, the DYFI, the youth wing of the CPI-M, approached the state police chief seeking to register a case against Hariharan for his misogynist remarks.

During the Lok Sabha poll campaign in April, Shailaja teacher alleged that the Congress was resorting to personal attacks against her and spreading misinformation online.

She also lodged a complaint with the Election Commission of India against Vadakara Congress candidate Shafi Parambil. She alleged that her morphed pictures were posted on an Instagram page titled 'Ente Vadakara KL18', which contains posts supporting Congress.

'Forest cover increased consistently over last 15 yrs'

AGENCIES NEW DELHI, 12 MAY

India's forest cover saw a consistent increase over the last 15 years, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) said at the recently concluded United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) in the US.

An Indian delegation, led by Jitendra Kumar, Director General of Forests and Special Secretary, MoEFCC, participated in the 19th Session of the UNFF, held at the UN Headquarters in New York from May 6 to May 10.

The delegation apprised the UNFF that the consistent increase in forest cover was

due to the "country's significant advancements in forest conservation and sustainable forest management," the MoEFCC said on Sunday.

"Globally, India ranks third in the net gain, in average annual forest area, between 2010 and 2020," it added.

Revised Composition of Asansol-Khatipura-Asansol Summer Special train for one trip
 Due to operational reason, 03509/03510 Asansol-Khatipura-Asansol Summer Special train will run by following revised composition (ICF Rake) for one trip on the dates mentioned below : 03509 Asansol-Khatipura Summer Special (JCO 14.05.2024, Tuesday) and 03510 Khatipura-Asansol Summer Special (JCO 15.05.2024, Wednesday) will run by revised composition. • Revised composition for one trip only : AC 1st-cum-AC 2-tier - 2, AC 2-tier - 3, AC 3-tier - 12, Sleeper - 5 & SLRD - 2 = 24 coaches. • On and from 21.05.2024, the train will run with the same composition (LHB rake) as notified earlier. All other instructions will remain same. Chief Passenger Transportation Manager
EASTERN RAILWAY
 Follow us at : @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter



I request everyone to participate in this 'Maha Yagya' of democracy in the fourth phase also and to elect the Government of India, to make the country a developed India, to protect the borders of the country...to make the country the third superpower.

UTTARAKHAND CHIEF MINISTER PUSHKAR SINGH DHAMI
WHILE CAMPAIGNING FOR THE ONGOING LOK SABHA ELECTIONS IN UP'S LUCKNOW

THUMBNAILED

Retired postal department employee ends life in park: A retired clerk from the government's postal department allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself with a licensed double-barrel gun in a park in the Rajajipuram locality here. He died on the spot due to excessive bleeding. The man, identified as Lakshmi Narayan Trivedi, 61, had retired from the post of clerk in the Indian postal department six months ago. His son Shiva said that he had been suffering from depression for the last few months. IANS

Former student leader shot at in UP's Ballia: A former student leader in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia was shot at and grievously injured when some unidentified youth opened fire at him, the police said. The victim was taken to the hospital by the police and later referred to Varanasi for advanced treatment. The incident took place near Patkhauli village of Sukhpura police station, when Shiprant Singh Gautam, was returning home on his motorbike. The condition of the injured is stable and the accused will be arrested soon. IANS

Srinagar Lok Sabha polls: All eyes on voter turnout

Srinagar is the first of three LS segments to go to polls in the Kashmir Valley

SP SHARMA
JAMMU, 12 MAY

Being perhaps the first Lok Sabha election after three decades without a poll boycott call from Pakistan backed terrorists and separatists, all eyes are set on the voter turnout on Monday when polling for the sensitive Srinagar parliamentary constituency will be held.

Of the three Lok Sabha constituencies in the Kashmir valley, Srinagar is the first to go to polls during the fourth phase of the election.

Like other parliamentary constituencies in the valley, Srinagar recorded low voting percentage in the past few elections due to terror threats against participating in the electoral process. However, this time the scenario seems a bit changed as enthusiasm is being witnessed in the downtown Srinagar where not a single vote was cast in 70 booths in the last parliamen-



tary election in 2019 when the total voter turnout in the constituency was 14.43 per cent and that too under a heavy deployment of paramilitary forces. The byelection for the Srinagar constituency in 2017 recorded a dismal 7.12 per cent voting. The polling percentage in 2004 was 18.57 per cent that gradually improved to 25.55 per cent in 2009 and 25.86 per cent in 2014.

The Election Commission is taking several steps to motivate voters to come out in large numbers to exercise their right to franchise. Leadership of the regional parties, par-

ticularly the National Conference (NC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have during their election campaign also asked the people to come out to vote and send a message to Delhi against abrogation of Article 370. This is the first major election after abrogation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and splitting the state into two union territories. The key contest is between Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi of NC and the youth leader of PDP Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra in Srinagar that has been represented by three generations of the Abdullah

family. Aga Ruhullah is a well known Shia cleric and is a former MLA of Budgam and also a cabinet minister. He is grandson of Aga Syed Mustafa, who was a respected Shia leader. Dr Farooq Abdullah, NC chief who presently represents the constituency, has put in his strength to campaign for Ruhullah. On the other hand, Parra has made efforts to connect with the youth in the constituency. He was arrested by NIA on 25 November 2020 on the charges of terror links. He was re-arrested by J&K Police after he received bail from the special NIA court. He won the district development council election in 2020 from Pulwama while being in jail. He was later released on bail by the High Court. PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti also campaigned for Parra.

The recent delimitation of constituencies saw the assembly segments in the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat getting increased to 18 from the earlier 15.

Parties fear rigging as police 'detain' workers on eve of polls in Srinagar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 12 MAY

A day ahead of polling for the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat, the National Conference (NC), PDP, Apni Party, and Peoples Conference (PC) accused the police of having unleashed an atmosphere of fear by detaining their party activists and expressed fear of rigging the elections.

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti and NC candidate Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi have written letters to the Election Commission seeking its intervention for maintaining integrity and impartiality of the democratic process. Ruhullah also named some of the NC activists detained by the police.

The Apni Party led by Altaf Bukhari and the Peoples Conference of former separatist Sajad Lone have been labelled as "B-teams of BJP" by the NC and PDP.

Both parties. Both parties have also voiced concerns regarding the detention of their members.

Mehbooba wrote to the ECI that "the situation has escalated to a point where the security establishment is



instilling a climate of fear in areas slated for election on May 13. This appears to be a direct result of public threats made by the Apni Party which has openly called for the arrest of PDP supporters.

"It is distressing to witness history repeating itself, reminiscent of the 1987 rigged elections that caused immense suffering and political disillusionment in the region. The blatant efforts to marginalise the PDP, which represents the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, only serve to deepen wounds and erode trust in democratic institutions", she wrote.

The PDP candidate for Srinagar, Waheed Parra, tagging the Election Commission, the

PMO and the Home Minister, alleged on X: "A senior police officer was directing officials to minimise voter turnout by detaining and harassing our workers."

Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari expressed serious concerns over the arrest spree of party workers and agents ahead of polling and termed it a blatant attempt to manipulate elections. He appealed to Lt Governor Manoj Sinha to intervene in the matter and pave the way for free and fair elections so that democracy flourishes in the region.

Speaking to media persons in Srinagar, Bukhari accused the NC and PDP of being hand in glove with the administration to harass workers and polling agents of rival political parties.

He said the NC and PDP have deep connections in the administration who on the behest of influential officials are curtailing the level playing field to other parties.

PC leader Sajad Lone, who is contesting the election in Baramulla, endorsed Bukhari and said party workers are being picked up on flimsy grounds.

Fourth and last phase voting in 8 LS seats in MP today

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, 12 MAY

Voting would be held from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the last eight remaining Lok Sabha seats of Madhya Pradesh in the fourth phase of the general elections on 13 May.

This would be the last phase of polls in Madhya Pradesh.

MP Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan told media persons today that 18,007 voting booths have been set up in the eight constituencies. Of these, women would officiate 2,001 booths and specially-abled persons would operate 66 polling booths.

The eight seats include Indore, Khandwa, Mandasaur, Dewas (SC), Ujjain



(SC), Dhar (ST), Ratlam (ST) and Khargone (ST). They are spread across 16 districts and 64 state assembly constituencies mostly in the Malwa-Nimar region of MP.

More than 1.62 crore voters would decide the fate of 74 candidates in the fray on the eight seats. Indore has the maximum number of candidates at 14 while Khargone has the least number at 5.

Indore is also the constituency with the highest

number of voters, which is more than 25.26 lakh. However, Indore is the smallest constituency amongst the eight, in terms of area.

Ujjain has the least number of voters that is around 18 lakh. Khandwa constituency is spread across the largest area in the eight seats.

The opposition Congress is urging voters in the Indore Lok Sabha constituency to create a record of sorts by casting their votes on the 'None of the Above' (NOTA) option, consequent to the party's official candidate Akshay Kanti Bamb withdrawing his nomination and joining the BJP a few days ago.

Bamb's move has left the Congress with no candidate on the seat.

SC to hear ex-CM Hemant Soren's plea against ED arrest

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 12 MAY

The Supreme Court is slated to hear on Monday the special leave petition filed by former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren challenging the dismissal of his writ petition by the Jharkhand High Court against his arrest in connection with a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam.

As per the causelist published on the website of the apex court, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta will hear the matter on 13 May, as per reports.

It may be recalled that the same Bench ordered Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to be released on interim bail in the excise policy

case till June 1. On Friday, the top court disposed of a separate plea filed by Soren seeking his release in view of the elections.

It said that the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader's prayer has become infructuous in view of the May 3 order passed by the Jharkhand High Court dismissing his plea against arrest, as per reports.

Earlier, the Supreme Court had issued a notice to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Soren's plea seeking interim bail on the ground of delay in delivery of judgment by the Jharkhand High Court despite reserving an order on his petition challenging ED arrest in the last week of February, as per reports.

PM Modi doing roadshow after BJP's dismal performance in first 3 phases in Bihar: Lalu

AGENCIES
PATNA, 12 MAY

Ahead of the roadshow of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Patna, RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav took a dig at him and said that he is doing the roadshow after BJP's dismal performance in the first three phases of the Lok Sabha elections in Bihar.

He further said that what benefit Bihar will get from the PM's roadshow.

"The people of Bihar are not fools. They know very well that even after taking 39 MPs out of 40 MPs, they developed Gujarat instead of Bihar. All the investments were taken to Gujarat despite Bihar having been with NDA for a long time. These people come to visit Bihar after five years," Yadav said in a post on his social media



platform X. "Bihar has brought them on the street after the first three phases of election and it will make them to roam in lanes in the remaining four phases of the Lok Sabha elections," he said.

"He (PM Narendra Modi) had said in 2014 that he would open a sugar mill and drink tea made of sugar that is produced from this mill. 10 years have gone by, what happened to your promise? He failed to

open a small sugar mill in the state as per his promise. He has not been able to fulfill even an iota of his big promises in the last 10 years," Yadav said.

"He did not give central university status to the 100-year-old historic Patna University despite the chief minister of his own ally pleading before him from the stage," he said.

PM Narendra Modi will be holding a roadshow in Patna later in the day. Security agencies have made elaborate arrangements on the route of the roadshow.

Starting from Patna's Dak Bungalow Chowk, passing through SP Verma Road, Exhibition Road, Uma Cinema Hall, Kadam Kuan, Sahitya Sammelan Bhawan, Thakurbari Road and Bakarganj, the roadshow will culminate at Udyog Bhawan.

Shashi Tharoor defends Kejriwal's remarks on PM Modi's age

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 12 MAY

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor came to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's defence on Sunday after the latter's remarks on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's age stirred a row.

Defending ally partner's remarks, the Congress leader, while addressing a press conference in Maharashtra's Mumbai on Sunday, said that Kejriwal is "right to point this contradiction out."

Tharoor claimed that there is no need to wait till September 2025 but a change of Prime Minister will happen in June 2024 referring to the counting day of Lok Sabha elections.

"We saw two statements one after the other, one is Amit Shah saying PM Modi insists that everyone should step down at 75, then the next day we saw Amit Shah saying PM Modi will continue till 2029. So, journalists should ask Amit Shah which



one is right. Kejriwal is right to point this contradiction out," Tharoor said.

"If PM Modi turns 75 in September 2025, according to his official records, on September 2025 are we going to see a change of Prime Minister or will there be an exception for one man? But in any case, we don't have to wait till September 2025, there would be a change of PM in June 2024," the Congress leader said.

Earlier on Saturday, Kejriwal, while addressing his first press conference after getting interim bail from the

Supreme Court in Delhi excise policy case, said, "These people ask the INDIA alliance who will be their Prime Minister. I ask the BJP: who will be your Prime Minister? PM Modi is turning 75, on September 17. He made a rule that leaders in the party would retire after 75 years."

Referring to BJP veterans who retired from office of Prime Minister at the age of 75, Kejriwal said, "LK Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Sumitra Mahajan, and Yashwant Sinha were retired and now PM Modi is going to retire on 17th Sep-

tember. If their government is formed, they will first dispose of Yogi Adityanath and then make Amit Shah the Prime Minister of the country. PM Modi is asking for votes for Amit Shah. Will Amit Shah fulfil Modi's guarantee?"

Addressing the press conference, Tharoor also expressed confidence in seeing a "wave of change" in the country as he called the ongoing elections "very important."

"Everybody has to be given an equal opportunity in the country and I'm here to say that we stand for a very different conception of India from what the BJP represents and that's why this election is very important. Seeing the first three phases, it looks like there is a wave of change," Tharoor said.

The Congress leader also emphasised on the party's alliance in Maharashtra upholding the unity as he expressed confidence of forming a coalition government on

June 4. "I'm very happy that we have two strong allies. Our allies are there with us. They are standing by us.

They are standing along with us. And it's because they see mutual respect. In BJP's NDA there is no mutual respect and that's why embarrassingly and almost humiliatingly Mr Modi went after the Akali Dal and the BJD. Both the parties spurned him and said no we prefer to contest on our own. That's because they have seen the experience of what it is like to work with the BJP, whereas we believe that the parties that we have shown respect to they will show us respect when the time comes to form the coalition government of India after the 4th of June," he said.

Tharoor also took a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said that the latter is running a "parliamentary system presidentially" as he called it "worst of both worlds."

56-inch chest not mustered courage to accept invitation to public debate: Jairam Ramesh

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 12 MAY

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh took a hit on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday for not accepting the invitation to a public debate requested by two former judges and a senior journalist through a letter sent to both the Prime Minister and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

Taking to his social media handle, Jairam Ramesh posted on X, "Day 1 of Rahul Gandhi's letter accepting an invitation to debate the Prime Minister. The 56-inch chest has not yet mustered the courage to accept the invitation."

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accepted the invitation to the public debate with Prime Minister Modi on Saturday. Former Judges Madan B



Lokur, Ajit P Shah, and senior journalist N Ram wrote a letter inviting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for a public debate on the Lok Sabha Election.

The debate would give a proper response to the allegations and challenges that either side had put up against each other.

Replying to the invitation, Rahul said on X that such a

debate "would be a positive initiative for the major parties to present their vision to the country from one platform for a healthy democracy".

"Congress welcomes this initiative and accepts the invitation for discussion. The country also expects the Prime Minister to take part in this dialogue," he said.

In their letter to the leaders, the former judges and journalists said that it would be great if the public listened to their responses and this is the reason a public debate would set a great precedent, not just by educating the public but also by projecting the true image of a healthy and vibrant democracy.

Madan B Lokur is a former judge of the Supreme Court, while AP Shah is a former chief justice of the Delhi High Court. N Ram is a senior journalist and the former editor-in-chief of The Hindu.

Future of Varun Gandhi will be decided after elections, says Menaka Gandhi

MANOJ BHADRA
SULTANPUR, 12 MAY

With the slogan of 'Ekla Chalo' versatile BJP leader and candidate from Sultanpur, Menaka Gandhi, an eighth-time MP, has gone full throttle in her campaign to be elected once more from the constituency that goes to the polls on 25 May.

The 'Choti Bahu' of the Gandhi family is leaving no stone unturned to reach every corner of her constituency and make direct contact with the voters. Every day, she addresses more than 20 small meetings from 10 in the morning to 8 at night.

Though she herself admitted that, at the age of around 70, it is very hard to go for such a long haul of meetings, the workers want her to reach everywhere, which she cannot ignore.

Menaka is contesting from Sultanpur for the second

time after winning Pilibhit seat for a record 6 times and once each from Aonla and Sultanpur seats.

When The Statesman went to meet her at her residence in Sultanpur City at 8 in the morning, she was surrounded by more than 100 people who had come with their problems. Adverse to the politicians of these days, Menaka, commonly called 'Mataji' by her voters, does not like anyone touching her feet.

But she obliges everyone to take photos with her and even give her a visiting card. Later, speaking across the breakfast table, she talked about her campaigning, political thinking, and a few personal matters.

Excerpts from the interview:

Q: It has been heard that you prefer to campaign alone in the elections and don't seek any assistance from the other

senior leaders of the party.

A: It is my habit that I don't seek any help from the party but rely on my own strength and that of my workers. I am very systematic in the campaign and make plans so that I can visit every place. You may be surprised to know that in the last month, after the announcement of the polls, I have addressed more than 500 meetings. On the other hand, meetings of the BJP leaders are expensive and time-consuming. I must say that there is no such anti-incumbency in my constituency, which was also a relief for me.

Q: What is your focus in these elections and what is your target margin of victory?

A: It is a contest of personality in Sultanpur and people will vote on the personality and not on caste or communal lines. Besides, I have always said that Lok



Sabha elections are the elections of Pradhans. As we all know, every candidate cannot reach every village; hence, his representative will be the Pradhans. I also contact all the Pradhans of the con-

stituency and seek their support. Presently, out of the total 957 pradhans in Sultanpur constituency, over 850 have assured their support for me, including some Muslim pradhans. On the ques-

tion of my target of winning margin in the 2024 elections, I think only win counts and margin have nothing to do with it.

Q: This is a big question that everyone wants to know. Will your son Varun Gandhi campaign for you? What will be his political future after being denied a ticket from Pilibhit?

A: Honestly, Varun was interested in coming to Sultanpur for campaigning. But I asked him if there was any such need and the workers here weren't enough to cover the campaign. On the future of Varun, I can only say that you people should wait and let him decide after the elections.

Q: What is new and different in these elections from 2014 and 2019?

A: There is nothing new as such in these elections. In 2019, I was new to the people here and they knew nothing

about me. But in the past 5 years, now they know me and I too know them well. Now we are in touch with everyone in the constituency and during the Covid period, our bonding has further strengthened.

Q: You have made good roads and other facilities in the constituency. But Sultanpur still lacks industrialization. Have you any plans?

A: Like the adjoining Amethi, Sultanpur does not have any industrial belts. Though in Jaisinghpur there are some small industrial units. I am trying to promote bamboo and mehendi cultivation in the region, which can give the farmers a good income.

Q: Earlier, Sultanpur was known as a very volatile and crime-based area. But now, after your entry in politics, it has been wiped out and there are no such criminal activities nowadays. What is your comment?

A: Everyone knows about me that I don't tolerate such nuisances, and after 5 years, almost all the people with a criminal background have gone underground or are laying quietly. Now Sultanpur has shed its tag as notorious place and people here are living peacefully.

Q: It has been reported that you strictly monitor the development works and don't tolerate any irregularities?

A: Sultanpur is my home and people here are like family members. So I want you to run the constituency like a home.

Any lapses in the development or welfare schemes is intolerable for me. It is my philosophy that whether it is Pilibhit or Sultanpur, I try to work not as an MP but a citizen of that constituency and put all my ability in developing the area and solving their problems.

Problems in press freedom and democracy

The 2024 World Press Freedom Index, released recently by Reporters Without Borders, an international organization for monitoring press freedom, contains a severe warning to democracy in Korea. In the index, which reflects the media situation in 2023, South Korea ranked 62nd out of 180 countries surveyed. Korea received its worst report card since it ranked 69th in the 2009 index and 70th in the 2016 index. It was 43rd in the 2022 index, when the index methodology was changed significantly, but fell to 47th in the 2023 index and then plunged 19 steps down in two years. Furthermore, Korea has been demoted to the third category of "problematic" among the five categories, though it has usually been included in the second category of "satisfactory."

It is even more shocking to look at the details. In terms of press freedom in the political context out of five contexts, Korea ranked 77th. In the socio-cultural context, it was 89th. The index is even more ominous when we recall that Korea fell from 13th to 47th in five years in the annual Democracy Report index by the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden.

If we think the democracy index was the first alarm on the state of South Korea's democracy, this time should be the second warning on the state of Korea's press freedom as the cornerstone of democracy. It is painful

The Korea Herald

to see Korea's press freedom fall from the top class to the middle level in just a couple of years.

However, there is also a positive point in that exposing problems provides opportunities to correct them. Analyzing the press freedom index can reveal three issues: the president's perception of the media, a partisan approach to journalism and social constraints on journalists.

The WPFI shows that the South Korean government has not adequately protected press freedom in the last year or two. Instead, it criticized the ruling party for attacking media companies that have been critical of the president or government. In November 2022 RSF criticized how an MBC reporter was not allowed to board the presidential plane during one of the president's official trips overseas.

It also criticized President Yoon Suk Yeol for unilaterally stopping his daily briefings to reporters and installing a wall in front of the press room in the presidential office building so that visitors to the presidential office could not be seen. Partisan politics is also recognized by the annual ranking. Since 2002, when RSF first released the index, Korea has ranked around 40th.

However, Korea ranked 69th in the 2009 index and 70th in the 2015 index, making it difficult to see Korea as a democracy. Korea's ranking in the 2009 index was related to the dismissal of union workers at YTN and MBC following the inauguration of President Lee Myung-bak.

The 2015 index was the result of the confrontation between the media and President Park Geun-hye. The motivations of the two former conservative president's disputes against media were partisanship.

RSF also criticized the progressive political camp in Korea. In 2021, the organization criticized the Moon Jae-in government's efforts to amend the Media Arbitration Act, which would introduce punitive compensation for media companies that produce fake news.

Only on paper

One reason for this silence is the insignificance of climate change as an issue to have an impact on the vote bank. The masses in India, in spite of suffering from scorching heat waves or becoming victims of natural calamities like floods and landslides, are yet to understand the deadening impact that climate change would have on livelihoods in future. The immediate need makes them blind to the crisis awaiting them in the near future



In the last few days, India was hit by severe hit waves that even caused deaths in some parts of the country. Last year was the second warmest year India has ever seen.

In fact, between the last Parliament election and the present one, the country has confronted a significant number of climate disasters including excessive rainfall, flooding, droughts, and heat waves. Only a few months back, the country watched the rescue operation of the workers trapped in the Uttarkashi tunnel that seemed even more thrilling than a thriller on screen.

The question is: will these disasters matter in the 18th Parliament election? Has climate change become that important an issue as to have a visible impact on deciding who hoists the tricolour on 15 August this year? Unlike some previous years, most political parties have taken the issue of Climate Change seriously in their manifestos this year.

The BJP manifesto promises to achieve energy independence by 2047 and meet the 500 GW target for renewable energy installed capacity by 2030. It has also declared that the new NDA Government would establish a Centre of Excellence for clean energy technologies and convert India into a global manufacturing hub for wind, solar and green hydrogen technologies.

The BJP has further promised to strengthen a few already existing government programmes and initiatives, such as the Green Credit programme, water conservation or soil improvements, the carbon credit programme (that rewards people with encashable credits for reducing carbon emissions) and the green credit programme that rewards people with credits for any positive work done for the environment.

The party has promised to launch programmes for improving the health of the rivers using the Namami Gange project as a model. The manifesto also declares that the new Government will establish a National Atmospheric Mission, called, 'Mausam' for making India 'weather ready'

and 'climate smart.'

Interestingly, the rivalry between the Indian National Congress and the BJP is not reflected in their manifestos in regard to their respective stances on climate change. Instead, there are a lot of commonalities between the manifestos of the two arch rivals. They seem to be birds of a feather. The manifesto of the Congress, in fact, has not entirely junked the Narendra Modi government's take on climate change.

It has, for instance, adopted the goal of net zero by 2070 and mapped out the party's path towards that end saying, "In order to facilitate the funding required for Green Transition and to achieve the goal of net zero by 2070, we will set up the Green Transition Fund of India together with state governments and the private sector."

The Congress has also promised to form an 'independent' Environment Protection and Climate Change Authority, to monitor and enforce environmental standards and the national and state level climate change action plans. The party has further declared that it would transform the National Action Plan on Climate Change, originally launched in 2008 and still in use, into a National Climate Resilience Development Mission that would integrate climate positive actions in all areas of development.

The Left parties were the first in India to keep significant portions on climate change in their manifestos. Sticking to the tradition, this time also, the CPI-M has declared that the party would "evolve a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) through a participatory process involving all stakeholders especially states to tackle climate impacts such as on agriculture, extreme rainfall and related landslides and urban flooding, heat waves and

urban heat islands, coastal erosion and sea-level calling." It has also promised to "evolve sustainable and environment/climate-friendly development strategies for the fragile Himalayan region and eco-sensitive regions of Western Ghats and the North-East."

The CPI-M, in fact, is the only national party that has explicitly mentioned the highly sensitive word 'coal' in its manifesto promising to "hand-over all the private allotted unexplored coal blocks to Coal India Ltd." It has further promised to reduce the dependence on imported coal and to initiate "a judicial inquiry into the fraudulent coal import by private companies." Such a take is very much in tune with the party's age-old fight against the privatization of the natural resources of the country.

While the manifestos of different political parties show their written commitment to the fight against climate change, one is bound to question how much of this rhetoric remains on paper and how much is heard in the ongoing election campaign? Not much, indeed.

The election campaign across the country seems to be governed mainly by religious division and fanaticism, identity politics and some other issues, such as, the need for a stable government, for good governance and a leader's guarantee to provide free food grains to 80 crore people via PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, houses to all through the PM Awas Yojana and health insurance for all via the PM Jan Arogya Yojana.

Unemployment and corruption are also being highlighted, as are some local/regional issues in certain pockets of the country. None of the important leaders has yet been seen to address the issue of climate change in a big way in their

speeches. Why are the parties which are so vocal on climate change in their manifestos practicing verbal reticence in the actual campaign?

One reason for this silence is the insignificance of climate change as an issue to have an impact on the vote bank. The masses in India, in spite of suffering from scorching heat waves or becoming victims of natural calamities like floods and landslides, are yet to understand the deadening impact that climate change would have on livelihoods in future.

The immediate need makes them blind to the crisis awaiting them in the near future. To them, earning bread today is much more important than contemplating on what they will have tomorrow.

In fact, what concern can those people show for climate change who live on footpaths in the most unhygienic conditions in almost every city or town of India? How can we expect a footpath-dweller to use a jute bag in place of a cheap plastic one?

Despite being a monstrous reality, in a country like India, climate change is still an issue that only a section of the middle class bothers about. Greed makes the rich trample over it and poverty makes the poor ignore it.

This is why to the political parties, by and large, climate change is an issue that needs to be ideologically addressed on paper during the election but not to be made an issue of in the actual campaign.

In fact, the absence of climate change as an important issue in the election campaign for the 2024 Parliament Election clearly suggests that the models to fight against climate change adopted by the first world Western countries will miserably fail in a country like ours.

Like so many other issues, it is difficult for the Global South to come to an agreement with the Global North on the issue of the global war on climate change as well. The fight against climate change can never succeed in the Global South if it fails to fight globally.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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US elite should heed students' call

SIR, This is with reference to "Nearly 2,200 people have been arrested during pro-Palestinian protests on US college campuses" (4 May), the brutal police and administrative crackdown on pro-Palestine student demonstrators in at least 35 US universities campuses has seized widespread attention.

Criminalising political opposition to the Gaza genocide and justifying high-handedness by accusing demonstrators of anti-Semitism reflect the authorities' bizarre and disdainful attitude that runs counter to democratic values the temples of higher learning seek to foster. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has also expressed concern over the crackdown.

But the protesters have termed it as a blatant attack on free speech and academic freedom. They have taken a moral stance in demanding an end to Israel's inherently illegitimate and indiscriminating carnage in

besieged Palestine, and called on university and college authorities to divest from Israeli companies and weapon manufacturing and withdraw from academic exchange agreements with Israeli institutions.

These violent Student Spring protests - the biggest and most prolonged since the Vietnam demonstrations in the 1960s and 70s - and clashes between the groups supporting Israel and Palestine reflect broader political tensions surrounding the Israel-Gaza conflict.

It is a worrisome trend that can lead to more hatred, communal divide and chaos which is neither good for campuses nor for the political leadership and the country.

In this startling situation, the university authorities should stop false and abhorrent anti-Semitism and anti-Islam propaganda to demonise the protesters, engage in a constructive dialogue with students and address their

legitimate concerns.

Students should peacefully end their protests to make the campus environment conducive for academic operations.

While a majority of Americans and Israelis support a immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the ruling elite should rise above political and foreign policy compulsions and pull up Israel which stands indicted by the UNGA and the ICJ. This will maintain America's acclaimed image of a global guardian of democracy.

Yours, etc., D S Kang, Hoshiarpur, 6 May.

ODISHA BATTLE

SIR, This refers to your editorial "Friends now foes". In politics there are no permanent friends or foes; only permanent interests.

Modi and the BJP have realized that there are few options for them to make up for the loss in seats in states like Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

They have zeroed in on Odisha where there is no other party to play the role of an opposition.

BOOSTING FAITH

SIR, The Apex Court decision of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta to grant interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is a step in the right direction. It strengthens democracy and thus boosts trust and faith in the judiciary of the nation. The order is unprecedented, objective and reflects openness, innovation and novelty at its best.

This order opens doors for similar treatment to be accorded to erstwhile Chief Minister of Jharkhand, Hemant Soren, who has been lodged in jail for the past couple of months.

For quite some time, he has been grappling in the courts to obtain bail since his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate.

The order kindles optimism in one more sense - obfuscation, glitches and vagaries prevalent in the legal system of the day cannot all the time be stumbling blocks in the delivery of natural justice promptly.

Yours, etc., PK Sharma, Barnala, 10 May.



There is a general feeling that Naveen Patnaik is doing a good job in the state.

But Odisha, despite its considerable mineral wealth remains as backward as ever. The BJD has for long continued to rule in the state and maybe the people are looking at an alternative. But as

seen in other states, when it comes to dislodging regional satraps, the BJP finds the going tough, unlike those states where the Congress is the main opposition.

Yours, etc., Anthony Henriques, Mumbai, 9 May.

Non-violence the best path for Palestine

BHARAT DOGRA

Amid persistent calls from the United States and other countries that Israel needs to make it easier for life-saving aid to reach Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli military closed two of the region's few operating border crossings in Rafah, a southern Gazan city, on 7 May.

Responding to political pressure and alarm, Israel then reopened a different border crossing into Gaza, called Kerem Shalom, on May 8.

These border crossings are crucial for aid workers and deliveries of food, fuel and other supplies, especially as commercial imports have stopped entering Gaza. The amount of aid going into Gaza each day has varied since Hamas' 7 October 2023 attack on Israel, and Israel's subsequent invasion of Gaza. But the overall number of aid trucks flowing through the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings is down 75 per cent from before the war, according to the United Nations. Aid workers say they are unable to meet Palestinians' needs in Gaza, even with the aid air drops and boat shipments that the U.S. and other countries are doing.

I spent 20 years as the president of Oxfam America, an international humanitarian organization, and have overseen humanitarian responses to some of the biggest crises of the past three decades, from the war in Kosovo to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. I know from experience that the major aid organizations know how to run large, well-integrated operational responses to emergencies like Gaza. However, this is not happening, in part because Israel is not giving aid groups what they need to do so.

After seven months of conflict, the international community has not set up the kind of well-coordinated response it would normally provide during a crisis.

There are several reasons why enough aid deliveries are not quickly entering Gaza. First, Israel controls all the border crossings into Gaza and does intensive searches of trucks for security reasons, slowing down the



deliveries. Even if aid does cross into Gaza, it does not mean the goods will reach people in need.

There have also been reports of people dying and being injured when trying to collect aid packages that are air-dropped, as well as Hamas and other groups intercepting aid deliveries and either hoarding the items or selling them at high prices on the black market.

In early May, northern Gaza passed a critical threshold and is now entering into a "full blown famine," according to the United Nations.

Bombings in Gaza have destroyed water and energy systems, leaving 95 per cent of the population without access to clean water.

There's a fairly standard playbook for how aid organizations respond to humanitarian crises like the one playing out in Gaza. In most cases, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, a designated U.N. office that focuses on humanitarian affairs and is typically called OCHA, takes the lead in defining what exactly different U.N. agencies should do to help people in a crisis.

The World Health Organization, World Food Program and other U.N. agencies all have their own specialties—be it health, housing, hunger, education, or other issues. The U.N. agencies coordinate their work, while OCHA also assigns an international nonprofit organization to help each U.N. agency

share their workload with other international and local nonprofits.

In most emergencies, there is clear coordination among international aid agencies from day one. This is a well-oiled machine with decades of experience in meeting people's immediate needs in some of the world's most challenging circumstances.

However, Gaza does not align with this typical system of aid work.

In Gaza and the West Bank, the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East, or simply UNRWA, has been the main U.N. agency that has been focused only on providing a full suite of services to Palestinians since the late 1940s, when Israel was created and many Palestinians were pushed out into what are now the Palestinian territories of Gaza and the West Bank.

Over the years, UNRWA's role has evolved from meeting Palestinians' basic needs for food and water, for example, to also providing health care and education. While other U.N. agencies like the World Health Organization work in Gaza, UNRWA is by far the largest aid organization there—and after Hamas is the second-largest employer in Gaza.

Both the Israeli and Egyptian governments have long recognized UNRWA as the main coordinator for trans-border aid shipments, especially those for other U.N. agencies and nonprofits that work with it.

While the UNRWA was accustomed to operating a large humanitarian operation in Gaza before the war, the agency is not equipped or staffed to help provide housing for the more than 1.7 million people in Gaza who have had to flee their homes.

Additionally, Israel and the UNRWA have a long, complicated relationship that came to a peak in March 2024, when Israel said that it would stop working with the agency altogether because of allegations—which have not been independently verified—that UNRWA staff participated in the Oct. 7 attacks and held hostages captive.

Israel no longer working with the UNRWA creates new logistical challenges that prevent a coherent, organized humanitarian response in Gaza. This may force other U.N. agencies to suddenly take over UNRWA's long-established roles in Gaza.

Israel's intermittent closing of border crossings into Gaza—and continued long delays for arriving aid trucks—is another crucial factor that is hampering aid delivery.

Aid experts also say that the number of aid trucks entering Gaza, which in May 2024 reached an average of 180 per day through the two main crossing points combined, is inadequate to address the hunger crisis.

Achieving what's actually needed, they say, would require many more trucks, an influx of aid workers, training

of Palestinian medical personnel to treat people suffering from malnutrition and gastrointestinal diseases, the restoration of medical facilities and, above all, an end to the military conflict.

Meanwhile, international nonprofits and their staff are facing their own safety challenges. At least 224 aid workers, most of them Palestinians, have been killed in Gaza since October 2023. Indiscriminate bombings of residential neighborhoods have forced other aid workers to move their families multiple times to find safety and shelter, making it nearly impossible for them to do their jobs.

I think there are certain things that the U.N. could do to help make it easier for aid deliveries to reach people in Gaza.

First, OCHA could step in to better coordinate all the relevant U.N. agencies that may need to join or take on a larger role in the Gaza humanitarian crisis.

I also think that the U.N. could insist that Israel help create safe and secure conditions for a well-coordinated and comprehensive U.N. response. This includes guarantees to open additional border crossings as needed and increase the number of daily aid deliveries—especially food—as well as ensuring more consistent access and supplies.

Professional humanitarians are prepared to sacrifice ourselves to preserve and protect the dignity of all, both Israelis and Palestinians. History has taught that the only lesson from all wars is that no one really wins and millions suffer quietly well into the future.

Humanitarians' job is to find and create safe spaces and save as many lives as we can, with the experience and resources at our disposal. We carry no weapons and rely entirely on respect for international humanitarian law and other rules of war to ensure our safety as we carry out this dangerous mission. But in order to carry out this work, we need access and minimally safe and secure conditions that let us do our jobs.

(The writer is Professor of global affairs and director of the McKenna Center for Human Development and Global Business, University of Notre Dame. This article was published on www.theconversation.com)

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

The proposal to light the streets of London by artificial moonlight is obviously in line with the "indirect lighting" fashion which has come so much into vogue for interiors during the past few years. The advantages of indirect or semi-indirect lighting are, of course, its softness and the absence of shadow-in short, its greater

approximation to ordinary daylight. It is only a question of time and organization when the same principle will be brought into operation in the lighting of the streets. In London the suggestion is to erect gigantic standards, 500 feet high, at some eight points in the West End, and from thence radiate light over the whole area by powerful constellations of electric lights. It is claimed for the proposal that it would be economical as well as efficient, for the reason that much of the effect of the present lighting is lost owing to the rays striking upon buildings and so being checked long before their power is spent. The conception is bold enough to have been taken from one of the prophetic efforts of Mr. H. G. Wells.

NEWS ITEMS

SCIENTIFIC ORTHODOXY

In his earlier years Sir Jagadis, like most other original thinkers, met, not only with discouragement and scepticism, but with active opposition; for there is a tendency towards orthodoxy even in physical science which is sometimes as "wooden" as that of theology. Particularly was this the case when Dr. Bose's researches as a physicist carried him into the domain of physiology. It was asserted that the excitatory response of ordinary plants to mechanical stimulus was an impossibility. Undeterred, Dr. Bose proceeded to prove by actual experiment that physiologically no dividing line can be drawn between the vegetable and the animal world. He found that the plant and the animal are similarly responsive to all the diverse forms of stimulus which impinge upon them. We ascend, in the one case as in the other, from the simplicities of the isotropic to the complexities of the anisotropic, and find that the responses are the same in both. The plant, like the animal, is a single organic whole, all its different parts being connected, and their activities co-ordinated by a nervous system. As in plants so in animals, stimulation gives rise to two distinct impulses, exhibiting themselves by two-fold mechanical and electrical indications of opposite signs.

The dual qualities or tones known as sensation are correspondent with those two different nervous impulses of opposite signs, which are occasioned by stimulation. These two sensory responses—positive and negative, pleasure and pain are found to be subject to the same modifications, under parallel conditions, as the positive and negative mechanical and electrical indications with which they are associated. And finally, perhaps the most significant example of the effect of induced anisotropy lies in the differential impression made by stimulus on the sensory surfaces, which remains latent, and capable of revival as the memory image. In this demonstration of continuity, then, it has been found that there are no dividing lines between physics, physiology and psychology.

FAMOUS NOVEL

STORY WITH EIGHT HUNDRED CHARACTERS

DESCRIBED as one of the finest novels ever written, the task of translating a Japanese book about 600,000 words long and containing 800 characters has just been commenced by a member of the staff of the British Museum.

Mr. Arthur Waley expects to be about six years in producing this work, which a publishing firm is to bring out in six big volumes. The author is Murasaki? a woman of the Japanese Court of 920 years ago, whose style, it is said, is as compelling as that of the most popular novelists. Mr. Waley told a Daily Mail reporter:

"She began this story when she was about 26. It was at first written on scrolls, each of its 54 chapters comprising a big scroll. It was copied by scribes and Murasaki used to read it out to the Court.

"She had reached late middle age when she finished the work. Much earlier she had brought the story to an end by killing off her hero; and then, reopening it, fixed on the hero's son as a central character.

"It was written in old Japanese, the Japanese uninfluenced by Chinese, and besides being quite unintelligible to the modern Japanese has been read by very few Europeans. All the 800 characters figure substantially, keep reappearing, and must be remembered; and a sort of key to them is provided.

IT CAME TO MIND | MANISH NANDY

Owning an orchard

There is a classic Jewish story of an orchard owner in Judea who took pity on a blind and a lame man and hired them as guards for his opulent orchard. The owner had noticed some lovely pears and peaches in his orchard and came over one morning to collect them. He saw not a single one. He asked his guards. The blind man said he couldn't even see the fruits, let alone pick them and eat them. The lame man pointed to his disabled leg and pleaded his inability to move or lift himself enough to be able to gather the fruits.

But the orchard owner was no fool. He asked the blind guard to lift the lame guard and gave a swift demonstration of how the two could have gotten together to pick and eat the luscious fruit.

The ability to put two and two together and come up with the right answer is a major skill. Not all of us can manage to achieve it, certainly not all the time. Haven't you ever come out of your boss's room and realized, a little too late, that you could have answered his question much better and startled him with your brilliance? After you have reached your girlfriend to her home and she has closed the door, you think, a second too tardily of the witty and charming thing you could have said and melted her heart.

You are not alone. That is what frequently happens to most of us. We can't put two and two together on the spot.



Illustration by : Debabrata Chakrabarty

We can't do it right away or ever. This is just an example of the silly things that trip up even intelligent people.

It leads us to an intriguing contradiction. We realize that smart people are often smart in different ways. A person who speaks well in many cases also can write well and can perhaps explain things well. We all know people like that. Amazingly though we also know the opposite examples. Of people who do several things well but are very poor in doing something simple. A person who can cook a thousand remarkable dishes can be quite useless describing how she works her culinary miracles. How come

some people can be so competent doing a variety of complex things and yet turn out to be incompetent doing a couple of elementary things?

Charles Spearman, an English army man who later became a psychologist, had an interesting answer. Spearman argued that what we talk of as somebody's intelligence has two parts. One part is a person's general intelligence that enables him or her to score well in many kinds of mental tests. The other part is a kind of special intelligence that lets one do well on certain tests and bungle on others. That part represents people's special bent; they do well, exceptionally

well in certain subjects and fumble in other areas. The first part is what impresses us about a woman's wide-ranging capacity; the second part confounds us about a smart man's inability to master some basic skill. The latter simply does not figure in the area of his special intelligence.

A Harvard scholar, Howard Gardner, took the second part further by talking of eight different types of intelligence. The first four we can easily recognize: verbal or linguistic intelligence, where one uses words or language with great effect, such as an author or journalist; logical or mathematical intelligence, where one is skilled with quantities and their relations, such as a physicist or philosopher; spatial or visual intelligence, where one is exceptional in thinking about space and its use, such as an architect or a designer; naturalistic intelligence, where one has the remarkable capacity to understand nature or environment, such as climatologist or animal specialist.

But Gardner spoke also of four other types of intelligence we overlook: interpersonal intelligence, the skill to understand other people, such as an insightful counselor; intrapersonal intelligence, the ability to decipher what is happening within oneself, such as a gifted psychologist; bodily or kinesthetic intelligence, where one can use one's body to

express subtle feelings, such as a talented dancer or acrobat; and musical or rhythmic intelligence, where one shows incredible mastery of melodic and harmonic elements, such as a great composer or performer.

The signal tragedy is that we are often judged by the wrong standard and found wanting. Our true power lies in a different area while we are force-fitted into a groove where our talent never has a chance to shine. We are cast aside as second-rate or untalented, while our precious gift lies unused and overlooked.

The worse tragedy is that we begin to think of ourselves as inept and unworthy. Experience tells us just having a gift is not enough. It needs sustenance, some minimal recognition and support, a smile of approval or a handshake of congratulation. Even extraordinary capacity can wither when it meets with scant acknowledgement and scant remuneration.

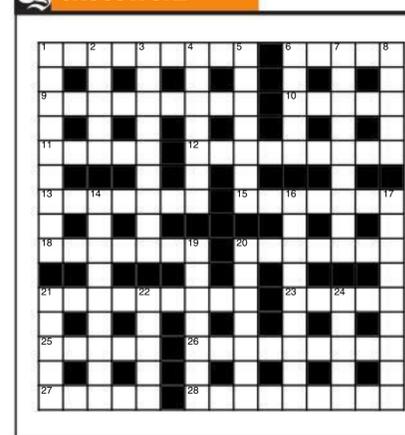
Let us not regret the brilliant riposte we could not make or the dulcet words we could not conjure at the appropriate moment. Let us cultivate the abilities we have, develop the orchard we have and struggle to widen our search for support and acceptance.

(The writer is a US-based international development advisor and had worked with the World Bank. He can be reached at mnandy@gmail.com)



CROSSWORD

NO-292778



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

O H C A P T
C H A R M L I N E A G E
T N E A T R R
B A N D M O N T H L E A P
V B E I B
D E L E T E C O M P A N Y
X R L M T
A S I A S W A R M E W E R
I L S U N
N A T I O N S R A T I O S
G A C D O
S U I T T R I B E P O D S
L I A F R E L L
A L O A D O F S L A T E
R N S Y L S

ACROSS

- I gag on a cored root vegetable (9)
- Criminals purchasing island? They're minted! (5)
- I got the job! So at last tucked into a quiet beer and some drugs (9)
- Coat boat in paint artfully at the bow (5)
- Tense editor, after taking religious instruction, had a shot (5)
- Stick around area to meet a bloke and a US highwayman (4,5)
- Senior and half-cut wino drinking beer and port (7)
- Flipping party time? Pops off to get drinks! (7)
- With no goals, direct girl to sub American for European (7)
- Go back out with Foremost of Romeos for a start! (7)
- Broken many bones? Certainly not! (2,2,5)
- Son with affected mannerisms is a little rascal (5)

DOWN

- Managed to collar canine that's released bit of gasty gas (5)
- A bit cruel to get plastered in oil? (9)
- Like the sound of Serpent in a childish tantrum? (5)
- Odd sort of awful penis droop? Not!! (3,6)
- On the contrary, I love marijuana themes in literature! (5)
- Not having a tot or two riled chef up (5-4)
- Lake beside a port, time to get in! (7)
- English soldier seen around section is simply ingenious (7)
- Cocaine high and drops of potent Armenian brew (5)
- Old person realities sent off the rails (9)
- Sting and Summers essentially invested in small paintings (5)
- After eating delicious starter, munched meal with one's drinks (9)
- Give diet up, having eaten last of this? (9)
- He's a spy in Barking that's both tough and useless (9)
- Ring work after bit of spoilt seafood (7)
- One soon to make a bloomer got up and sat on friend (7)
- Bed woman, having had bottom pinched (5)
- Butch Cassidy finally goes after chap heading for Louisiana (5)
- Male idiot behind opening of Avengers Assemble (5)

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

THUMBNAILS

Indian tech leaders stand behind Ola's Bhavish in his fight against Microsoft & LinkedIn: Indian tech industry leaders have come out in support of Ola Founder and CEO, Bhavish Aggarwal, after his tirade against Microsoft-owned LinkedIn for deleting his posts and "bullying Indians" into agreeing with the Big Tech platforms or cancelling them out. Home-grown IT software company Zoho's CEO Sridhar Vembu agreed with Aggarwal, saying "we in India have to strongly resist this woke imperialism". "It is best understood as a fanatical religious doctrine that masquerades as a socio-political movement," Vembu posted on X social media platform. Edtech company Unacademy CEO Gaurav Munjal earlier posted that this is so "f***** up on LinkedIn's part". An angry Ola CEO on Saturday announced the termination of Microsoft Azure cloud's services and moved the entire workload of his company to his own AI venture called Krutrim. "We've decided to move our entire workload out of Azure to our own Krutrim cloud within the next week," he said in a blog post.

After last week's fall, expect markets to remain range-bound

in the week ahead, support exists at the lows made on Thursday and the previous lows made on 19th April

AGENCIES NEW DELHI, 12 MAY

Markets had a crazy week and were under pressure throughout. They fell on expected lines and this time, we could not blame the US markets as they gained on all five trading sessions.

What happened is a blessing in disguise as it has cooled of the markets, even though Mumbai is having sweltering heat currently.

BSESENSEX lost 1,213.68 points or 1.64 per cent to close at 72,664.47 points while NIFTY lost 420.65 points or 1.87 per cent to close at 22,055.20 points. The broader markets saw BSE100, BSE200 and BSE500 lose 1.83 per cent, 2.04 per cent and 2.25 per cent respectively. BSEMID-CAP lost 3.27 per cent while BSESMALLCAP lost 3.80 per cent. In what could best be described as an unusual situation, markets lost in two trad-

ing sessions but were flat in the remaining three sessions. Just an instance to point out the flatness was NIFTY closing at unchanged levels down to two decimal points on Wednesday at 22,302.50 points compared to Tuesday. I do not remember any other instance in recent times when the levels have remained identical like this.

The Indian Rupee lost 8 paise or 0.10 per cent to close at Rs 83.50 to the US Dollar. Dow Jones had a stellar week and gained on all five trading sessions of the week. It was up 836.96 points or 2.16 per cent to close at 39,512.64 points.

The week gone by saw three IPOs open and close for subscription. The first was Indegene Limited which had issued shares in a price band of Rs 430-452. The issue was open from Monday the 6th of May to Wednesday the 10th of May. The issue was subscribed an overall 70.26 times with QIB portion subscribed 192.72



times, HNI portion subscribed 55.84 times and Retail portion subscribed 7.8 times. There were 27.80 lakh applications in all.

The second issue was from Aadhar Housing Finance Limited which was open from Wednesday the 8th of May to Friday the 10th of May. The price band was Rs 300-315. The issue was subscribed 26.76 times overall with QIB portion subscribed 76.42 times, HNI portion subscribed 17.33 times and Retail portion subscribed

2.58 times. There were 16.38 lakh applications.

The third issue was from TBO TEK Limited which was open from Wednesday (8th May) to Friday (10th of May). The price band was Rs 875-920. The issue was subscribed 86.68 times overall with QIB portion subscribed 125.51 times, HNI subscribed 50.51 times and Retail portion subscribed 25.65 times. There were 23.75 lakh applications.

The week ahead sees one IPO from general insurer, Go

Digit General Insurance Limited. The issue opens on Wednesday the 13th of May and closes on Friday the 15th of May. The issue consists of a fresh issue of Rs 1,125 crores and an offer for sale of 5,47,66,392 equity shares in a price band of Rs 258-272. The company is promoted by Prom Watsa of Fairfax.

The company helps in customising products as required in the general insurance space. It became profitable in FY22-23 and has built on the same in the current nine months ended December 23. The valuations based on current nine months are attractive and offer scope for appreciation on listing as well as for people with a minimum, medium term holding period.

Markets on Thursday, made the intraweek lows at 72,334.18 points on BSESENSEX and at 21,932.48 points on NIFTY. These were higher than the lows made on April 19, at 71,816.46 points and 21,777.65

points.

The fourth round of voting out of seven phases would be held on May 13, followed by the fifth round the following Monday. Volatility has increased in line with the significance of the event and is further borne out by the fact that FPIs have sold close to Rs 30,000 crores in the current month which has been counterbalanced by domestic institutions who have spent their entire kitty of record SIP inflows for the month. Coming to the markets in the week ahead, while support exists at the lows made on Thursday and the previous lows made on 19th April, even if they are broken, support exists around 21,500 on NIFTY and at 71,650 points on BSESENSEX. On the upside hurdles exist around 22,450-500 and at 73,900 points on BSESENSEX. These levels need to be broken and sustained for any further up move. Expect markets to trade in a narrow range till then.

'India all set to overtake Japan as 4th largest economy by 2025'

AGENCIES NEW DELHI, 12 MAY

Citing various macroeconomic parameters that are doing pretty well, India's G20 Sherpa and former CEO of Niti Aayog Amitabh Kant projected that the country is all set to overtake Japan as 4th largest economy in the world by 2025.

The size of India's GDP is currently ranked 5th, after the US, China, Germany, and Japan. It overtook the UK in 2022.

Just a decade ago, India's GDP was the eleventh largest in the world. Currently, India's GDP is estimated to be around USD 3.7 trillion. Some highlights of India's journey to the top 5 economies of the world in 2024 from Fragile 5 in 2013, according to Kant, among others, record GST collection, over 8 per cent GDP growth in the past three quarters, trading in Indian currency Rupee with various countries (to be precise 27), inflation at manageable levels.

The term Fragile 5 was coined by a Morgan Stanley analyst in 2013 and refers to a set of five emerging countries, including India, whose economy was not doing well back then. The other four countries were Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa, and Turkey.

Double-digit growth in the steel, cement, and automobile manufacturing sectors; global leader in digital public infrastructure, with e-transactions surging to 134 billion, accounting for 46 per cent of all global digital payments; accounts opened under Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile trinity have over Rs 2.32 lakh crore as current balance; average annual inflation between 2013-14 and 2022-23 declined to 5 per cent from 8.2 per cent between 2003-04 and 2013-14 are some other things he attributed to India's firm growth.

Firm GDP growth forecasts, inflation at manageable levels, political stability at the central government level, and appreciable central bank monetary policy, have all contributed to painting a bright picture for the Indian economy in recent quarters.

Foreign investors pull ₹ 17,000 crore from Indian equities amid election uncertainty

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 12 MAY

In May, foreign investors pulled out a massive Rs 17,000 crore from Indian equities in the first 10 days of the month.

The pullout was due to the general election and the uncertainty surrounding its outcome, coupled with expensive valuations and profit booking.

According to the data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) experienced a net outflow of Rs 17,083 crore in equities this month (till May 10).

Notably, this was way higher than a net withdrawal of Rs 8,700 crore during April. FPIs made a net investment of Rs 35,098 crore in March and Rs 1,539 crore in February.

Looking ahead, post-general election, corporate India's strong financial performance in Q4 FY24 is anticipated to be rewarding.

On the global front, the US



Fed has indicated no rate cuts until inflation cools, thus raising scepticism over the possibility of an early rate cut. Further, the data said that the FPIs withdrew a net amount of Rs 14,860 crore from equities in 2024 so far.

They, however, invested Rs 14,307 crore in the debt market. The volatility index, also known as a fear gauge, touched 18.4 (the highest this year) this past week as equity benchmarks saw sharp corrections in both benchmark indices and broader markets.

So far in May this year, Nifty50 is down 2.5 per cent, falling 500 points. The fear gauge had hit a low of 10.2% on April 23 this year.

Analysts, however, noted that Vix surge so far is much lower in the latest general election as compared to the 2019 and 2014 editions

Analysts, however, noted that Vix surge so far is much lower in the latest general election as compared to the 2019 and 2014 editions.

Experts also noted that this aggressive selling by FPIs may have been prompted by worries and murmurs about the low voter turnout in first three phases of the general election and whether the ruling alliance will get the number of seats earlier anticipated.

Another anticipated reason could be profit booking by FPIs in anticipation of a market correction, particularly around the results day.

ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement Joint Committee meets in Malaysia

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 12 MAY

The 4th Joint Committee meeting for the review of AITIGA (ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement) was held in Putrajaya, Malaysia, the Commerce & Industry Ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

A total of 8 Sub-Committees have been constituted for dealing with different policy areas of the Agreement in the review and out of these, 5 Sub-Committees have started their discussions.

All the 5 Sub-Committee reported the outcomes of their discussions to the 4th AITIGA Joint Committee. Four of these Sub-Committees dealing with 'National Treatment and Market Access', 'Rules of Origin', 'Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity

Assessment Procedures' and 'Legal and Institutional Issues' also met physically in Putrajaya, Malaysia alongside the 4th AITIGA Joint Committee.

The Sub-Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary had met earlier on May 3, 2024.

The Joint Committee provided necessary guidance to the Sub-Committees. Notably, the discussions for review of AITIGA, to make it more trade-facilitative and beneficial for businesses across the region, started in May 2023.

The Joint Committee undertaking the review work has met four times so far. The Joint Committee finalised its Terms of Reference and the Negotiating Structure for the review negotiations in its first two meetings and initiated the negotiations for review of AITIGA from its

third meeting held from 18-19 February 2024 in New Delhi.

The meeting was co-chaired by Rajesh Agrawal, Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, India and Mastura Ahmad Mustafa, Deputy Secretary General (Trade), Ministry of Investment, Trade & Industry, Malaysia.

The delegates from India and all 10 ASEAN countries participated in the discussions. ASEAN is one of the major trade partners of India with a share of 11 per cent in India's global trade.

The bilateral trade stood at USD 122.67 Bn during 2023-24. The upgradation of AITIGA will further boost bilateral trade.

Both sides would next meet for the 5th Joint Committee meeting from 29-31 July 2024 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

How volatility hit the Indian markets in last three elections

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 12 MAY

A report by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) stated that as many as 449 infrastructure projects were hit by cost overrun in March 2024.

These projects each entailing an investment of Rs 150 crore or above were hit by cost overrun of more than Rs 5.01 trillion, the official report stated.

Out of the 1,873 projects, 449 reported cost overrun and 779 projects were delayed, the

report said. Notably, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation monitors infrastructure projects worth Rs 150 crore and above.

The ministry's latest report for March 2024 said the total original cost of implementation of the 1,873 projects was Rs 26,87,535.69 crore and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be Rs 31,88,859.02 crore, which reflects an overall cost overrun of Rs 5,01,323.33 crore (18.65% of the original cost). The expenditure incurred

on these projects till March 2024 is Rs 17,11,648.99 crore, which is 53.68 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects.

However, the number of delayed projects decreased to 567, if the delay is calculated on the basis of the latest schedule of completion, it added.

Furthermore, it said that for 393 projects neither the year of commissioning nor the tentative gestation period has been reported.

Out of the 779 delayed projects, 202 have overall

delays in the range of 1-12 months, 181 have been delayed for 13-24 months, 277 projects for 25-60 months, and 119 projects have been delayed for more than 60 months. The average time overrun in these 779 delayed projects is 36.04 months.

The report highlighted the delays in tie-up for project financing, finalisation of detailed engineering, change in scope, tendering, ordering and equipment supply, and law and order problems, among other reasons.

Startup Strategy: SoundNMind burns midnight oil to offer 'Emotional Wellness'

RITWIK MUKHERJEE KOLKATA, 12 MAY

'SoundNMind', as a start-up organisation, has been active for the past few years, working specifically in the domain of mental health, spreading and embracing emotional wellness, under the slogan: "No Health without Mental Health". It firmly believes that "Emotion" plays a key role in moulding our thoughts. And therefore, to control thoughts and polish our emotions, Sound N Mind has come up with assorted breathing techniques, induced with elemental sounds, helping to calm down brain waves. Irrespective of the type and degree of mental trauma, the mindful exercises offered by Sound N Mind infuse a relaxed state of mind, helping to cope up with overwhelming moments in life, bestowing one with positive affirmations and outlook towards life and lifestyle. May be the Mental Health Month, Saurish Chowdhury, Founder-mentor, SoundNMind shares his thoughts and visions, in an interview with The Statesman.

Excerpts: **Q: How did the Sound N Mind journey start?**

Chowdhury: Since my childhood days, under the guidance of my father, a doctor by profession, I had always wanted to do something for the people as the craving to help them was always burning within me. Having lost my father, fighting against the clutch of cancer, the pain, the enigma of losing my father and the passion to help people in need precipitated Sound N Mind - The power of healing. With the firm belief that mental peace and refinement are the pillars of overall development and harmony; I have been imparting mental wellness and self-rein-



stating sessions, primarily to the Cancer patients, fighters and caregivers coupled with Autism (ASD), Senior citizens and the Corporate Sector. I hope to spread an awareness to tackle and fight Stress - the hidden bane of the modern century, which besets in the life of many.

Q: You may have an engineering background (IT), but people may ask if you are qualified enough to conduct such courses, before joining Sound N Mind

Chowdhury: Having worked in top MNCs for over 12 years, including IBM, Siemens and Cognizant and then starting my own software firm, I decided to pursue a course on applied psychology. I now hold a Diploma in Modern Applied Psychology (DMAP), and also certified Professional Life Coach, a Mental Health Practitioner, Master Life Coach, Emotional Intelligence Life Coach, Cognitive Behavioural Life Coach & Mindfulness Life Coach.

Q: What exactly do you do through Sound N Mind?

Chowdhury: One in five people in the workplace experience a mental health condition, and while many employers are developing policies to support a healthy workforce, there is no shared vision for mental health in the workplace. Major hindrance in the workplace is pointed out to be the outcome of strenuous work leading to stress and other psycho-emotional depletions. Sound N Mind establishes

sessions of emotional welfare and intelligence through various assorted breathing principles coupled with sound guided mindfulness toning.

Similarly, teenage is a floating age, with a weighing mind what matters to them the most is self-esteem and body image. Symptoms of Depression in teens may manifest themselves in different ways than in adults due to the different social and developmental challenges in everyday life. Waylaid by associated stress and anxiousness, it can take a complete 360 degree turn from the normal inclination of the mind. Sound N Mind anchors a model to alleviate them through incorporating the touch of Mindfulness and Breathing with incantations, to reduce their inflammatory response. Awareness of mind and body emotional balance.

Then, factors related to Anxiety and Depression are very common with the elderly denizens with hike in reports of significant overlapping of depressive and anxiousness symptoms. Tarrying is common in old age - they become slow and dependent. But unfortunately in many nations and societies, old age is often posed as a stage for others, to act out in a rage. SoundNMind brings forth articulated breathing for calming the mind and sound guided mental imagery method to create the peaceful mental ambience. SoundNMind also conducts Acute Listening And Breathing Workshops for the expecting mothers. In short, we are catering and imparting holistic psychoemotional wellness. We are providing an umbrella, for equipping people to understand and evaluate mental imbrogios at different stages and phases of their lives.

Q: The month of May is celebrated as the Mental

Health Month in many parts of the world? What is the significance and what do you propose to do during this time?

Chowdhury: May is a time to raise awareness of those living with mental or behavioral health issues and to help reduce the stigma that so many people experience. Maintaining emotional and mental wellness is key to living a healthy life, and we all need help and guidance to do this. Thanks to modern technology, there are experienced counsellors, psychologists, and psychiatrists just a click or a call away, and one can opt for a telephonic consult or a video consult, as per one's comfort level. It is clear that the pandemic has increased the recognition as well as receptivity of mental health issues in our country specifically in the corporate sector. Being in this field and being an integral part of this mental health awareness campaign, we believe that shining light on a nebulous, but critical problem must concern us beyond business as usual. The pandemic brought all of us together under the same roof, 24x7, and this is not an easy situation to live in. Some of the issues this has given rise to include domestic violence, alcohol & drug abuse, and increased anxiety which has also developed into depression. We will have to start a fight against these issues. In individuals with feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, self-doubt, low self-worth, difficulty maintaining jobs and relationships are all common side-effects of exposure to long-term stigma. We will strive to combat stigma by actively protesting it, by spreading awareness via community programmes, and by not isolating & abandoning those with mental health issues.

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You know, there would be a ceasefire tomorrow if... Hamas released the hostages, women, the elderly, and the wounded,

U.S. PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

ABOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR A CEASEFIRE IN THE GAZA WAR

WEATHER

Table with 3 columns: CITY, MAX(°C), MIN(°C). Rows include SINGAPORE, HONG KONG, TOKYO, LONDON, DUBAI, SAN FRANCISCO, NEW YORK, MOSCOW.

S= sunny, CL= clear, H=hazy, R= rainy...

Flash floods and cold lava flow hit Indonesia's Sumatra island, killing at least 15 people: Heavy rains and torrents of cold lava and mud flowing down a volcano's slopes on Indonesia's Sumatra island triggered flash floods that killed at least 15 people and injured several others, officials said Sunday.

As Israel pushes deep into Rafah, Hamas regroups elsewhere in ungoverned Gaza

Palestinians reported heavy Israeli bombardment overnight in the urban Jabaliya refugee camp

ASSOCIATED PRESS RAFAH, 12 MAY

Israeli forces were battling Palestinian militants across the Gaza Strip on Sunday, including in parts of the devastated north that the military said it had cleared months ago, where Hamas has exploited a security vacuum to regroup.

Israel has portrayed the southern Gaza city of Rafah as Hamas' last stronghold, saying it must invade in order to succeed in its goals of dismantling the group and returning scores of hostages. A limited operation there has expanded in recent days, forcing some 300,000 people to flee and drawing warnings from Egypt, where an official said it is putting the country's decades-old peace treaty with Israel at risk.

But the rest of the war-ravaged territory seems to provide ample opportunities for Hamas. Israel has yet to offer a detailed plan for postwar governance in Gaza, saying only that it will maintain open-ended security control over the coastal enclave, which is home to some 2.3 million Palestinians.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected post-



war plans proposed by the United States for the Palestinian Authority, which administers parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, to govern Gaza with support from Arab and Muslim countries. Those plans depend on progress toward the creation of a Palestinian state, something to which Netanyahu's government is deeply opposed.

With the two close allies divided, Gaza has been left without a functioning government, leading to a breakdown in public order and allowing Hamas to reconstitute itself in even the hardest-hit areas.

The war began when Hamas and other militants attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking another 250 hostage. They still hold about 100 captives and the remains of more than 30, and internationally mediated talks over a cease-fire and hostage release appear to be at a standstill.

Israel's air, land and sea offensive has killed more than 35,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants in its figures. Israel says

it has killed over 13,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Palestinians reported heavy Israeli bombardment overnight in the urban Jabaliya refugee camp and other areas in the northern Gaza Strip, which has suffered widespread devastation and been largely isolated by Israeli forces for months. U.N. officials say there is a "full-blown famine" there.

Residents said Israeli warplanes and artillery struck across the camp and the Zeitoun area east of Gaza City, where troops have been battling Palestinian militants for over a week. They have called on tens of thousands of people to relocate to nearby areas.

"It was a very difficult night," said Abdel-Kareem Radwan, a 48-year-old Palestinian from Jabaliya. He said they could hear intense and constant bombing since midday Saturday. "This is madness."

First responders with the Palestinian Civil Defense said they were unable to respond to multiple calls for help from both areas, as well as from Rafah.

Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the top Israeli military

spokesman, said that in addition to Jabaliya and Zeitoun, forces were also operating in Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun. The two towns near Gaza's northern border with Israel were heavily bombed in the opening days of the war.

The military "is now going into Jabaliya for the second time and into Zeitoun for the third time, and it will continue to go in and out," columnist Ben Caspit wrote in Israel's Maariv daily, channeling the growing frustration felt by many Israelis more than seven months into the war.

"Hamas' regime cannot be toppled without preparing an alternative to that regime," he wrote, drawing comparisons with the American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. "The only people who can govern Gaza after the war are Gazans, with a lot of support and help from the outside."

The United Nations' agency for Palestinian refugees, the main provider of aid in Gaza, said 300,000 people have fled Rafah since the operation began there. Most are heading to the heavily damaged nearby city of Khan Younis or Mawasi, a crowded tent camp on the coast where some 450,000 people are already living in squalid conditions.

Russia says it has captured 5 villages in north-east Ukraine, more than 1,700 civilians flee

AGENCIES UKRAINE, 12 MAY

Moscow's forces captured five villages in a renewed ground assault in northeastern Ukraine, the Russian Defense Ministry said Saturday, and Associated Press journalists in the city of Vovchansk described multiple buildings destroyed after Russian airstrikes and barrages of Grad rockets.

Ukrainian officials didn't confirm whether Russian had taken the villages, which lie in a contested "gray zone" on the border of Ukraine's Kharkiv region and Russia.

Ukrainian journalists reported that the villages of Borysvka, Ohiritsev, Pyna and Strilecha were taken by Russian troops on Friday. Russia said the village of Pletenivka was also taken.

In an evening statement Saturday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said fighting was still ongoing in the settlements of Strilecha and Pletenivka, as well as Krasne, Morokhovets, Olinykove, Lukyantsi and Hatyshe. "Our troops are carrying out counterattacks there for a second day, protecting Ukrainian territory," he said.

The Institute for the Study of War said Friday that geolocated footage confirms at

least one of the villages was seized. The Washington-based think tank described recent Russian gains as "tactically significant."

The renewed assault on the region has forced more than 1,700 civilians residing in settlements near the fighting to flee, according to Ukrainian authorities. It comes after Russia stepped up attacks in March targeting energy infrastructure and settlements, which analysts predicted were a concerted effort by Moscow to shape conditions for an offensive.

On Saturday, Russia continued to pummel Vovchansk with airstrikes and Grad rockets as police and volunteers raced to evacuate residents. At least 20 people were evacuated to safety in a nearby village. Police said that 900 people had been evacuated the previous day.

AP journalists who accompanied an evacuation team described empty streets with multiple buildings destroyed and others on fire. The road was littered with newly made craters and the city was covered in dust and shrapnel with the smell of gunpowder heavy in the air. Mushroom clouds of smoke rose across the skyline as Russian jets conducted multiple airstrikes.

Rise in UK knife attacks leads to a crackdown and stokes public anxiety

AGENCIES LONDON, 12 MAY

A familiar horror reached Pooja Kanda first on social media: There had been a sword attack in London. And then Kanda, who was home alone at the time, saw a detail she dreaded and knew all too well.

A man with a sword had killed a 14-year-old boy who was walking to school. Two years ago, her 16-year-old son, Roman, was killed by two sword-wielding schoolmates while walking to a neighbor's to borrow a PlayStation controller.

"It took me back," Kanda, who lives near Birmingham, said about Daniel Anjorin's April 30 killing in an attack in London's Hainault district that also wounded four people. "It's painful to see that this has happened all over again."

In parts of the world that ban or strictly regulate gun ownership, including Britain



and much of the rest of Europe, knives and other types of blades are often the weapons of choice used in crimes. Many end up in the hands of children, as they can be cheap and easy to get.

Although the number of fatal stabbings has mostly held steady in England and Wales over the past 10 years, headline-grabbing attacks and an overall rise in knife crime

have stoked anxieties and led to calls for the government to do more.

"Knife-enabled" crime — in which knives were used to commit crimes or someone was caught illegally possessing one — rose 7% in England and Wales last year, the government said last month, noting some localities were not included. In London, such crimes jumped

20%. The other two U.K. countries, Scotland and Northern Ireland, keep their own statistics.

With knives so readily available, there's only so much that can be done. Of the 244 fatal stabbings in England and Wales in the 12 months ending with March 2023 — the most recent figures available — 101 were committed with kitchen knives, far surpassing any other type of blade, according to the Office of National Statistics. But the uptick in knife crime and a steady drumbeat of shocking attacks, including those that killed Roman Kanda, Daniel Anjorin and three people in Nottingham last year, has pushed the issue to the forefront.

"It seems like every day something like this is reported in the press," Sanjoy O'Malley-Kumar, whose 19-year-old daughter Grace O'Malley-Kumar was among the Nottingham victims, said on

"Good Morning Britain" after the recent attack in London.

In last week's local elections, candidates debated policies such as stop-and-search.

Even movie star Idris Elba has weighed in.

"I can pick up a phone right now, type in knives and I'll get inundated with adverts for them," the London-born star of "The Wire" and "Luther" said during a protest in January. Guns are heavily restricted in the U.K. and there's not much debate about it. That's partly because the 1996 massacre of 16 elementary students in Dunblane, Scotland, led to a ban on owning handguns. Firearms used for hunting are tightly regulated. Restricting knives is trickier, but the government is trying. It's already illegal to sell a knife to someone younger than 18 or to carry one in public without a good reason, such as for work or religious purposes.

Saudi Crown Prince postpones Islamabad visit yet again amid raging political turmoil in Pakistan

AGENCIES ISLAMABAD, 12 MAY

The much-awaited visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Al Saud to Pakistan on May 19 has been postponed, yet again.

While the Pakistan government, which has been preparing for the high-profile visit for weeks, remains tightlipped on the reasons behind its postponement, sources reveal that MBS is quite unhappy with the current situation in the country.

They revealed that the Saudi Crown Prince remains quiet upsets with the political developments in Pakistan, particularly with the recent statements made by some leaders which have been seen as an attempt to drag Saudi Arabia in the country's internal matters.

Recently, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sher Afzal

Marwat blamed the 'Saudi influence' behind him not being considered for the Chairman's post of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

"Shibli Faraz told Imran Khan in jail that the Saudi Ambassador does not want me to be appointed as the PAC chairman," Marwat said while speaking to the media outside Adyala jail in Rawalpindi, where he was denied a meeting with the former Prime Minister. Last month, Marwat claimed that Saudi Arabia was a "conduit" for the regime change operation carried out by the United States to oust Imran Khan's government following which PTI removed him from its core and political committee and also issued a show-cause notice on trying to damage relations with Saudi Arabia.

"It is certain that Saudi Arabia is unhappy over the remarks made by Marwat that

smack of domestic political point-scoring. Marwat has directly accused Saudi Arabia for meddling in Pakistan politics and the Saudis do not tolerate such behaviour," said senior political analyst Javed Siddique while admitting that the cancellation of MBS' visit to Pakistan is a big "setback" for the country. On the other hand, government sources maintain that there are some points on the economic front which still need to be cleared between both parties before MBS finalises his Pakistan visit. They maintained that Saudi investors and businessmen, who recently toured Pakistan, are interested in some projects but the terms of the agreement have not yet been finalised.

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Parliamentary election runoff puts hard-liners firmly in charge of Iran's parliament

AGENCIES DUBAI, 12 MAY

Iran's hard-liners won most of the remaining seats in an election run-off to give them full control over the country's parliament, authorities said Saturday, while not sharing any details on the turnout.

The result, and that of the previous vote in March, gives hard-liners 233 of the 290 seats in Iran's parliament, according to an Associated Press tally.

Hard-liners seek more cultural and social restrictions based on Islamic sharia, including demanding that women wear the Islamic veil in public. They also express enmity toward the West, particularly the United States.

Those politicians calling for change in the country's government, known broadly as reformists, were generally



barred from running in the election. Those calling for radical reforms or for abandoning Iran's theocratic system were also banned or didn't bother to register as candidates.

Vote counting began after the ballots closed late Friday, with the election authority publishing the names of the winners the day after.

Interior minister Ahmad Vahidi said Saturday the elec-

tion saw "good participation," without elaborating. "All elected people have had a relatively good and acceptable" number of votes, he said.

The result requires approval by a constitutional watchdog. It is expected next week. The new parliament will begin its job on May 27.

The parliament in Iran plays a secondary role in governing the country though it can intensify pressure on the administration when deciding on the annual budget and other important bills. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has the final say in all important state matters.

In March, a total of 25 million ballots were cast, for a turnout of just under 41%, the lowest since the 1979 Islamic Revolution that brought Islamists to power.

NIS looking into N Korea's suspected provision of weapons to Russia

AGENCIES SEOUL, 12 MAY

South Korea's spy agency on Sunday said it is looking into suspicions that North Korean weapons made in the 1970s have been supplied to Russia for its war in Ukraine amid deepening military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow.

The remark by the National Intelligence Service (NIS) came in response to a recent report by a local media outlet that 122 mm artillery shells manufactured in the North in the 1970s appeared to be among the weapons that Russia used in its ongoing war against Kyiv, Yonhap news agency reported.

"The NIS is analysing the relevant circumstance in detail and also continues to track overall military coop-



eration between North Korea and Russia," the spy agency said.

Photos released by a Ukrainian photographer last year showed Korean letters inscribed on rocket shells.

Experts said they were likely 122 mm multiple rocket launcher shells.

South Korea's Defense Minister Shin Won-sik has also estimated the North to have shipped around 6,700 con-

tainers to Russia since a summit between their leaders in September, which are enough to accommodate approximately three million rounds of 152 mm artillery shells or 500,000 rounds of 122 mm artillery shells.

The NIS also said it is closely monitoring the possibility of illicit shipment of missile parts to North Korea amid concerns it may be procuring such parts to develop new weapons.

On Saturday, North Korea said that it would deploy a new 240 mm multiple rocket launcher to its military starting this year, a day after leader Kim Jong-un oversaw a test-firing of controllable shells for "the technically updated version" of the 240 mm multiple rocket launcher system, according to state media.

Switzerland's Nemo wins 68th Eurovision Song Contest after event roiled by protests over war in Gaza

ASSOCIATED PRESS SWEDEN, 12 MAY

Swiss singer Nemo won the 68th Eurovision Song Contest early Sunday with "The Code," an operatic pop-rap ode to the singer's journey toward embracing a nongender identity.

Switzerland's contestant beat Croatian rocker Baby Lasagna to the title by winning the most points from a combination of national juries and viewers around the world. Nemo, 24, is the first nonbinary winner of the contest that has long been embraced as a safe haven by the LGBT community. Nemo is also the first Swiss winner since 1988, when Canadian chanteuse

Celine Dion competed under the Swiss flag.

"Thank you so much," Nemo said after the result from Saturday's final was announced soon after midnight. "I hope this contest can live up to its promise and continue to stand for peace and dignity for every person."

At a post-victory news conference, Nemo expressed pride in accepting the trophy for "people that are daring to be themselves and people that need to be heard and need to be understood. We need more empathy."

Nemo's victory in the Swedish city of Malmo followed a turbulent year for the pan-continental pop con-



test that saw large street protests against the participation of Israel that tipped the feelgood musical celebration into a chaotic pressure cooker overshadowed by the

war in Gaza.

Hours before the final, Dutch competitor Joost Klein was expelled from the contest over a backstage altercation that was being inves-

tigated by police.

Nemo — full name Nemo Mettler — bested finalists from 24 other countries, who all performed in front of a live audience of thousands and

an estimated 180 million viewers around the world. Each contestant had three minutes to meld catchy tunes and eye-popping spectacle into performances capable of winning the hearts of viewers. Musical styles ranged across rock, disco, techno and rap — sometimes a mashup of more than one.

Israeli singer Eden Golan, who spent Eurovision week in Malmo under tight security, took the stage to a wall of sound — boos mixed with cheers — to perform the power ballad "Hurricane." Golan shot up the odds table through the week, despite the protests that her appearance drew, and ended in fifth place behind Nemo, Baby

Lasagna, Ukrainian duo alyona alyona & Jerry Heil, and French singer Slimane.

Eurovision organizers ordered a change to the original title of her song, "October Rain" — an apparent reference to the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that killed about 1,200 people in Israel and triggered the war in Gaza.

The show was typically eclectic Eurovision fare, ranging from the pop-zombie folk hybrid of Estonia's 5Mii-nust x Puulpuu to the folk-inflected power pop of Greece's Marina Satti and Armenia's Ladaniva and the goofy 1990s nostalgia of Finland's Windows95man, who emerged from a giant onstage egg wearing very little clothing.





One Nation One Election' policy shall give governments more time to work for the people

TRIPURA CHIEF MINISTER MANIK SAHA DURING A MEETING

Registration of will no longer compulsory in UP: High court

PRAYAGRAJ, 12 MAY

In a major judgment, the Allahabad High Court has held that the registration of a will is not necessary in Uttar Pradesh.

The state government had made registration of wills mandatory from August 23, 2004. "Wills in Uttar Pradesh are not required to be registered and a will, for its non-registration, will not be void whether before or after the Uttar Pradesh Amendment Act, 2004," the court said.

A division bench of Justices Siddhartha Varma and Ajit Kumar held that Section 169(3) of the Uttar Pradesh Zamin-dari Abolition and Land Reforms Act will be void to the extent it provides for the registration of a will.

The High Court made it clear that a will, shall not be considered invalid if it is not registered.

The bench pronounced the verdict while disposing of a "reference" sent to it by the Chief Justice in a petition filed by Pramila Tiwari.

The High Court held that Section 169(3) of the Uttar Pradesh Zamin-dari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1950, in so far as it requires a will to be compulsorily registered, is contrary to the Indian Registration Act, 1908, which makes the registration of a will optional. Hence, the court held that the amendment of Section 169(3) of the 1950 Act to the extent that it requires a will to be compulsorily registered is void and accordingly, struck down the said part.

In the Shobhnath case, the High Court had said the registration of a will was necessary after the law came into force. But in the Jahan Singh case, it was said a will becomes effective after death and therefore, it should be registered at the time of presentation.

AGENCIES

Shah targets Gandhi family in Rae Bareilly

He asked why Gandhi family had visited Rae Bareilly after remaining absent for 5 yrs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE RAE BAREILLY, 12 MAY

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday targeted the Gandhi family during an election meeting in the party's stronghold here.

Mr Shah began by questioning why the Gandhi family had visited Rae Bareilly after remaining absent for five years and sought answers from them.

He asserted that only the BJP could bring development to Rae Bareilly. "The money from Sonia Gandhi's development fund is spent on the party's vote bank, accusing the Gandhi family of utilising the MP fund in Rae Bareilly solely on minorities."

He also questioned Rahul Gandhi's decision to abandon the Amethi seat to con-



test from Rae Bareilly.

Addressing a gathering in support of BJP candidate and UP minister Dinesh Pratap Singh in the Congress stronghold, Shah sought answers from the Gandhi family, especially Priyanka Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. He questioned their absence during various tragic incidents, such as the boiler explosion in NTPC which claimed many lives, the Bachrawan train

accident in which 50 people died, and the drowning of five girls. There was no trace of the family even during the Corona epidemic, he added.

Cornering the Congress on the issue of reservation, the Union Home Minister said that as long as there is even a single BJP MP in Parliament, the reservation for Dalits and backward classes will not end. He said that the Congress always tells lies. He raised the

issue of Section 370 in Jammu and Kashmir and said that the Congress feels that its removal was wrong. "You all tell me whether the removal of Article 370 was wrong," he asked the people.

"Congress leaders, whether Mani Shankar Aiyar or other leaders are praising Pakistan and saying that talks should be held with Pakistan. How can one talk to someone who kills our soldiers? Not only this, these leaders say that Pakistan says that Rahul Gandhi should become the Prime Minister of the country", he alleged.

Amit Shah asserted that during the Samajwadi Party's tenure in the state, there was rampant goondaraj. Today, the mafia raj has completely ended. The atmosphere at the packed GIC ground was charged with enthusiasm when Shah attacked the Gandhi family.

Will declare UP a mafia free state after 4 June, says Yogi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, 12 MAY



ready for this," he has said.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has warned the mafia and said that after 4 June, the state government will give a fixed cut-off date to declare UP a mafia-free state. He said the properties acquired by all mafia leaders will be confiscated and allotted to the poor, orphans, women protection homes and institutions for the disabled.

The CM made this big announcement during an interview on a private TV channel on Sunday.

In this interview, CM Adityanath also talked openly about the action taken against mafia and opposition leaders.

He said that hospitals and schools will be built on the illegal lands of the mafia. "In the first phase, the mafia will be targeted and in the second phase, properties of their operatives will also be confiscated. Our action plan is also

response to another question, he said that "now a criminal is forced to beg for his life with a placard around his neck. We have provided a fear-free environment in the state."

When some Islamic fundamentalists spoke about Ghazwa-e-Hind, the CM said, "Ghazwa-e-Hind is not going to happen until doomsday. India will remain India." On the call of Congress leader Salman Khurshid's niece for vote jihad, Yogi Adityanath said that "if you do jihad for votes, you will not get heaven".

He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has kept aside caste and religion and gave the benefits of social welfare schemes to everyone.

"Those who are trying to polarise our society, can never be well-wishers of Muslims. They will always want Muslims to wear lungi and run," he said.

Chief Minister Adityanath took a dig at the Congress and Rahul Gandhi and said that after 4 June, there will be no one to question them.

Preparation complete for Modi's roadshow & nomination in Kashi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE VARANASI, 12 MAY

All preparations are complete for a grand road show of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Kashi on May 13 and filing of his nomination on 14 May.

According to an estimate by party resources, PM Modi will stay in his parliamentary constituency for about 22 hours. He will undertake a 5 km road show on Monday evening in his parliamentary constituency. He will file his nomination on 14 May after taking the blessings of Kotwal Kalbhairav of Kashi. On this day, there is a coin-



cession of Bhaum Pushya Nakshatra along with Abhijeet Muhurta, Anand Yoga, Sarvarthasiddhi Yoga.

Pandit Ganeshwar Shastri Dravid, who gave the auspicious time for the consecration and foundation stone laying of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, has described the auspicious time of 14 May as the best. According to Ganeshwar Shastri Dravid, Pushya

Nakshatra will start from 01:43 am on 13 May, and will continue till 3:10 pm on 14 May. After this Ashlesha Nakshatra will start. According to the horoscope of PM both the constellations are favourable for him.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday inaugurated the media centre at Hotel de Paris in Cantt area. He garlanded the portraits of Deendayal Upadhyay and Pandit Syama Prasad Mookerjee. Here, he met media-persons and asked about their well being. All the press conferences related to the elections of the PM will be held in this office from now on.

Gas and mud mix erupts in Imphal West during digging, probe begins

AGENCIES IMPHAL, 12 MAY

The district administration in Manipur's Imphal West asked the ailing and people with health issues to shift to safer places after the eruption of a mixture of gas and mud in Langthabal Kunja Awang Leikai area since Saturday created a potential hazard, officials said on Sunday.

District officials said that the flare-up of a mixture of gas and mud was largely controlled on Sunday but efforts were on to fully end it. District Magistrate Kiran Kumar said that the eruption occurred on the land of Yurembam

The situation is currently under inspection by a team of the SDRF and technical experts

Manihas workers were digging to set up a hand pump for domestic use, affecting the environment, including air quality. The situation is currently under inspection by a team of State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and technical experts to find out the causes, the composition of erupted material, and the consequences of the incident on lives and the environment.

The situation is under proper scientific observation, the DM said in an order, adding that to avoid any potential hazards to the lives of the people living in the vicinity, they are advised to take certain precautionary as well as preventive actions. Considering the circumstances, people (especially those having breathing issues due to asthma or past Covid history, small children or infants, or those in advanced stages of pregnancy), residing in the vicinity of the location (within a radius of 100 metres), were instructed to shift to a safer place until further instruction, the order read.

INS Delhi & Shakti make port call at Malaysia's Kota Kinabalu



NEW DELHI, 12 MAY

Indian Naval Ships (INS) Delhi and Shakti arrived for port calls at Malaysia's Kota Kinabalu on Sunday, as part of the operational deployment of the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet to South China Sea.

The ships will engage with the Royal Malaysian Navy on various professional interactions to include Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEE), cross-shipping visits and visits to training bases over the next three days.

The port call is a demonstration of India's warm ties with Malaysia and the growing naval collaboration between the two countries.

The Indian Naval Ships arrived from Singapore where they undertook various bilateral engagements earlier in the week, reaffirming the commitment to enhance maritime security and stability in the region.

The visit provided an opportunity for discussions on enhancing naval cooperation and interoperability between the navies of both India and Singapore. AGENCIES

'20pc candidates have criminal cases, 37pc are crorepatris in 5th phase in UP'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, 12 MAY

Around 20 per cent of the candidates contesting Lok Sabha election in Uttar Pradesh in phase 5 have criminal cases registered against them while 37 per cent are crorepatris.

Uttar Pradesh Election Watch, (UPEW) and Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) analyzed the affidavits of all 144 candidates contesting in the fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections in UP from 14 constituencies.

The constituencies are: Lucknow, Mohanlalganj, Rae Bareilly, Amethi, Jalaun, Jhansi, Hamirpur, Banda, Fahehpur, Kaushambi, Barabanki,

Faizabad, Kaiserganj and Gonda. According to the report released here on Sunday, 29 out of 144 (20 per cent) candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves while 18 per cent of the candidates have declared serious criminal cases against themselves.

Party-wise details of candidates who have declared criminal cases against themselves are - 5 out of 14 from Bahujan Samaj Party (36 per cent), 4 out of 14 from BJP (29 per cent), 5 out of 10 from Samajwadi Party (50 per cent), 3 out of 4 (75 per cent) candidates of Congress and 1 out of 4 (25 per cent) candidates of Apna Dal (Kamerawadi). A



total of 29 per cent of Bahujan Samaj Party, 21 per cent of BJP, 40 per cent of Samajwadi Party, 75 per cent of Congress

and 25 per cent of Apna Dal (Kamerawadi) candidates have declared serious criminal cases against themselves.

Ravidas Malhotra, who is contesting from Lucknow on Samajwadi Party, has 18 criminal cases registered against him, the second candidate with criminal image is Pradeep Jain Aditya, who is the Congress candidate from Jhansi, he has six criminal cases registered against him. Bhagat Ram is at number 3, a candidate from Kaiserganj from Samajwadi Party against whom one criminal case has been registered.

The report further says that among the crorepati candidates, 53 out of 144 ie 37 per cent candidates are crorepatris which includes 13 out of 14 (93 per cent) of BJP, 10 out of 10 (100 per cent) of SP, 10 out

of 14 (71 per cent) of BSP while 4 out of 4 (100 per cent) candidates of Congress.

The average assets of the candidates of the fifth phase of UP Lok Sabha elections are worth Rs. 4.37 crore. Among the main parties, the average assets of 14 candidates of BJP are around Rs 28 crore. The average assets of 14 candidates of BSP are around Rs. 5 crore. SP candidates' average wealth is Rs 4 crores while 4 Congress candidates have average wealth of around Rs 9 crore. Among the candidates for the fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections, Anurag Sharma is contesting on BJP ticket from Jhansi and has assets around Rs 212 crore while his party

candidate Karan Bhushan Singh, contesting from Kaiserganj has assets of Rs 49 crore.

Gonda Lok Sabha seat BJP candidate Kirtivardhan Singh has assets worth around Rs 37 crore. State convener of UP Election Watch, Santosh Srivastava said the top three candidates who have declared the least assets are Dharamraj, who is contesting from Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat from AI Hind Party (total assets of Rs 20,000), his party candidate Deepak Kumar Verma from Jhansi is at the second place (Rs 22,000) and at third place is Ambrish Dev Gupta, who is contesting from Bharat Mahaparivar Party from Faizabad (Rs 32,000).

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD

1 Inlet (3)
2 Bill (4)
3 Inheritor (4)
4 Earache (7)
5 Main emphasis (5)
6 Knowed (4-9)
7 Live (6)
8 Male relative (informal) (7)
9 Vacillating (informal) (5-8)
10 Surpass (5)
11 Public sale (7)
12 Flank (4)
13 Clip (4)
14 Body of water (3)

1 Woman's top (6)
2 Annual (6)
3 Wet spongy ground (3)
4 Repeatedly (5,3,5)
5 Pardon (6)
6 In spite of everything (5,3)
7 Item of baby equipment (8)
8 Peripherals (3-3)
9 Overjoyed (6)
10 Boundaries (6)
11 Everest, 18 Poker, 20 Tweed.
12 Eyre, 6 Equerry, 7 Derring-do, 9 Geography.13 Nude.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD
ACROSS: 1 Dine, 4 Sate, 8 Water, 9 feature, 10 Extreme, 11 Error, 12 Guilty, 14 Stay on, 17 Act up, 19 Mounted, 21 Handkerchief, 22 Eyre, 23 Nude. DOWN: 13 Insignia, 15 Overjoyed, 16 Boundaries, 17 Everest, 18 Poker, 20 Tweed, 21 Schoolboy's hat (3)

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovalieski



NEED TO KNOW

- Ambulance**
FD Block Association (Amb) 9830452536, 9830181286
Happy Calculators 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**
Lalbazar (Police Control Room) 22143230
S. P. (North 24-Pgns) 25423005
S.P. (South 24-Pgns) 2479-3352/1311
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, 2638-7412/3542/2581 (manual).
Sealdah: 2350-3535/3537
Shalimar Station: 2668-1121, Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway: 139.

SCRABBLE® (G|R|A|M|S|I) BRAND

REYHTAD
IGJINRRA
CVTOAER
ADCRTSU
CREEADLI

PAR SCORE 225-235
by JUDD

Life Care 2284-6940
Peoples Blood Bank 2455-5164/5557
RK Mission Seva Pratishthan 2475-3636/39

SUDOKU Concepts Sudoku By Dave Green

		3	7	4				
	5				3			
2	1					5		
3	8				1			
1		5			3			
	6				1	8		
		7	1	8	4	9	5	
						2	1	6
							8	7

Difficulty Level ★★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that no row, no column and no 3x3 box contains the same number. The difficulty level increases through the week.

North-East showcases high electoral participation

NAVA TRAKURIA

Who describes the northeast as a land of separatists, where the residents often remain reluctant to participate in any national event, including the general elections? While a declining voters' turnout emerged in various parts of India during the last three phases of the 18th Lok Sabha polls, the north-eastern region showcased an excellent voter response in a peaceful ambience, except in some areas of Manipur. The sensitive voters have thus shown their inherent commitment to the nation by participating in the greatest electoral show on Earth with unparalleled enthusiasm.

The land-locked region sends 25 members to the lower house of parliament, and the electorates exercised their franchises through electronic voting machines in all three phases, with more than 10 per cent more voter turnout than the national average. Assam, the largest state in the North-east, witnessed fully peaceful and participatory polling in the final phase on 7 May for four parliamentary constituencies, namely Guwahati, Barpeta, Dhubri, and Kokrajhar, with over 80 per cent voter turnout, which is nearly 15 per cent higher than the recorded electoral participations by the Election Commission of India (ECI) in other parts of the south Asian nation.

Altogether, 93 Lok Sabha seats belonging to 11 states and union territories went to the polls in the 3rd phase. The voters of Gujarat (25 seats), Karnataka (14 seats), Maharashtra (11 seats), Uttar Pradesh (10 seats), Madhya Pradesh (8 seats), Chhattisgarh (7 seats), Bihar (5 seats), West Bengal (4 seats), Goa (2 seats), Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (2 seats), and Jammu and Kashmir (1 seat) had already confirmed their mandates to the preferred representatives out of 1,331 nominees belonging to national and regional political parties (including a few independent candidates).

After four more phases of polling scheduled for 13, 20, 25 May and 1 June, the counting of votes will take place on 4 June, and the results are expected the same day. According to

the ECI, polling in the 3rd phase recorded 64.4 per cent voter turnout nationally, where Assam topped the list with an 81.61 per cent electoral response, followed by West Bengal (75.79 per cent), Goa (75.20 per cent), Chhattisgarh (71.06 per cent), Karnataka (70.41 per cent), Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (69.87 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (66.05 per cent), Maharashtra (61.44 per cent), Gujarat (58.98 per cent), Bihar (58.18 per cent), and Uttar Pradesh (57.34 per cent).

The first two phases on 19 and 26 April (covering 102 and 88 parliamentary seats, respectively) recorded voter turnout as 66.14 and 66.71 per cent, respectively, while Assam reported far better (78.25 and 77.35, respectively) polling percentages. Tripura, Meghalaya, Sikkim, and Manipur also recorded impressive polling (over 75 per cent) in the 1st and 2nd phases. Nagaland, even after six districts voted zero, recorded around 57 per cent polling for the lone parliamentary seat. The voters of Arunachal Pradesh successfully exercised their franchise to elect two MPs and 50 legislators, with a turnout of around 67 per cent. Mizoram witnessed peaceful polling for the lone parliamentary seat, but it recorded only 55 per cent turnout.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) put candidates in all ten parliamentary seats in Assam in the first and second phases, but the saffron party fielded only one nominee (Bijuli Kalita Medhi for the Guwahati LS seat) in the last phase. It extended support to its alliance candidates, namely Phani Bhusan Choudhury (Asom Gana Parishad) for the Barpeta seat, Zayed Islam (AGP) for Dhubri, and Jayanta Basumtary (United People's Party Liberal) for the Kokrajhar constituency. The former women's wing chief of Assam state primarily faces an electoral challenge from Indian National Congress candidate Mira Borthakur Goswami in Guwahati.

In Barpeta, the AGP legislator faces Deep Bayan (Congress), Manoranjan Talukdar (a CPM legislator), and a few others, whereas in Dhubri, the AGP nominee challenges sitting All India United Democratic

Front MP Moulana Badruddin Ajmal and Congress legislator Rakibul Husain in the westernmost constituency. The nomination of sitting Kokrajhar MP Naba Kr Sarania was cancelled, and hence the electoral battle in the Bodo-dominated constituency emerged as a triangular contest, where the UPPL nominee faces challenges from Kampa Borgoyary (Bodoland People's Front) and Garjan Mashhary (Congress).

In the 2nd phase, the BJP's sitting MP Dilip Saikia faces electoral challenges from Madhav Rajbangshi (Congress) and Durgadas Boro (BPF) in the Darrang-Udalguri seat. The Diphu seat witnesses frontal electoral fights between Amarsing Tisso (BJP) and Joy Ram Englung (Congress). In Silchar, state minister Parimal Suklabaidya faced Surya Kanta Sarkar (Congress) and Radheshyam Biswas (Trinamul Congress). The Congress party is expecting positive outcomes in the Nagaon and Karimganj seats. The sitting MP Pradyut Bordoloi primarily faces Aminul Islam (AIUDF) and Suresh Borah (BJP) in Nagaon, and in Karimganj, the oldest party fielded Hafiz Rashid Ahmed Choudhury against Sahabul Islam Choudhury (AIUDF) and Kripanath Malla (BJP).

During the 1st phase, union minister Sarbananda Sonowal faced electoral challenges from Manoj Dhanowar (Aam Aadmi Party) and Lurinjyoti Gogoi (Asom Jatiya Parishad) in the Dibrugarh seat. Another Rajya Sabha member, Kamakhya Prasad Tasa, had a direct contest with Roselina Tirkey (Congress) in Kaziranga. Similarly, in Sonitpur (earlier named Tezpur), BJP candidate Ranjit Dutta was challenged by Prem Lal Ganju (Congress) and Rishiraj Kaundinya (AAP). Sitting saffron MP Pradan Barua primarily faced challenges from Uday Shankar Hazarika (Congress) in Lakhimpur. Jorhat seat attracted public attention as two sitting MPs, namely Gaurav Gogoi (who represented the now-delimited Kaliabor seat) and sitting saffron MP Tapan Gogoi, contested with high promises.

Altogether, 88 parliamentary constituencies across 13 states and union territories (including Kerala, Karnata-

ka, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir) went to the polls in the 2nd phase, where two seats in Tripura and Manipur also witnessed voting. In Tripura East, the saffron party supported Tipra Motha candidate Kriti Singh Debbarma against CPM nominee Rajendra Reang, which recorded over 80 per cent polling. Outer Manipur went to the polls in both phases, where Kachui Timothy Zimik (Naga People's Front) was supported by the BJP against Congress candidate Alfred Kanngam S. Arthur. Many booths in and around Imphal went for re-polling, and the state's voter turnout reached over 75 per cent.

The 1st phase covered 102 parliamentary seats under 17 states and four union territories (including Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Jammu & Kashmir, and all north-eastern states, except Sikkim voted for legislative assembly also). The electorate voted for 32 Sikkim legislators and an MP with 75 per cent electoral responses. The ruling Sikkim Krantikari Morcha fielded sitting MP Indra Hang Subba against Prem Das Rai (Sikkim Democratic Front), Gopal Chettri (Congress), and Dinesh Chandra Nepal (BJP). State CM Prem Singh Tamang, former CM Pawan Kumar Chamling, legendary footballer Bhaichung Bhutia, etc. contested from separate assembly constituencies.

In Arunachal Pradesh, 10 BJP candidates, including state chief minister Pema Khandu and his deputy Chowna Mein, won the race in assembly segments with no fielded opponents. Union minister Kiren Rijju faced Congress nominee Nabam Tuki in the Arunachal West seat, and sitting saffron MP Tapir Gao was challenged by Bosiram Siram in the Arunachal East constituency. West Tripura seat, where the BJP fielded former state CM Biplab Kumar Deb against the united opposition candidate Ashish Kumar Saha, witnessed over 81 per cent polling.

The Tura seat of Meghalaya also



recorded 81 per cent turnout, where the ruling National People's Party put sitting MP Agatha Sangma against Zenith Sangma (Trinamul Congress) and Saleng A Sangma (Congress). Shilong constituency, however, recorded around 65 per cent voting, where sitting Congress MP Vincent Pala was challenged by state minister Ampareen Lyngdoh.

In the Inner Manipur seat, BJP candidate Basanta Kumar Singh faced challenges from Angomcha Bimol Akoijam (Congress). Zoram People's Movement nominee Richard Vanlalhmangaiha was challenged by K. Vanlalvena (Mizo National Front), Lalbiakzama (Congress), and Pu Vanhlalmuaka (BJP) for Mizoram's lone seat, whereas in Nagaland, Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party nominee Chumben Murry (endorsed by the People's Democratic Alliance)

emerged as a front-runner against his rival Supongmeren Jamir (Congress).

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance is looking for 400+ seats in the 545-member Lok Sabha under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. But despite relentless awareness campaigns by the ECI, social organisations, media outlets, and political personalities, including Modi, who is seeking a third consecutive premiership, the voter turnout remains unsatisfactory in mainland India. Northeast has done better here, thanks to a localised campaign by Lok Jagran Manch Asom for 100 per cent turnout, which successfully launched the campaign with printed leaflets, music videos, short plays, etc. to inspire the people to vote with pride and responsibility.

The writer is a Guwahati-based special representative of The Statesman

Over 15K houses damaged in hail storm; 11K affidavits filed before inquiry commission on ethnic crisis



YAMBEM LABA

It was a normal sunny day on the 5th of May in Manipur. But by 2 in the afternoon, the skies had darkened, and half an hour later, Mother Nature's fury broke loose. Be it climate change or what, the state had not seen anything like it in the last 50 years or so. Heavy rain with high-speed winds soon swept across. The rat-tat-tat sound on tin roofs began to be heard as hail started pouring down from the sky, and the grounds and streets were soon covered in sheets of white. The hail came down in various sizes, ranging from pebbles to pears. Transmission lines were destroyed by the heavy gale, and lightning struck in a couple of places, killing one and injuring 10 others in the

process. The devastation all around was so immense that the State Cabinet the next day realised that over 15,425 houses were damaged, with all of them having their tin roofs punctured by the hundreds. A few houses were also toppled. Soon it was declared that the state had sanctioned a sum of Rs 6.90 crore from the disaster relief fund and had empowered the Deputy Commissioners to make the distribution once an assessment had been done.

The damage district-wise was put at Imphal West district 6,053 houses, Imphal East district 3,600, Bishenpur district 1,179, Thoubal district 800, Kakching district 120,200 in Ukhrul district, 130 in Tengnoupal district 120 in Noney district, 100 in Kamjong district, 540 in Churachandpur

district, 292 in Kangpokpi district, 16 in Chandeldistrict, and 256 in Tamenglong district. The distribution was pegged at 5 lakhs for the valley districts and 4 lakhs for the hill districts each.

The next day, long queues of lines were seen outside shops selling CGI sheets, with people lining up from pre-dawn. Soon rumours that the shops have run out of stock did the rounds, and news that prices have been jacked up by five hundred rupees per bundle. Soon, student groups had fanned out and forced the shop owners to return the excess amount that they had charged the customers. The Deputy Commissioners came to the scene and declared that the prices that had last stood one month ago should not be changed and warned of dire consequences if found

otherwise.

But when the assessment began, it was mixed up with politics. The first group to fan out were the workers of the local BJP MLAs. Keeping in mind that the elections to the Parliament were just over, the BJP workers thought of revenge on their opponents in politics. For instance, where BJP strongman and minister Th. Biswajit reigned, his workers reportedly told a known Congress-supporting family to get their relief from Bimol, meaning the Congress candidate in the last parliamentary elections. And the next day, when the official team from the office of the Deputy Commissioner came, this particular person and a few others in the locality were skipped from the inspection and assessment. So much for fair play. The Manipur Pradesh



Committee President, K. K. Meghachandra, also demanded that financial assistance be provided to families who are victims of the calamity and also said that when contacted, the officials did not know how to make the assessments. He also demanded that the calamity be declared a national disaster. He also added that the sum of Rs 6.9 crore was too little and wrote to the Prime Minister demanding a relief package of Rs 200 crore. Soon, chief minister N. Biren Singh began touring the affected areas, making a personal assessment of the problem first hand. It was also soon discovered that more than 500 hectares of standing horticultural crops have

been damaged, affecting more than 1,000 farmers, according to K. Devdutta Sharma, director of Horticulture and Soil Conservation.

And on the ongoing ethnic war between the Kukis and the Meiteis, which began on 3 May 2023, and has been ongoing for more than a year, the three Member Commission of Inquiry instituted by the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India has so far received 11,000 affidavits. This was stated to a section of the media by a senior officer of the MHA recently. The Court of Inquiry was established in November 2023 by the Government of India and asked members of the public to submit statements, allegations, or complaints in the form of an affidavit. The majority of the complaints were filed by individuals, while a few were from civil society organisations. The affidavits were made before oath commissioners or notary officers, for which the complainants do not have to pay a single rupee. The Court of Inquiry is

being headed by Ajai Lamba, former Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court, along with Himangshu Shekar Das IAS (Retd) and Alok Prabhakar (IPS Retd). It has also examined all the affidavits and said that soon responses would be sought from the Government of Manipur and the Government of India. The main office is located in Delhi, with a field office in Imphal. It is also questionable if adequate administrative measures were taken to prevent the violence and riots, and the historical aspects are also being examined. At least 221 people were killed, and more than 50,000 were displaced. And at least 36 Meiteis have not been traced till now, and their relatives are seeking closure for their missing cases.

In the meantime, a total of 5,457 illegal immigrants from Myanmar have been detected in Kamjong District, bordering Myanmar, and their biometric readings have been taken, according to Chief Minister N. Biren Singh. Taking it to X, he said that the detection was as of 7 May 2024. He also added

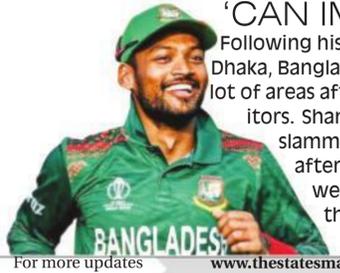
that 77 illegal immigrants have already been deported back to Myanmar. Earlier, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that the complete boundary between India and Myanmar will be fenced up and the Free Movement Regime that has been existing since independence will be scrapped. All this is with a view to curbing illegal immigrants entering the country from that country, CM Biren Singh also added.

And also, a heavy exchange of fire took place yesterday across the border in Myanmar at Myo Thit, near the international border in Kamjong. The fire-fight was suspected between members of the anti-Myanmarese government, the People's Defence Force and the Kuki National Front on one side, and the Manipur-origin People's Liberation Army (PLA), now based there. The PF-KNF side is reported to have sustained high casualties, with over 30 killed and many injured, and a huge cache of arms recovered from their side.

The writer is a senior journalist at The Statesman

'CAN IMPROVE IN LOT OF AREAS'

Following his side's 8-wicket loss against Zimbabwe in the 5th T20I match in Dhaka, Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto said they can improve in a lot of areas after the way they played in the five-game series against the visitors. Shanto scored 36 runs from 28 balls at a strike rate of 128.57. He slammed 5 fours and 1 six while batting in the first inning. Speaking after the match, the Bangladesh skipper accepted they did not start well on Sunday even after getting the opportunity. Shanto added they are well prepared for the upcoming T20 World Cup.



For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Milan end dismal run by thrashing Cagliari in Serie A: AC Milan eventually registered a comfortable win in Serie A as they tore Cagliari apart 5-1 with Christian Pulisic's double. Having failed to claim a win in the past six outings, the Rossoneri were looking for a resounding response and they went ahead in the 35th minute with Ismael Bennacer's strike in chaos. The home side doubled the lead in the 59th minute when substitute Rafael Leao's sensational pass inspired Pulisic to finish with a solo run, reports Xinhua. Despite Nahitan Nandez's cushion for Cagliari in the 63rd minute, Milan restored the lead in the 74th minute in a spectacular fashion when Tijjani Reijnders unleashed a rocket out of the box that flew into the corner.

Suarez on target as Inter Miami rally to beat Montreal: Luis Suarez continued his prolific scoring form as leaders Inter Miami recovered from a two-goal deficit to register a 3-2 away win over Montreal in Major League Soccer (MLS) on Saturday night. Bryce Duke put the hosts ahead at Saputo stadium with a 22nd-minute strike after Jules Vilsaint's perfectly weight pass on the counterattack. Vilsaint then put his name on the scoresheet by playing a slick one-two with Ariel Lassiter before cutting inside his marker and angling a shot into the far corner.

CSK keep playoffs hopes alive with five-wicket win over RR

Fighting knock from skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad and a 3-wicket haul by Simarjeet Singh helped CSK secure a win against RR in the Indian Premier League

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, 12 MAY

A fighting knock from skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad and a three-wicket haul by Simarjeet Singh helped Chennai Super Kings (CSK) secure a five-wicket win against Rajasthan Royals (RR) in the Indian Premier League at Chennai on Sunday. With this win, CSK is in the third spot with seven wins and six losses, giving them 14 points. RR is at second spot, with eight wins and four losses, giving them 18 points. In the run chase of 142 runs, openers Rachin Ravindra and skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad started off really well for CSK. Rachin, took a more attacking approach against RR pacers, first smashing Sandeep for a six and then hitting Trent Boult for a four and six. However, Rachin's quick start ended with Ravichandran Ashwin dismissing him for 27 in 18 balls, with a four and two sixes.

Daryl Mitchell was the next up on the crease. Mitchell made an impact from the get-go, punishing spinner Ravichandran Ashwin and Sandeep with some elegant boundaries. CSK reached the 50-run mark in 5.2 overs.

The partnership between the duo was cut short by Yuzvendra Chahal, trapping Mitchell leg-before-wicket for 22 in 13 balls, with four bound-



aries. CSK was 67/2 in 7.5 overs. Halfway through the innings, CSK was 77/2, with Ruturaj (20*) and Moeen Ali (4*) unbeaten. Moeen Ali could not stick around for long, dismissed by Nandre Burger for 10 in 13 balls, being caught by Avesh Khan at deep point. RR was 86/3 in 11.5 overs.

With some brief assault by Shivam Dube on Ashwin, CSK reached the 100-run mark in 13.2 overs. However, the spinner had the last laugh, removing him for 18 in 11 balls, with Rryan Parag taking a catch near the boundary.

At the end of 15 overs, CSK was 116/4, with Jadeja (3*) and Gaikwad (30*) unbeaten.

Jadeja was given out for obstructing the field after the left-arm all-rounder intentionally stopped the ball from hitting the stumps on an attempted run-out, putting Chennai in a tricky situation.

After the introduction of Impact Player Sameer Rizvi, CSK completed the chase comfortably securing their seventh victory in 13 games.

Earlier, fine bowling spells from Simarjeet Singh and Tushar Deshpande restricted Rajasthan Royals (RR) to just 141/5 in their 20 overs.

Choosing to bat after winning the toss, openers Jos Buttler and Yashasvi Jaiswal put Rajasthan to a steady, but

cautious start, scoring at around seven runs per over. Jaiswal was the aggressor, targeting Maheesh Theekshana's spin and Shardul Thakur's medium pace effectively. At the end of the powerplay in six overs, RR was 42/0, with Jaiswal (24*) and Buttler (18*) unbeaten. A top edge by Jaiswal got Simarjeet Singh the wicket of Jaiswal for 24 in 21 balls, with three fours and a six. Skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad took a fine catch. RR was 43/1 in 6.2 overs. Simarjeet gave RR another blow, getting Buttler caught at fine leg by Tushar Deshpande for 21 in 25 balls, with two fours. RR was 49/2 in 8.1 overs.

RCB beat Delhi Capitals

Royal Challengers Bengaluru beat Delhi Capitals by 47 runs at M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Sunday to keep their slim playoff hopes alive. Getting an invitation to bat first, RCB posted 187 for 9 in their must-win clash against DC. Rajat Patidar slammed 52 off 32 while Will Jacks hit 41 off 29. Rasikh Salam was the pick of the DC bowlers with figures of 2 for 23 in three overs. In reply, Delhi Capitals got off to a poor start and lost four wickets inside powerplay. They were eventually bowled out for 140 in 19.1 overs despite Axar Patel's fighting knock of 57 off 39.

Ravindra Jadeja given out for obstructing field

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, 12 MAY

Chennai Super Kings' Ravindra Jadeja was given out for obstructing the field after the left-arm all-rounder intentionally stopped the ball from hitting the stumps on an attempted run out during Match 61 of Indian Premier League 2024 against Rajasthan Royals at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Sun-



day. Chennai Super Kings won the match by 5 wickets, reaching 145/5 in 18.2 overs chasing Rajasthan Royals' total of 141/5.

Deeksha breaks National record in 500m event



AGENCIES
LOS ANGELES, 12 MAY

Track athlete KM Deeksha shattered the Indian national women's record in the 500m during the Sound Running Track Festival, held in Los Angeles.

Deeksha finished third with a time of 4:04.78, outperforming the previous record of 4:05.39 set by Harmilan Bains

in 2021. Deeksha's previous personal best was 4:06.07 achieved in the final of the National Inter-State Athletics Championships at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar in 2023, when she defeated Bains to win gold.

In the women's 500m in Los Angeles, Parul Chaudhary finished fifth in 15:10.69, missing out on improving her NR, while compatriot Ankita finished tenth in 15:28.88.

Farmer's son Parvej Khan, who shines in US collegiate race, aims to represent India in Olympics



AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 12 MAY

A son of a farmer from Haryana, Parvej Khan, who clinched the men's 1500m title at the SEC Outdoor Track & Field Championships 2024, a major collegiate athletics event held in Louisiana, USA, expressed his aspiration to represent India in the Olympic Games but acknowledged the necessity of meeting the qualification standard.

Hailing from Chahalka, a village in Haryana's Mewat district, Parvej is in the USA on a scholarship with the University of Florida.

On Saturday, he clocked 3 minutes and 42.73 seconds to win the race at the LSU Bernie Moore Stadium in Baton Rouge. His personal best is 3:38.76, achieved in California last month.

After his win, the 19-year-old told the media, "Yeah, representing India in the Olympics is on my mind. But it's really hard to qualify for Paris as I am really far behind the qualification, but I am trying to give my 100% and do my job every day. People trust me so I am doing good day by day to execute my plans well and I hope I get an Olympics standard."

Later in the day, Parvej participated in the 800m race, securing third place with a time of 1:46.80, just seven-tenths shy of his personal best set back in March in Florida.

Parvej is a National Games 2022 champion in the 1500m. He had shattered a 28-year-old Games record in the process.

Wrestler Aman Sehrawat seals Paris 2024 Olympics quota; Deepak Punia crashes out

AGENCIES
ISTANBUL, 12 MAY

Asian champion Aman Sehrawat secured a Paris 2024 quota for India in the men's 57kg freestyle category at the World Wrestling Olympic Qualifiers in Istanbul, Turkey on Saturday.

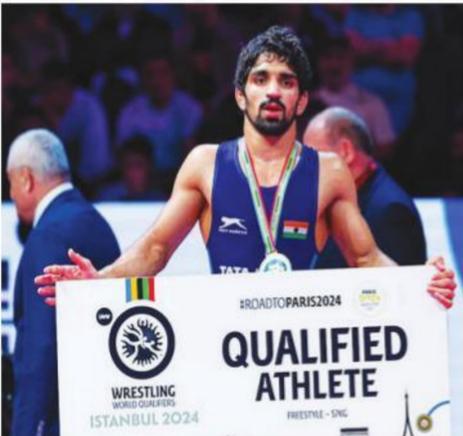
Sehrawat, a U23 world champion, beat Chongsong Han of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea 12-2 in the semi-final for India's sixth quota in wrestling for the Paris 2024 Olympics.

However, this was India's first Paris 2024 quota in men's freestyle wrestling. All of the previous five quotas were obtained by the Indian women wrestlers.

The Istanbul meet is the final opportunity for wrestlers to obtain a quota for the upcoming Summer Games. Three Paris Olympic quotas are on offer in each weight class.

The two finalists in each division will obtain Paris Olympic quotas for their respective countries. The third spot, meanwhile, will go to the winner of the playoff bout between the two bronze medalists in the weight class.

In the earlier rounds, the 20-



year-old Sehrawat beat Olympian Georgi Vangelov of Bulgaria 10-4 on the back of five takedowns to move into the quarter-finals. He then set up a bout for quota with a 12-2 win over Andriy Yatsenko of Ukraine.

"I slept last night knowing that I just have to fight for six minutes today. Whether you win or lose is a different matter. I just wanted to do my fight," Aman said as quoted by the Olympics.com. Deepak Punia,

meanwhile, missed out on a quota in the 86kg. The Asian Games silver medalist went down to China's Zushen Lin 6-4 despite leading 3-0 at one stage in his first bout.

Zushen Lin was later ousted in the quarter-finals, ending Deepak Punia's hopes for an Olympic quota via repurchase route. The Indian wrestler had narrowly missed out on a medal at the Tokyo Olympics after finishing fifth.

Shooting: Esha, Anish register 2nd win in Olympic Selection Trials

AGENCIES
BHOPAL, 12 MAY

Both Esha Singh and Anish Bhanwala registered their second win in the Olympic Selection Trial (OST), posting victories in the women's 25m pistol and men's 25m rapid-fire pistol (RFP) OST T3 matches respectively. While Anish had won the first trial in the same event in Delhi, Esha had won the second trial in the women's 10m air pistol, also at the Karni Singh range in Delhi.

On Sunday at the M.P. State Shooting Academy (MPSSA) ranges, Esha notched her first trial win in women's 25m pistol, shooting 43 in the final. Her score was a point more than the world record set by Korean Kim Yeji at the Baku World Cup, earlier this month.

Manu came a good second with 40 hits while Rhythm Sangwan picked up the final podium point, bowing out ahead of the 10th and final series with a score of 33. Simranpreet Kaur Brar and Abhidnya Patil were fourth and fifth respectively.

In the Men's RFP final, Anish seemed to be in a league of his own, bossing the five-man finals field with three per-



fect series of five hits to begin the eight-series final with. He eventually missed just four to finish with 36 hits for the win.

Vijayveer Sidhu did stutter in the beginning, but eventually held his own to come in second with 31 hits. Ankur Goel was third with 19, while Adarsh Singh and Bhavesh Shekhawat came fourth and fifth respectively.

All 10 shooters will come back on Monday for the fourth (T4) and final OST match in both events. n

average in the first three trials, Manu Bhaker comfortably leads Esha Singh at the top in the women's sport pistol while Anish is also well ahead of second-placed Vijayveer in the men's RFP. Even as Manu and Anish look near certain for a top finish in their respective 25m pistol events, the fight for the second spot still seems to be up for grabs. The final picture in the Olympic 25m events will certainly be clear on Monday.

Indian Hockey team gears up for Paris Olympics 2024; 75 days to go

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, 12 MAY

In 75 days, the Indian men's hockey team will take the field at the Yves-du-Manior Stadium in Paris to end their 44-year Gold Medal drought. To realize this dream, they will have to overcome the reigning Olympic Champions Belgium (World No. 2), Australia (World No. 3), Argentina (World No. 7), New Zealand (World No. 10), and Ireland (World No. 11) in Pool B, and secure a top-four finish in the pool to progress to the Quarter-Finals.

Meanwhile, Pool A comprises the world's top-ranked team, the Netherlands, alongside Germany, Great Britain, Spain, South Africa, and



Zealand, followed by a match against Argentina on July 29 before facing Ireland and Belgium on July 30 and August 1. They will play their last group-stage game against Australia on August 2.

Shedding light on the preparation of the team for the Paris 2024 Olympics Captain Harmanpreet Singh said, "We are in the last stages of an intense training block right now. The team has worked on the areas we felt needed attention after the Tour of Australia. Soon, we will head to Europe to play some essential matches in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2023/24 to test ourselves against some tough opponents like Argentina, Belgium, Germany, and Great Britain. The chemistry

in the squad continues to grow and with only 75 days left for the Paris 2024 Olympics we are working to be in the best shape possible."

Vice-captain Hardik Singh expressed his excitement for the Paris 2024 Olympics saying, "The team is leaving no stone unturned in our endeavour to change the colour of our previous medal and clinch Gold at the Olympics this time. We have players like PR Sreejesh and Manpreet Singh who could be playing their fourth Olympics along with quite a few players who could be playing their third Olympics, including our Captain. Their experience has been instrumental in moulding some of the younger players we have

in the squad right now. Only 75 days remain for the Paris 2024 Olympics and we cannot wait to begin our Olympic journey."

India has a rich history in hockey at the Olympics. They won their first Gold Medal after beating the Netherlands 3-0 in the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam and went on to dominate, winning Gold Medals in the 1932, 1936, 1948, 1952, 1956, 1964, and 1980 Olympics. In addition to their 8 Gold Medals, India claimed a Silver medal in 1960 and 3 Bronze medals in 1968 and 1972, and the previous Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2020, making them the most successful Men's Hockey Team in the Olympics with 12 Medals.

LaLiga: Real Madrid tame relegated Granada; Mallorca takes vital win

AGENCIES
MADRID, 12 MAY

Already-confirmed LaLiga champions Real Madrid ended a perfect week when they won 4-0 away against Granada.

Madrid traveled to the south of Spain after qualifying for the UEFA Champions League final with a 2-1 home win over Bayern Munich on Wednesday. Carlo Ancelotti made many changes to his side, but after a difficult opening 35 minutes, Madrid whitewashed the rival that will play next season in the second division. Left back Fran Garcia opened the scoring after a pass from youngster Arda Guler and then returned the favor for the Turk to double the lead on the stroke of halftime.

Brahim Diaz added Madrid's third four minutes after the break and scored his second in the 59th minute of the game. Giovanni Gonzalez's scrappy 29th-minute goal gave Mallorca a vital 1-0 win at home to Las Palmas to lift them nine points clear of the relegation zone and pile the pressure on Cadiz who will face Getafe at home on Sunday.

Mallorca's win also means that Granada's descent to the second division was confirmed before they kicked off their match against Real Madrid. Athletic Club Bilbao's chances of qualifying for the Champions League look to have ended after their 2-2 draw at home to Osasuna, but they showed spirit to overcome a host of absences to come back from 2-0 down.