



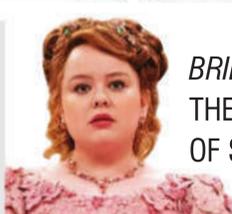
'INDIA DID BEST UNDER COALITIONS'

P7



FREE, OPEN INDO-PACIFIC NECESSARY FOR GLOBAL PEACE: EAM

P5



BRIDGERTON: IDEALISING THE WALLFLOWERS OF SOCIETY

P11



'AUSTRALIANS NOT APPROACHED FOR HEAD COACH SLOT'

P12

SENSEX 75,410.39 ▼ 7.65

NIFTY 22,957.10 ▼ 10.55

₹ vs \$ 83.11 ▲ 18 PAISE

GOLD 72,440 ▼ 980

SILVER 92,000 ▼ 500

BRENT CRUDE (IN \$) 81.19 ▼ 0.17

## WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. Rain/thundershower likely to occur in some areas. Maximum and minimum temperatures likely to be around 36°C and 28°C respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY Max. 89% Min. 46%

TEMPERATURE Max: 36.7°C (+1.3) Min: 27.6°C (+0.7)

SUN RISES 04:53 hrs SUN SETS 18:14 hrs

MOON RISES 19:12 hrs MOON SETS 05:5 hrs

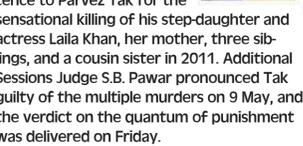
New Moon on 6 June

## THUMBNAILS



Polling officials leave for their respective polling stations on the eve of the sixth phase of LS polls in Prayagraj on Friday. ANI

Step father sentenced to death for killing actress Laila Khan, 5 others in 2011: A Mumbai Sessions Court on Friday awarded death sentence to Parvez Tak for the sensational killing of his step-daughter and actress Laila Khan, her mother, three siblings, and a cousin sister in 2011. Additional Sessions Judge S.B. Pawar pronounced Tak guilty of the multiple murders on 9 May, and the verdict on the quantum of punishment was delivered on Friday.



MAMATA BANERJEE BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

We live in a country where there is no freedom of speech or expression. People have been coerced and the voice of the opposition stifled....

Trinamul Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee said that the BJP has turned the entire country into a jail and has taken away the rights and freedom of people. She was addressing an election meeting at Canning Stadium on Friday afternoon. Trinamul Congress has fielded sitting MP Pratima Mondal again from Mathurapur Lok Sabha seat. The election in this seat will be held on 1 June.

"We live in a country where there is no freedom of speech or expression. People have been coerced and the voice of the opposition stifled. Unless we change the situation now, be sure that in future BJP will change the Constitution and the rights of the SC, ST and minorities will be taken away. We will have to defeat the saffron party to save the country," she said. Miss Banerjee said: "For quite some time the Prime Minister is making a narrative that the Muslims will take away the rights of the SC people. This is their Constitutional right and no one can take it away. Modi has said this just to defame the Muslims and this has been deliberately done. Miss Banerjee garlanded the

# Penultimate phase of Lok Sabha polls today

Voting for 42 seats of the Odisha Assembly will also take place

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

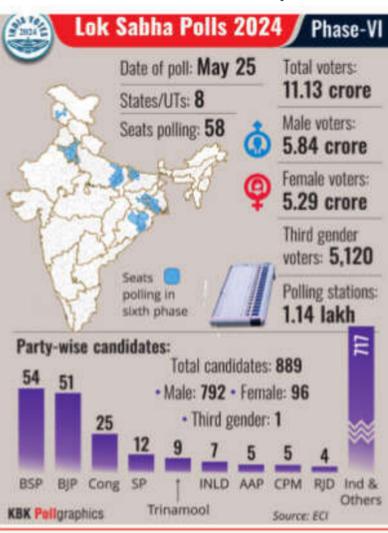
Voting for the sixth and penultimate phase of the Lok Sabha elections, covering 58 constituencies in eight states and Union territories will be held on Saturday. More than 11.13 crore voters will decide the fates of 889 candidates who are in the fray.

The polling is scheduled to commence at 7 a.m. in 1.14 lakh polling stations, manned by around 11.4 lakh polling officials amid tight security.

Of the 58 Lok Sabha seats going to the polls in the sixth phase, 14 are in Uttar Pradesh, 10 in Haryana, eight each in Bihar and West Bengal, seven in Delhi, six in Odisha, four in Jharkhand and one in Jammu and Kashmir.

Voting for 42 seats of the Odisha Assembly will also be held in the state's third phase of simultaneous polling.

Key candidates from the BJP are Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan (Sambalpur, Odisha), former Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal



Of the 58 seats going to the polls in the 6th phase, 14 are in Uttar Pradesh, 10 in Haryana, eight each in Bihar and Bengal, seven in Delhi, six in Odisha, four in Jharkhand and one in Jammu & Kashmir.

Khattar (Karnal), Manoj Tiwari (North East Delhi) and Bansuri Swaraj (New Delhi); prominent candidates from Congress include Kumari Selja (Sirsa, Haryana), Deep-

ender Singh Hooda (Rohtak, Haryana), JP Agarwal (Chandni Chowk) and Kanhaiya Kumar (North East Delhi). Other prominent candidates include senior

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Somnath Bharti (New Delhi), PDP President and former J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti (Anantnag-Rajouri) and the Trinamul Congress' Lalitesh Pati Tripathi from UP's Bhadohi. Meanwhile, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has called upon voters to turn out in greater numbers at polling stations and vote with responsibility and pride.

It reminded voters of parliamentary seats in urban centres like Delhi, Gurgaon and Faridabad about their right and duty to vote and break the trend of urban apathy. The poll panel also said the concerned CEOs and State machineries have been directed to take adequate measures to manage the adverse impact of hot weather or rainfall wherever predicted. Assured Minimum Facilities like water, shed, toilets, ramps, volunteers, wheelchairs, and electricity are in place to ensure that every voter, including elderly and persons with disabilities, can cast their vote with ease, it said.

## SC declines NGO's plea for publication of booth-wise voter turnout data

PARMOM KUMAR NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

The Supreme Court on Friday declined to pass any direction to the Election Commission on a plea by the Association for Democratic Reforms seeking publication of polling booth-wise voter turnout data.

Adopting a "hands-off" approach in the midst of the ongoing general election, the court noted that polling for the five phases is already over, and the sixth one takes place on Saturday.

Refusing to pass order as sought by the NGO Association for Democratic Reforms by its 9 May application, a vacation bench of Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Satish Chandra Sharma adjourned the hearing (on the application), noting that the "hands-off" approach is needed in the middle of the election process.

Adjourning the hearing on the application, the vacation bench said: "Prima facie we are not inclined to grant any interim relief since prayer B of the 2019 petition [filed by ADR] is similar to prayer A of the 2024 application. List the both main petition and application before an appropriate bench after (summer) vacation."

At the outset of the hearing, the Election Commission questioned the maintainability of the application by the NGO, stating that it has been filed after the court's judgment of 26 April where in all the issues including form 17 C data were dealt with.

The Commission said that NGO approached the top court without referring to the 26 April 2024 judgment.



## There is no confusion; BJP's next government is certainty, says Modi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said 90 per cent of people anywhere in the country say his next government is a certainty; there is no "confusion" this time, people want to vote for the BJP, and no citizen wants his vote to go "waste."

Addressing a BJP election rally in Gurdaspur, Punjab, he said the 2024 election will give leadership to the country. On one side is BJP and NDA, with a clear vision of Viksit Bharat, a Nation First resolve, track record of 10 years and assault on corruption. On the other side, there is INDI alliance which is severely communal, casteist and follows dynasty politics.

INDI alliance partners Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) act like friends in Delhi and protect the corrupt, while abusing each other in



Punjab. What do they think; they can befool people like this? "People know these two shops have a common shutter," Mr Modi said. "To defeat the INDI alliance and to realize your dreams, you should press the lotus button of the BJP," he said. "Who knows the real face of the INDI alliance better than Punjab," the Prime Minister said. The INDI alliance gave maximum wounds to Punjab. First, the Partition after Independence, then instability due to self-interest, followed by a long phase of unrest, attacks on brotherhood and on faith, he said.

## BJP has turned entire country into jail, says Mamata

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 24 MAY

Trinamul Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee said that the BJP has turned the entire country into a jail and has taken away the rights and freedom of people.

She was addressing an election meeting at Canning Stadium on Friday afternoon. Trinamul Congress has fielded sitting MP Pratima Mondal again from Mathurapur Lok Sabha seat. The election in this seat will be held on 1 June.

"We live in a country where there is no freedom of speech or expression. People have been coerced and the voice of the opposition stifled. Unless we change the situation now,



be sure that in future BJP will change the Constitution and the rights of the SC, ST and minorities will be taken away. We will have to defeat the saffron party to save the country," she said. Miss Banerjee said: "For quite some time the Prime Minister is making a narrative that the Muslims will take away the rights of the SC people. This is their Constitutional right and no one can take it away. Modi has said this just to defame the Muslims and this has been deliberately done. Miss Banerjee garlanded the

## OBC ruling: CM says will move SC

AGENCIES KOLKATA, 24 MAY

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Friday that her government will approach the Supreme Court challenging the Calcutta High Court order that cancelled the OBC status of several classes in the state

photo of Kazi Nazrul Islam whose birth anniversary will be observed tomorrow.

Coming down heavily on PM Modi, she said: "After trying all his experiments, he is now calling himself a divinely commissioned being and has a mission to fulfil. In older days

granted since 2010. Addressing an election rally in Sagar in South 24 Parganas district, she said the state government would appeal to the higher court against the order after summer vacation. "We do not accept the order that scrapped OBC certificates", she said. (Pg 2)

the kings used to call them representatives of god on earth. What does he think of himself? His mission is to sell the PSUs, sell everything in the country. Sometimes I think what sort of person he is. He is saying that he is not a biological person," she said.

## Patnaik says he's in 'good health'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE BHUBANESWAR, 24 MAY

With the BJP constantly raising questions over the health of CM Naveen Patnaik and alleging use of AI, and deepfake videos, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday said he is in good health and campaigning in the State in the polls. "As you can see I am in very good health and have been campaigning all over the state for over a month. There is a limit to the amount of lies BJP can tell", Mr Patnaik said.

Kartik Pandian (Mr Patnaik's second-in-command) who has been BJP's principal target, reacted today saying "I only hope that BJP comes up with innovative ideas instead of talking about something which is non-existent. You are all watching the Chief Minister. It is very unfortunate, below the belt."

"People of Odisha will not appreciate this kind of demeaning Chief Minister who is hugely popular among the people of the state. I only suggest letting them come up with something innovative. It is so substandard" he added. Mr Patnaik has come



under scathing attack from BJP during the poll campaign. Right from BJP's top heavyweights to state level leaders, none has spared Mr Patnaik, saying that it is high time he retires, as Mr Pandian has taken advantage and hijacked governance in the state. Mr Patnaik is a hostage, he has been held captive, they have alleged.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a poll rally on 21 May targeted Mr Patnaik insinuating towards his falling health by saying that Naveen Patnaik, who is 77 years old, should retire due to his "advanced age and health issues".

Even PM Modi has made subtle references to the 'slow' moving Mr Patnaik and the 'Tamil Babu' taking control, which he characterised as an affront to Odia Pride.

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‘গাহি সামোর গান-  
যেখানে আসিয়া এক হ'য়ে গেছে সব বাধা-বাবধান।  
যেখানে মিশেছে হিন্দু-বৌদ্ধ মুসলিম-ক্রীড়ান।’

**Homage to Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam on his Birthday**

Government of West Bengal

# Verdicts by some judges have no basic merit: Mamata Banerjee

Her remarks came against the backdrop of the recent statement of a retired judge of Calcutta HC Chitta Ranjan Dash

**AGENCIES**  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday again attacked some sections of the judiciary of Calcutta High Court, saying they have 'no basic merit'.

"We have immense respect for the courts and the judicial system. But I am sorry to say that verdicts by some of the judges do not have basic merit. One judge has admitted his association with the RSS," the chief minister said while addressing an election campaign meeting at Mathurapur Lok Sabha constituency in South 24-Parganas district in



support of the party candidate Bapi Halder.

of Calcutta High Court Chitta Ranjan Dash. On the day of his retirement from judicial services on 20 May, the retired judge gave credit to RSS for



shaping his personality. Earlier, a recent order by a Division Bench of the Calcutta High Court cancelled all Other Backward Class (OBC)

certificates issued in West Bengal after 2010. The chief minister said that the order for the cancellation of several lakhs of OBC

certificates is not simply acceptable. "It is a shame. I do not accept this verdict and I will move against the higher court's order," the chief minister said. She also attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his comment that "his energy is not biological". "If he has been sent by the gods, it is better for him to stay at a temple. I will arrange the construction of that temple," the chief minister said.

The chief minister made it clear that Trinamul Congress continues to be part of the opposition INDIA bloc. "In all probability, the INDIA bloc will come to power and we will give leadership to the country," the chief minister said.

## Met predicts considerable impact of storm in Kolkata



**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

Kolkata could be pounded with 'heavy' to 'very heavy' showers going up to 200mm at a few places when the low pressure system 'Renal' crosses Bangladesh and adjoining West Bengal coasts between Sagar Island and Khepupara around Sunday midnight as a 'severe cyclonic storm'.

According to the information received from the Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC), the system was closest to Sagar Islands at a distance of about 660km in the south-southeast.

It lay centred at 11am, 710 km south of Canning and 700 km south-southwest of Khepupara in Bangladesh.

According to the weather scientists, the system that was in the form of well marked low pressure area yesterday, became a depression today and is expected to intensify into a cyclonic storm by the next morning and further into a severe cyclonic storm by Saturday night.

With continued movement of the system towards the north, the system is likely to cross the coasts between Sagar Island and Khepupara around Sunday midnight as a severe cyclonic storm.

The weather office is anticipating a considerable impact of the storm over both West Bengal and Bangladesh. Kolkata, Howrah, Nadia and East Midnapore are expected to have high winds, reaching 80 to 90kmph gusting to 100kmph on 26 May while South 24-Parganas could have thunderstorms and wind and at a speed of 100-110kmph gusting to 120kmph.

Even on Monday, the system is expected to remain as a cyclonic storm with wind speed of 70-80, gusting up to 90kmph.

The high wind is expected to be coupled with heavy rainfall on Monday when the districts of North 24-Parganas, South 24-Parganas, Kolkata, Nadia, Hooghly, Howrah and Murshidabad are anticipated to bring rainfall 110mm to 200mm at few places.

**Emergency control room at Sealdah division**

With the cyclone brewing in Bay of Bengal, the Sealdah Division of the Eastern Railway alerted all its divisional officers to remain vigilant to minimise the impact of the system.

A high-level meeting convened by the divisional railway manager of Sealdah to discuss with all branch officers on preparatory action against the upcoming cyclone, was held today.

The division decided to open an emergency control room from 25 to 27 May with maximum manpower.

Sensitization to combat the possible waterlogging and installation of pumps, tower wagons kept on standby, arrangement of DG sets and emergency light in all big stations, especially at Sealdah and Kolkata wherefrom mail and express trains proceed, are some of the measures the division decided to take to handle situations of emergency.

Meanwhile, the Kolkata Municipal Corporation is also gearing up to tackle the situations of heavy rainfall during the upcoming cyclone.

The civic body has decided to deploy more manpower in areas prone to waterlogging. It has also decided to take measures to ensure that the power supply at pumping stations does not get disrupted during the rainy period.

## BJP moves SC challenging Cal HC restrain order on ads



**PARMOD KUMAR**  
NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday approached the Supreme Court challenging the Calcutta High Court order restraining it from publishing any kind of derogatory advertisements against the Trinamul Congress, which violated the model code of conduct during the ongoing general election.

Making a mentioning for an urgent listing of the petition on 27 Monday, a lawyer appearing for the BJP told a Bench of Justice Bela M Trivedi and Justice Pankaj Mishal that high court has restrained the BJP from issuing advertisements during the Lok Sabha polls till 4 June, the day election process ends.

"We will see," the Bench said. The BJP has challenged the 22 May order of the Division Bench of Calcutta High Court refusing to interfere with a single-judge order directing the Bharatiya Janata Party not to publish any advertisement violating the Model Code of Conduct during the Lok Sabha election.

While refusing to interfere with the single-judge order, the Division Bench had observed that a "Laxman Rekha" should be adhered to and there should not be any personal attack on the part of any political party.

The Division Bench had also emphasised that it was imperative that all political parties follow healthy electoral practices, as the ultimate victim of misleading electoral campaigns was the voter.

The BJP had contended before the Division Bench that the single-judge passed the order without giving it any hearing.

## 'Ex-BJP leader reveals plot in Sandeshkhali'



**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

The Trinamul Congress national spokesperson Dr Shashi Panja and senior leader Dr Arup Chakraborty held a press meet on a Basirhat BJP leader joining the Trinamul and highlighted the BJP's planned move to create trouble there.

Dr Shashi Panja said, "We saw the BJP Basirhat district general secretary Siriya Parveen join Trinamul Congress and heard some frightening facts. It became clear that the allegations of rape and sexual harassment in Sandeshkhali were all proved false. Siriya was forced to tell lies in BJP and she was a witness to the entire conspiracy. When Siriya was returning to her home after joining us yesterday, BJP West Bengal co-in charge and national IT cell chief had a conversation with her. He tried to influence her to return to BJP."

She added, "A very important feature seen in the audio clip is that when Siriya repeatedly claimed that the alleged reports of sexual harassment of women in Sandeshkhali were all false, the BJP leader didn't deny it even once."

## City police set to impose Sec 144 from 28 May



**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

From 28 May, Kolkata Police is all set to clamp Sec 144 in the city for two months till July to curb, what it claims, any "violent activity" for which a blueprint had been prepared.

The police are taking no chances. Issuing the notice on the necessity of clamping of Sec 144 on the city streets, Kolkata Police commissioner Vineet Goyal said that prohibitory order under Section 144, which pertains to assembly of not more than five people, to be in force on city streets particularly in areas like Esplanade and Victoria House under Bow Bazar PS to Hare Street PS from 28 May till 26 July.

Though the city police sources are downplaying the notice on clamping of Sec

## Grandmother, granddaughter die in wall collapse



**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

A grandmother and her granddaughter lost their lives early this morning. While walking along the road, they were crushed by a collapsing wall.

The incident took place on Friday morning in Ramanandapur village of Nabagram, Murshidabad.

The police have identified the deceased as Ganga Mandal and her granddaughter Priyanka Mandal. On Friday morning, like any other day, the elderly grandmother went out for a walk, carrying her granddaughter in her arms. While they were walking along the road, a wall of a house on the roadside suddenly collapsed on them.

Local villagers noticed the incident and rushed to the spot. They managed to recover Ganga Mandal's body by removing the debris. Priyanka, who was critically injured, was taken to Murshidabad Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared her dead.

The police have sent both bodies for post-mortem.

## City police set to impose Sec 144 from 28 May



**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

144, particularly in areas around Esplanade and claiming it to be a routine affair the date of 28 May has assumed significance. On 28 May, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to come to the city and is slated to participate in a road show for campaigning.

The road shows, either by the Prime Minister or later by the chief minister on the eve of the last lap of the polls, 1 June, are unlikely to be held in those areas.

Meanwhile Kolkata police posted on their social media (X) handle, "Kolkata Police issues 144 Cr PC order in vicinity of Dalhousie and Victoria house on regular basis. This is nothing new and such orders are renewed every two months.

Copies of previous orders attached. So please refrain from spreading misleading information."

# Constituency watch: Kurmi population, vote boycott call factors in Purulia

**DEBAJYOTI CHAKRABORTY**  
PURULIA, 24 MAY

About 18,19,989 voters will exercise their franchise in Purulia Lok Sabha constituency tomorrow and for the first time in the past six years, the BJP is facing a tough contest in its bastion of south Bengal.

Purulia, which is known for its *Chhau*, *Iac* and *palash* (flame of the forest), has registered the highest growth of forest cover in the state in the past few years, according to the Union environment, forest and climate control ministry report.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, Jyotirmoy Singh Mahato of the BJP defeated Dr Mrigank Mahato of the TMC by a margin of over 2,04,732 votes.

Jyotirmoy Singh Mahato is again contesting from Purulia, where he amassed about 49.33 per cent polls against

TMC candidate's 34.19 per cent in 2019 polls.

The TMC bounced back in the 2021 Assembly polls and wrested the Manabazar and Baghmundi Assembly seats from the BJP.

Still the saffron brigade managed to win the Balarampur, Joypur, Purulia, Kashipur and Para seats.

Purulia has been a prestige fight for the BJP and to retain this seat, PM Narendra Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah and BJP national president J P Nadda have campaigned for Jyotirmoy Singh Mahato, who is also a state general secretary of the BJP.

Seven candidates are in the fray: Veteran Congress leader Nepal Mahato, who has been backed by the CPM, BJP's Jyotirmoy Mahato, TMC's Shantiram Mahato (former state minister), Forward Bloc's Dharendra Nath Mahato and Independent candidate Ajit Prasad Mahato.



Shantiram Mahato



Jyotirmoy Singh Mahato



Nepal Mahato

Over 35 per cent voters in Purulia Lok Sabha seat are from the Kurmi community or Mahato, and all the political parties have fielded Kurmi candidates to woo the Mahato vote bank.

But the presence of Ajit Prasad Mahato, the head of the Kurmi community in polls and the boycott of the Bauri community of the BJP are

likely to hit the BJP hard, it seems.

Political parties fear that Ajit Prasad Mahato, the independent candidate can cut a sizable chunk of the 5.25 lakh Kurmi voters, being their supreme leader in these polls and can make the difference.

If Ajit Prasad Mahato splits the Kurmi votebank and the Congress and the Forward

Bloc candidates manage to retain a sizable amount of their original votebank then results can be different.

In recent times, Ajit Prasad Mahato is fighting for getting the ST status for the Kurmi community, which they had before Independence and has organised movements and agitations. The TMC has also supported their demand.

Jyotirmoy Singh Mahato polled 49.33 per cent votes in 2019 which was up from 7.15 per cent polled by BJP candidate in 2014 Lok Sabha polls. The percentage of Forward Bloc candidate's came down to 5 per cent in 2019 from 21 per cent in 2014 and Congress candidate's from 15 per cent to 6 per cent.

The TMC votebank also came down to about 4.5 per cent in five years.

This is why both TMC chairperson Mamata Banerjee and Aisekh Banerjee stressed repeatedly that if the Left Front and Congress votebank switches back then the results will be different.

"You have got a BJP MP for five years. What have you got from him? I challenge PM Narendra Modi to release his report card for Purulia. Instead, the women are benefiting with Lakshmi Bhandar and the poor labourers are getting funds from the state for the

100 days' job work after the Centre has stopped funding. Our government is working to supply drinking water to parched areas," said Abhisekh Banerjee at a rally in Baghmundi.

Since the TMC government came into power peace prevailed as bloodshed by the Maoists have stopped and today Purulia has emerged as a top tourism destination in the map of the country, added Abhisekh Banerjee.

CM Mamata Banerjee said that the industrial freight corridor and the Rs 72,000 crore Jungle Sundari Industrial Township project will act as a game changer for the Purulia economy in the coming years.

The All India Adivasi Coordination Committee has called for a vote boycott for BJP on the issue of Centre's Forest Right Act 2023, stating that it is against the tribal people.

About 8,97,787 women

voters and 9,22,787 men will cast their votes for Purulia tomorrow.

The TMC is depending on the women votebank, who have benefitted from the Lakshmi Bhandar.

"People know whom to vote for. People will vote for BJP because they want Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister. I don't think the vote will split in Purulia despite the presence of so many Mahato candidates in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls," claims Jyotirmoy Singh Mahato.

Veteran Congress leader Nepal Mahato seemed cautious, this time it will be a tough contest and will be hard to predict who will win from Purulia, who incidentally is fighting with CPM support.

Whereas, AIFB is fighting the polls alone in Purulia despite CPM support to Congress, which was once upon a time its bastion and have won about nine times in the past.

# Checking crop damage, collective farming works wonders for Jhargram farmers

**ASHOK CHATTERJEE**  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

Lakhimani Murmu is an active member of Maniyardi Kadambharna SHG (self-help group) in Maniyardi Village of Binpur, Jhargram.

Lakhimani lives in a mud house surrounded by forest, with her husband and two sons. Like most of the small-holder farmers belonging to the scheduled tribes, Lakhimani had very little land for growing crops.

Thus, producing for their own needs was the first priority, and planning for any other crop than paddy was a luxury for her.

A couple of years ago small-holder farmers like Lakhimani began to take hesitant steps toward vegetable farming to supplement their income.

On the other hand, high price fluctuations of tomato, green chilli and brinjal led

farmers to incur losses. Looking for higher-price markets would leave the crops to rot, or the farmers would have to sell them at a price available in the local market.

When Pradan introduced collective green chilli cultivation, Lakhimani showed courage to come forward to grow it on a 0.1-acre land and earned Rs 4,000 profit.

Pradan organized an exposure visit to gain insights on vegetable farming and marketing directly from farmers.

It was felt that Guntur's dry red chilli was very apt for this black soil region, especially the Tejaswini variety, which could help farmers overcome the challenges of crop damage, price fluctuation and loss of crop (due to its longer shelf-life).

The aim was to connect with the spice market to avail a good price for the product in the monsoons.

Pradan is a national sup-



port organisation to NRLM, the flagship rural development programme.

National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) is the flagship programme of the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) for promoting poverty reduction through building strong institutions for the poor, particularly women, and enabling these institutions to access a range of financial services.

Lakhimani (53) was hesitant to take the risk to cultivate a new crop. Despite her concerns, she prepared her 0.1 acres of fallow land for the red crop, seeing the recent green chilli success in the area.

To reduce her risk, she sowed turmeric seeds in another 0.09 acres of land as per guidance. In 2020, she transplanted 1,200 dry red chilli seedlings and 135kg of turmeric.

After 40 days of transplantation, flowers bloomed in her red-chilli plants and in two months' time; she took



to plucking and selling them after drying the chillies. A second plucking followed after three weeks.

In order to mitigate the impact of price fluctuations on farmers, a farmer producer organization (FPO) named Janglemahal Sabujathi Mahila Producer Company was formed under the project, 'livelihoods enhancement through market access and women empowerment' (LEAP), supported by Walmart Foundation.

The FPO helped in negotiating the price for Lakhimani's dry red chillies.

From a capital investment of Rs 2,500, Lakhimani's profit was nearly Rs 10,000. Red chilli was the beginning; she had her turmeric plants waiting to be harvested.

After a period of 10 months, she harvested 104kg from 20kg of seeds. She sold half of her harvest to the FPO at the rate of Rs 38/kg and kept the remaining plants for the next year to be harvested. Lakh-

mani earned a profit of Rs 3,152.

Besides harvesting the remaining turmeric, she along with other farmers of Maniyardi village will be growing red chillies and tomatoes on 0.19 acres of her land this year with support from the FPO.

The FPO has already procured 2.3 tonnes of turmeric seeds.

Eight agriculture entrepreneurs (farmers who have come forward as an entrepreneur to raise healthy saplings) have raised 50,500 Tejaswini saplings with the aim of providing healthy and disease-free saplings to their farmers.

Pradan is working in three districts of the state.

There is also Jharnamoni Murmu, who like Lakhimani is also utilising this benefit. She is sowing kerela on 25 decimal of land, mustard (168 decimal), brinjal Kharif (21 decimal), brinjal Rabi (20 decimal,

bottle gourd (42 decimal). Apart from red chilli Lakhimani is also planting watermelon on 42 decimals and other crops.

Prof Prasanta K Patra of Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya, who has stayed in Jhargram and worked there, said, "Binpur has poor soil since it falls in the area with high humidity and rainfall (extreme conditions). The decomposition rate is very high which is a factor for the less carbon content in the soil. Rigorous cultivation has led to the organic carbon content falling down. Farmers also cannot apply organic manure due to socio-economic reasons and are more dependent on NPK (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium). The soil type is not only hungry, it is thirsty too. There is a good market in Binpur and in Jhargram. It is good to know that the farmers are getting the price of their produce."

THUMBNAILS



**Asset health monitor:** IEMA Research & Development Pvt. Ltd. unveiled its latest breakthrough, the IEMA Asset Health Monitor (AHM). This innovative IoT product line represents a paradigm shift in real-time asset monitoring technology and promises to revolutionise the way industrial assets are managed. The AHM derives from a deep commitment to innovation and enterprise and addresses the need for proactive asset management in industrial settings. Dr Satyajit Chakrabarti, director, IEMA praised the AHM as evidence of the company's commitment to excellence and industrial innovation. **SNS**

**Youth drowns:** A youth drowned in Mundeswari river in Khanakul while taking bath on Thursday. The victim was declared brought-dead by the attending doctor at Khanakul hospital. Elder brother of the deceased, Mahadeb Bhar, said, "On Thursday evening when I returned home I was shocked to know that my younger brother Parlad Bhar (33) was no more. Neighbours said Parlad usually took bath at the Mundeswari river. On Thursday evening, while taking a bath he ventured deep into the water. Since he didn't know how to swim he could not return to safety and drowned. Locals rushed to his rescue and little later fished him out and rushed him to the hospital. **SNS**

**Promoting young athletes:** As part of campaign Dabur Glucose conducted a special awareness session on energy and stamina management at the Surya Sen Sporting Club, Khardah in Kolkata as part of 'Energize India' to promote young sporting talent and drive awareness about the importance of energy and stamina among young athletes in major sports academies across India. Three top athletes of this Club were also felicitated. **SNS**

# Abhishek warns people not to fall for BJP's promises

He was addressing a gathering at Magrahat Purba in South 24-Parganas

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

**T**rinamul Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee said a sensible, responsible and secular government will come to power in New Delhi, which will address the issues of price rise and mounting unemployment.

He was addressing a gathering at Magrahat Purba in South 24-Parganas this afternoon.

The area falls under Joy nagar Lok Sabha constituency. Pratima Mondol, the sitting MP, has been nominated for the third time. The constituency will go for voting on 1 June.

Abhishek said he had fixed the target of winning the Diamond Harbour seat by at least 4 lakh votes.

He said, "In 2014, when Narendra Modi came to power, gas cylinders used to cost Rs 400, which has reached Rs 1000. One piece of egg used



to cost Rs 2.50 and now it costs Rs 7. One kilo of tea, which used to cost Rs 100 in 2014 now costs Rs 280. No attempt has been made to control price rise," he said.

Mr Banerjee said he had challenged Mr Modi to pub-

lish a white paper in March to announce how much money the Centre has given to the state government for Awas Plus schemes after 2021.

"They have not given a single paisa. Modi did not accept my challenge. This is BJP's nature. They create divisions among people but do not believe in development. The leaders are coming to the state like migratory birds and are speaking lies. Do not believe them," he maintained.

Mr Banerjee said in Magrahat Purba, 79,000 women have received benefits under Lakshmir Bhandar scheme.

Another 5,890 women have received money under the Rupashree scheme, while 3.29 lakh people have received free monthly ration.

About 28,000 people have received financial assistance under the Swasthya Sathi card. "This is our report card. All-round development has taken place in south 24-Parganas. If the margin is more, the Diamond Harbour Model will be replicated in Joynagar,

he said. He said in South 24-Parganas all the Lok Sabha seats are under Trinamul Congress. They are Jadavpur, Mathurapur, Joynagar and Diamond Harbour.

He urged the people to cast their vote in favour of Pratima Mondol, the party's nominee.

He assured the people belonging to the minority community by saying, "The state government will move the Supreme Court against the High Court order scrapping their rights under OBC category. Our chief minister has said that the facilities they enjoy will continue and the state government will move the Supreme Court. The high court has deliberately given the judgment when the election is on."

He urged the people not to fall into the trap of the BJP. "They may try to create trouble before the election. Maintain cool and peace and cast your vote in favour of Trinamul Congress," he said.

# Bangladesh MP murder case: Local court sends accused to 12-day CID custody

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

A court in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas District on Friday remanded Jihad Hawaldar, the accused in the Bangladesh MP murder case, to 12 days Criminal Investigation Department (CID) custody.

The case pertains to the mysterious death of Bangladesh MP Md Anwarul Azim. Hawaldar, an illegal infiltrator from Bangladesh, told the CID that he was specially hired and brought to Kolkata from Mumbai for the crime, and was one of those who murdered and then disposed of the Bangladesh MP's body.

On Friday afternoon, Hawaldar was presented before the court, and the CID counsel sought his custody, saying further interrogation of the accused would lead to more crucial clues linked to the murder. Meanwhile, CID sources said that their officials who had gone to Bangladesh to conduct the probe, have found that Hawaldar faces murder charges there as well. Hawaldar was specially

hired because of his expertise in skinning the bodies and mincing flesh which he developed as a professional butcher. Sources said that since the body parts of the deceased Bangladesh MP have been disposed of at different places, the process of recovering them is time-consuming for the CID officials investigating the matter.

After getting his 12-day custody, the CID officers will now interrogate him further to have an idea of the probable places where the body parts of the deceased Bangladesh MP might have been dumped.

Azim, a three-time MP in Bangladesh, came to Kolkata for some treatment purposes on May 12 and initially, he stayed at the residence of his long associate and friend in Kolkata Gopal Biswas at Baranagar. However, on May 14, he went out of Biswas' residence and informed the latter that he would be coming back on the same day.

State police sources said that he went missing since then and his mobile phone was also switched off.

# BJP activist murder case: FIR filed against 25 Trinamul workers

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

The police have finally registered an FIR against 25 Trinamul Congress workers in Nandigram in West Bengal's East Midnapore district in connection with the brutal murder of woman BJP activist Rotibala Ari, said sources here on Friday.

Ari was murdered there on Thursday morning. The district police sources said the FIR has been registered based on a complaint filed by Manju Ari, the daughter of the deceased woman. Manju has named these 25 ruling party workers.

The 25 Trinamul Congress workers named in the FIR include local heavy-weight names like Sheikh Sufian, Sheikh Allahrazi, Khokon Shit and Debu Roy, among others.

Meanwhile, tension is continuing to prevail in Nandigram, especially at the epicentre of Sonachura area, where the murder of the woman BJP activist took place.

# Metro to run extended services at night



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

In what should come as good news to city commuters, the Kolkata Metro Railway has decided to run special services on the Blue Line on an experimental basis at night from today.

The services are to be operated in both Up and Down directions with rakes leaving Kavi Subhash and Dum Dum stations at 11 p.m. from Monday to Friday.

According to the carrier, during the two services, the train would stop at all stations en-route while one ticket counter at each station would be kept open to issue tokens, smart cards and so on.

Meanwhile, the city Metro



received the much awaited Dalian rakes from China on 23 May.

According to sources, the second batch of the Dalian coaches were discharged from Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, on the day, when 16 Metro rail coaches, each weighing 48 tons, were unloaded at Netaji Subhash Dock of the city port.

According to the SMPK, these state-of-the-art coaches were carried in a vessel MV Bosi 58, having length of 116.99 m and gross tonnage of 8621 and breadth of 19.6 m, arrived at Netaji Subhash Dock, under the Kolkata Dock System of SMP Kolkata on 22 May.

MARCH FOR PRIDE



Sant Swabhiman Yatra, organised by Bongio Sanyashi Samaj in Kolkata on Friday. ■ BISWAJIT GHOSHAL

# Arjun Singh receives death threat

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

BJP Barrackpore MP candidate Arjun Singh received a death threat via WhatsApp call last night.

The threat was made for 29 May, i.e., within five days from now. The Barrackpore BJP candidate posted the call recording on social media.

However, the candidate is not giving much importance to the threat. He said, "Mamata Banerjee can do anything, but it's not possible to eliminate me by announcing it beforehand."

In the audio clip, posted on X, the voice on the other end can be heard threatening to kill Arjun by 29 May. The voice in Hindi says, "Arjun Singh, if you can, stay alive until the 29th. I will shoot you dead in front of everyone."

Along with the audio, he mentioned that he has filed a complaint with Barrackpore Police. Mr Singh said, "This is the state of law and order in Bengal under Mamata Banerjee's rule. Watch what TMC will do. Partha Bhowmik, Abhishek Banerjee and

# However, the candidate is not giving much importance to the threat

Mamata Banerjee can do anything. But killing me after announcing it is very difficult. They can kill me otherwise."

Arjun revealed that the youth who made the call is named as Niketan Verma, also known as Chottu.

His father's name is Anup Verma. Arjun alleged that the accused is involved in drug dealing. The outgoing MP stated that the police have been informed about the entire matter, and an investigation will start immediately.

Yesterday, the house of booth agent Tapas Ray, the BJP candidate at Tala Park, was attacked.

Two bikes belonging to the BJP Yuva Morcha leader and his brother were set on fire. BJP leaders claimed that even after the Assembly election, they continue to be victims of Trinamul violence.

The BJP has targeted the Trinamul over this issue, while the state's ruling party has denied the allegations.

## 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. **25<sup>th</sup> May, 2024 (Saturday)** in 8 Parliamentary Constituencies.

The Schedule of Poll for Phase 6 is as follows :

No. & Name of Parliamentary Constituency	Voting Date & Timing
<b>30 - Tamluk, 31 - Kanthi, 32 - Ghatal, 33 - Jhargram (ST), 34 - Medinipur, 35 - Purulia, 36 - Bankura, 37 - Bishnupur (SC)</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> May, 2024 (Saturday) 7 a.m. - 6 p.m.</b>

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  
Check your name in the voters' list & know your polling station

SMS for information on voters' list  
SMS=EO->space>EPIC NO.-> & send to 1950

Issued in public interest by Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal

# ER conducts successful speed trial on Howrah Burdwan chord line

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

Commuters could soon travel faster in premium trains like Rajdhani and Vande Bharat.

The Howrah Division of the Eastern Railway successfully conducted a speed trial between Howrah-Bardhaman chord line recently that would help in augmenting the speed of 160kmph to such trains.

According to the ER, during the trial, an Oscillation Monitoring System rake consistently maintained speeds between 150 to 155 kilometres per hour in both up and down directions in the Howrah-Khana section.

According to the ER, the trial was a crucial step towards optimizing the speed and overall efficiency of the Howrah-Bardhaman chord line.

"Major works have been completed, and the successful speed trial conducted on 17 May," said the divisional railway manager (DRM) of Eastern Railway's Howrah division, Sanjeev Kumar.

The upgradation, according to the zonal railway, would allow premium trains such as the Rajdhani, Shatabdi, and Vande Bharat Express to operate at speeds closer to their potential maximum of 160 kmph.

Following the success of this system, other trains equipped with Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coaches would also be able to take advantage of the increased speed.

# CYCLONE

### Before the Cyclone

- Ignore rumours, stay calm, DO NOT panic
- Keep your mobile phones charged
- Keep track of weather updates on TV, radio, newspapers
- Keep your documents and valuables in waterproof packets
- Prepare emergency kit of essential items like food, medicines, water and clothes
- Secure your house; don't leave sharp objects loose
- Untie cattle/animals to ensure their safety
- Fishermen should not venture out to sea or river
- Fishermen should keep boats in safe places

### During and after the cyclone

#### Indoor Situation

- Switch off electrical mains and gas supply
- Keep doors and windows shut
- DO NOT stay in thatched/kutchra house or in damaged pucca house
- If your house is not safe, shift to cyclone shelter or nearby safe pucca building before the onset of the cyclone
- Keep track of weather updates on TV, radio and newspapers, and from the local administration

#### Outdoors Situation

- Do not enter damaged buildings
- Watch out for broken electric poles, wires and other sharp objects
- Seek safe pucca shelter as soon as possible

Call for help: 1070

ICA-D 894(4)/2024

Department of Disaster Management & Civil Defence, Government of West Bengal

# Prajwal Revanna's family knows everything about him: K'taka CM

Siddaramiah also said Kumaraswamy is saying anything that comes to his mind to divert attention

AGENCIES MYSURU, 24 MAY

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramiah stated on Friday that the family of fugitive JD(S) MP and prime accused in the sex videos case, Prajwal Revanna, knows everything about him.

When asked about the warning to Prajwal Revanna by his grandfather, former Prime Minister, HD Deve Gowda, that he would be isolated from the family, CM Siddaramiah questioned, "Has Prajwal gone without informing his family? Hasn't he been in contact with his family members?"

"His uncle Kumaraswamy had stated that Prajwal was not in touch with him from the beginning. However, while campaigning for him, Kumaraswamy claimed that Prajwal was like his son.

"Doesn't this statement prove that there was communication between them? Prajwal's matter is known to his family."



Prajwal Revanna is facing serious charges and the FIR against him contains charges of rape, sexual assault, disrobing women and forcibly videographing sexual acts in order to threaten the victims.

"I have not stated that Prajwal Revanna is a criminal. I have been saying that he is an accused in the case," the CM clarified.

Answering a question on former CM Kumaraswamy's

accusation that the government was tapping his phone, CM Siddaramiah said, "Kumaraswamy is saying anything that comes to his mind to divert attention from the Prajwal Revanna case.

Kumaraswamy must first learn to respect the law of the land."

CM Siddaramiah stressed, "I have written letters twice to PM Modi seeking the cancellation of Prajwal Revanna's passport and haven't received a response yet. The PM has not responded to my letters. I am confident that a letter from the CM will get a response. Let me see if my second letter is answered."

Regarding his son, former MLA Dr. Yathindra getting the post of MLC, CM Siddaramiah stated that the high command had promised that Yathindra would be made an MLC.

"We have to wait for the decision of the high command," he maintained.

"I was contemplating contesting from the Kolar Assembly seat. I was asked to contest from Varuna, and Yathindra was asked to vacate the seat for me. Yathindra, following the words of the high command, vacated the seat for me. It remains to be seen what the high command will do," he stated.

# KPCC chief alleges bar-bribe scam citing audio clip of bar owners' union leader

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 24 MAY



Citing an audio clip of their union leader asking all bar owners in the state to give Rs 2.50 lakh each for "favourable" liquor policies, KPCC president K Sudhakaran demanded the resignation of Excise Minister M B Rajesh.

Sudhakaran said here on Friday that the audio clip exposed the new liquor policy under which Rs 25 crore would be extorted from the bar owners as kickbacks. "From 900 bars in the state, Rs five lakh is being thus collected," he added.

He alleged that a huge amount of money was collected from the bar owners before the Lok Sabha polls, and now the remaining amount is being collected. The government move, he said is to allow bar owners to make huge profits by doing away with the dry day policy, opening pubs in IT parks and extending the bar timings.

The senior Congress leader said the new liquor policy of the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Government in the state would drown Kerala in liquor. This is the most dread-

ed move that would throw the young into alcoholism, and thereby ruin their future.

Sudhakaran recounted how the LDF leaders raised a hue and cry when bar owners had claimed that the then finance minister KM Mani took a Rs 1 crore bribe from them. He had to resign following the allegation.

The bar bribe allegation against then finance minister KM Mani had rocked the UDF government led by Oommen Chandy. The allegation of the same nature seems to be causing a headache for the incumbent LDF Government in the state.

The audio clip purportedly sent by an office bearer of the Federation of Kerala Bar Association, a collective of bar owners, found its way to the media in which their leader was heard saying each bar owner needs to pay Rs 2.5 lakh

to fulfil their demands such as scrapping of the dry day policy and extending bar working hours from 11 pm to 12 pm. It's not a coincidence that these suggestions are being discussed by the state government ahead of the formulation of its liquor policy for the year.

In the voice clip, reportedly sent by the outfit's Idukki district president Ani Mon to the members of the district during the executive meeting of the bar owners held in Kochi on Thursday, the speaker can be heard saying that a new liquor policy would be declared after the elections and there would be many favourable changes such as scrapping the dry day policy.

Following the leak of the audio clip, the Opposition leader in the Kerala Assembly, VD Satheesan, also demanded the resignation of Minister of Excise M B Rajesh alleging a scam in the LDF Government's move to tweak the state's liquor policy in favour of bar owners.

Speaking to media persons in Kochi, Satheesan alleged that the call for fund collection would not have taken place without the approval from the government.

# Courts cannot allow DNA testing routinely, strong prima facie case required: Kerala HC

AGENCIES KOCHI, 24 MAY

The Kerala High Court has ruled that courts cannot allow DNA testing in all cases, but only in those matters where a strong prima facie case is made out in favour of the person who seeks the test.

"The court finds that one cannot seek DNA test to be done only in his/her attempt to fish out evidence in support of his/her case. Unless and until the applicant makes out a strong prima facie case, such an application is not liable to be allowed," it said while allowing a petition challenging a trial court's decision to allow a DNA test to be conducted in a property dispute.

The trial court order came on a petition filed by a woman before a trial court in 2017, staking a claim to land belonging to a man who died in the 1980s on the grounds that the



deceased was her father, and that he had been married to her mother before he later married another woman. She claimed that she was born out of the deceased man's first marriage and hence, she and her mother were entitled to a part of the deceased man's property.

This was contested by the deceased man's son, who contended that his father was never married to anyone else other than his mother. Hence to prove her parentage, she filed an application for conducting a sibling DNA test, which a magistrate's

court allowed. The deceased man's son subsequently filed an original petition before the High Court and after going through the facts of the entire case, it said: "It's already held by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the existence of a strong prima facie case is a sine qua non to seek conduct of the DNA test. Here, the plaintiff/ applicant herself admits that there exists no evidence, except the aspect sought to be proved by DNA analysis..."

"DNA analysis, even if allowed, will not establish the marriage between (the deceased man and the plaintiff's mother). At best, it may prove that the plaintiff is the daughter (of the deceased man). The proof of the same, by itself, would not carry the plaintiff anywhere. The prayer is one for partition," the High Court said as it set aside the order allowing the conduct of a DNA test.

# Seriousness of an offence is sufficient to reject K Kavitha bail: ED to Delhi HC

AGENCIES NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) on Friday opposed the bail plea of Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader K Kavitha in connection with the excise policy case and said that the seriousness of an offence is sufficient to reject bail, even if trial is likely to take time to conclude.

In its reply filed in Delhi High Court, ED stated, "In the case of the offence of money laundering, mere routine conditions which ensure the presence of the accused during the trial or protect the evidence, are not enough because of the transborder nature of the offence of money-laundering and the influence that may be exercised by the accused."

An accused can anonymously remove the money

trail using the technology, which is available today to make the investigation and trial infructuous.

The bench of Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma on Friday heard the submissions of K Kavitha's lawyer and listed the matter for further hearing on May 27, 2024.

The court noted that the CBI has yet to file its reply copy in the matter.

Meanwhile, Advocate DP Singh appeared for CBI and further informed the court that they are set to file a chargesheet in the matter first week of June.

Senior Advocate Vikram Chaudhari and Advocates Nitesh Rana, Mohit Rao and Deepak Nagar appeared for K Kavitha in the matter.

Recently, the Delhi High Court issued notice to the Enforcement Directorate and



CBI on a bail petition moved by Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Leader K Kavitha in the money laundering case pertaining to the scrapped Excise policy of Delhi.

The Rouse Avenue Court on Tuesday reserved the order on cognizance on the Enforcement Directorate's supplementary prosecution complaint (Chargesheet) filed against BRS Leader K Kavitha and others.

Recently, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) filed a sup-

plementary prosecution complaint (chargesheet) in Excise Policy money laundering case in Rouse Avenue Court.

The chargesheet was filed against BRS Leader K Kavitha and other accused namely Champreet Singh, Damodar, Prince Singh and Arvind Kumar.

The plea moved by K Kavitha stated that she is a mother of two children one of which is minor presently under shock and is undergoing medical supervision.

Kavitha in her fresh bail plea alleges that there have been attempts to drag her in the scandal by the members of the ruling party at the Centre.

She through bail plea submitted that the entire case of Enforcement Directorate hinges upon statements made by the approver, witnesses or co-accused under Section 50 of the PMLA.

The Prosecution Complaints do not put forth a single document that corroborates the statements. There is not a single piece of evidence that points to the guilt of the Applicant.

She further stated that as the arrest of the Applicant is illegal as section 19 of PMLA has not been complied with.

"Neither has any corroboration to the allegation of the actual cash transaction nor any money trail is forthcoming, therefore, the satisfaction of guilt as expressed in his Arrest Order is merely a sham and a pretence," she stated.

On May 6, The Rouse Avenue Court of Delhi dismissed the bail petitions moved by Bharatiya Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader K Kavitha in connection with CBI and ED cases related to Excise Policy case.

**Kerala Assembly session likely from 10 June:** The Pinarayi Vijayan cabinet on Friday decided to recommend to Governor Arif Mohammed Khan that a fresh session of the Kerala Legislative Assembly be convened on June 10. The session will be held immediately after the Lok Sabha poll results are announced on June 4. The Assembly session is expected to be stormy, given several political issues the government is confronting. The Congress-led opposition has enough material on the alleged corruption case involving Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's daughter Veena Vijayan. Incidentally, this issue was first raked up in the Assembly by first-time Congress legislator Mathew Kuzhainaden in 2023 and has now snowballed into a big controversy with the ED, SPIO and Registrar of Companies probing.

# K'taka BJP to stage protest on 28 May against 'neglect' of Bengaluru by Congress govt

AGENCIES BENGALURU, 24 MAY

Karnataka BJP President B.Y. Vijayendra announced on Friday that the party would stage a large-scale protest on May 28 to condemn the disorderliness and chaos in state capital Bengaluru.

Speaking to reporters after chairing a meeting at the party headquarters here, Vijayendra said the BJP will organise protests in every ward to highlight the crisis that Bengaluru is facing.

"The roads in the city are all blocked, and vehicular movement comes to a standstill following two days of rain.

There are people in Bengaluru who pay the highest taxes. Ever since the new government took over, not a single rupee has been granted for the development of Bengaluru," he claimed.

"The commissioner says they are prepared to face any eventuality, even in the case of heavy rainfall. However, the statement has remained just a speech, and the shortcomings in the system remain the same. The government has hiked taxes on properties and for vehicle registration, but it has not helped the people of Bengaluru.

"The roads are pothole-ridden, while garbage management is also not done effectively. Though there are maximum number of ministers from Bengaluru, no one is bothered about the development of the city," he said.

The state BJP chief also said the protest is meant to get justice for the people of Bengaluru.

"This is not a protest staged for the sake of it. It is strategised in a manner so that solutions are found for the issues," he said.

The meeting of MLAs, former MLAs, and corporators from Bengaluru discussed the problems faced by the city in detail, Vijayendra said.

# ECI grants permission for T'gana Formation Day celebrations

AGENCIES HYDERABAD, 24 MAY

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has accorded permission to the Telangana government for organising State Formation Day celebrations on June 2.

Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari held a meeting with senior officials on Friday to review the arrangements to be made for the State Formation Day celebrations at Parade Grounds, Secunderabad.

With the ECI giving permission to the government, the Chief Secretary instructed the officials to make elaborate arrangements in a befitting manner.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will visit Gun Park

and pay tributes to the martyrs at the Telangana Amaraveerula Stupam or martyrs' memorial. He will then proceed to the Parade Grounds for the main ceremony.

As the state is set to complete 10 years of its formation, the State Cabinet at its meeting on May 20 decided to organise the celebrations on a grand scale.

The meeting decided to felicitate senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi in recognition of her key role in the formation of the state.

However, a confirmation of Sonia Gandhi's participation in the event is still awaited.

In view of the model code of conduct for Lok Sabha elections, the government had written to the ECI, seek-

ing permission to organise celebrations.

The government also plans to felicitate all those who worked for the formation of the state.

Meanwhile, the Chief Secretary during the meeting to review arrangements for the June 2 celebrations directed the police department to prepare traffic route map while assigning alighting / pick up points and parking places and make arrangements accordingly duly providing signage at vantage points.

The police department was also told to regulate the movement of dignitaries by designating pick-up points to ensure smooth and timely departure to avoid unnecessary delay at the time of leaving the venue.

# K'taka BJP slams Siddaramaiah's govt after Google decides to set up plant in Tamil Nadu

AGENCIES BENGALURU, 24 MAY

Karnataka BJP on Friday slammed the state government for its "lethargic" approach after Google decided to set up a plant in Tamil Nadu.

"Google is set to invest billions in Tamil Nadu where it will produce smartphones and drones. Karnataka is bearing the consequences of lethargic, sleeping Congress government that has completely lost its way and is looking directionless," Karnataka BJP President B.Y. Vijayendra said.

He said that the government is driving the state towards disaster due to its "mis-governance" and "misplaced" priorities.

"While Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has succeeded in attracting



investments to India, the Karnataka government has failed miserably in showcasing Karnataka as a 'Top Investment Destination' and instilling confidence in investors," Vijayendra said.

He said that the same government ruined the Karnataka farmers as it was unable to defend the state's share of Cauvery water against alliance partner DMK.

"No surprise, the same trend continues with multi-billion-dollar investments making their way to Tamil

Nadu," Vijayendra said. Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said that BJP leaders indulge in propaganda about the state's investment.

"Due to the misrule of the BJP, lakhs of industrialists and businessmen have left the country. After Congress came to power in Karnataka, industrialists have started to show interest in investing in the state," Shivakumar said.

He said that the Karnataka Industrial and IT ministers are carrying out excellent work. "We will answer the BJP with documents once the election is over. The whole country knows that Karnataka is a land of peace, development, and progress. The state is looked up to by the country and the world," Shivakumar said.

## TENDER

### EASTERN RAILWAY

**Additional E-Auction Programme of Eastern Railway for the Month of JUNE, 2024**

**No. S-4/S/DAP/2023-24, dated : 22.05.2024.** In reference to the above, additional date has been scheduled for Jamalpur Depot for the month of June, 2024 as under and the other dates of Jamalpur Depot along with other Depots & Divisions shall remain unaltered. **Additional date of Jamalpur Depot : 05.06.2024**  
(STORES-14/2024-25) **Chief Materials Manager/ADMN**  
Tender Notice is also available at websites : [www.er.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.er.indianrailways.gov.in) / [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)  
Follow us at : [@EasternRailway](https://www.facebook.com/EasternRailway) / [@easternrailwayheadquarter](https://www.facebook.com/easternrailwayheadquarter)

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### Metro Railway, Kolkata

Tender Notice is invited by Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer/POH, Metro Railway, Kolkata for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work : **Name of Work :** Modification of existing 35 Ton capacity Bogie Load Testing Press. **Advertised Value :** ₹ 9,98,250/- **Bid Security :** ₹ 20,000/- **Date and Time of closing :** 15.00 hrs. (IST) of 21.06.2024. **Notice Board Address :** Office of the Chief Electrical Engineer/R.S. Dum Dum Car Depot Complex, Metro Railway, Kolkata-700090. **Website particulars :** <https://www.ireps.gov.in>  
**Tender No. : MR-POH-74-162**  
Follow us at : [@metrorailwaykolk](https://www.facebook.com/metrorailwaykolk) / [@metrorailkolkata](https://www.facebook.com/metrorailkolkata)

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### Metro Railway, Kolkata

Tender Notice for e-tendering is invited by Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway, Kolkata for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work : **Name of work :** Zone 04 i.e. Zonal Contract for Zonal maintenance & Up-Keep of track from Km. 0/00 (Dumdum Ex.) to (-)06/7 between Dakshineswar (In) including Noapara Car Depot Yard including ballasted track up to Noapara, all carshed lines, up to link line from Noapara Car Depot Yard to Belghoria Station of Eastern Railway of Metro Railway, Kolkata. **Approx Cost of Work :** ₹ 4,09,50,423.68, **Earnest Money :** ₹ 3,54,800/-, **Completion Period :** Twenty Four (24) Months, **Date and Time of Closing :** 18.06.2024 at 12:00 hrs. The Tender Document and other details can be obtained from the website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). Amendments/Corrigendum, if any, would be uploaded only on the website.  
**Abridged e-Tender Notice No. : Civil-2477-2024 (Open)**  
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**BMSICL Bihar Medical Services & Infrastructure Corporation Limited**

2nd & 3rd Floor, Swasthya Bhawan, Behind IGIMS, Sheikhpura, Adjacent to State Health Society, Bihar, Patna- 800014  
Phone/Fax: +919006405255, +919471009193

**TENDER NOTICE**

**Tender for Rate Contract & Supply of Glucometer Machine, Glucose Test Strips and Auto Disable Lancets for the State of Bihar**  
**Notice Inviting Tender Ref No. :- BMSIC/MEDICAL DEVICES/CONSUMABLES/24-04**  
(Only through E- Tender on website: [www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in](http://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in))

Bihar Medical Services and Infrastructure Corporation Limited (BMSICL) invites E-Bids from the interested parties for "Tender for Rate Contract & Supply of Glucometer Machine, Glucose Test Strips and Auto Disable Lancets for the State of Bihar", vide Notice Inviting Tender No. - BMSIC/MEDICAL DEVICES/CONSUMABLES/24-04. Detailed tender document containing eligibility criteria, selection mechanism, other terms and conditions are available on the website [www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in](http://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in).

Tender Schedule	
Tender Reference No.	BMSIC/MEDICAL DEVICES/CONSUMABLES/24-04
Date of Pre-Bid meeting	31 <sup>st</sup> May 2024 at 14:30 Hrs. at BMSICL Conference Hall, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Swasthya Bhawan, Behind IGIMS, Sheikhpura, Adjacent to State Health Society, Bihar, Patna - 800014
Last date and time of submission of online bids	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 by 17:00 Hrs.
Last date and time for submission of EMD and Tender Fees	27 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 till 14:00 Hrs.
Date, Time and Place of opening of Technical Bid	27 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 (at 15:00 Hrs.) on the website of <a href="http://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in">www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in</a> in the office of BMSICL
Date and time of opening of Financial Bids	To be announced later on <a href="http://www.bmsicl.gov.in">www.bmsicl.gov.in</a> and <a href="http://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in">www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in</a>
Validity of Tender	180 Days
Cost of the tender document	Rs. 11,800/- (Eleven Thousand Eight Hundred only) Non-refundable.

For further details please visit : [www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar](http://www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar) **GM (Procurement)**  
PR- 000914 (B & C) 2024-25 **BMSICL**  
लोकसभा आम निर्वाचन 2024- मतदान महात्योहार, बिहार हे तयार

Congress was afraid to even take Dalai Lama's name: PM

India is the country of the Buddha and the govt has vigorously promoted this heritage, says Modi

AGENCIES MANDI, 24 MAY

Revealing that he often talks to the Tibetan spiritual leader, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that the Congress party was so "timid" that it was afraid to even take the name of the Dalai Lama.



ditya Singh, the scion of the erstwhile royal family and son of Virbhadra Singh.

the 14th Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamshala. The Buddhist spiritual leader's office later told IANS that the Chief Minister had paid a "courtesy call on His Holiness".

Spiti) over her recent purported tweet featuring the Dalai Lama. She had later apologised for it, saying that the action wasn't meant to hurt anyone.

Naxalism will return to Bihar if CPI-ML wins: Shah

AGENCIES PATNA, 24 MAY



Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, on Friday said that Naxalism would resurface in Bihar if the CPI(ML) won Lok Sabha elections in the state.

again," HM Shah said. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Naxalism was wiped out from Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

One more accused arrested in Bengaluru blast case: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday arrested one more accused in the Bengaluru Rameshwaram Cafe blast case.

TENDER CENTRAL RAILWAY VARIOUS CONSTRUCTION WORKS Chief Administrative Officer (Const), Central Railway, 6th floor, New Administrative Building, D.N. Road, CSMT, Mumbai-400001, for and on behalf of President of India invites Open tenders through e-tendering on IREPS website (e-tender portal) www.ireps.gov.in (in Two Packet System), from reputed Contractors for the following work: Name of Work: Construction of Earth work, Major Bridges, Minor Bridges, Road Over Bridges, Road Under Bridges, Limited Height Subways/Pedestrian Crossing, Retaining Wall, Drains, Track Laying and Civil Works including Station Building, Service Buildings, Platforms, Residential Quarters, Station Machinery, Compound Wall and Fencing along the alignment from Solapur (Ch (-) 1086) to Tuljapur (Ch 52500) except Ch. 45760 to Ch.48660 (i.e. except Tunnel Portion) in connection with New Line section under Solapur Division of Central Railway (the "Project").

Free and open Indo-Pacific necessary for global peace: External affairs minister

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 24 MAY



India believes that a free, open, safe, secure, peaceful, prosperous and stable Indo-Pacific is a necessary precondition for peace, security and prosperity of the world, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday amid China's aggressive posturing on maritime issues.

ing, our start-up and innovation ecosystem or ease of doing business, India is now racing to catch up even while seeking to leapfrog." India's infrastructure progress is also keeping pace, he said. "We are building 28 kilometres of highway every day, 14 kilometres of railway track daily, creating eight new airports and on an average 1.5 metros every year. Alongside, we have doubled the number of our technical and medical institutions," he added.

Secure borders very crucial for country's growth: Ajit Doval

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 24 MAY



National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Friday highlighted the importance of the borders saying that the country would have progressed at a faster pace if its frontiers had been more secure.

Doval who was attending Border Security Force's Investiture Ceremony and delivered Rustamji Memorial Lecture in Delhi said, that secure borders are not only important for territorial integrity, but also have a significant impact on the internal security of the country.

EASTERN RAILWAY e-Tender against Open Tender Notice No. 17-SDSTE-ASN-2024-25, dated 22.05.2024. e-tender is invited by Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer, Eastern Railway, Asansol Division, Station Road, Asansol, Pin-713301 for the following work: Name of Work / Location: "Asansol Division-Signal & Telecom work in connection with (1) Modification of E.I. from Warm Standby to Hot Standby at Deoghar, (2) Augmentation of Deoghar Coaching maintenance pit for 24 nos. LHB type coach maintenance and Sick line". Advertise Tender Value: ₹ 4,45,10,887.48. Earnest Money: ₹ 3,72,600/- Completion period of the work: 270 days from the date of issue of LOA. Date & Time of Closing of the tender: 17.06.2024 at 15.00 hrs. Website Particulars: http://www.ireps.gov.in/ Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. The tender/bidders must have Class-II Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/bidders can participate in e-Tendering. (ASN-56/2024-25) Tender Notice is also available at websites: www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in Follow us at: @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

EASTERN RAILWAY E-Auction for awarding the contract over Asansol Division Open e-Tender is invited by Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Eastern Railway, Asansol Division, Station Road, Asansol, PIN-713301 through IREPS portal vide website www.ireps.gov.in for awarding the contract. Details of which are as: Category of Auction: Leasing of Parcel Space (SLR). e-Auction Catalogue No.: C-3-PARCASN1006. Date of Auctions start: 10.06.2024, 12.00 hrs. Sl. No., Train No. & SLR: (1) 12376 (Jasidih-Tambaram Weekly Superfast Express) FSLR-1, (2) 13509 (Asansol-Gonda Express) FSLR-1, (3) 22465 (Madhupur-Anand Vihar Terminal Baba Baidyanath Dham Deoghar Superfast Express) FSLR-1, (4) 22306 (Jasidih-SMVT Bengaluru Weekly Superfast Express) FSLR-1, (5) 12384 (Asansol-Sealdah Superfast Intercity Express) FSLR-1, (6) 17322 (Jasidih-Vasco-Da-Gama Weekly Express) FSLR-1, (7) 22459 (Madhupur-Anand Vihar Terminal Baba Baidyanath Dham Deoghar Humsafar Express) FSLR-1, (8) 11428 (Jasidih-Pune Weekly Express) FSLR-1, (9) 13509 (Asansol-Gonda Express) FSLR-2, (10) 13507 (Asansol-Gorakhpur Express) FSLR-2, (11) 12235 (Madhupur-Anand Vihar Terminal Humsafar Express) FSLR-1, (12) 12342 (Asansol-Howrah Agnibina Express) FSLR-1, (13) 19436 (Asansol-Ahmedabad Weekly Express) FSLR-1, (14) 13507 (Asansol-Gorakhpur Express) FSLR-1, (15) 13509 (Asansol-Gonda Express) RSLR-1. All prospective bidders are advised to visit the website www.ireps.gov.in for full details and to participate against the above mentioned e-Auction as per schedule given above. (ASN-57/2024-25) Tender Notice is also available at websites: www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in Follow us at: @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

EASTERN RAILWAY Tender Notice No.: EL/HWH/25/21 (Notice)582, dated 22.05.2024. Open e-tenders are invited by Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah, DRM Building, near Railway Station, Howrah-711101 for the under-mentioned electrical works: Sl. No. 1. Tender No.: EL-HWH-25-21-3296. Name of work: Electrical (G) work in connection with Construction of Limited height subway in lieu of Level Crossing No. 29B/T at Km 178/2-4 between Azimganj Jn-Paradga in Katwa-Azimganj Section under AEN/Azimganj. Tender Value: ₹ 14,98,862. Bid Security (Earnest Money Deposit): ₹ 30,000/-. Sl. No. 2. Tender No.: EL-HWH-25-21-3297. Name of work: Electrical (G) work in connection with Construction of Limited height subway in lieu of Level Crossing No. 7/C/E at Km 23/10-11 in Ahmadpur-Katwa Section under AEN/Katwa. Tender Value: ₹ 15,12,782. Bid Security (Earnest Money Deposit): ₹ 30,000/-. Completion Period: 120 Days (for both sl. nos.). Closing date and time of tender: 14.06.2024 at 15.00 hrs. (for both sl. nos.). In case the date of closing mentioned in the notice inviting tender is declared a holiday/bandh/strike on any account, the date of closing tender online will not be changed as the application in the website of IREPS does not permit submission of any offer after closing date and time of the tender. However, opening of tenders online will be on any convenient day after closing date and time of the tender. The details of tender are available at website www.ireps.gov.in Tenderers are requested to submit their offer online on the above website. (HWH-68/2024-25) Tender Notice is also available at websites: www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in Follow us at: @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

EASTERN RAILWAY Detailed Tender No. 3WTCACOCER2024-25: Open E-Tender in Two Stage Reverse Auction System, dated 22.05.2024. Tender for Open e-tendering is invited by Chief Administrative Officer/Con, Eastern Railway, Kolkata, 4th Floor, 1st, Strand Road, New Kolligah, Kolkata-700001 for the following work: Name of work: "Construction of important Bridge No. 18 over Barakar River (10x30.50m+5x45.7m open web Girder) with pile foundation located at Ch. 230.124 Km (Centre line of bridge from Howrah in between Barakar and Kumardubi station and ROR (1x45.7m+1x76.2 m+3x30.5m open web Girder) in between Barachak-Sitarampur at Ch. 219.117 Km and ROR (2x30.5m+1x76.2m open steel Girder) in between Sitarampur-Kulti at Ch. 224.508 Km and ROR 4x30.5m+1x76.2m open web Girder at Ch. 206.05 Km in between Kalpalihari-Nimcha with provision of sub and superstructure to accommodate double line in connection with construction of multi tracking Railway BG line." Approx Value: ₹ 3,57,28,68,036.18. Earnest Money: ₹ 1,00,00,000/-. Cost of tender document: 0.0. Completion period: 30 (Thirty) Months. Date of closing: 21.06.2024 at 15.00 hrs. The tender documents and other details can be obtained from the website www.ireps.gov.in The bidding for the tender is to be submitted through the e-tendering on above website. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any manual offer if received, shall not be accepted and will be summarily rejected. (CON-19/2024-25) Tender Notice is also available at websites: www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in Follow us at: @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

Porsche crash: Pune police dismiss charge of special treatment for minor

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 24 MAY



Pune Police commissioner Amitesh Kumar on Friday asserted that no preferential treatment was given to the minor boy allegedly involved in mowing down two IT professionals in Maharashtra.

The crime branch officials on Thursday questioned the grandfather and minor friend of the 17-year-old boy. The driver, employed by the family of the minor involved in the car accident, in a statement to the police said that the teen was insisting on going behind the wheel and he had to call the father to inform the latter about it.

footage purportedly showing her son boasting about how he got away with the incident. NCP leader and Baramati MP Supriya Sule on Thursday questioned Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister Devendra Fadnavis on the incident. She said Fadnavis should reveal who tried to pressure the police and how the minor got bail.

Sule also expressed her surprise at Devendra Fadnavis "rushing" to Pune and making comments about the accident. "Fadnavis told reporters that police should not come under any political pressure. I want to tell him that those in power can pressure the police in such probes. My question to Fadnavis is who pressured the police and how despite such a heinous crime, the kid got bail," she told a news agency.

Will scrutinise OBC reservation given to Muslims: UP Dy CM

AGENCIES LUCKNOW, 24 MAY

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Thursday said that his government will scrutinise the Other Backward Classes reservations given to Muslim communities in previous governments in the state adding that reservations should not be given on the basis of religion.

trators and Muslims in Bengal from 2010-2024. It was like a knife in the chest for the OBC community. Calcutta HC order should be implemented with immediate effect. In other states, similar investigations should be done. In Uttar Pradesh, we will also do a detailed review regarding it. We won't allow anyone to snatch OBC reservations," Keshav Prasad Maurya told ANI. Deputy Chief Minister Maurya said that the previous government did it just to gain the vote bank of a particular community which is unconstitutional.

Regulation of Trains for Traffic & Power Block over Howrah Division For overhead equipment maintenance work in Bandel -Katwa Section, Traffic & Power Block will be necessary on UP & DN Bandel- Katwa Line for 05 days from 25.05.2024 (Saturday) to 29.05.2024 (Wednesday). Consequently, the following arrangements have been made in train running on 26/05, 27/05, 28/05 and 29/05/2024: Cancellation of EMU: From Bandel - 37751, From Katwa - 37752. Controlling of EMU: 37748 will be controlled for 25 minutes enroute. Note:- (1) The Block will start after passing of 37917 UP Howrah-Katwa Local from Bansberia at 13.21 hrs. & 37746 DN Katwa-Bandel Local from Bandel at 13.35 hrs. (2) After cancellation of block, first train will be 37919 UP Howrah-Katwa Local on UP Bandel-Katwa Line & 37748 DN Katwa-Bandel Local on DN Bandel-Katwa Line. Special Note: Special or Late Running Trains & any further Newly Introduced Train/Parcel Train/TOD during the block period, if any, will be controlled/diverted suitably enroute during block. Passengers are requested to follow the Public Address System of stations. Inconvenience is regretted. Divisional Railway Manager, Howrah (CON-19/2024-25) EASTERN RAILWAY Follow us at: @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

Cabinet Secretariat Department (Directorate of Aviation) Patna Airport, Patna - 800014. TEL No:- 0612-2225659, 2224423 Fax 0612 2224614, e-mail-cadbihaar@bihar.gov.in Letter. No: CBN (misc.)-05-76/2023- 415 CORRIGENDUM With reference to our Tender No.-CBN (misc.)-05-78/2023-143 Dated- 27.02.2024 (PR.NO.018442 (CSD) 2023-24) and Corrigendum No.- 263 Dt. 03.04.2024 (PR.NO. 000035 (CSD) 2024-25) & No.- 383 Dt. 10.05.2024 (PR.NO. 000704 (CSD) 2024-25) for hiring of One 7+2/8+2 seating capacity VIP/VVIP Configuration twin Engine Helicopter on wet lease for a period of 05 years, due to unavoidable Circumstances we hereby revise the Schedule of Events as below. S/n. Schedule of Events Revised date and time 1. Last date for submission of proposals & Technical bid opening 31.05.2024 2. Presentation by Bidding organisations 05.06.2024 (11:00AM) 3. Opening of Financial Bid 11.06.2024 4. Award of Contract 18.06.2024 5. Positioning of Helicopter 25.06.2024 2. Tender received before or on Technical bid opening date i.e. 21.05.2024 will be considered. Company or Firm who has already submitted the tender, need not submit it again. 3. Other terms and conditions of the tender and subsequent Corrigendums will remain unchanged. This information is available on www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar also Director Directorate of Aviation, Cabinet Secretariat Department, Govt. of Bihar, Patna PR. No. 000934 (CSD) 2024-25 लोकसभा आम निर्वाचन 2024 - कोई मतदाता न सृष्टे

TPCODL TP CENTRAL ODISHA DISTRIBUTION LIMITED A Joint Venture of Tata Power and Govt. of Odisha, 1st Floor, Anuj Building, Plot No.29, Satya Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha - 751007 NOTICE INVITING TENDER NIT No: TPCODL/P&S/NIT/24-25/06 Bids are invited from eligible Bidders for the following tenders of TPCODL: Sl. No. Tender Enquiry No. Tender Description 1 TPCODL/P&S/1000000710/2024-25 Providing Mobile SMS Services at TPCODL for 2 Years 2 TPCODL/P&S/1000000712/2024-25 Providing Security Services at TPCODL for 3 Years 3 TPCODL/P&S/1000000713/2024-25 Construction of Nimapara Division Office Under BBSR-1 Circle 4 TPCODL/P&S/1000000714/2024-25 Construction of Cuttack Division Office at Jagatpur Under Cuttack Circle For more details like bid due date, EMD, tender fee, bid opening date etc. of the Tenders, please visit "Tender" section at TPCODL website https://www.tpcentralodisha.com. All tenders will be available on TPCODL website w.e.f. from dtd. 28.05.2024. Future communication / corrigendum to tender documents, if any, shall be available on TPCODL website.

## Ugly nature of US' hijacking of human rights

**A** growing number of unilateral sanctions have been imposed against China by the United States since 2017, with the US increasing its pressure on Chinese technology companies with the imposition of export controls and the launch of administrative and civil charges.

These moves have been followed by further sanctions and restrictions related to and in connection with Xinjiang and Hong Kong that expand the list of targets to include key sectors of economic activity, including agriculture, construction, trade, new and green technologies, energy, finance, telecommunications and others.

The unilateral sanctions imposed by the US against China do not conform with international legal norms and cannot be justified as countermeasures under the law of international responsibility, as a UN expert has said.

The unilateral coercive measures impact people's full enjoyment of human rights as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and are imposed as a tool to compel the targeted state to act in accordance with the demands of the US.

States such as the US should therefore lift their unilateral coercive sanctions against China, and also take strong action to curb sanction over-compliance by businesses and other actors under their jurisdiction, said Alena Douhan, UN special rapporteur

## CHINADAILY

on unilateral coercive measures and human rights, at a news conference in Beijing on Friday, after an official 12-day visit to China.

"A decline in business activities and the significant loss of global markets either due to unilateral sanctions per se or due to over-compliance with such measures by foreign businesses and entities have led to job losses, with consequent disruptions in social protection schemes, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable, particularly in labor-intensive sectors, including women, older persons, and all those in informal employment," Douhan said.

The multifaceted negative impact of sanctions is also showcased in areas such as education and academic/scientific cooperation with the listing of several prominent Chinese universities and research centers, the interruption of exchange programs, scholarships and joint research projects between Chinese and foreign - mainly US and European - institutions, as well as the broader stigmatization of Chinese students and scholars, who may be denied entry visas or subjected to thorough background checks purportedly on national security grounds.

Moreover, as Douhan pointed out, access to justice and the fundamental principles of due process and the presumption of innocence are also seriously undermined by the listing and de-listing procedures. That means the designated individuals and entities are not provided with the evidence that has supposedly provided the grounds for their designation and they have extremely limited capacity to pursue administrative and judicial proceedings before the sanctioning states' court systems, whose procedures are often lengthy, costly, nontransparent and inefficient.

In other words, to protect human rights in Xinjiang or Hong Kong is just an excuse employed by the US to justify its China-targeted sanctions. In practice, these sanctions have not only caused inevitable harm to human rights in China, they may also lead to negative humanitarian consequences elsewhere in the world, as Douhan said, despite China having the capability to mitigate their negative impacts to various extents.

# Aspiration and Reality

The global South lacks a leading great power in terms of defence or economy and is characterized by diversity. It also lacks strong representation in some key international institutions like the UN Security Council. It basically operates from a position of weakness, seeking opportunities to join coalitions for international order reform, driven by aspirations for development, voice, and status



**F**irst, it should be highlighted that the world of power and hegemony has undergone three transformations between the Second World War and the present. In 1952, Alfred Sauvy classified the world into three categories: First World, Second World, and Third World. However, his idea was out of date by the late 1980s when the USSR collapsed. By then the concept of 'Developing and Developed World' had become popular, signifying a wide range of interests.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century three major groups arose: the global South, represented by developing nations like Brazil and India, the global West, led by the US and Europe, and the global East, led by China and Russia. With unique histories, grievances, and leaders, each group provides narratives, solutions, and aspirations for reshaping the world order. The emergence of this 'Three Worlds' system reflects more than just shifts in global power: it reveals a deeper ideological struggle between the global East and global West.

Each superpower advocates for a distinct type of world order: the US defends a liberal international order, while China and Russia aim for one that challenges Western liberal values. According to Prof. Ikenberry this isn't just a power struggle but a clash between liberal and illiberal visions of world order, where both seek to shape global rules and institutions to secure their political systems and values. So, it is the struggle for world order which primarily involves the global West and East, each led by a superpower and a coalition of great powers.

In the post-Covid era both these superpowers - China and the United States - are aggressively moving to establish their group's primacy in the changing global order. But it is impossible for both the US and China to achieve success on their own. They require companions and allies. Bigger coalitions perform better in these competitive times than smaller ones, and these possible allies are found in the global South.

In contrast, the global South lacks a leading great power in terms of defence or economy and is characterized by diversity. It also lacks strong representation in some key international institutions like the UN Security Council. It basically operates from a position of weakness, seeking opportunities to join coalitions for international order

reform, driven by aspirations for development, voice, and status.

However, the global South is not devoid of resources. It is, after all, home to most of humankind. In this case, India, the most populous nation in the global South can function as a kind of intermediary. Both the East and the West are offering various incentives to strengthen relationships with the global South. While the US, one of the main proponents of the post-war liberal international order, offers trade, security, and foreign aid; China is marketing the developmental model. Despite being the weaker member of the 'Three Worlds', the global South possesses structural qualities that will make it a strong and significant alliance in the changing global order.

India, a pivotal state in the global South, has the power to influence broader global patterns of alliances and partnerships. It can also lead the global South by perfectly balancing the benefits of both regions, keeping in mind Turkey's and Brazil's respective positions. India can serve as a kind of third party, influencing global narratives about what constitutes appropriate and acceptable behaviour in international politics, given its position as the leader of the global South. To assume that role, India needs to focus on the following five areas with equal importance: economy, military, technology, demography, and climate change because these are the fundamental requirements for becoming a superpower. The goal of becoming a superpower can be dashed by deficiencies in any area. Is India capable of that?

Here we shouldn't be overly sentimental or romantic. We should remember that emotion is not intelligence, enthusiasm is not understanding, and to entertain high ideals is not to think. Perhaps we have enough of these, but they may not turn out to be reality until we are able to look at our abilities from close quarters. The goal of becoming a superpower is admirable, but it is important to analyse the difficulties and complications that go with it. If we focus on the economic sector, in 2023, India's economy really thrived, with a projected GDP growth of 7.3 per cent, surpassing IMF estimates

of 6.3 per cent. Government-led capital formation increased by over 10 per cent, but private sector investment declined sharply, alongside a 4 per cent drop in foreign direct investment between April-November 2023. High disinvestment rates rose by nearly 29 per cent. Inflation is forecast to rise to 5.4 per cent in 2024, with food prices escalating to 9.5 per cent in December 2023. Agriculture and allied sectors grew by less than 2 per cent in 2022-23 due to adverse weather conditions. Manufacturing is expected to grow by 6.5 per cent, but certain industries faced declines between April-November 2023.

Now let's discuss India's defence industry, which has shown progress, with a production turnover of Rs 1,087 billion (US\$13.5 billion) in 2022-23 and exports to over 85 countries involving 100 Indian firms. However, production growth hasn't met procurement demands, with a target of \$26 billion by 2025. Despite reforms, domestic share in armed forces' capital acquisition

hasn't increased significantly since 2014-15. Export targets remain unmet, with licensing manufacturing dominating at 58 per cent in defence procurement. Challenges include slow implementation of reforms and reliance on external sources due to limited technological depth in major systems and components. On the other hand, the convergence of transformative technologies like AI, blockchain, cloud computing, IoT, open source, and automation is revolutionizing the fintech landscape. Niche financial sectors lead in harnessing these innovations for application development, value creation, and competitive edge. Traditional financial institutions must adapt swiftly, leveraging their resources to navigate this wave of disruption. Embracing these trends is essential for staying relevant and competitive in the rapidly evolving financial industry, where agility and innovation are key to success amidst the changing technological landscape.

Nilekani and Carstens propose a new model called "Finternet" comprising interconnected financial ecosystems. It integrates technological advancements and governance princi-

ples, incorporating tokenization and unified ledgers. By seizing these chances, India can assume a leading position.

Lastly, there are still two crucial topics to discuss: climate change and demography. India, contributing only 3 per cent of historical climate pollution, faces significant environmental challenges due to coal consumption and rapid development. Its carbon emissions increased by 75 per cent since 2005, with coal accounting for 14 per cent of global demand. Extreme heat threatens 600 million people, exacerbated by climate change.

Indian citizens prioritize climate action, with 85 per cent expressing concerns. The government aims for net-zero emissions by 2070, requiring a \$10 trillion investment. Political parties, including the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and opposition Indian National Congress, pledge support for renewable energy, targeting 500GW of capacity and emphasizing green energy transition. On the other hand, India's demographic landscape is shifting, with a slight decline in the proportion of young people projected over the next 15 years. Despite this, India's demographic dividend remains significant, with 12 million young individuals entering the workforce annually. Challenges include low labour participation rates and high youth unemployment. Only about one in ten young people had jobs in 2023, with just 30.2 million out of 305.3 million working-age individuals employed. Navigating this transition effectively is crucial for India's future economic and social well-being. However India's internal politics may both aid and hinder its aspirations to lead the global South. India is now facing the most critical task of safeguarding democracy amidst widespread corruption.

In this situation the United States and China are shifting from traditional alliance systems to cultivate ties with countries like India and Brazil. Both powers aim to prevent countries from aligning with the other. America's nightmare coalition is the global East and South uniting, while China fears alignment between the West and South. India has the potential to emerge as a significant leader in the global South by addressing the above-mentioned key areas. From this perspective, it is preferable to acknowledge that India may not have the capacity to lead the world but can exert significant influence among global South countries.



**ARDHENDU BANERJEE**  
The writer is on the faculty of the Department of Statistics, Basanti Devi College, Kolkata

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Message for allies

**SIR,** This refers to your editorial "Putin-Xi meet" published on 20 May. Russia engaged in a high-cost, long drawn out war with Ukraine, is no the superpower of the Cold-war era.

Russia feels the need for a closer friendship with China because of economic pressures mounted by the USA through the weapon of sanctions.

The huge GDP gap with USA has brought Russia closer to China as its natural ally in its war with Ukraine.

However, China's commitment towards Russia by entering into mutual partnership on issues will not be unconditional.

China will ensure that Russia reciprocate any kind of Chinese assistance in the war with Ukrai-

ne with Russian support in its future conflicts on take over of Taiwan or other fronts.

The Putin-Xi meet therefore conveys meaningful new signals to traditional allies of Russia. Such countries once considered closer to Russia must now re-adjust their external and defense strategies.

Yours, etc., Kunal Kanti Konar, Kolkata, 22 May.

### NOT UNSCIENTIFIC

**SIR,** Apropos Anthony Henriques' letter to the editor 'Unfortunate' published on 21 May, there is nothing unscientific in astrological calculations to determine an auspicious time for filing nomination papers. Many do not know that the Nabadwip-based

Grahavipras or the astrologer class of Brahmins aka Nadia Banga Samaj were famous for their accurate predictions.

Governor-General Lord Hardinge had once arrived in Nabadwip where he met such Grahavipras. In conversation with them, Lord Hardinge said that he learnt that his wife had set sail from London but had not arrived at Calcutta although the scheduled time of arrival was past. Lord Hardinge felt that his wife was in danger.

Ramjoy Shiromani, a Nabadwip-based Grahavipra predicted after calculations that Lady Hardinge was very near Calcutta and advised Lord Hardinge to proceed towards Calcutta to meet his wife. Lord and Lady Hardinge met each other at Calcutta on the banks of the river Ganges.

Yours, etc., Anindya Ghosal, Burdwan, 21 May.

### RBI DIVIDEND

**SIR,** Please refer to today's report "RBI approves transfer of Rs 2.11 trillion as surplus to government". The magnitude of RBI's dividend, surpassing the Union government's budgeted amount from the public sector, is a significant development.

RBI came into this windfall because of high interest rates in advanced economies, which may persist before an eventual cyclical inversion.

The strength of India's recovery from the pandemic also contributed to the RBI surplus, and monetary policy would be inclined to pursue this course by easing interest rates ahead of the pack.

With PSUs gaining market capitalisation, the dividend flow is expected to remain robust in the medium term. This could potentially influence the pace of privatisation, particularly when the ripple effects of government capex are strongly felt by PSUs.

The stability of dividends as a revenue source, compared to the market-dependent capital receipts from divestment, may also factor into the government's decision-making, potentially leading to a slower fiscal glide path.

Yours, etc., Khokan Das, Kolkata, 24 May.

# 'India did best under coalitions'

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor is among the most popular faces of the party. The former United Nations Under-Secretary General had also served as the Minister of State for External Affairs under the UPA government headed by Manmohan Singh.

A man not new to controversies, Tharoor has received both bouquets and brickbats for his nonchalant and friendly banter, especially on social media.

Surya S Pillai of The Statesman caught up with the Thiruvananthapuram MP as he interacted with voters along the length and breadth of the country. He talked about the mood of the voters, role of media in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the north versus south divide, and the benefits of a coalition government.

**Q. You are travelling extensively convincing voters to choose INDIA bloc over the BJP. What is the mood of voters?**

**A.** The mood is very encouraging for us. I am not suggesting a sweep for us, but there is every possibility of a better result than the NDA can aim for. The voters today are talking about their well being more than anything else. For example, everybody is mentioning unemployment. In our country today, 45 per cent unemployment is prevalent among the 19 to 25 years age bracket.

The other is inflation; the BJP can say that India's inflation is not high as per global standards, but by Indian standards, we are in troubled waters. You can imagine the condition of the country if people are unable to afford something as basic as food.

Thirdly, income levels have gone down. Forget about doubling farmers' income, there is not even a 10 per cent increase in their incomes. Reports have shown 80 per cent of the Indian population has seen a decline in their incomes in the last 10 years.

**Q. The Opposition-backed INDIA bloc has often termed the 2024 Lok Sabha polls as the fight between ideologies. It has talked about how this election is all about saving the Constitution**



**and democratic ethos. Do you think this message has percolated to the masses?**

**A.** Among the educated class, there are some real concerns about democracy, the Constitution, weaponising of agencies, or the BJP 'washing machine' for the corrupt. I think it is also present at the macro level. At the bottom or retail level of politics, unemployment, price rise and inflation are the talking points. So both are parallel concerns without contradicting each other.

**Q. Delhi is voting on May 25 where the Congress is in alliance with the beleaguered AAP. Many Congress workers have voiced their angst against this tie-up. Your comments.**

**A.** The problem with not wanting an alliance is that in two successive elections, the BJP has swept. So we cannot afford to give them a third chance by dividing the opposition votes, which is why the logic of an

alliance makes perfect sense. All I can say is that it is better for us to put our votes together than put them apart.

In the last Lok Sabha election, we did better than the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). We got 22 per cent vote share in Delhi and the AAP got 18 per cent. We felt many people wanted us to come to power in the national capital.

Cut to 2024, we have good candidates on our side, and the AAP has a considerable hold on some quarters.

**Q. You have advocated for a coalition government and how it is bereft of autocracy. Will you also address the perils associated with this kind of governance like indiscipline or clash of opinions?**

**A.** There is a need for collegiality and cooperation. In fact, studies have shown how the best periods of economic growth in our country have been under coalition governments. Look at India from 1991 to 2001,

those were not majority governments.

At the moment, we are seeing the opposite problem - the problem of an electoral autocracy. You have elected a leader, but he is conducting himself autocratically.

We are not in a presidential system. We are a parliamentary democracy where the prime minister is primus inter pares or the first among equals.

**Q. INDIA bloc is accused of creating the north-south divide when it talked about the devolution of tax money and how south states are not effectively benefited as compared to their northern counterparts.**

**A.** Devolution of tax money is objective numbers, it is not imaginary. We are talking about the dwindling tax revenue coming to states by the Centre. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has increasingly resorted to cesses. Cesses are not divided and shared with states, and only go to the Union government. The net result is the states are affected.

Whether it is a north-south divide, you hear similar complaints from Maharashtra. But the larger question is a political one. Politics of the north and politics of the south are incompatible. Case in point is the demonization of minorities in the north, whereas, in the south, all communities live together happily. There are major differences but there need not be a divide.

**Q. Political strategist Prashant Kishor recently said if the BJP failed to get 370 seats, the stock market will turn red. What do you say about that?**

**A.** This is plain scaremongering. As far as the stock market is concerned, similar worries were expressed in the past. When the Deve Gowda government came in 1996, the stock market plunged, but within a short while, then finance minister P Chidambaram presented the 'dream budget' and everything shot up again.

Ultimately, the stock market is governed by sentiment which keeps fluctuating. It is silly to say vote for

the BJP if you want to save the stock market.

Tomorrow, when we will have a successful and responsible government, we will automatically see good results. So investors need not worry, they should not be moved by temporary sentiments.

**Q. The Congress campaigning, especially on social media, has really picked up, and is garnering a good response.**

**A.** We are giving the BJP as good as they have given us in the past. We have become more vigorous, witty and innovative with our social media messages. As you all know I was not very popular in my party for using the virtual platform earlier as they believed it was undignified. But the Congress is waking up and using the platform extremely well.

Where the BJP is scoring above us now is the mainstream media. Those are the ones who are more vulnerable to government pressure. So this has given the saffron party an advantage in public perception. But the opposition is being able to hold its own in the digital space.

**Q. You have maintained that the BJP's 'Abki baar, 400 paar' slogan is a distant dream. What are the chances of the saffron party in the south?**

**A.** In the south, the BJP will not get a single seat in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. They might get a handful of seats in Telangana. In Andhra, they are relying heavily on (TDP chief) Chandrababu Naidu. In Karnataka, they will do worse than the last time. On the whole, it will be a net loss for the BJP in the southern belt.

**Q. What is your message for the voters this election?**

**A.** Vote in your self interest. Do not be swayed by propaganda. All this '400 paar' should not be taken seriously. There is nothing inevitable about a BJP win, and it is certainly not invincible. Vote for what you believe is good for you and the country. Vote for a government that believes in an inclusive India.

## OCCASIONAL NOTE

REUTER'S message of May 15 announcing an agreement as to wages between coal-owners and miners might be more, lucid, but could not be more acceptable. Since 'de-control' and the strike of 1921, the danger of another great strike has always been present, and if the miners' conference on May 29 accepts the agreement, England will breathe freely. Until recently, wages in the industry were fixed in relation to the selling price of coal. That now seems archaic. The new method is to fix the relative shares of profits and wages a relation to the prosperity of the industry. By a coincidence, yesterday's telegrams brought news of the rejection of a private bill for nationalizing the mines. Nationalization is the miners' dream, but few outside the Labour party have yet been converted, and though the Government approved the principle, the bill was thrown out by a combination of Liberals and Conservatives.

## NEWS ITEMS

### Dr. Lazarus's Essence of Chiretta

At Rs. 4, 2-8 & Re. 1-8 Per bottle. Prepared from the original receipt of E. J. Lazarus, M.D. Is recommended by most eminent medical practitioners all over India, for ali bilious and liver complaints. His other medicines: Essences of Papiya for indigestion. Neem (skin diseases). Moondee (brain tonic). Anantmoool or Indian Sarsaparilla (blood purifier), Spleen pills. Tonic antepieriodic pills. Family Embrocation, Infantile fever powder etc., they have been in extensive use for the last 71 years Obtainable of all leading Chemists. Price list giving full directions can be had from:-E, J. LAZARUS & Co. Medical Hall Benares Cantt.

## SHIP'S BOOKMAKER

### UNOFFICIAL POST ON THE BIG SHIPS

PRACTICALLY every British liner of any size crossing the Atlantic includes in its complement an individual who signs on as a trimmer, "greaser," or steward, but who actually is the ship's bookmaker.

Ship's bookmakers confine their attentions to the officers and crew, for no man in the world likes to chance his luck more than a seaman, and seamen are all the same whether they be masters or deck hands.

When the ship leaves port says the Daily Mail he distributes cards which he has had printed, among his old clients. These cards contain the lists of runners in the prominent races which are to be run while the ship is at sea. Alongside the name of each horse there is marked the odds which he is prepared to give.

In the cases of the big events modern wireless news services which are picked up by ships at sea supply the names of the winners. The lucky backers are paid at once in the innermost recesses of the "glory-hole." In all other cases the men wait until the ship is back in port, when old newspapers containing the racing results can be obtained. The bookmaker meets his clients in the taproom of an inn and pays up forthwith.

## THE RE-BIRTH

I believe I said, only last week, that come snow or wind or thunder I would not again mention the weather. It seemed to me too risky. But I break through my resolution in order to tell you that we have had such an Easter as never was - not in this century, at all events. All that the poets have said or sung about Spring came true, all in a single night. The trees burst into miraculous leaf, as though they had been awaiting a signal, and where, last week we covered over fires, we now fling our windows wide, and talk of a heat-wave! And the flowers Gardens - even the grubbliest little backyard specimens - pink with almond blossom, and the iris coming out in the squares, and daffodils a commonplace. Tulips are almost cheap to buy, and there are borders of hyacinths in bloom in many a garden. London is ablaze with flowers.

The crowds on Easter Monday were something to marvel at. The river girl came out strong, with sleeveless frock and white shoes. That many of her never entered a boat mattered not at all; the holiday aspect was the important thing. Some even managed to cultivate a layer of sunburn in that one day; although that, of course, may have been due to the "sunburn" powder that is now so fashionable. Modes in make-up change almost as quickly as modes in dress, and you may have heard that this is now the correct shade worn with a brownish shade about the eyes, and very dark red lip salve that shades to brown. I met a friend made up in this wise the other day, and she looked very nice, and much more natural than the women I saw in Paris last June, when there was a fancy for rose-pink cheeks and cherry lips.

# Chabahar will give India access to CAR

SMRUTI S PATTANAİK

On May 13, India signed a 10-year contract for operationalising the Shahid Beheshti Terminal of Chabahar, a port on Iran's southwestern coast that would provide India with a vital connection to Central Asian Republics (CARs), Afghanistan and further to Europe through the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). In 2003, India expressed interest in developing the port, but a formal agreement was not signed. A trilateral general cooperation framework on Chabahar between Iran, India and Afghanistan was signed only in 2016.

This route benefits India, as it will have land access to CARs and Afghanistan for its trade. Though India had already signed a short-term agreement with Iran to operationalise the port, the commercial viability of this port was a major challenge. Given the US sanctions on Iran and the short-term deal, it could not attract private capital. Moreover, the port's commercial viability could only be achieved if a robust supply chain network is implemented. That is feasible with investments made by private sectors, which would play an important role as stakeholders.

Since 1979, Iran has been facing international sanctions imposed by the US following an attack on the US Embassy during the Iranian revolution. It was further sanctioned due to its persuasion of the nuclear weapons programme. However, some of these sanctions were eased during the Barack Obama regime in 2016 to facilitate a nuclear deal with Iran. The

sanctions were re-imposed by the Donald Trump administration after he cancelled the nuclear deal.

In November 2018, the US announced that it had exempted India from sanctions for developing Chabahar Port and constructing a railway line that had emerged as an important port for accessing landlocked CARs and Afghanistan. Moreover, the US supported it as it was essential for the development and reconstruction of Afghanistan, a key foreign policy goal.

India has been cautious about its investment in Chabahar. Nevertheless, there are several speculations regarding the implementation of this project. In fact, in 2021, there were reports that India is not a part of the 628-kilometre Chabahar-Zahedan rail link. Later, it emerged that it was non-committal as Iran wanted to involve a company that belonged to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards under US sanctions. Both countries later clarified that they are still implementing the project together.

After the signing of the agreement with Iran, the US State Department warned India of the potential risk of sanctions. However, India has convinced the US about the larger implications of this project and its benefits for regional countries. Indian foreign minister said that the US should not take a 'narrow perspective' of the project.

The Taliban takeover is one reason the refinement of the port slowed down in Afghanistan after the US withdrawal in 2021. The ground situation has changed since then due to the Taliban's outreach to India and

India's reciprocation. As a result of the dynamics of their relationship with Pakistan, the Taliban is keen to access the port and has announced an investment of \$35 million.

As of now, India has exported 2.5m tonnes of wheat and 2,000 tonnes of pulses to Afghanistan as part of its humanitarian assistance. This export is significant as India does not have land and port access to Afghanistan through Pakistan which perceives India as its strategic rival.

Analysts also see Chabahar emerging as a rival to the Gwadar port in Pakistan, which was built by China. At one point, China also evinced an allure towards developing Chabahar as India was wary of US sanctions. In 2021, China signed a 25-year agreement to invest \$400 billion in Iran, raising concerns in India. Since 2021, India has regularly allocated a budget for the development of the port.

The port would be a significant lifeline for India for its trade with CARs. At present, India's trade with the CAR countries is worth a little more than \$2 billion. Iran's Chabahar port is a major geo-economic asset for Iran. Not only will this port enhance Iran's status as a connectivity hub to reach out to the landlocked CARs and Eurasia, but it would benefit the country economically by bringing business to the second most sanctioned country after Russia. Iran is looking for opportunities to boost its ties with countries friendly to Iran, which has also been a major energy source for many countries.

It was due to the US sanctions that India reduced its energy dependency. But India knows Chabahar

would serve its more extensive geopolitical and geo-economic interests. For example, the decision of an Indian steel conglomerate to invest in Hajigok to extract minerals from Afghanistan also highlighted the difficulties of accessing the nearest port to export which underlined the importance of Chabahar.

Iran also underlines the importance of this port's connectivity. As the then Iranian Foreign Minister Amirabdollahian said, "Signing a contract for equipping and operating Shahid Beheshti Port terminals in Chabahar and boosting cooperation in the north and south corridors are very important opportunities."

This strategic port is expected not limited to boosting trade between the two countries, as Chabahar remains an important connector to the INSTC, a 13-member organisation.

The current agreement envisages an Indian investment of \$120 million in infrastructure development and a \$250 million line of credit to Iran. Operationalised by India Ports Global Limited (IGPL) after an MoU to this effect was signed on 23 May 2016, the port is poised to boost trade between India and the CARs. As mentioned earlier, it provides alternative access to Afghanistan for its external trade.

India has operated Chabahar port since 2018. However, it is only now that both countries have agreed to international arbitration, which Iran was reluctant to accept earlier. The two countries have agreed that the matter would be referred to a three-member tribunal in Muscat in line with the Singapore Arbitration Tribunal prior to international

arbitration. Iran has also agreed to no penalty clause if the target to get a particular amount of cargo is unmet.

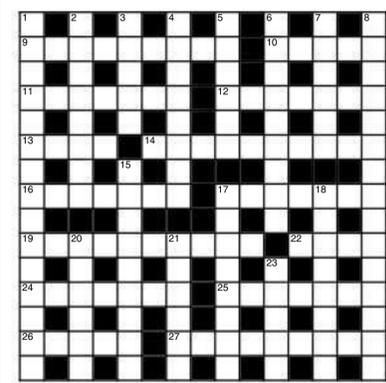
India's objectives are not just to reach the CARs but to connect to the INSTC. The Chabahar port will connect India through a maritime route and Chabahar by road to Bandar-e-Anzali (an Iranian port on the Caspian Sea). From Bandar-e-Anzali to Astrakhan, a Russian port in the Caspian Sea, by ship further into Europe by Russian railways. At present, India is not focusing much on the INSTC connectivity to Europe given the geopolitics of the Ukraine war; it is concentrating on its connectivity to the CARs, which is part of the INSTC corridor.

In 2022, the first India-Central Asia summit was held, followed by a meeting of the national security advisers. The two countries are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). In 2020, India announced a \$1 billion line of credit for infrastructure development. After India accessed the quadrilateral Ashgabat Agreement on International Transport and Transit Corridor in 2018, its quest for connectivity with the CARs has received a further boost. India has also proposed the inclusion of Chabahar Port as part of the INSTC to the CARs.

Connectivity has emerged as a key definer of geopolitics and access to market and trade initiatives, and through these instruments, achieving domestic economic growth is now a potent geo-economics instrument. Chabahar serves both bilateral and regional economic growth.

The Kathmandu Post/ANN

## CROSSWORD



### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

HUSBAND AND WIFE  
O E L W E R R A L  
S M B L L T T N  
E R I C A L O I T E R I N G  
O E S G O I  
F I R S T M A T E C A N O N  
C E T N L T  
O S C A R P A T R I A R C H  
M Z R E A E  
M E A N S T E S T N O N E T  
O R T S I T C O  
N O I S O M E T R E M O L O  
S N R N H L U T  
M A R K E T R E S E A R C H

### ACROSS

- 9 Hit the XO? (6,3)
- 10 Left in place old Disney character (5)
- 11 Getting back to Coleridge, rating rushed over to tell story (7)
- 12 On the gin, read out letters in swinging bar (7)
- 13 Launder western money initially neglected (4)
- 14 British chatter about stray animal in stories (4,6)

### DOWN

- 1 Dark horse that may be last in Derby literally? (7,8)
- 2 More than reasonable Fare to Jupiter or Mars? (8)
- 3 Bark perhaps coming about the Spanish hold at sea (5)

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

NO-292790

THUMBNAILS



**State Bank's Voter Awareness drive through sand art: State Bank of India, Local Head Office, Bhubaneswar has taken up various programs for voter awareness in all its Administrative Offices and Branches. As part of this campaign, a special sand art creative has been unveiled in front of the Local Head Office by Mr. Dinesh Pruthi, Chief General Manager Bhubaneswar Circle in the presence of other senior officials. Shri Pruthi advised all employees and their families to ensure voting on this great festival of democracy. This sand art work was created by Mr. Subal Maharana, an employee of State Bank of India.**

# Stock markets hit fresh record highs, Nifty surpasses 23000-mark

On the Sensex, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, L&T, NTPC, and Axis Bank were top gainers; Tech Mahindra, Asian Paints, ITC, TCS, and M&M top drags

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

The benchmark indices on Friday hit fresh record highs with Nifty surpassing the 23,000 mark for the first time.

It took 88 trading sessions for Nifty to rally 1,000 points from 22,000, which it touched on January 15.

Sensex opened lower at 75,335.45, and ended at 75,410.39, down 7.65 points, or 0.01 per cent.

It touched a low of 75,244.22 during the day, but also created a fresh all-time high of 75,636.50 in early trades.

On the other hand, the Nifty 50 opened lower at 22,930.75, and at close, it was at 22,957.10, down 10.55 points, or 0.05%.

Nifty 50 touched a low of 22,908.00, and created a fresh peak of 23,026.40 during intraday trades.

Both the indices showed spirited momentum in early trades to surpass the all-time high record they had created in yesterday's trade.

Among the sectors, oil and gas, capital goods, telecom and media were up 0.5-2%, while FMCG, Healthcare, IT, Metal and Realty were down 0.5% each.

At Sensex, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, Larsen & Toubro,



NTPC, and Axis Bank were the top gainers. Tech Mahindra, Asian Paints, ITC, TCS, and Mahindra & Mahindra, ended as the top drags.

While on the Nifty 50, the top gainers were HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, BPCL, Larsen & Toubro, and UltraTech Cement.

Adani Ports & SEZ, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, JSW Steel, Titan and Asian Paints were the top drags.

The broader market indices ended on a mixed note, with the BSE SmallCap down 0.20 per cent and the BSE MidCap down 0.23 per cent.

Stock market currently lacks new catalysts to sustain and extend its gains. Election-related jitters have eased, but speculations will keep the market volatile till the election outcome is announced.

Experts have believed that after the election, market focus will transition to valuations, likely restricting the market's upside potential.

In the Nifty rally to 23000-mark, Tata Steel and State Bank of India followed closely with advances of over 31

per cent each, while Maruti Suzuki India and Bharti Airtel gained 30 per cent each.

Amid the renewed concerns regarding the US Federal Reserve's upcoming decision on interest rates, the global markets ended lower.

Data revealed a surge in US business activity alongside increasing inflation, raising expectations that the Federal Reserve will maintain its current stance.

The S&P Global Flash US PMI Composite Output Index jumped from 51.3 in April to 54.4 in May, with reports indicating a significant acceleration in inflation, the second-largest monthly increase in eight months.

## Nephro Care India to raise ₹ 35-40 crore from SME IPO

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, 24 MAY

Nephro Care India Limited (NCIL), a leading multi-specialty healthcare provider in Eastern India, seems well set to raise nearly Rs 35-40 crore through an initial public offering (IPO) on NSE Emerge platform. This strategic move will enable NCIL to expand its operations across India.



The company intends to utilise net proceeds from the IPO to set up a multi-specialty hospital, 'Vivacity Multi Speciality Hospital', at Madhyamgram in Kolkata, West Bengal, and use remaining capital for general corporate purposes. The new hospital will be a unit of Nephro Care India Limited and is proposed to include 100 inpatient beds, including a 30-bed Critical Care unit having ICU, HDU, RTU and NICU facilities. Vivacity will offer treatment services in various disciplines such as cardiology, medical oncology, gastroenterology, gynaecology and many others, including an advanced renal transplant unit in East India, said Dr. Pratik Sengupta, founder, Nephro Care.

Interestingly, EY - Nathealth report of March 2023, suggests, quoting government figures, that nearly 220,000 patients develop end-stage renal disease (ESRD) in India, leading to an additional annual dialysis demand of 34 million treatment sessions. India presently has nearly 5,000 existing dialysis centres (including 1353 centres under PMNDP). This capacity will not be sufficient to meet the upcoming demand as this disease gains traction due to various sociological and environmental factors.

Another interesting statistics suggests that India needs totally 103507 Dialysis machines. At present there are 40,000 machines. Therefore, there is a gap of 65,000 machines.

Dr. Sengupta, who has successfully performed more than 1,000 kidney transplants till now and is a pioneer in holistic renal care through a combination of clinical intervention, yoga and lifestyle support, said that NCIL posted a revenue of Rs. 19.90 crore and earned a profit (PAT) of Rs. 3.4 crore during the first nine months of FY 2023-24, compared to a revenue of Rs. 17.09 crore, with a profit (PAT) of Rs. 1.94 crore in FY

2022-23.

The IPO will comprise a fresh issuance of 45.84 lakh equity shares with a face value of Rs 10 each.

Nephro Care India Limited, on its parts, operates on a multidimensional patient engagement framework comprising programs and facilities such as Mukti, Home Dialysis, Home Care and Diagnostics. While Mukti takes care of the overall well-being of the patient and improves the quality of life through a blend of modern medicine and ancient yogic wisdom, Home Dialysis offers dialysis at the comfort of homes to CKD patients who are unable to visit the dialysis centres, and "Home Care" services ensure clinical & lifestyle support beyond clinics to take care of all collateral medical needs of the patients. NCIL's clinics are operated on a 'hub-and-spoke' model, where each clinic is independent and individually well-equipped with skilled healthcare professionals and advanced infrastructure to serve the healthcare needs of the patients and ensure their rehabilitation.

## Green energy will help fight pollution and create jobs in India

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

India, committed to climate mitigation programme, today stands 4th globally in renewable energy installed capacity, 4th in wind power capacity and 5th in solar power capacity, as per International Renewable Energy Agency - Renewable capacity statistics 2023.

The recent government initiatives have played a major role in this. As of November 2023, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has approved 50 solar parks with an aggregate capacity of around 37,490 MW in 12 states across the country.

Also, the domestic industry is looking for ways to push this aggressively.

At COP26 held in 2021, India committed to an ambitious five-part "Panchamrit" pledge. They included reaching 500 GW of non-fossil electricity capacity, generating half of all energy requirements from renewables, to reducing emissions by 1 billion tonnes by 2030.

India as a whole also aims to reduce the emissions intensity of GDP by 45 per cent. Finally, India commits to net-zero emissions by 2070.

About 44 per cent of India's energy requirements at present come from non-fossil sources and are likely to touch as high as 65 per cent by 2030, much higher than what the country pledged at the COP summit in 2021.

## Despite external headwinds, India closed 2023-24 fiscal strongly: Ministry of Finance

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

The Indian economy closed the just-concluded financial year 2023-24 strongly with its growth surpassing market expectations, despite strong external headwinds, the monthly economic review of the Department of Economic Affairs under the Ministry of Finance said.

The review report, released on Friday, said early indications suggest a continuation of the economic momentum during the first quarter of 2024-25 (April-June).

"The emerging robust trends in important high-frequency indicators of growth like the GST collections, e-way bills, electronic toll collections, sale of vehicles, purchasing managers' indices and the value and number of digital transactions attest to the growing strength of the economy," read the report.

Industrial activity is gain-

## India's forex reserves touch all-time high of \$648.7 billion: RBI data

**NEW DELHI, 24 MAY**

India's forex reserves spiked by \$4.549 billion to touch a new all-time high of \$648.7 billion for the week ended May 17, the Reserve Bank said on Friday. This is the third consecutive week of increase in the overall kitty, which had increased by \$2.561 billion to \$644.151 billion in the previous reporting week ended May 17. As per the RBI data, in the week ended May 10, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased \$3.361 billion to \$569.009 billion.

For the week ended April 5, the reserves had hit an all-time high of \$648.562 billion following multiple weeks of increases. Further, the gold reserves increased \$1.244 billion to \$57.195 billion during the week. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up \$1.3 million to \$18.168 billion, RBI said. India's reserve position with the IMF was down \$168 million to \$4.327 billion in the reporting week, the data showed.

## Wheat procurement in full swing, crosses last year's total procurement figure: Govt

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

Procurement of wheat during RMS 2024-25 is going on smoothly in the major procuring States across the country, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution said on Friday.

The ministry highlighted that 262.48 LMT of wheat has already been procured so far this year in Central Pool surpassing last year's total procurement of 262.02 LMT.

A total of 22.31 lakh farmers have been benefited during RMS 2024-25 with total MSP outflow to the tune of Rs. 59.715 crores, it said.

In terms of state performance, the ministry said the major contribution in the procurement came from five procuring states viz. Punjab,



Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh with procurement of 124.26 LMT, 71.49 LMT, 47.78 LMT, 9.66

LMT and 9.07 LMT respectively. Further, the ministry highlighted that the rice procurement is also progressing smoothly. 728.42 LMT paddy equivalent to 489.15 LMT of rice has been so far procured directly from 98.26 Lakh farmers during KMS 2023-24, with total MSP outflow of approx. Rs. 1,60,472 crores.

With above quantity of procurement, the combined stock of wheat and rice at present in Central Pool surpassed 600 LMT which puts the country in a comfortable position to meet out its requirements of food grains under PMGKAY and other welfare schemes and for market interventions too.

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**WAREHOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY**  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

NCUI Building, 4th Floor, 3, Siri Institutional Area, August Kranti Marg Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016, Tel. No.: 49536496, 49092978

F.No. WDR-HR0Dept(DDSR)/1/2023-HR/736 Date: 14-05-2024

Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) invites applications from eligible personnel working in the Central / State Governments / Central and State PSUs / Autonomous / Statutory bodies for the following posts to be filled on deputation / absorption basis:

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	No. of vacancies	Number and date of the Advt.
1.	<b>Under Secretary (Technical)</b> [Level-11 (Rs. 67,700-2,08,700) (7th CPC)]	01	No. WDR-HR0Dep (UST) / 1 / 2023-HR / 3048 dated: 08-03-2024
2.	<b>Deputy Director (Strategy Risk and Research)</b> [Level-11 (Rs. 67,700-2,08,700) (7th CPC)]	01	No. WDR-HR0Dep (DDSR) / 1 / 2023-HR/3064 dated 11-03-2024
3.	<b>Principal Private Secretary (PPS)</b> [Level-11 (Rs. 67,700-2,08,700) (7th CPC)]	01	No. WDR-HR0Dep(UST) / 1 / 2023-HR / 3048 Dated: 08-03-2024
4.	<b>Deputy Director (Legal)</b> [Level-11 (Rs. 67,700-2,08,700) (7th CPC)]	01	No. WDR-HR0Dep(DDSR) / 1 / 2023-HR / 735 dated 14-05-2024
5.	<b>Deputy Director (Human Resource)</b> [Level-11 (Rs. 67,700-2,08,700) (7th CPC)]	01	No. WDR-HR0Dep(DDSR) / 1 / 2023-HR / 735 dated 14-05-2024
6.	<b>Assistant Director (Stakeholders Affairs)</b> [Level-8 (Rs. 47,600-1,51,100) (7th CPC)]	01	No. WDR-HR0Dep(DDSR) / 1 / 2023-HR / 735 dated 14-05-2024

Detailed information may be seen at the Authority's website: [www.wdra.gov.in](http://www.wdra.gov.in) Applications in the prescribed format available on the website may be submitted to the Assistant Director (Human Resource), Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority, New Delhi within 30 days from the date of publication of vacancy circular in the Employment News, Corrigendum etc., if any, shall be put up on the WDRA website.

Note: Those candidates who had applied against the post of Deputy Director (Legal), vide advertisement number WDR-HR0Dep(DDLG)/1/2023-HR/2985 dated 21-02-2024, need not apply again. However, they can update their application, if they so desire. WDRA will consider their candidature along with the candidates applied for the post against this advertisement.

Sd/- Venita Solomon  
Assistant Director (HR)

CBC 0810912/0001/2425

## Classified

**CHANGE OF NAME**

**NAME CHANGE**

In my Passport No. J0570420 my name & my father Name Recorded as Md. Jaynal Abedin Biswas S/o-Abdul Majit Biswas instead of Joyanal Abedin Biswas s/o-Lt. Abdul Majid Biswas. I have solemnly declared vide affidavit No. 4618, before the court of the 1st Class Judicial Magistrate, at Barasat, Date: 22/05/2024 that SIDHARTH SAHU and RANJEET KUMAR is the same and one identical person in the eye of law.

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**PUBLIC NOTICES**

To Whomsoever It May Concern

Ramakrishna Math Baghbazar, having its Registered Office at 1, Udbodhan Lane, Baghbazar, Kolkata - 700003, West Bengal intends to republish the book titled "Sri Sri Chandri" edited by R a s m o h a n Chakraborty in the Bengali language 14 days from date. To the best of the publisher's knowledge, there is no subsisting copyright claim by any person in respect of the above work.

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MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (PMSSY Division)

Room No. 201-D, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi-110011

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (PMSSY Division) invites applications from eligible candidates for filling up the post of Deputy Director (Administration) in Level-13 (Rs. 1,23,100 - 2,15,900) (as per 7th CPC) on transfer on deputation basis in each of Vijaypur (Samba) (Jammu & Kashmir) and Guwahati (Assam).

2. For further details, please visit Website of the Ministry & this Division i.e. <https://www.mohfw.gov.in> and <https://pmssy-mohfw.gov.in> and

3. Detailed advertisement will be published in Employment News. The last date of receipt of applications will be the 45th day from the date of publication of advertisement in Employment News.

Dinesh Kumar  
Joint Director  
Tele: 011-23061730

CBC 17101/11/0005/2425

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Kolkata

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I don't have to decide whether I have more sympathy for one child or the other

GERMANY'S FOREIGN MINISTER ANNALENA BAERBOCK

STATING THAT IT IS NOT ABOUT TAKING SIDES IN THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ISRAEL & HAMAS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Israeli military recovers bodies of 3 more hostages

The army said they were killed during the 7 October attack and their bodies were taken to Gaza

AGENCIES TEL AVIV, 24 MAY

The bodies of three more hostages killed on Oct 7, were recovered overnight from Gaza, Israel's army said Friday...



Israel says around 100 hostages are still captive in Gaza, along with the bodies of at least 39 more, while 17 bodies of hostages have been recovered.

faces pressure to resign, and the U.S. has threatened to scale back its support over the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

On Friday Netanyahu said the country had a duty to do everything to return those abducted, both those killed and those who are alive.

In a post on X Friday, French President Emmanuel Macron gave condolences to the family of Hernandez-Radoux, a French-Mexican citizen, saying France remains committed to releasing the hostages.

The ruling is also expected to take effect Friday afternoon by the International Court of Justice to decide on an urgent plea by South Africa to order Israel to cease operations.

cease-fire order by judges of the International Court of Justice would heap more pressure on an increasingly isolated Israel.

On the hostages, Israelis are divided into two main camps: those who want the government to put the war on hold and free the hostages, and others who think the hostages are an unfortunate price to pay for eradicating Hamas.

Earlier this week a group representing the families of hostages released new video footage showing Hamas' capture of five female Israeli soldiers near the Gaza border on Oct. 7.

Russia links Ukraine to Crocus City Hall terror attack

AGENCIES MOSCOW, 24 MAY

Alexander Bortnikov, Director of Russia's Federal Security Service, on Friday said that Ukrainian military intelligence is directly involved in the terrorist attack at Crocus City Hall in the Moscow suburb.

Bortnikov made the statement at a meeting of the Council of Heads of Security Agencies and Special Services of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

He said: "The investigation is ongoing, but it is already safe to say that Ukrainian military intelligence has a direct connection to this attack."

Bortnikov promised that



"all circumstances of the crime will be established and everyone involved in it will not escape punishment."

A shooting at Moscow's Crocus City Hall concert venue on March 22, followed by a massive fire, resulted in at least 144 deaths and 551 injuries, according to official statistics.

WEATHER

Table with 3 columns: CITY, MAX(°C), MIN(°C). Lists cities like SINGAPORE, HONG KONG, TOKYO, LONDON, DUBAI, SAN FRANCISCO, NEW YORK, MOSCOW with their respective weather conditions.

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

Eight killed in knife attack in China: Eight people were killed and another injured in a knife attack in Hubei Province, central China, authorities said on Friday.

Vietnam: Fire at residential building kills 14 in Hanoi

HANOI, 24 MAY

A fire at a rental building in Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, killed 14 people and injured three others early on Friday, local media reported.

The building, which covers an area of 100 square meters, is located in a narrow alley approximately two meters wide and about 200 meters from Trung Kinh Street, making it inaccessible to fire trucks, VnExpress reported.

The rental multistory building has two rooms on each floor, with the first floor used for electric bicycle sales and repairs, Vietnam News Agency reported.

An electric bicycle short circuit was initially cited as the main cause of the flames, which occurred at 0:30 a.m., reports Xinhua news agency.

The case is being further investigated. A total of 1,555 fires and explosions happened in Vietnam in the first four months of this year, killing 28 people and injuring 26 others.

According to the country's General Statistics Office, the fires and explosions caused property losses of some 89.8 billion Vietnamese dong (3.5 million US dollars).

Top UN court orders Israel to halt military offensive in Rafah; Israel is unlikely to comply

AGENCIES THE HAGUE, 24 MAY

The top United Nations court ordered Israel on Friday to immediately halt its military offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah - but stopped short of ordering a cease-fire for the enclave.

Although Israel is unlikely to comply with the order, it will ratchet up the pressure on the increasingly isolated country.

Criticism of Israel's conduct in the war in Gaza has been growing, particularly once it turned its focus to Rafah.

This week alone, three European countries announced they would recognize a Palestinian state, and the chief prosecutor for another international court requested arrest warrants for Israeli leaders, along with Hamas officials.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is also under heavy pressure at home to end the war, which was triggered when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel, killing 1,200 people, most civilians, and taking some 250 captive. Thousands of Israelis have joined

weekly demonstrations calling on the government to reach a deal to bring the hostages home, fearing that time is running out.

Israel rejects the claims by South Africa, a nation with historic ties to the Palestinian people. "Israel takes extraordinary measures in order to minimize the harm to civilians in Gaza," Tamar Kaplan-Tourgeman, a member of Israel's legal team, told the court last week.

In January, ICJ judges ordered Israel to do all it can to prevent death, destruction

and any acts of genocide in Gaza, but the panel stopped short of ordering an end to the military offensive. In a second order in March, the court said Israel must take measures to improve the humanitarian situation.

While the ruling by the International Court of Justice is a blow to Israel's international standing, the court does not have a police force to enforce its orders. In another case on its docket, Russia has so far ignored a 2022 order by the court to halt its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Iran's military says Raisi's helicopter caught fire soon after crash and there was no sign of attack

AGENCIES TEHRAN, 24 MAY

The helicopter carrying Iran's late President Ebrahim Raisi caught fire soon after it crashed into a mountain and there was no sign it was attacked, state media reported, citing the military's crash investigators.

The statement from the general staff of the armed forces in charge of investigating the crash was read on state television late Thursday.



The first statement on the crash did not lay blame but said more details would come after further investigation.

The crash Sunday killed Raisi, the country's foreign minister and six other people.

The general staff's statement said the communications between the control tower and the crew of the helicopter before the crash contained nothing suspicious. It said the last communication of the crashed helicopter was between it and two helicopters accompanying it some 90 seconds before the crash.

There was no sign of anything shot at the helicopter and its flight path did not change, the statement said.

About 100 feared dead during huge landslide in Papua New Guinea

AGENCIES SYDNEY, 24 MAY

About 100 people were feared dead after a huge landslide battered a remote village in Papua New Guinea, the media reported.

The incident occurred around 3:00 a.m. local time



in Kaokalam Village in Enga Province, located over 600 km northwest of Port Moresby, Xinhua news agency reported quoting ABC.

"It has occurred when people were still asleep in the early hours, and the entire village has gone down," Elizabeth Laruma, President of the Porgera Women in Business Association, was quoted as saying.

JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY Kolkata-700 032 B.P.Ed. Admission (session 2024-2025) Applications are invited for admission to 2-year B.P.Ed. course to be made on-line through the University website...

China sends dozens of warplanes and ships near Taiwan to show its anger over island's new leaders

AGENCIES TAIPEI, 24 MAY

Taiwan tracked dozens of Chinese warplanes and navy vessels off its coast on Friday, the second day of a large military exercise launched by Beijing to show its anger over the self-governing island's inauguration of new leaders who refuse to accept its insistence that Taiwan is part of China.

China has issued elaborate media statements showing Taiwan being surrounded by forces from its military, the People's Liberation Army. A new video on Friday showed animated Chinese forces approaching from all sides and Taiwan being enclosed within a circular target area while simulated missiles hit key population and military targets.

Despite that, there was little sign of concern among Taiwan's 23 million people, who have lived under threat of Chinese invasion since the two sides split during a civil war in 1949. Taiwan's parliament



was mired on Friday in a dispute between political parties over procedural measures, and business continued as usual in the bustling capital of Taipei and the ports of Keelung and Kaohsiung.

The defense ministry said it tracked 49 Chinese warplanes and 19 navy vessels, as well as coast guard vessels, and that 35 of the planes flew across the median line in the Taiwan Strait, the de facto boundary between the two sides, over a 24-hour period from Thursday to Friday.

Taiwanese marine and coast guard vessels along with air and ground-based missile units have been put on alert, particularly around the Taiwan-controlled island chains of Kinmen and Matsu just off China's coast and far from Taiwan's main island.

CORRIGENDUM TO RAC ADVERTISEMENT NO. 150 FOR APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON RECRUITMENT & ASSESSMENT CENTRE (RAC)

Reference Advt. No. 150 published in Employment News, dated: 11-17 May, 2024 (DAVP Ref. CBC 10301/11/0021/2425 EN 6/24) and on RAC/DRDO website on 1st May, 2024.

The following amendments / corrections may please be noted: Eligibility: For: Retired Scientist or Technologists or Academicians or Civil Servants retired at the level of Secretary to the Govt. of India by re-employment on contract or eminent serving scientists or officers serving at the level of Secretary to the Govt. of India are eligible to apply.

Metro Railway, Kolkata PCSTE, Metro Railway, Kolkata for & on behalf of The President of India invites e-Tenders against Open Tender due to open on 20.06.2024 at 15.30 hrs. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

EASTERN RAILWAY e-Tender Notice No.: DTE\_JMP\_01 (Sl. No. 1 to 14), dated 22.05.2024. e-Tender is invited by Assistant Town Engineer, Eastern Railway, Jamalpur Workshop, Dist. Munger, Bihar, Pin-811214 for the following works.

Metro Railway, Kolkata Tender Notice for e-tendering is invited by Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway for the following work: Name of Work: "Zone 05 i.e. Zonal Contract for Zonal maintenance & Up-Keep of track and track bed of both Up & Dn line from Km. 0/0 to 07/14 between Dum Dum to Central (incl.) including "Y" siding at Girish Park of Metro Railway, Kolkata".

Metro Railway, Kolkata Tender Notice for e-tendering is invited by Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway, Kolkata for and on behalf of President of India for the following work: Name of work: Zone 03 i.e. "Zonal contract for Up-keep of track and track bed both Up & DN Line from Km. 16/18 to 25/11 between Mahanayak Uttam Kumar (Ex) to Kavi Subhas (In) including Kavi Subhas Yard and Carshed of Metro Railway, Kolkata".

Extension of sale period for MAHATRANSCO SRM e-Tender No. T-48/2023-24 The sale period & last date of submission for following SRM e-tenders is further extended up to 08.06.2024 @ 18:00 Hrs. Date of opening (Tech. bid): 10.06.2024 at 10:00Hrs (if possible). All other terms & conditions of the e-tender will remain unchanged.

# 'The country suffered a great deal under Cong & INDI alliance'

Calcutta High Court verdict affirmed that Muslims are not entitled to reservations, says Yogi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE MAHARAJGANJ, 24 MAY

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said here on Friday that the leaders of Congress and the I.N.D.I. alliance caused significant harm to the country. The chief minister made these remarks during a public meeting at the Fareda assembly of the Maharajganj Lok Sabha constituency while urging the public to vote for Union Minister and Lok Sabha candidate Pankaj Chaudhary. He said, "In their quest for power, they (the Opposition) have divided the nation and torn its social fabric apart. They propose to amend the Constitution to redirect OBC reservations to Muslims, a deeply conspiratorial move against the country that we cannot accept." Continuing his attack on the INDIA bloc, Yogi said, "In West Bengal, Congress's ally,



the Trinamul Congress Party (TMC), attempted to allocate all OBC reservations to Muslims, a decision that the Calcutta High Court deemed 'unconstitutional'. The court affirmed that Muslims are not entitled to reservations in India. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar stated that reservation provisions were established for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and after the Mandal Commission, the reservation was instituted for OBCs. This reser-

vation cannot be on a religious basis." He warned that religious-based reservations could lay the foundation for further division of the country, which was already partitioned in 1947. We must prevent another such partition. "Ram Lalla now resides in his divine temple in Ayodhya, a feat made possible by the double-engine government and the power of your votes," he pointed out.

The chief minister emphasised the importance of using the strength of the vote to respond to those who oppose Hindu and Sanatan values "whereas, in the SP and Congress governments, all the money was given for the construction of boundary of the cemetery." "Us dauran gaanv mein gareeb ki zameen par char log topi pehenkar pahuchte the aur jabran boundary bana kar kabristan ka board laga dete the. (There was a time when a few people sporting caps used to forcibly erect boundary walls of graveyards on the land of the poor.) In contrast, he said, funds today are spent on enhancing India's heritage and temples and improving facilities for travelers and devotees in deference to the people's sentiments. CM Yogi accused the Samajwadi Party, RJD, AAP, and other constituents of the I.N.D.I. alliance of opposing

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He reminded the public that they defeated Baba Saheb in elections and, during the SP government, removed the names of institutions dedicated to Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram. He accused Akhilesh Yadav of threatening to demolish memorials of prominent figures like Ambedkar, Sahu Ji Maharaj, and Savitribai Phule in Lucknow. Adityanath condemned Congress and the I.N.D.I. alliance for allegedly tampering with the Constitution, imposing emergencies, and undermining India's spirit for their interests, asserting that their current manifesto contains dangerous proposals as proof of their ongoing mischief. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath highlighted the significant development strides in Maharajganj, stating, "The entire railway line from Anandnagar to Siswa has been approved, with work commencing soon."

# 'Those promoting religion-based quota should be exposed'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, 24 MAY

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday welcomed the decision of the Calcutta High Court regarding OBC-Muslim reservation, and emphasized that the Constitution never allows reservation on the basis of religion. Speaking to media at his official residence, Yogi commented, "The TMC government of West Bengal, driven by political appeasement, introduced this reservation in 2010 by forcibly including 118 Muslim castes into the OBC category. This approach of prioritizing political interests over national welfare by the I.N.D.I. alliance must be denounced and exposed." He criticized the Mamata government of West Bengal for forcefully encroaching upon the rights of OBCs. "The Honorable High Court's reversal of the TMC government's unconstitutional action is a significant rebuke. Such

unconstitutional acts cannot be tolerated. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar reiterated this point numerous times in the Constituent Assembly." He explained that in India, reservation provisions were established for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and after the Mandal Commission, the reservation was instituted for OBCs, taking into account their social and economic backwardness. "The Constitution of India never allows reservation on the basis of religion. Baba Saheb had repeatedly warned the country that the country was divided on the basis of religion and we should not create any such situation which would push the country towards partition," he said. Describing the decision of the Calcutta High Court as an 'example,' the Chief Minister emphasized that even in Karnataka, the Congress government has made similar encroachments on the rights of OBCs by providing reservations to Muslims.

Azam Khan, family get bail in fake birth certificate cases



PRAYAGRAJ, 24 MAY

In a major relief to Samajwadi Party leader Mohammad Azam Khan and his family, the Allahabad High Court on Friday granted bail to him, his wife Tanzeem Fatima and son Abdullah Azam in two fake birth certificate cases. The court also stayed the 7-year imprisonment given by a trial court in the case. A single bench of Justice Sanjay Kumar Singh approved the bail of Khan, Tanzeem and Abdullah, and stayed the sentence of seven years. The verdict was given on a criminal revision petition.

# Parties pull out all stops as battle for Purvanchal heats up in UP



AGENCIES LUCKNOW, 24 MAY

As the Lok Sabha elections enter the final phases, Uttar Pradesh is poised for an intense battle, with the BJP and its allies facing a strong competition from the SP-Congress alliance in Purvanchal region. Purvanchal, comprising 27 Lok Sabha seats (14 in the sixth phase and 13 in the seventh and last phase), has emerged as a pivotal battleground, drawing attention due to its electoral significance and complex political and caste dynamics. The 2022 Assembly poll results set the stage for a closely-contested battle between the BJP-led NDA and the SP-Congress combine. Unlike in the 2019 General Elections, the BSP has preferred to go solo in 2024. It may benefit or harm the NDA and the INDIA bloc on some seats depending on local factors since the contest appears to be a straight one between the NDA and the INDIA bloc. In the 2022 Assembly polls, the SP had won 45 out of 135 Assembly seats in Purvanchal. The Congress also made inroads with victories in two constituencies, while the

BSP had bagged only one seat. The BJP managed to win 69 seats with its allies securing an additional 18. The fight may be even more intense in the sixth phase featuring 14 Lok Sabha seats. It was in this region alone that the SP won more seats than the BJP in the 2022 Assembly polls. Of the 70 Assembly seats under the 14 Lok Sabha constituencies, the SP emerged victorious on 34 seats while the NDA bagged 43 seats with the BJP winning 34 and its allies nine. The SP had swept all the Assembly seats under Ambedkar Nagar, Lalganj and Azamgarh LS constituencies. The Congress and the BSP also won one Assembly seat each in this region in 2022. The SP won 11 of the 70 Assembly seats under the 13 Lok Sabha constituencies that will go to polls in the last phase on June 1. The Congress also emerged victorious in one Assembly segment under Maharajganj Lok Sabha seat. The rest of the seats went to the NDA -- 43 to the BJP and nine to its allies. The battle for Purvanchal was not an easy one for the BJP in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections either.

# Assam govt confirms illicit liquor, not cholera, as cause of 11 deaths at tea estate

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE GUWAHATI, 24 MAY

The Assam government on Friday said the deaths of 11 individuals at Tonganagaon Tea Estate in Upper Assam were caused by the consumption of illicit liquor rather than cholera. During a media briefing in Tinsukia district, Deputy Commissioner Swapnil Paul clarified that the deceased workers from the Tonganagaon Tea Estate did not succumb to cholera or diarrhoea. "Comprehensive tests

conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) found no germs of cholera or diarrhoea in the bodies of the deceased," Paul stated. He further elaborated that the health department and district administration have determined that while some workers died due to the consumption of illicit liquor, others succumbed to different health issues. "A fact-finding committee was rushed to the garden to ascertain the exact reasons for so many deaths in such

a short span of time," he added. In response to the crisis, a 24-hour mobile medical camp has been established in the Tonganagaon Tea Estate to address any immediate health concerns. Over the past week, the tea estate has seen the tragic deaths of 11 individuals. The excise department has been instructed to take stringent measures against the production of illegal liquor. "The department has been directed to destroy all illegal dens where illicit liquor is

brewed," Paul mentioned. Initially, the Assam Tea Tribes Students' Association (ATTSA), Tinsukia district committee, claimed that the deaths were due to cholera and diarrhoea. They provided a list of the deceased and reported that many others were hospitalized. Reacting to the incident, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal expressed his concern and directed state Chief Secretary Ravi Kota and the District Commissioner to take immediate action. He also extended his

condolences to the bereaved families. This tragic incident has highlighted the urgent need for stringent measures to curb the production and consumption of illicit liquor in the region. It has also prompted a thorough review of health and safety protocols in the tea estates of Assam. The government and health authorities are now focusing on preventing such incidents in the future, ensuring the safety and well-being of the tea garden workers, and addressing any underlying health concerns that may arise.

# Mafia buried, henchmen rotting in jail in UP: Nadda

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KUSHINAGAR, 24 MAY

BJP national president J P Nadda on Friday asserted that the party is unwavering in its commitment to transform India into a developed nation. Addressing a public meeting in Sakhopar on Friday and urging support for BJP candidate Vijay Kumar Dubey from the Kushinagar Lok Sabha seat, Nadda highlighted that once Uttar Pradesh grappled with the terror of mafia leaders, witnessing murders in broad daylight, and leaving businessmen and daughters feeling unsafe. However, under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi and Chief Minister Yogi, a transformative change has occurred. "Mafia leaders have been brought to justice, and their associates are rotting in jail."

He highlighted that today, businesses are flourishing, and women are forging their own paths towards success. Nadda praised Yogi Adityanath for his relentless efforts to make Uttar Pradesh a leading state. Nadda highlighted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, major countries like the United States, European nations, and Japan struggled to decide whether to prioritize the economy or lives. In contrast, Prime Minister Modi made a decisive choice guided by the principle, 'Jaan Hai Tou Jahaan Hai' (If there is life, there is the world). While informing the public, he said, "While it took 100 years for the encephalitis vaccine to reach India, the country developed not one but two COVID-19 vaccines in just nine months. With 220 crore doses and booster shots administered, countless lives were saved. "Today, India has become



the world's second-largest pharmaceutical exporter and has surpassed Japan to become the third-largest automobile producer. Additionally, India ranks second in steel production. This evolving India is becoming self-reliant in various sectors. Extreme poverty has dropped to less than 1 percent, as NITI Aayog and the Interna-

tional Monetary Fund confirmed," he said. Nadda informed the public about some of the beneficial schemes, adding, "The Pradhan Mantri Suryaghar Yojana will reduce your electricity bill to zero, and the elderly individuals over 70 years will benefit from the Ayushman Bharat Scheme. A new development chapter is being written, with 11 crore families benefiting from the Har Ghar Nal Yojana. Over the past ten years, 55,000 kilometers of National Highway have been constructed. Thanks to Yogi Ji's efforts and Modi Ji's support, AIIMS has been established in Gorakhpur." He underscored the pivotal role of each citizen in shaping the nation's destiny through their vote. Casting your vote wisely, he emphasized, is a crucial step towards development, while a misguided vote can endanger the dignity of women and girls.

Criticizing Congress, he said, "They underestimated the potential of the Indian people and called them 'illiterate', while Modi Ji's vision has empowered even vegetable vendors to engage in digital transactions." He urged people to reflect on the remarkable progress India and Uttar Pradesh have made in the past decade and seven years, respectively, and to recognize their own contribution to this journey. He accused Congress of committing scams across all sectors and claimed that leaders like Lalu Prasad Yadav, Akhilesh Yadav, Mamata Banerjee, and the DMK have all engaged in corruption. He pointed out that many of these corrupt leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Chidambaram, Sanjay Singh, Arvind Kejriwal, and Azam Khan, are either out on bail or in jail.

According to officials, the second birth certificate of Abdullah was used for contesting assembly polls. But, his election was canceled by the High Court on the election petition. He did not get relief even from the Supreme Court. His date of birth is recorded as January 1, 1993 in the educational certificate, and September 30, 1990 in the certificate issued from Municipal Corporation Lucknow. A case was registered against all three. In the 2017 Uttar Pradesh polls, Abdullah was elected as SP MLA from Swar assembly seat. His rival candidate Nawab Kazim Ali Khan alias Naved Mian as well as BJP leader Akash Saxena complained about contesting the election on a fake birth certificate as Abdullah was not qualified to contest the same. SNS

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD

1	2	6	3	4	5
8		9			
10				11	
12			13		
14					15
16		17			
18	19				20
21					22

**ACROSS**

- Place of suffering (4)
- Uncertainty (5)
- Intention (3)
- Right of possession (9)
- Overalls (9)
- Piercing tool (3)
- House-train (11)
- Shade (3)
- Apiarist (9)
- Lovely (9)
- Male offspring (3)
- Lustre (5)
- Emblem of peace (4)

**DOWN**

- Stockpiles (6)
- Food fish (5,4)
- Pub game (5)
- Expression of disgust (3)
- Overthrow (6)
- Give (6)
- Numbing substance (11)
- Italian appetiser (9)
- Religious ministers (6)
- Company stock (6)
- Monarch's son (6)
- Buffalo (5)
- Compete (3)

**SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD**

**ACROSS**

- Leak
- Tum
- Lactern
- Cuisine
- Cream
- Tweet
- Pretend

**DOWN**

- Locust
- Knife
- Bulgar
- Useless
- Normal
- Ease
- Tot
- Arche
- Nopolis
- Hasten
- Ardent
- Cable
- Agel
- Guilt
- Arche

By arrangement with The Independent. Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required.

### BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker

TODAY, WHILE WE WERE DOING A DOCUMENTARY ON CAMP SWAMPY, WE SAW A SERGEANT CATCH ONE OF HIS MEN LOAFING

FOR ANY OF OUR SENSITIVE VIEWERS... YOU MAY NOT WANT TO WATCH THE NEXT SEGMENT

### RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson

HEAR ANY BUFFALO OUT THERE?

NO, NOT A SINGLE ONE

MAYBE THEY'RE SCARED OF EAGLES!

### DADDY DAZE/John Kovalski

COME ON IN AND MEET THE FORMERLY FEROCIOUS TEDDY BEAR.

AWW, HE'S CUTE AND BIG!

SO THE QUESTION IS WHOSE HOUSE IS HE GOING TO LIVE AT?

WELL, I'LL HAVE TO RENT A MOVING VAN. FINE HE CAN STAY.

### NEED TO KNOW

**Ambulance**  
FD Block Association (Amb) 9830452536, 9830181286  
Happy Calcuttans 24400160  
City Point Nurses Centre 2567-4113, 9831142623  
People's Relief Committee 2280-4943/9444

**24 hrs Medical Oxygen Delivery**  
BOC India Ltd. 9831277777

**Blood Banks**  
Ashok Laboratory 24720333  
Central Blood Bank 23510619

**Life Care** 2284-6940  
**Peoples Blood Bank** 2455-5164/5957  
**RK Mission Seva Pratishthan** 2475-3636/39

**Police/Fire**  
Lalibazar (Police Control Room) 22143230  
S. P. (North 24-Pgns) 25423005  
S.P. (South 24-Pgns) 2479-3333/1311  
Bhawan Bhawan 24791761/9, 24791933  
Fire Service Station Salt Lake: 2357-5293;

**Howrah** 2666-8111; Behala 2497-6285

**Civic Services**  
Kolkata Municipal Corporation: 2266-1000  
Water: 2543-1602

**Calcutta Telephones**  
Changed Number Announcement: 1316, 2636-1951, 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), 1316, 2636-7412/3542/2581 (manual).  
Sealdah: 2350-3535/3537  
Shalimar Station: 2668-1121, Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway: 139.

**SCRABBLE CHALLENGE**  
SUDOKU

### SUDOKU

Concepts SudoKu By Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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.

# The saga of successful thematic concerts

MEENA BANERJEE

The theme-based baithaks, curated by young sitar maestro Subhranil Sarkar, have gained tremendous popularity among initiated listeners. Usually, khayal vocalists and instrumentalists serve an item that comes under the canopy of Purab Anga Gayaki (PAG) as dessert after the main course of khayals or gatkaris. The concept of organising an evening of 'A Different Thumri Festival Baithaki' was totally focused on (PAG), led by Thumri, and it caught the fancy of music lovers. The sprawling courtyard of Girish Bhawan's Thakur Dalan, the venue, was bursting at its seams on 30 March.

Sarangi, an instrument closest to the human voice, was the first choice. Maestro Sarwar Hussain selected a Khamaj bandishi thumri set to slow jat. He was beautifully shadowed by his son, Aman Hussain, a budding sarangi player, and the lyrics were sung by renowned vocalist Rageshri Das. They were in the safe hands of tabla maestro Abhijit Banerjee, who fondly remembered how, as a young tabla player, he had accompanied legendary sarangi maestro Ustad Lateef Khan and how happy he was to be the accompanist of his grandson-disciple Sarwar. He also played a 'Ledh (Hori of Madhya Pradesh) in Chanchar's swaying gait. After the Kafi (addha tala), Rageshri's 'Lakhon ke bol sahe' echoed on the sarangi, verbatim!

But to do justice to a full-fledged thumri on instruments like the sitar and sarod is quite challenging. Sarod virtuoso Amjad Hussain covered up this disadvantage very aesthetically with the support of Manali Bose, a brilliant vocalist. They chose a thumri composed by Pandit Dhruv Tara Joshi, set to Madhyam se Pilu and Sitarkhani. The elaboration by Sarod remained very close to vocals with emotive phrases, as demonstrated by Manali. She also offered steady support in the laggi, beautifully played by tabla wizard Ujjwal Bharati. Their next piece was a dadra in Pancham se Gara. Apparently Hussain was much more comfortable now and exploited the pliable raga by crafting a very melodic



introduction and phrases set to dadra, embellished with a keherwa talfirta. On request, he played a popular composition by Ustad Vilayet Khan. The fast Taans could do better with pinpointed notes.

Blessed with tuneful hands and an analytical mind, sarod maestro Pratyush Banerjee, who straddles almost all the genres of music with élan, surprised many by admitting that thumri rendition is difficult without proper taleem. 'My guru emphasised Ragas' pristine character. It is difficult to come out of it,' he admitted. However, he chose to play a Desh thumri. The auchar was delightful due to soulful gayaki-based embellishments. Supported by tabla maestro Tanmay Bose, his thumri, set to Dipchandi, bent heavily towards gatkaris elements and suddenly switched over to keherwa. This was followed by a tappa that stood out for its playing technique, its contents, and the pristine purity of notes even in superfast gitkiri taans.

A well-trained musician in dhruwad khayal and thumri, harmonium wizard Rupashree Bhattacharya found a vocalist companion in Bishnupriya Chakraborty, but their choice of performing a Pilu-Khamaj dadra instead of a thumri at the outset was disheartening. Nonetheless, Rupashree treated this jod raga with awesome clarity. Her next choices were the Sohini and Pahadi dadras, immortalised by Ustad

Bade Ghulam Ali Khan. Soumen Sarkar offered beautiful support on the tabla.

## MELODIC NECTAR

Both the flute and the sarangi are instruments that are very close to the human voice. Despite their vastly different playing techniques, renowned flautist Debopriya Chatterjee, his disciple, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia of Maihar School, and Sabir Khan (son and disciple of sarangi legend Sultan Khan of Kirana Gharana) churned up an enthralling jugalbandi, superbly supported by tabla maestro Akram Khan's delicate and intricate Ajrara style. This was the grand finale of the 12th Sangeet Amritam Sangeet Samaraha, held at Gyan Manch recently.

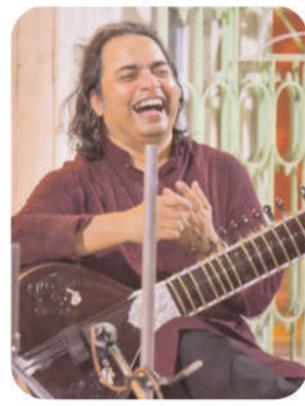
The event's beginning also saw a jugalbandi between sitar and sarod, dipped in undiluted Maihar flavor. The famous Kedia Brothers (Mor Mukut and Manoj) delighted the audience with Raga Yaman's gatkaris set to jhaptaal and teental, followed by a beautiful dhun in Mishra Kafi. Amit Chatterjee offered a very apt and artistic tabla accompaniment. The only vocal item of the event was a solo khayal (raga Kedar) and a beautiful traditional thumri in raga Madhyam Se Gara, rendered by Vidushi Sangeeta Bandyopadhyay, an exponent of Lucknow-Patiala-Indore gharana and founder of

Sangeet Amritam. Her soulful rendition was brilliantly accompanied by tabla maestro Arup Chatterjee and harmonium virtuoso Gourab Chatterjee.

## TRIBUTES

Tabla player Krishnendu Paul also paid his 12th annual musical tribute to his father, Pandit Gour Paul, a disciple of the legendary guru Natubabu (Krishna Kumar Ganguly). Under the aegis of Krishnendu's organisation, Parameshwari, the event's main attraction was a solo tabla recital by Pandit Sujit Saha. Following the Farukhabad tradition, he began with peshkar and chalan and moved on to different permutations of baant and kayda, followed by rela and tukra. After his scintillating performance, the elated Parameshwari family felicitated him.

Earlier, the veteran tabla maestro backed up Punyabrata Dasgupta as his accompanist during his rendition of slow and fast khayals in Puria Dhanashri and a Khamaj thumri set to jat. Debashish Adhikari's guiding harmonium was admirable. Violinist Subhranshu Bhattacharya, supported by the host Krishnendu himself on the tabla, presented an elaborate alap and slow ektal gatkaris in raga Shuddh Kalyan, the medium jhaptaal gat in raga Yaman, and finally drut teental gat and jhala in raga Bhupali. It was aestheti-



cally very pleasing. The final artist, Tanvi Goswami, sang Raga Adi Basant with an eye for symmetry. She was nicely accompanied by Gautam Chakraborty (tabla) and Suraj Sharma (harmonium).

## ANNUAL RITUAL

The Maa Sarada Hall of Narendrapur Ramakrishna Mission came alive when 'Sonarpur Hansadhwani' organised its annual ritual of paying melodic homage to Guru Arun Bhaduri, an extremely refined person who excelled in khayal, Nazrul-Geeti, modern Bangla Gaan, etc., a prolific composer, and a wonderful Guru with SRA.

Under the able direction of Bhaduri's disciple Dipankar Roy, a

researcher, composer, performer, and teacher, the initial invocation with Sanskrit shlokas and a lively chorus of popular Hansadhwani bandish 'Lagi lagan' by the students of the organisation was neat. His senior students went on to showcase a few of his inventions, such as raga Madhuram and tala Reshmi (eleven beats). Rajannya Dutta (vocal), Imon Roy (harmonium), and Anabhik Ghosh (tabla) were much above average.

After the felicitations of several dignitaries belonging to the cultural world, Dipankar Roy settled down to sing Raga Bhimpalasi, replete with khayal bandishes in slow rupak and medium-paced teental, followed by a Chaturang set to fast teental. All these self-composed bandages were treated with devotion. Ably assisted by Arka Banerjee (tabla) and Kamalaksha Mukherjee (harmonium), he closed with a raga Kirwani-based self-tuned Kabir Bhajan.

Tabla maestro Parimal Chakraborty stands out for his original touch to this over-popular percussion instrument. Supported by Hiranmay Mitra's steady harmonium, he enthralled the hall with his stylish peshkar and its elaboration, followed by tukra, kayda, etc. steeped in layakari. Finally, it was time for the soulful Purab Anga Gayaki, rendered by its celebrated exponent Vidushi Suranjana Bose. She began with a Hori thumri and cast her spell for the next hour, which culminated in a devotion-charged Kabir Bhajan.

The writer is a senior music critic

## The Heritage Academy celebrates its 7th film festival



The Department of Media Science, The Heritage Academy (THA), Kolkata, organised the 7th Heritage Academy Film Festival (HAFF) on the campus on 14 and 15 May 2024. The festival was inaugurated by the actor and producer, Subhashree Ganguly, as the chief guest. The festival was held in the presence of Madhupa Bakshi, Dean of the Department of Media Science at THA, along with Pradip Agarwal, CEO of Kalyan Bharti Trust (KBT), Gour Banerjee, Principal of THA, and other faculty members of the college. There were various events like fiction films, non-fiction films, photography, one-take films, trailer making, and many more. Over 100 entries for various events were received from the students of various colleges across the city.

During the inaugural address, Subhashree Ganguly said that it is really inspiring that within a very short period of time THA had organised such a wonderful film festival, which had already received various films made by the students from various colleges around the city.

There were engaging sessions with Unmesh Ganguly, content creator, and Rwitobroto Mukherjee, an actor, who spoke about the basic

ingredients of content creation and acting, respectively.

The second day witnessed a master class on 'Filmmaking in the Metaverse' which was addressed by Professor Samir Mukherjee, founder and mentor of VR AR in academia and drone academia. There was an event, the 'Cine Couture Fashion Show', which was evaluated by Srijita Ghosh, a fashion and social media influencer. Actress Chaity Ghoshal also addressed a particular session in HAFF 2024.

Apart from these, Judhajt Sarkar and Professor Ayan Nandy from Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI), along with other experts from the film and entertainment industries, were the judges for this festival. Actress Chaity Ghoshal also addressed a particular session in HAFF 2024.

The final day of the event witnessed the address of eminent film director and singer, Anjan Dutta, who was interviewed by Judhajt Sarkar on his latest movie, *Chaalchitra* Ekhon, which was made as a tribute to the legendary filmmaker, Mrinal Sen.

"Such a festival enriches the sense of creativity and innovation among the students," said Shri P. K. Agarwal, CEO of KBT, during the event.



# Bridgerton: Idealising the wallflowers of society

PURBASHA KARMAKAR

With frequent utterances of "My Lord" and "My Grace", Netflix takes us back to the enhancing world of *Bridgerton*, where romance, elegance and scandal collide against a candy-coloured backdrop of the regency era in London. Based on Julia Quinn's best-selling historical romance novels, Shonda Rhimes, Betsy Beers and Chris Van Dusen, after the success of last season's enemies-to-lovers trope, now bring us a new season where friends become lovers.

*Bridgerton* released its third season on 16 May 2024, with the first installation of four episodes. Penelope Featherington (Nicola Coughlan), an 'insipid wallflower', is living the dual life of Lady Whistledown, an eyebrow-raising anonymous female writer who penned a gossip sheet that skewered 18th-century London society. This sheet often exposed the hypocrisies of aristocratic London society, observed how men and women behaved in English society, and commented on their failings and cruelty.

However, as Lady Whistledown's identity is known to a very limited number of people, it ruins one of Penelope's most vulnerable friendships, that with her childhood confidante, Eloise Bridgerton (Claudia Jessie). As Eloise grapples with betrayal, she becomes friends with their society's 'mean girl', Cressida Cowper (Jessica Madsen). This character themes the pick-me-up behaviour in women and how patriarchy pits young girls against each other. It is through Eloise's friendship that we discover that behind her slightly sinister self lies a heart that is vulnerable and is yearning to make friends. It is heartwarming to see female friendships placed above the bar of romance.

Now, let's shift our attention to the friends-turned-lovers, Penelope Featherington and Colin Bridgerton (Luke Newton), who, in this season, finally emerge from the shadows of their older siblings and corners of the ballrooms to take centre stage. We see a remarkable transformation reflected in their wardrobe, appearance, and attitude, manifesting maturity and desirability.

Colin's travel experiences made him an absolute casanova, therefore appealing to female attention, a trait that young men his age think to be



cool. Hence, writers show how society forces men to suppress emotions and participate in the 'alpha male' charade. On the other hand, the show lets book-loving Penelope take charge of her own prospect of finding a husband, hoping that he will respect her individuality. She even fights for it when the need arises. It was revealed long ago that Penelope has a crush on Colin. Gradually, we see Colin realise that he wants more than going to brothels or being with random women abroad. Together with his deep connection to Penelope, which was built over years of friendship and familiarity, it probably made him realise that he does have feelings for her. It felt like the development of their romance was hastily done in Part 1, lacking the slow-burn development

that made the first season effective.

The showrunners did a great job. They set positive standards of representation for all body types. This season, you will also see a debutante converse with her mother in American Sign Language, Penelope talking to a young Lord in a wheelchair, and another debutante who is also a plus-size girl.

The subplots revolve around the narratives of three other Bridgerton siblings: Francesca (Hannah Dodd), Benedict (Luke Thompson) and Eloise. While Francesca has caught the Queen's (Golda Rosheuvel) attention this season because of her piano skills, Benedict develops a love interest with a woman in science. Amidst all the match-making and pounding of

hearts, it is Eloise who remains unaffected, enjoying her independence and asserting herself at parties and gatherings, telling how women can do better things when marriage is not always on their minds.

*Bridgerton*, this season (Part 1), through the Featherington siblings, highlights the absence of basic sex education among the unmarried women in 18th-century English society. It also delves into the experiences of former working-class individuals, Mr Mondrich (Martins Imhangbe) and Lady Mondrich (Emma Naomi), as they navigate towards nobility while being conflicted about losing their identity. For Part 2 of this season, fans are to wait until 13 June this year.

## 'BRO, FROM OUR U-19 DAYS'

India batter Shikhar Dhawan has paid tribute to his Under-19 and Men in Blue teammate Dinesh Karthik for his 'incredible journey' as the latter concludes his IPL innings following Royal Challengers Bengaluru's (RCB) playoff exit from the tournament. Dhawan lauded the wicketkeeper-batter's dedication and energy while extending best wishes for his future journey. "Bro, from our Under-19 days to now, it's been an incredible journey filled with hard work and accomplishments. Your dedication has always been inspiring. I love the energy and positive vibe you bring, always making people smile." Dhawan wrote on his Instagram post.

For more updates [www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com)

### THUMBNAILS



**Barcelona sack Xavi Hernandez as head coach:** Spanish giants Barcelona have confirmed that head coach Xavi Hernandez will leave the side at the end of the ongoing La Liga season. Xavi joined the club in November 2021 and steered Barcelona to La Liga and Supercopa de Espana (Spanish Super Cup) titles in the 2022-23 season. In the ongoing season, Barcelona are set to finish second behind Real Madrid. "In a meeting that took place at the Joan Campes Sports City, president Joan Laporta informed Xavi Hernandez that he will not continue as coach of the first team in the 2024-25 season," the Barcelona-based club said in a statement on Friday. "FC Barcelona wants to thank Xavi for his work as a coach, which adds to an unparalleled career as a player and team captain, and wishes him all the luck in the world," it added. Xavi will coach his last game as first-team coach against Seville on Sunday.

# Jay Shah denies approaching former Aussie stalwarts for India head coach's role

Ricky Ponting had claimed that he was approached for the role but he decided to decline as it did not fit with his "lifestyle" right now

TRIDIB BAPARNASH  
NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

Rejecting claims of approaching former Australian cricketers to consider taking up the head coach's role of the Indian team, BCCI secretary Jay Shah on Friday instead dropped hints of going for an Indian with a "deep understanding" of the country's cricket structure, to succeed Rahul Dravid, who is unlikely to apply for a third stint after it culminates post the forthcoming T20 World Cup in the Americas.

Shah's statement came a day after Australia legend Ricky Ponting, and former Aussie Test opener Justin Langer said that they had turned down approaches for the high-profile post. Both Ponting and Langer are associated with Indian Premier League franchises — Delhi Capitals and Lucknow Super Giants, respectively.

"Neither I nor the BCCI have approached any former Australian cricketer with a

coaching offer. The reports circulating in certain media sections are completely incorrect," Shah said.

Shah said that the hunt for the national team's head coach is a meticulous process, while insisting that having an in-depth knowledge of Indian domestic cricket would be an important criteria for appointing a new coach. He said the understanding would be crucial to "truly elevate Team India to the next level."

"Finding the right coach for our national team is a meticulous and thorough process. We are focused on identifying individuals who possess a deep understanding of the Indian cricket structure and have risen through the ranks," he said.

Going by Shah's statement, it seems that the BCCI is eyeing an Indian, and former India opener Gautam Gambhir, who is currently mentoring IPL 2024 finalists Kolkata Knight Riders, could be one of the frontrunners for the job. Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming has



also been linked to it.

Ponting had on Thursday claimed that he was approached for the role but he decided to decline as it did not fit with his "lifestyle" right now.

"I'd love to be a senior coach of a national team, but with the other things that I have in my life and wanting to have a bit of time at home... everyone knows if you take a job working with the Indian team you can't be involved in an IPL team, so it

would take that out of it as well," Ponting had said.

Taking up the role also implies spending 10-11 months away from home but Ponting said his family seemed ready for it.

"...I had a whisper to my son about it, and I said, 'Dad's been offered the Indian coaching job' and he said, 'Just take it, dad, we would love to move over there for the next couple of years'," Ponting said. "That's how much they love being over there and the culture of crick-



et in India, but right now it probably doesn't exactly fit into my lifestyle," the former Aussie skipper quipped.

Meanwhile, Langer said he would "never say never" but at the same time revealed receiving crucial advice from LSG captain KL Rahul.

"It would be an amazing job. I also know that it's an all-encompassing role, and having done it for four years with the Australian team, honestly, it's exhausting," Langer had said.

"And that's the Australian job. You never say never. And the pressure of doing it in India... I was talking to KL Rahul and he said, 'You know, if you think there's pressure and politics in an IPL team, multiply that by a thousand, (that is) coaching India. That was a good bit of advice, I guess."

"It would be an awesome job, but not for me at the moment," Langer added.

Describing the head coach's position as the "most

prestigious job" in international cricket and said it demands a high level of professionalism.

"When we talk about international cricket, no role is more prestigious than that of the head coach of the Indian cricket team. Team India commands the largest fan base globally, enjoying support that is truly unrivalled. Our rich history, passion for the game make this one of the most lucrative jobs in the world," he said.

"The role demands a high level of professionalism as one gets to nurture some of the best cricketers in the world and an assembly line of talented cricketers to follow. Catering to the aspirations of a billion fans is a huge honour and the BCCI will pick the right candidate, capable of propelling Indian cricket forward," the board secretary assured.

The BCCI has advertised for the position and the deadline for the applications is May 27, a day after the IPL 2024 final in Chennai.

# Kohli thanks just-retired DK for helping him out in tough times

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's spirited IPL 2024 campaign ended in the Eliminator against Rajasthan Royals, and with that the curtains on veteran wicketkeeper-batter Dinesh Karthik's illustrious IPL career also came down. Karthik's retirement was officially confirmed by the RCB in a post on Friday afternoon.

Star batter Virat Kohli led the franchise to sing praises of the 38-year-old stumper, who the Delhi batter credited for helping him out in tough times during the 2022 IPL season. In a video shared by the franchise, Kohli gushed about Karthik, terming him a "wise man".

"Off the field, I have had some really nice and interesting conversations with Karthik. He is a wise man, has great knowledge about a lot of things, not just cricket. I have thoroughly enjoyed my conversations with him," Kohli said.



"Even in that phase in 2022 when I did not have a great IPL season, I was really struggling for confidence, Karthik sat me down a couple of times and gave me a very honest explanation of how he is seeing things and maybe I am not able to see them myself," Kohli recalled.

Back in that season, Kohli endured three ducks to his name and managed to score just 341 runs from 16 matches with two half-centuries and a strike-rate of 115.98.

"So, I just like his honesty and courage to go and speak to anyone about things that he feels deeply about. And that I think is the most special thing for me when it comes to

endured three ducks to his name and managed to score just 341 runs from 16 matches with two half-centuries and a strike-rate of 115.98.

Karthik and that's one thing I have always cherished about him. That's why we get along really really well," Kohli said.

Karthik ended IPL 2024 with 326 runs from 15 games at an average of 36.22 with two half-centuries and a top score of 83.

Recalling his first impressions of Karthik when the duo first played together for India in the 2009 Champions Trophy on South African soil, Kohli said, "The first time I met DK, I remember we were playing in South Africa if I am not wrong in the Champions Trophy 2009. It was the first time I shared the change-room with Dinesh and I found him to be a very amusing, I would say hyper-active, confused person, most of the times he was moving all over the place, never stopping. That was my first impression of Dinesh."

"Outstanding talent, brilliant batter to watch and my first impression and present day impression are not far apart. Just that he has become wiser and calmed down a lot," the 35-year-old added.

# ICC announces commentary panel for 2024 T20 World Cup

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

The 2024 T20 World Cup is just one week away as 20 teams face off in an attempt to win the ultimate prize. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the panel for commentators for the course of the tournament.

Ricky Ponting, Sunil Gavaskar, Matthew Hayden, Ramiz Raja, Eoin Morgan, Tom Moody and Wasim Akram will be the leading voices through a month long journey set to begin on June 1.

The other big names in the team include Dale Steyn, Graeme Smith, Michael Atherton, Waqar Younis, Simon Doull, Shaun Pollock, Katey Martin, Mpumelelo Mbangwa, Natalie Germonos, Danny Morrison, Alison Mitchell, Alan Wilkins, Brian Murgatroyd, Mike Haysman, Ian Ward, Athar Ali Khan, Russel Arnold, Niall O'Brien, Kass Naidoo and former West Indies skipper Daren Ganga.

Along with some of the



iconic voices of the cricketing world will be American commentator James O'Brien better known as Jomboy who will be making his World Cup debut and cater to the American audiences.

Adding to the insights on the modern game, the team will be joined by former men's and women's T20 World Cup champions such as Dinesh Karthik, Ebony Rainford-Brent, Samuel Badree, Carlos Brathwaite, Steve Smith, Aaron Finch and Lisa Sthalekar.

"This tournament will be different in many ways, which makes it even more exciting. With 20 teams, 55 matches, and some new venues, it's a

thrilling combination, and I can't wait to dive in. Being part of such a high-class commentary team is a fantastic feeling, and commenting on players I have recently played with makes it even more interesting," said Dinesh Karthik to ICC.

"The Men's T20 World Cup, with its new format and more teams competing, is a fantastic opportunity to spread the game. I'm sure both old and new cricket fans will be eager for the action to begin. I will be watching every team closely, and it will be fascinating to see the different tactics that come into play," added Dale Steyn.

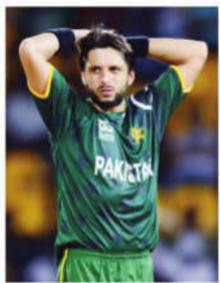
# Afridi joins Yuvraj, Gayle, Bolt as ICC T20 WC ambassadors

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi was on Friday revealed as one of the tournament ambassadors, along with Yuvraj Singh, Chris Gayle and eight-time Olympic gold-medallist sprinter Usain Bolt for the forthcoming ICC men's T20 World Cup 2024 in the West Indies and the USA.

Afridi is synonymous with Pakistan's most memorable moments in T20 World Cup history. He played a pivotal role in their journey to the final in the inaugural tournament in 2007 and their triumph in the 2009 edition.

Afridi came in clutch for Pakistan in both those years — he was Player of the Tournament in the 2007 edition where they fell on the final hurdle to arch-rivals India. However, they were quick to put that loss behind them and got their hands on the trophy in the next edition, where Afridi was the Player of the Match in both the semi-final against South Africa and the final for an all-round performance against Sri Lanka.



The former Pakistan captain cherished his memories of the T20 World Cup and expressed his elation at joining the upcoming edition as a tournament ambassador.

"The ICC Men's T20 World Cup is an event that is very close to my heart. From being Player of the Tournament in the inaugural edition to lifting the trophy in 2009, some of my favourite career highlights have come from competing on this stage," said Afridi.

"T20 World Cups have gone from strength to strength in recent years, and I'm thrilled to be part of this edition, where we will see more teams,

more matches and even more drama than ever before.

"I am particularly excited to witness the India vs Pakistan fixture on June 9. It is one of the great rivalries in sport and New York will be a fitting stage for this unmissable encounter between two great teams," he added.

Claire Furlong, ICC General Manager — Marketing and Communications, added: "Shahid competed in six ICC Men's T20 World Cups, two of which as captain and delivering a Player of the Match performance when winning the trophy in 2009, so who better to join our all-star ambassador team."

"He's a fan favourite around the world and alongside Yuvraj Singh, Chris Gayle and Usain Bolt, will be bringing fans closer to the event ahead of what is set to be the biggest T20 World Cup ever," Claire added.

The ICC men's T20 World Cup kicks off on June 1 with co-hosts USA taking on Canada at Grand Prairie Stadium in Dallas. India will open their campaign on June 5 against Ireland.

# Bangladesh's loss to USA a wake-up call before T20 WC: Shakib

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

Seasoned all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan termed Bangladesh's series loss to relatively lesser-known USA team as a "wake-up call" in the lead-up to the ICC men's T20 World Cup, starting June 1 in the West Indies and the USA.

Bangladesh's preparation for the marquee event suffered a massive setback when they went down 0-2 in the three-match T20I rubber, with a game still to be played. Bangladesh will now desperately look to avoid a whitewash.

"Certainly it is disappointing and we didn't expect it but we must give credit to the US team for the way they have played. I think no one expected that we will lose two games. Any match you lose as a team is disappointing and you don't want to lose a game and obviously it is very disappointing. But having said that we have to play the World Cup and this series might be a wake-up call for us as we haven't played the way we want to play," Shakib said while analysing the loss.

The 37-year-old cautioned



his side that there are no small or big teams in the shortest format of the sport, and the United States of America's team has proved that in the first couple of games.

"It's a team game and everyone has to take the responsibility - you win as a team and you lose as a team. I don't want to blame any particular person or any particular department. It's just that T20 is such a format you have to play very good cricket in all three departments to win against any team. There are no small or big teams in T20 cricket and that's why it is more exciting than any other format. And the proof of that is in the last two games the way US played," Shakib com-

mented.

Irrespective of the humiliating losses, Shakib insisted that they did not take the opposition lightly. "I don't think we took them lightly. In the first game maybe we couldn't do what we wanted to do and in the second game exactly the same thing happened - we couldn't execute the plans that we were supposed to do on the ground," he said.

"In T20 every team is very much equal. I have seen the game between West Indies A and Nepal and they really played well and you are seeing games between Ireland and Netherlands and they are playing very close matches. Pakistan lost to Ireland and

in the T20 it is anybody's game."

"It is on the day you perform better, and so you cannot take anything lightly in T20 cricket because one or two overs can change the momentum of the game and completely change the scenario of the game. That's why you are always up for the challenges and you cannot take anything lightly or anything for granted," the former captain added.

Bangladesh will open their campaign in the T20 World Cup against Sri Lanka on June 8, before taking on South Africa on June 10. They will wrap up their league stage with matches against the Netherlands (June 13) and Nepal (June 17).

# IPL: Spinners seal Sunrisers date with KKR in final after toppling Rajasthan Royals

AGENCIES  
CHENNAI, 24 MAY

Spinners reigned supreme in the Qualifier 2 and orchestrated Rajasthan Royals exit from the Indian Premier League as they helped Sunrisers Hyderabad walk away with a 36-run win at the Chepauk on Friday.

SRH skipper Pat Cummins' gamble to put spinners at their frontline attack against RR's power hitters worked like a charm for them.

The free-scoring Sunrisers will return to the feature in the final against Kolkata Knight Riders for the first time since 2018. The Riders outplayed Hyderabad in all facets of the game in Qualifier 1 earlier this week.

Missing a couple of key players, the Royals stepped up to chase down 176 against a resilient Sunrisers bowling set-up.

Yashasvi Jaiswal tonked the ball into the stands on the final ball of the first over to make clear Rajasthan's intent.

Cummins followed up with an economical 5-run over. Boundaries became scarce after Cummins' over which made struggling Tom Kohler-Cadmore take a gamble. In the fourth over Tom (10) attempted to whack the ball into the stands only to mistime his shot and sky it into the air. Rahul Tripathi took the catch.

In the last over of powerplay, Jaiswal went on a boundary-scoring spree. Facing pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jaiswal struck three fours and a maximum to take the Royals score to 51/1.

After the powerplay, Cummins introduced spinners into the attack and his single move took the game away from Rajasthan.

Impact substitute Shahbaz Ahmed bagged the big fish Jaiswal (42) in his first over. In the next over, Abhishek Sharma deceived Rajasthan skipper Sanju Samson to reduce RR to 70/3 in 9 overs.

In the 12th over, Riyan Parag and Ravichandran Ashwin fell to Shahbaz. Shiron Hetmyer and Dhruv Jurel tried to pull RR back into the game. But the spinners didn't allow the opposition batters to breathe for even a second. After Hetmyer fell to Abhishek, Jurel fought a lone battle but the asking rate had gone out of the Royals reach. The pressure caught up to RR as they fell short of the chase by 36 runs.