

evolve
 'VOTE FOR SOMEONE PASSIONATE ABOUT CAUSES'
 PAGE 15

8th DAY
 APPROPRIATION OF INDIAN TEXTILES
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IPL 2024 FINAL: CUMMINS FACES GAMBHIR TEST
 PAGE 12

The Sunday Statesman

India's National Newspaper since 1818

PAGES 16 | ₹5.00 L/C | KOLKATA | NEW DELHI | SILIGURI | BHUBANESWAR | PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky. Rain/thundershower with strong surface wind very likely. Maximum and Minimum Temperature most likely be around 38°C and 30°C respectively.

RAINFALL: Trace
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
 Max. 85% Min. 54%
TEMPERATURE
 Max: 37.0°C (+1.6) Min: 29.2°C (+2.3)
SUN RISES 04:53 hrs **SUN SETS** 18:14 hrs
MOON RISES 20:13 hrs **MOON SETS** 05:56 hrs
 New Moon on 6 June



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi takes a selfie with his mother and CPP chairperson Sonia Gandhi as they leave after casting their votes in New Delhi on Saturday. ■ ANI

Chhattisgarh factory blast kills at least 12: At least 12 people feared dead and many injured in a massive explosion at an ammunition factory in Bemetara district, Chhattisgarh on Saturday. The blast occurred at the Special Blast Limited factory in Borasi village, Berla block. The state government has ordered a magisterial inquiry into the explosion. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai announced the investigation and declared financial assistance of 5 lakh rupees for the families of the deceased and 50,000 rupees for the injured.

507,297,288 votes cast in first five phases: ECI

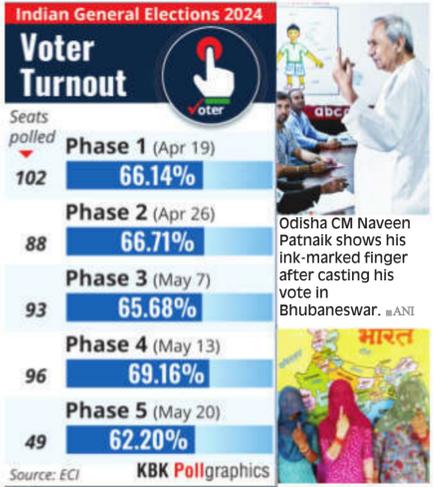
Any alteration in number of votes polled is not possible, says poll panel

AGENCIES
 NEW DELHI, 25 MAY

The Election Commission of India on Saturday said that they have decided to further expand the format of the release of turnout data to include the absolute number of voters in every parliamentary constituency as it announced these figures for the five phases completed so far.

"The Commission feels duly strengthened by the Supreme Court's observations and verdict on the process of release of turnout data by the Election Commission of India. This brings upon the Commission, a higher responsibility to serve the cause of electoral democracy with undeterred resolution," the commission stated.

"The Commission has therefore decided to further expand the format of the release of turnout data to include the absolute number of voters in every parliamentary constituency, which of course is discernible Parliamentary Constituency wise by all citizens themselves by applying the turnout percentage to total electors, both already made available in the public domain," it said.



They have acknowledged the truth. An attempt is made to create an atmosphere of doubt. We will discuss this with everyone one day for sure

CEC RAJIV KUMAR

The absolute number of voter turnout for the first five phases is 507,297,288. In the first phase of the Lok Sabha polls, the turnout was 110,052,103, the second phase witnessed a turnout of 105,830,572 voters, the third phase 113,234,676, the fourth phase 122,469,319 and the fifth phase a 55,710,618 turnout. Amid allegation of discrepancies on voter turnout

nating voter turnout data in the best possible manner, taking into account statutory considerations," the EC said in a statement.

It claimed that the whole exercise of the release of turnout data from the date of commencement of polls on 19 April has been accurate, consistent and in accordance with election laws and without any discrepancy whatsoever. "The Commission has informed in the public domain and also to individual political parties the detailed process of recording and release of turnout data and the manner of custody and usages of form 17C," it said. It underlined that there has been no delay in the release of voter turnout data.

Voter turnout data was always available 24x7 on the facilitative Voter Turnout App from 9.30 a.m. on the poll day of each phase.

"The EC publishes estimated voter turnout on two hourly basis till 1730 hrs (5.30 p.m.). After 1900 hours (7 p.m.) when the polling parties start arriving, data is continuously updated. By midnight on the poll day, the Voter turnout app will show the best estimated 'Close of Poll (COP)' data in percentage form," it added.

(With SNS inputs)

59.82 pc turnout recorded in sixth phase, Bengal sees highest turnout with 78.19 pc

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
 NEW DELHI, 25 MAY

An estimated 59.82 per cent voter turnout was recorded on Saturday in the sixth phase of voting in Lok Sabha elections in 58 constituencies spread across eight States and Union Territories. The polling was reported to be by and large peaceful.

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

The fate of a total of 889 candidates' was sealed in the EVMs. Prominent among the candidates from the BJP are Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan (Sambalpur, Odisha), former Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar (Karnal), Manoj Tiwari (North East Delhi) and Bansuri Swaraj (New Delhi); JP Agarwal (Chandni Chowk), Kanhaiya Kumar (North East Delhi).

According to the data issued by the Election Commission of India (ECI), the voter turnout was recorded at 59.82 per cent. West Bengal recorded the highest



Delhi registered 56.04 per cent turnout, Uttar Pradesh 54.03, Jammu and Kashmir 53.38 per cent, as per the data.

The fate of a total of 889 candidates was sealed in the EVMs.

turnout at 78.20 per cent, followed by Jharkhand at 63.27 per cent and Odisha at 60.97 per cent.

Haryana saw 59.36 per cent turnout, Delhi 56.04 per cent, Bihar 54.68 per cent, Uttar Pradesh 54.03, Jammu and Kashmir 53.38 per cent, as per the data.

Polling in Anantnag-Rajouri in Jammu and Kashmir was completely peaceful with a turnout of 53.38 per cent, the highest in many decades.

Elections also took place for the 42 Assembly constituencies of the Odisha Assembly (third phase) simultaneously. The voter turnout was recorded at 60.07 per cent, as per the voter turnout app. For the convenience of voters, the poll panel made arrangements of assured minimum facilities like water, shed, toilets, ramps, volunteers and wheelchairs.

The Lok Sabha elections are being held in seven phases between 19 April and 1 June. The first phase of polling was held on 19 April, second phase on 26 April, third phase on 7 May, fourth phase on 13 May and fifth phase on 20 May. The first phase recorded 66.14 per cent voter turnout, second 66.71 per cent, third 65.68 per cent, fourth 69.16 per cent and fifth phase 62.2 per cent.

The seventh and final phase is scheduled to take place on 1 June.

BJP is a party of false promises, says CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
 KOLKATA, 25 MAY

Trinamul Congress chairperson and chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday held a rally at Minakhan's Haroa Circus Ground in support of Trinamul candidate Haji Nurul Islam of Basirhat and issued a call to throw out the BJP regime from the Centre.

Miss Banerjee said that BJP buys votes with money and attacked the saffron party as a "false party with false promises." "Lakhs of cash are being seized every day. They are trying to purchase votes by distributing cash. They think they can buy everyone with cash," she said. She raised the slogan, "Remove BJP, Save the Country."

At the rally, Miss Banerjee also accused the Trinamul Congress MLA for Minakhan, Usharani Mondal, and her



husband, Mrityunjay Mondal, of having close ties with the BJP. "You will continue to be a Trinamul MLA but won't attend meetings? That will not work. Until you apologise and beg for forgiveness, we do not accept Usharani Mondal. I have no relationship with her. We don't want people like you. Will you sell the party with your husband? We will not tolerate this," said Miss Banerjee.

She asked the people of Minakhan to remember that the party is above all as it represents the ideology. "No personal interest or gain should be prioritised over the party. You, the people of Minakhan, must ensure the victory of Haji Nurul Islam. I will personally come here again. I promise you that the NRC and CAA will not be implemented as TMC will put up stiff resistance against them. We will oppose the Uniform Civil Code," she said.

The Chief Minister also expressed displeasure over two recent orders passed by Calcutta High Court - cancellation of around 26,000 school jobs, and scrapping more than five lakh OBC certificates issued by the Bengal government after 2010 as 'invalid'.

She assured that the interests of OBC, SC, and ST communities would be kept intact. "I assure you that no job will be taken away by the BJP or anyone else. Grants for farmers will continue. Fishermen will receive Rs 10,000 assistance in phases," she said. She also took part in a road show from BF and CF ground to EM Bypass this afternoon.

'India needs a PM who can assert its capacity, strength'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
 NEW DELHI, 25 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the current Lok Sabha election is not for just electing MPs; it is to elect the nation's PM, and India needs a PM who can assert this strong country's capacity and strength before the world with full force.

Addressing a BJP election rally in Patna, he told the crowd: "Your vote is no ordinary vote, it has weight that it will decide India's PM. You may be in Pataliputra, but you will decide Delhi's fate."

The Prime Minister said: "While Modi is working 24 hours for you, the INDI alliance is speaking lies to you 24 hours. Modi is working 24x7 for developed India by 2047,



for an atmanirbhar India, and enhancing India's security, along with construction of modern roads and railways."

The INDI alliance, on the other side, "has no work; some are relaxing in jail or outside, and day or night, busy abusing Modi, and trying to appease their vote-bank."

The Prime Minister said the INDI alliance is planning to have five PMs in five years. What will happen to the

country if this system is really implemented, he asked.

"And who are claimants for the PM's post, they include the son of the Gandhi family, Samajwadi Party family's son, National Conference family's son, NCP family's daughter, TMC family's nephew, AAP chief's wife, Nakli Shiv Sena family's son and RJD family's sons or daughters. They want to play musical chairs with the PM's post," he said.

The Prime Minister said the INDI alliance people are severely communal, they have nothing to with the Constitution; they are severely casteist and severely family-first people. Can such people do any good for Bihar or Patna, or to anybody's family, he said.

Raging inferno at gaming zone in Rajkot leaves 24 dead



Rescue operation underway after a massive fire broke out at the TRP game zone, in Rajkot on Saturday. ■ ANI

At least 24 persons were reportedly killed in a massive fire at a gaming zone in Gujarat's Rajkot on Saturday.

The fire broke out inside the gaming zone in a shopping mall when it was teeming with children.

Police teams and fire tenders were rushed to the spot to douse the fire. Sources said the owner of the gaming zone has been arrested.

The shopping mall was inundated with crowds because of the weekend. A couple of people are believed to be trapped inside the gaming zone where a rescue operation is on in full swing.

Meanwhile, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has instructed the officials to prioritise the rescue operation and ensure immediate treatment for the injured.

"Instructions have been given to the municipal corporation and the administration for immediate rescue and relief operations in the fire incident in the game zone in Rajkot. Instructions have also been issued to prioritise arrangements for immediate treatment of the injured," Mr Patel said.

Expressing grief over the incident Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X: "Extremely distressed by the fire mishap in Rajkot. My thoughts are with all those who have lost their loved ones. Prayers for the injured..."

Bengal braces for Remal, control room set up at Lalbazar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
 KOLKATA, 25 MAY

The depression which lies between Central and East Bay of Bengal has intensified into a deep depression and by Saturday evening formed a cyclone, according to the Meteorological department, which predicted landfall of between 11 p.m and 1 a.m on 26 May night between Sagar Island and Khepupara of Bangladesh.

The Met department said the wind speed of Cyclone Remal during its landfall will likely to be around 100-120 kmph and with a gusting speed of around 135 kmph.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall has been forecast in South and North 24-Parganas on Sunday accompanied with thunderstorms, whose wind speed has been predicted at around 100 kmph.

The two 24-Parganas districts apart, East Midnapore, Howrah, Hooghly, Nadia, East Burdwan and West Midnapore too are likely to bear the brunt with heavy to very heavy rain-



Kolkata police conduct a public awareness campaign about Cyclone Remal at Nimtala Ghat in Kolkata on Saturday. ■ SNS

fall predicted for tomorrow and Monday.

On Monday, heavy rains are likely in Howrah, Hooghly, Kolkata, Murshidabad, Malda and South Dinajpur while light and moderate rainfall has been predicted in West Midnapore, Burdwan, Birbhum, Jalpaiguri and North Dinajpur.

The situation is expected to be at its worst between 6 p.m. on Sunday and 6 a.m. on Monday. On Saturday morning, the formation was around 420 km south of Khepupara in Bangladesh and at an equal distance from the Sagar Islands in a South-South East direction and was moving northwards. With landfall expected between Sagar Island and Khepupara of Bangladesh, the closer the landfall is to Sagar, the more Bengal and Kolkata will be affected.

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) in the evening issued a red warning for heavy and very heavy rain for Kolkata. A red warning is already in place for both North

In view of Remal's likely impact, flight operations at NSCB International Airport are being suspended from 12 p.m. Sunday till 9 a.m. Monday.

and South 24-Parganas for Sunday and Monday.

The Bengal administration as well as Central and state agencies associated with disaster management are gearing up to tackle the natural calamity. While a control room has been set up at the Kolkata Police headquarters in Lalbazar for the state agencies, teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) are heading for the districts that are likely to be affected by the cyclonic storm. The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is also issuing alerts to mariners besides coordinating with its Bangladeshi counterparts.

The NDRF, meanwhile, has deployed 12 teams with equipment in seven districts.

While one team will be deployed in Kolkata, there will be two each in the districts of North 24-Parganas, East Midnapore, and West Midnapore. Three teams have been deployed in South 24-Parganas, which is expected to be hit the hardest. The remaining teams will be stationed at Howrah and Hooghly. Senior officials of the National Crisis Management Committee held a meeting with Bengal chief secretary BP Gopalika on Friday to assess the preparations of the state administration to meet the calamity. In South 24-Parganas, District Magistrate Sumit Gupta held an emergency meeting with BDOs to discuss advance preparations for the cyclone.

Mr Gupta stated: "Control rooms have been opened in the district and blocks. Additionally, residents will be relocated from Ghoramara and other places to safe locations by Saturday evening. There is a risk of tidal waves in coastal areas on Sunday."

(More on Page 2)

Poll remark: Kejriwal tears into ex-Pakistan minister

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
 NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday came down heavily on former Pakistan minister Fawad Hussain Chaudhry over his remarks on the Lok Sabha elections and said India will not tolerate interference from the biggest sponsors of terrorism in its internal matters.

Mr Kejriwal, who is also the national convener of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), said the situation in Pakistan is very bad right now. You take care of your country. "The elections taking place in India are our internal matter," the AAP leader said.

The former Pakistan minister in response to Mr Kejriwal's statement, posted on X: "CM Sahab indeed electioneering is your own issue but hope you will appreciate extremism be it in Pakistan or India is a borderless phenomenon and dangerous for everyone be it BD (Bangladesh), India or Pakistan so everyone with some conscience must be concerned... situation in Pakistan is very far from ideal but individuals must strive for better society wherever they are..."



dling our issues. Your tweet is not needed. The situation in Pakistan is very bad right now. You take care of your country. "The elections taking place in India are our internal matter," the AAP leader said.

The former Pakistan minister in response to Mr Kejriwal's statement, posted on X: "CM Sahab indeed electioneering is your own issue but hope you will appreciate extremism be it in Pakistan or India is a borderless phenomenon and dangerous for everyone be it BD (Bangladesh), India or Pakistan so everyone with some conscience must be concerned... situation in Pakistan is very far from ideal but individuals must strive for better society wherever they are..."

South 24-Parganas gears up for cyclone Remal

Both North and South 24-Parganas are under red alert for Sunday and Monday, while Kolkata and four other districts are under orange alert

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 25 MAY

The South 24-Parganas district administration has geared up to tackle the impending cyclone.

Yesterday, three teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) arrived in the district and a control room has been set up.

Three years ago, in May, Cyclone Yaas wreaked havoc in the Sundarbans, including Ghoramara Island, Mousuni Island, Gobardhanpur, Sagar, Namkhana, Patharpratima and Gosaba.

Now, Cyclone Remal is threatening to strike.

Detailed analysis is underway to determine if the coastal areas of the Sundarbans will be hit again.

Both North and South 24-Parganas are under red alert



Kolkata police miking to spread awareness about Remal at Nimtala ghat in Kolkata on Saturday. ■ SNS

for Sunday and Monday, while Kolkata and four other districts are under orange alert.

According to the weather department's forecast, a deep depression will form over the Bay of Bengal on 25 May.

By the morning of 26 May, it will intensify into a power-

ful cyclone.

Sources from the central meteorological department indicate that the cyclone will hit the coastal areas near the West Bengal-Bangladesh border with wind speeds exceeding 100 km/h around midnight on Sunday.

The sea will become turbulent from Friday morning. Hence, fishermen in West Bengal have been advised to return to land by Friday evening. Experts believe that East Midnapore and South 24-Parganas districts will be directly affected by Remal.

Additional lightning warnings have also been issued for the district.

The district administration of South 24-Parganas is well-prepared to face the cyclone, said the authorities. District magistrate Sumit Gupta held an emergency meeting with BDOs to discuss advance preparations for the natural disaster.

He reviewed the latest situation in each block on Friday afternoon. Fishermen's associations have been warned.

According to administrative sources, the National

Disaster Response Force teams are stationed in Kakdwip, Sagar and Gosaba. Control rooms have been ordered to be set up in each block and panchayat offices in coastal areas.

Additionally, preparations are underway to relocate residents from Ghoramara and other island areas to safe locations.

The irrigation department has been instructed to monitor weak embankments closely. The power department and other departments have been told to be on alert. Many people in coastal areas are fearful due to the risk of embankment breaches.

According to sources from the Kakdwip sub-division administration, all ferry services in the sub-division will be suspended till further announcements. Additionally, tourists are prohibited

from entering the sea at Bakkhali and Gangasagar beaches. All flood shelters are being prepared.

Bijon Maity, assistant secretary of the West Bengal United Fishermen Association, said, "No fishermen are at sea, but we have warned everyone." The district magistrate stated, "Control rooms have been opened in the district and blocks. Additionally, residents will be relocated from Ghoramara and other places to safe locations by Saturday evening. There is a risk of tidal waves in coastal areas on Sunday."

Sundarban Development Minister Bankim Hazra said, "The administration is taking all necessary preparations. Special attention is being given to river embankments to ensure quick action if needed. Additionally, adequate relief supplies are being prepared."

Rescuers take guard as Cyclone Remal gathers steam



AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 25 MAY

Central and state agencies associated with disaster management are gearing up with severe cyclonic storm Remal hurtling towards the West Bengal and Bangladesh coastlines. The landfall is expected sometime around midnight on Sunday.

While a control room has been set up at the Kolkata Police headquarters in Lalbazar for the state agencies, teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) are heading for the districts that are likely to be affected by the cyclonic storm.

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is also issuing alerts to mariners besides coordinating with its Bangladeshi counterparts for proper handling of the situation.

"We are keeping a watch on the situation. All vessels that are likely to be close to the path of the storm have been told to take precautions. Warnings are being sent constantly to all ships and any smaller vessels that may be out at sea."

"Though there is an official ban on fishing in West Bengal at this time of the year, a search is being made for any stray trawlers that may have evaded the ban and sneaked out to sea. We are also in touch with the Bangladesh Coast Guard for a coordinated search and rescue effort if the need arises," a senior ICG official from the North East

Region, headquartered in Kolkata, said.

He also said that apart from ICG ships, air assets are also in place at Kolkata and Bhubaneswar for immediate deployment. Two monitoring stations have been set up at Haldia and Paradip by the ICG. The NDRF meanwhile, has deployed 12 teams with equipment in seven districts. While one team will be deployed in Kolkata, there will be two each in the districts of North 24-Parganas, East Midnapore, and West Midnapore.

Three teams have been deployed in South 24-Parganas which is expected to be hit the hardest. The remaining teams will be stationed at Howrah and Hooghly.

Meanwhile, Rathendra Raman, Chairperson of the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port (SMP) in Kolkata, reviewed the preparedness at the ports of Kolkata and Haldia.

The situation is expected to be at its worst between 6 p.m. on Sunday and 6 a.m. on Monday. There will be no cargo or container handling at the ports during this period and all equipment will be secured in a boom-down state to prevent any accident.

Ships at berth are also being secured properly. Port operators have also been instructed to secure all equipment and vehicles during the period. Importers and exporters have been directed to protect any exposed cargo with tarpaulin sheets and guard them with sandbags.

Hooghly district admin expects damage to crops, thatched houses

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HOOGHLY, 25 MAY

The approaching cyclone, Remal, accompanied by heavy to very heavy rainfall may cause havoc in the district, the district administration has sounded alert and alerted all the municipalities, local bodies, quick response team, irrigation department, the PWD, power supply and PHE department.

Control rooms at different places are being set up to monitor the changing situation with the advancement of cyclonic storm accompanied with heavy to very heavy rainfall, relief items are kept ready to reach affected people and medical teams are all put in place to meet any emergency situation.

An orange warning was issued in Hooghly district with heavy rainfall (7-11 cm) to very heavy rainfall (12-20

cm). Thunderstorm with wind speed reaching up to 50 kmph to gust (60-70) kmph has been predicted by the Met department.

Major damage is expected in the rural belt.

The local administration expects damage to thatched houses and huts, breaking and uprooting of trees, damage to power and communication lines is also expected.

Damage of paddy crops, horticultural crops and orchards, inundation of low-lying areas and localized flooding is expected.

The district administration has also issued safety directives.

All ferry services have been suspended from today till Tuesday and the disaster management team and civil administration has been kept on alert.

ER prepares to tackle cyclone Remal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 25 MAY

Eastern Railway is all prepared to face the consequences of probable landfall of cyclonic storm Remal.

All the divisions of Eastern Railway are scrupulously following basic guidelines as preparedness and mitigating the effects of the storm Remal, which is likely to hit West Bengal on 25-26 May and have initiated many measures.

All the divisions of Eastern Railway viz Howrah, Sealdah, Malda and Asansol will be following safety protocols as done in previous cases of storm/ tornado hitting West Bengal. Round-the-clock manning of headquarters emergency control and divisional control rooms by officers of engineering, electrical, S&T dept, safety & operating departments from 8am on Saturday to 8am on



Hot humid weather in Kolkata before Remal's arrival on Saturday. ■ MOULMONDAL

Tuesday morning. Officers at control rooms have been asked to convey time-to-time any abnormalities and storm update/ status to DRM, ADRM and other senior officers.

All advertising boards inside and outside stations will be checked and attended by engineering and commercial department officers and get them strengthened (wherever) required. Platform sheds will be checked and precautionary measures to be taken

to withstand the high-speed storm.

Intensive foot patrolling and stationary staff deployment to protect engineering assets viz track, bridges, FOB etc to be started from Saturday, informed a railway release. Engineering materials loaded in wagons will be stationed at critical flood/ track subsidence prone locations and diesel locos will be strategically placed for prompt movement of such wagons.

2 more nabbed in connection with RKM property case

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 25 MAY

Siliguri Police arrested two more persons in connection with grabbing the property of the Ramakrishna Mission.

They were produced before the court today. The police got the names of more persons, following interrogation of five persons, who were arrested three days ago. But the police have not yet arrested Pradip Roy, named in the FIR, lodged by the secretary Ramakrishna Mission in Jalpaiguri Swami Shivapremnanda.

Roy is still absconding, police said.

However, following instruction from chief minister



Mamata Banerjee, Siliguri mayor Goutam Deb yesterday visited the building named Sewak House, met Swami Shivapremnanda and gave him mutation papers from Siliguri Municipal Corporation and other papers, including holding tax receipts after thorough investigation conducted by the police.

Significantly, the police registered another case against the Ramkrishna Mission following a complaint of one

Pradip Roy, who claimed its ownership. Sources said Mr Roy was the mastermind behind the property grabbing case.

But the police after investigation and examination of papers came to a conclusion that Roy was not the rightful owner of the property.

The Ramakrishna Mission authorities finally proved that the late Sunil Kumar Roy of Siliguri donated his property, the land measuring 1.59 acre with two storied building, named Sewak House, located under Ward 42 on the Sevoke Road, Siliguri to Ramakrishna Mission at Belur Math through a Registered Deed of Trust.

The police, who locked the main gate of the property for investigation, finally unlocked it and handed the building to Ramakrishna Mission on Thursday so that it can begin philanthropic activities from there.

Notably, a group of armed men attacked the security staff and kidnapped a total of seven persons including cook, carpenter and mason, who were inside the building at around 3.30 a.m. on 18 May.

Bangio Sanyashi Samaj took out a rally named Sant Swabhimani Yatra in Siliguri yesterday and criticised Ramakrishna Mission's property grabbing case.

Police continue search for slain Bangladesh MP's minced body

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 25 MAY

West Bengal Criminal Investigation Department (CID) conducted a search operation in Bhangar for the second consecutive day on Saturday to retrieve the minced pieces of the body of Bangladesh member of parliament Anwarul Azim Anar

According to the West Bengal Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Anar was smothered and killed in a flat in Kolkata and his body chopped and minced to destroy his identity.

The CID team has launched a search operation to find the body parts of the Bangladesh MP.

Anar who entered India on May 12, was last seen on the afternoon of May 13 when he went with friends to the flat in Bidhannagar near Kolkata for a medical check-up.

The CID said that they had arrested one of the suspects in the case, a Mumbai-based



Police search for the body parts of Bangladesh MP Anwarul Azim Anwar who was brutally murdered in Kolkata, at Bhangar area canal in South 24-Parganas on Friday. ■ ANI

butcher who confessed during interrogation that he had taken off all the skin from the Bangladeshi MP's body, chopped it up and minced the cut parts in a bid to destroy its identity.

Police said, "The assailants brought a butcher named Jihad (alias Siam) who was living in Mumbai illegally for many years. Two months ago,

he was brought to Kolkata by an American citizen of Bangladesh origin, Akhtaruzzaman Shaheen. This Shaheen is the mastermind of this planned heinous murder."

The accused Shaheen confessed that, on the orders of Akhtaruzzaman, he along with four other Bangladeshi nationals had smothered and killed Anwarul Azim Anar in

a flat, police said.

"Then they removed all the flesh from the body in the flat and minced it to destroy his identity and then they put everything in a polythene packs. They also chopped the bones into small pieces. They then took those packets out of the flat and dropped them around Kolkata and surrounding areas using different modes of transport," the police said in a statement on Thursday.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) was formed to investigate the killing of Bangladeshi MP.

Earlier this week, Bangladesh Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan in a news conference in Dhaka said that Anar, a three-time Awami League MP was killed in Kolkata. Speaking to reporters at his residence on Wednesday, the minister said that Bangladesh Police have arrested three persons in this connection, reported Bangladesh Newspaper Daily Star.

Classified

<p>SITUATION VACANT</p> <p>Wanted Faculties for D.El.Ed. Course of Khailsani Basanti Teachers' Academy, Bilkuli Boro Pukur Dhar, P.O.: Khailsani, Chandannagar, Dist.: Hooghly, W.B.-712138, for the post: Science, Humanities and Social Science, Mathematics, Language, Fine Arts / Performing Arts. Qualification as per NCTE Norms & Regulations 2014. Apply earliest along with photocopy of testimonials. E-mail id: principal.kbta@gmail.com Mob No.: 9007055046.</p>	<p>Coordination, Inventory, HR, seeks change. 9830794108.</p>	<p>CHANGE OF NAME</p> <p>I, DEBAPRIYA Chatterjee, residing at 65/A, S.C. Chatterjee Street, Konnagar, Hooghly have changed my surname from Chakraborti to Chatterjee vide Affidavit Number 4884 dated 24-05-2024. Hereafter Debapriya Chatterjee and Debapriya Chakraborti is same and identical person</p>	<p>I, SUDIPTA Subhasis Aich, S/o. Subhasis Aich, residing at 3/2, Ambika Ghosal Lane, Chatterjeehat, Howrah-711102, West Bengal, India shall henceforth be known as Sudipta Aich as declared before the Notary Public, Alipore Court, vide Affidavit No. 18, dated: 24-05-2024, Sudipta Subhasis Aich and Sudipta Aich both are same and one identical person.</p>
<p>SITUATION WANTED</p> <p>SENIOR Accountant, Commercial Real Estate, Infrastructure Development, Construction, Handling Projects, Accounts, Finalisation, Taxation.</p>	<p>I, MD NASIM, S/o. Sabir Ali, R/o. 1/7A/24, J.K. Ghosh Road, P.S.: Ultadanga, Kolkata-700037, declare that my name been wrongly recorded as Nasim Akhter. Henceforth Md Nasim and Nasim Akhter is identical same person vide affidavit sworn before Notary Public, Kolkata, 24-05-2024.</p>	<p>GROOMS WANTED</p> <p>WANTED groom for 33 years old, Kolkata-based divorcee girl, EB origin, B.Tech., fair complexion, Kulin Kayastha, height-5'-3", having a 4-years old boy child, Dhanu Rashi, Noro</p>	<p>Public Notices</p> <p>My client(s) intend to purchase ALL THAT piece and parcel of land measuring 1 cottah 2 chittaks 7 square feet a little more or less together with four storied dwelling house standing thereon comprised in premises number 53A, Shyambazar Street, Kolkata-700004, PS Shyambazar and PO Shyambazar within Ward No. 10 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation from its owner Mr. Sushen Bhattacharyya son of late Dr. Suniti Bhattacharyya. Any person(s) or entity having any right, title, interest, claim or demand whatsoever in respect of the aforesaid property is called upon to intimate the same in writing along with necessary document(s)/evidence in support thereof to me at my address given below or to call me at the numbers given below within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which the same shall be deemed to have been abandoned, waived, disclaimed and/or given up irrevocably.</p> <p>Advocate Dhiman Ray High Court, Kolkata 10, Old Post Office Street, Ground Floor (Quarter Area), Kolkata 700011 Mobile: 907552073/ 629633332 Email: raydhiman@yahoo.co.uk</p>

Cinema memorabilia to inspire collection

ASHOK CHATTERJEE
KOLKATA, 25 MAY

A display and sale of rare collections from the world of cinema is being put up at Tollyganga area for film buffs and anyone, who is passionate about celluloid.

Posters from yesteryears, booklets and other knick-knacks, which are part of memorabilia can be found at Shaker Bazaar, a one-of-a-kind exhibition-cum-sale series of collectors' items. The organizers said this is the first edition.

Being held at Noa Café in south Kolkata, many interested individuals walked in on the first day, Friday. The exhibition will continue till Sunday. Legendary actress Madhabi Mukhopadhyay inaugurat-



ed the show.

Talking about the show, art curator and researcher Jyotirmoy Bhattacharya said, "Kolkata is an amazing city, so many things happen here. We do not have a good archival system, where such things could be saved for later. But,

there are many individual collectors, who have painstakingly preserved these items. We are giving a message that one can keep a hand-painted poster, which is no more in practice. Exhibits of posters from films by Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Ritwik Ghatak, Ajay

Kar, posters from Hollywood and Bollywood, which are all part of our nostalgia today. We want people to engage in adda sessions over this period. In earlier times, booklets were given out when films were distributed, which had the synopsis of the film, songs and the artists. Lobby carts are also something which is now lost."

Writer and film producer Leena Gangopadhyay, who is also a partner in the exhibition-cum-sale said, "We want to promote good food, coffee and adda over cinema. These artifacts on display here are from a time zone, when we were not there and this is an attempt to capture that time zone. This is also a platform for the new generation to learn about the time gone by."

6th phase of LS polls: Sporadic incidents of violence reported

Voting percentage was reported to be 78 till 5 p.m. in the eight constituencies of Bengal



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 25 MAY

Sporadic incidents of violence were reported from some parts, mainly in Jhargram, Ghatol, Tamluk during the sixth phase elections in eight Lok Sabha (LS) constituencies in West Bengal on Saturday. Voting percentage was reported to be 78 till 5 p.m. in the eight constituencies — Tamluk, Kanthi, Ghatol, Jhargram, Medinipur, Purulia, Bankura and Bishnupur — in the southern part of the state.



The overall polling percentage in eight Lok Sabha constituencies that went to polls on Saturday has been recorded till 5 p.m. at 78 per cent.

The break-up of the percentage in eight LS constituencies are as follows: Bishnupur has topped the list of recording highest at 81.47 per cent followed by Tamluk 79.79 per cent, Kontai: 75.66 per cent, Ghatol: 78.92 per cent, Jhargram: 79.68 per cent, Midnapore: 77.57 per cent Purulia: 74.09 per cent, Bankura: 76.79 per cent.

over polling agents being prevented from entering the booths.

The agitating ruling party supporters squatted on the road and surrounded BJP candidate Hiran Chatterjee's vehicles in Keshpur under Ghatol constituency.

"Our booth agents are not allowed to sit inside the booths," he alleged.

BJP activists also staged a protest on the road and set tyres on fire in the area.

Trinamul Congress MP Dipak Adhikari alias Dev, contesting against Hiran however, rubbished the allegations.

Sporadic incidents of violence were also reported from

various parts of the Kanthi constituency in East Midnapore district.

BJP activists staged protests against the central forces and accused them of assaulting voters. "The TMC and the central forces are working against us. They are beating our party supporters," BJP candidate Soumendhu Adhikari claimed.

In the Midnapore constituency, BJP candidate Agnimitra Paul was seen facing 'go back' slogans by TMC activists. Subsequently, a scuffle broke out between the BJP and TMC supporters, following which central forces reached the spot to disperse the mob.

In Tamluk, one of the keenly contested LS constituencies in the state, former Calcutta High Court judge and BJP candidate justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay was greeted with 'go back' slogans from Trinamul Congress supporters in some areas when he visited polling booths in Haldia and Nandigram. A large contingent of security personnel was deployed to bring the situation under control and disperse the crowd.

In the Bankura constituency, BJP candidate and Union minister Subhas Sarkar faced protests while visiting one of the booths in the area.

On Friday night, a Trinamul Congress worker in Mahishadal, under Tamluk constituency was killed by unidentified persons triggering tensions in the area. The deceased, who has been identified as Sheikh Moibul, was a member of the local panchayat samiti. Chief minister and Trinamul Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee while addressing an election campaign in Haroa in North 24 Parganas today came down heavily on the saffron party, saying, "BJP again unleashed violence in several areas in Nandigram. An incident of murder was reported in Mahishadal last night and we will take political revenge against this."

INKED



Voters show their ink-marked fingers after casting their votes for the Lok Sabha elections, in Purba Medinipur on Saturday. ■ ANI

Polling in Junglemahal seats marred by sporadic violence



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MIDNAPORE, 25 MAY

The sixth phase of polling in West Bengal reported incidents sporadic violence and disruptions at some pockets of Midnapore, Ghatol, Tamluk, Kontai, and Jhargram.

BJP candidate Dr Pranta Tudu and his security personnel were attacked allegedly by Trinamul Congress (TMC) supporters in Garhbeta, West Midnapore. Dr Tudu claimed that his convoy was ambushed by TMC goons, resulting in injuries to two Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) jawans, who were hospitalized.

Dr Tudu recounted the incident: "All of a sudden, TMC goons who had blocked the roads started hurling bricks at my car. When my security personnel tried to intervene, they were injured."

Dr Tudu had to run away from the scene to save his life. "Thankfully, I had security personnel with me. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to save my life," Dr Tudu said.

A large police contingent was deployed to control the situation. However, local TMC leaders denied the allegations, accusing Dr. Tudu of attempting to "vitiate the peaceful polling process." They claimed that villagers protested against Tudu's threats to voters.

Vehicles belonging to various media houses were reportedly vandalized amid the chaos. Despite the tensions, the average polling percentage for the five Lok Sabha seats till 5 p.m. was 77.99 per cent, with Tamluk recording the highest at 79.79 per cent, followed by Jhargram at 79.68 per cent, Ghatol at 78.92 per cent, Midnapore at 77.57 per cent and Kontai being lowest at 75.66 per cent.

The epicenters of tension were Ghatol in West Midnapore and Tamluk in East Midnapore. In Tamluk, BJP candidate and former Calcutta

High Court judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay faced aggressive protests from TMC supporters as he moved from one booth to another. Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) personnel frequently intervened to disperse protesting crowds.

Mr Gangopadhyay, initially maintaining composure, later expressed frustration, threatening, "If such unruly protests continue wherever I go, the bones of protesters will be broken."

Suvendu Adhikari, Leader of Opposition in West Bengal Assembly, attributed the protests to TMC's fear of imminent defeat. He accused TMC of obstructing BJP polling agents and tampering with CCTV cameras. "Trinamul Congress is completely wiped out at Tamluk," Adhikari asserted.

In Ghatol, BJP candidate Hiran Chatterjee also reported TMC hooliganism. A clash erupted at Keshpur between TMC and BJP workers after Chatterjee's convoy was stopped by villagers demanding an apology for alleged BJP violence against TMC activists. Police intervened, but tensions escalated, leading to baton charges and tyre burnings by TMC protesters.

Mr Chatterjee accused the police, central forces, and TMC of colluding to defeat him. "They do not want the truth to come out," he said. His TMC opponent, Deepak Adhikari (aka Dev), coun-

tered, claiming Chatterjee was inciting tension.

In Midnapore, BJP candidate Agnimitra Paul raised concerns after encountering a state police officer at a polling booth, which she reported to the Election Commission. Paul also faced protests at Kismat Angua in Bonpura village, where she engaged in a verbal altercation with voters.

Abhijit Gangopadhyay continued to face hostility in Tamluk and Haldia, with protesters chanting "Go Back" and "thief." He warned, "If protests are held, then we will break their bones," before CRPF personnel dispersed the crowds.

Suvendu Adhikari, after voting at Nandanayakbar primary school in Nandigram, acknowledged reports of TMC intimidation but reassured that the BJP had secured most key booths.

"Scattered reports of intimidation and removal of BJP's polling agents have reached us from early morning but be rest assured BJP has ensured tight security in almost 90 per cent of the important booths this time," he said.

In Dantan, West Midnapore, seven people were injured in clashes between TMC and BJP workers wielding bamboo poles and sticks. As the day progressed, sporadic violence underscored the intense political rivalry in West Bengal, casting a shadow over the electoral process.

1 voter dies in heat while Bankura votes amid rain and festivity

KANCHAN SIDDIQUI
BANKURA, 25 MAY

Bankura in Junglemahal, where bullets used to rule once, witnessed preference for ballots today that recorded 82 per cent polling till 5 p.m. in one segment.

Three Assembly segments of the Bankura Lok Sabha seat - Ranibandh, Raipur and Taldangra, for years remained Maoist infested, where the fatwa against casting votes was the order. The segments secured 79.85 per cent, 82.50 per cent and 80.25 per cent voting respectively, today.

"Gone are those days of frequent bloodbath and the people of Junglemahal have expressed their franchise through EVM today," claimed Jyotsna Mandi, state minister after exercising her franchise in Ranibandh. She said, "People know that the credit goes to our chief minister Mamata Banerjee."



Women dressed in yellow saris and snickers that they wear during the tribal festival of Karam Puja were seen queuing up in the polling stations. Middle-aged voter Shyamoli Murmu, Kusum Soren at Darkedi polling station in Ranibandh said, "We voted in a festive mood today. It's a joyful day in a true sense."

The Bankura and the Bishnupur Lok Sabha seats recorded 76.79 per cent and 81.47 per cent polling till 5 p.m. today and barring a handful of stray

incidents polling remained peaceful added with a sudden rain for 10 minutes around 2.30 p.m. followed by a breeze of respite.

Trinamul Congress meanwhile alleged attempts of tampering in five polling booths at Bhamuria in Raghunathpur of the Bankura constituency.

Sharing two photographs EVM, VVPAT with paper tags with BJP written on them the TMC posted on X handle that the BJP was trying to tamper votes (in photos).



The Election Commission ruled out the charges saying: "While commissioning, common address tags were signed by the candidates and their polling agents." Arup Chakraborty, the TMC candidate said, "After we raised suspicion, the EVMs of the polling booths - 56, 58, 60, 61 & 62 were replaced accordingly."

A voter Manik Pathan meanwhile was thrashed heavily by the central forces in Kotulpur Assembly area of the Bishnupur constituency



as he'd appeared several times at a polling booth despite being warned. He was shifted to the Bidhniipur hospital.

One voter, Kartik Ghorui (45) of Khano village in East Burdwan died while on his way to the polling booth for casting his vote this afternoon. The village falls under the Bishnupur Lok Sabha seat. The physicians diagnosed that he died due to severe heat stroke. The entire area reeled under unbearable heat and humidity today.

Trinamul files plaint against micro observer

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 25 MAY

Today, The Trinamul Congress lodged a complaint to the general observer R Lalvena in Ghatol PC of ECI about one micro-observer of ECI getting inside room of the polling station and "acting as an agent of BJP supporting BJP candidate Hiranmoy Chatterjee at 156 Panithar booth in Sabang AC. The letter was signed by Sk Abu Kalam Boksh, Sabang block president of TMC.

Meanwhile, Trinamul Congress national spokesperson Dr Shashi Panja talked about Jhargram candidate Pranat Tudu's security harassing a woman voter. "We are condemning this. In Bengal,

women cannot be harassed in such a manner and this cannot continue. I do not know what lessons you are getting from the Prime Minister."

TMC X post read: BJP's Nari-Biddeshi achoron is no longer confined to words; it's now evident in their actions. From Central Forces outraging the modesty of women to BJP MP candidate, Pranat Tudu's security physically assaulting a woman waiting to cast her ballot, their onslaught on Bengal's mothers and sisters grows more brazen by the hour.

When the PM himself sets the tone with his misogynistic behaviour, what more can we expect from his underlings?"

High voting pc due to CM's developmental schemes: Bratya Basu

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 25 MAY

The Trinamul Congress held a press conference in the evening which was addressed by two senior ministers Bratya Basu and Chandrima Bhattacharya.

The leaders highlighted the attack on women voters at some places and how the BJP leaders tried to influence voting.

Minister Bratya Basu said, "Overall, people's excitement to vote has been seen. In many PCs, we saw 80 per cent voting by 5 p.m. We saw how the BJP candidate of Jhargram and BJP goons abetted violence. In Purba Medinipur, where people are seeking justice, we saw how injustice is occurring. On the

night of day-before-yesterday, goons entered homes of people and tried to settle places where they knew the TMC votebank existed. They entered homes and threatened voters. They killed people and vandalised cars apart from attacking the media. We have seen a fierce argument between a BJP candidate and security personnel. One phase of polling is left and we hope it will be peaceful."

He added that like our national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee has said that the final pin in BJP's coffin will be given during the final phase. Bengal will give this anti-women, anti-anti-Bengal BJP a befitting reply. The way the PM used the Mujra word today for the Opposition...he not only



ashamed his position but also insulted a community. This shows BJP's culture that from bottom to top, it is a reflection (of what they stand for)

On BJP alleging that not common people but TMC protested against Abhijit Ganguly and Agnimitra Paul, Mr Basu said, "I think in some cases, these were voluntary protests by the people. We have been hearing that Medinipur is not AITC's stronghold and we are losing, so how can we



stage demonstrations? It must be because of the candidates' behaviour that the ordinary people protested."

Mr Basu added, "I don't know why they are complaining against the EC because the state EC is under central EC. This means they are expressing lack of confidence in central agencies. Does it mean the BJP leaders are getting a hint about elections that the voting pattern is reversing? Maybe, that effect is falling on the EC and central forces. I will say that despite the provocation



of BJP leaders, central military forces have worked calmly and we hope that they will help in the peaceful polling of the seventh phase. The way BJP is complaining, I feel that their number of seats will be between 5-10 against their slogan of 30

seats."

On high voting in the sixth phase, Mr Basu added: "I think that due to CM Mamata Banerjee's developmental schemes, the women have got encouraged and voting percentage is high. Also, due to the realisation that the INDI alliance is coming to power, there is more excitement among the people."

Chandrima Bhattacharya, said the nari birodhi nature of the Opposition, especially the BJP, leaders has come to the fore in the sixth phase of polling. In 7 days, women were assaulted by the CRPF, who are here for protection. "Even today, a woman has alleged that the CRPF personnel molested her at her residence. We condemn the atrocities of the CRPF.

CM Vijayan unlikely to tweak liquor policy

State CPI(M) secretary M.V. Govindan has also denied any change in the policy



AGENCIES THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 25 MAY

M.P. Rajesh in view of the audio clip asking bar owners to pay Rs 2.50 lakh each for 'favourable liquor policies', the Pinarayi Vijayan government is unlikely to tweak the existing policy. State CPI(M) secretary M.V.

Govindan denied any change in the policy. He said, "When there is no news, the news gets created and this is what has happened. The state government has already clarified that no decision has been taken, why all this noise then."

Generally, the annual liquor policy comes into effect from April 1 but this time as the model code of conduct for the Lok Sabha polls is in force, it was deferred.

However, after a political uproar on the issue, Minister Rajesh wrote to the state police chief to probe the audio clip and register the case.

The case will be filed against Animon, the president of the Idukki Federation of Kerala Hotel Association, who is also the vice president of the apex body of bar hotel owners. It was his audio clip that went viral. Generally, the annual liquor policy comes into effect from April 1 but this time as the model code of conduct for the Lok Sabha polls is in force, it was deferred.

A few of the relaxations, which were said to be included in the new liquor policy, are

lifting of dry days (i.e., the first of every calendar month), and extending the timings for liquor sales at stores and bars.

After the controversy surfaced, the president of the majority bar owners in the state, Sunil Kumar categorically denied any drive to collect funds to be given for formulating a favourable liquor policy. He said the bar owners had met to discuss buying a building in the state capital for their association.

But his denial fell flat after the agenda of the meeting had no mention of their building project, instead it was about the proposed liquor policy.

It will not be long before Animon is questioned. In 2015 the then Excise Minister, K.M. Mani had to quit after an allegation surfaced that he had taken Rs one crore bribe from bar owners. And, in the latest case, the audio clip says the demand is Rs 2.5 lakh, which could add up to over Rs 20 crore.

Bar bribery row: UDF seeks judicial probe; seeks resignation of excise, tourism ministers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 25 MAY



UDF convener MM Hassan on Saturday demanded the government to order a judicial probe into the alleged bar bribery row in the state.

The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) has toughened its stance on the bar bribery allegations levelled against the Pinarayi Vijayan government.

Speaking to media persons here, Hassan said that only a judicial probe, not the inquiry conducted by the Crime Branch, would unearth the truth behind the audio clip. "Crime branch investigation will not bring out the real facts behind the bar bribery. The UDF is demanding the government to order a judicial probe into the allegations to bring out the truth behind the bribery charges," Hassan said.

He alleged that Excise Minister MB Rajesh and Tourism Minister Muhammad Riaz are involved in the bar bribery and demanded the resignation of both these ministers.

The UDF convener further said that the bribe collection from bar owners cannot happen without the approval and knowledge of the Chief Minister.

The bar bribery allegation made headlines when an audio clip, purportedly sent by an office bearer of the Federation of Kerala Bar Association, a collective body of bar owners, found its way to the media in which the leader was heard saying that each bar owners need to pay Rs 2.5 lakh to fulfil their demands such as the scrapping of the dry day policy and extending bar working hours from 11 pm to 12 pm. These suggestions

are already being discussed by the state government ahead of formulating its new liquor policy for the year.

Meanwhile, the Crime Branch has initiated a preliminary investigation into the controversial issue surrounding the voice recording of the leader of the bar owners' organisation demanding payment of Rs 25 crore for relaxation in the liquor policy. Excise Minister MB Rajesh had on Friday lodged a complaint with the DGP, alleging a conspiracy behind the audio recording.

Following the emergence of the audio clip and the subsequent bar bribery allegations, the LDF government might reconsider its proposed plan to relax regulations on liquor bars. The move of scrapping of the dry day policy and extending bar working hours from 11 pm to 12 pm could be put on hold. Both the government and the CPI-M are worried that any concessions to bars amid the controversy will help the opposition to state that there is substance in the bribery allegations.

Siddaramaiah directs suspension of police officials over youth's custodial death



AGENCIES MYSURU, 25 MAY

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday directed the suspension of a Deputy Superintendent of Police (Dy SP) and Police Inspector in connection with the death of a youth in police custody.

On Friday, the police took Adil (30), into custody on alleged charges of organising illegal betting (Matka), where he died in police custody.

Speaking to reporters in Mysuru, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that the deceased had epilepsy (brain disorder) and died in the hospital. "I have suggested that bringing the accused to the

police station without an FIR is wrong. No one should be brought to the police station without an FIR," he said.

Davanagere SP Uma Prashanth said the accused was not kept in the police station for more than six to seven minutes.

Tension continued to prevail in Karnataka's Channagiri town on Saturday following violence by a mob over the alleged custodial death. Security has been tightened in the city, and officers have been directed to take action to ensure law and order in the region. Additional forces have also been called from the neighbouring districts to maintain law and order.

So far, in the ensuing clashes between the protesters and police, eleven police personnel have been injured while more than five police vehicles have been damaged in the stone-pelting.

PMO has not informed Foreign Ministry: K'taka HM after Jaishankar remark on Prajwal Revanna's passport

AGENCIES BENGALURU, 25 MAY

After External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar disclosed that the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) received a request only on May 21 to impound the passport of Janata Dal-Secular MP Prajwal Revanna, Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwar said that the former's statement shows that the PMO had not informed the concerned ministry.

"This shows that the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has not informed the Foreign Ministry Office. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had written a letter. What happened to the Prime Minister's letter written by our CM?" the Karnataka Minister said.

Revanna is facing a probe by a Special Investigative Team (SIT) constituted by the



Karnataka government over allegations of sexual harassment and criminal intimidation following a complaint by a woman who worked in his household.

Parameshwar's statement comes after EAM Jaishankar, in an exclusive interview with ANI, clarified the procedural aspects, saying, "To impound a passport is governed by an act called the Passport Act. We need a judicial

court or a police request to do so. The MEA got this request from Karnataka only on May 21."

Highlighting the adherence to legal procedures, Jaishankar emphasized that the external affairs minister acted promptly upon receiving the request. "We immediately acted on it. On 23rd of May... we have to follow a certain procedure and the procedure is initiated," he added. Siddaramaiah wrote to PM Modi on May 1 and May 23 urging him to take action to cancel the diplomatic passport of Prajwal Revanna, who is said to have flown to Europe after being accused of sexually exploiting several women.

In his letter to the Prime Minister, the Karnataka CM said that it is shameful that Prajwal Revanna fled the country on April 27, 2024, to Germany using his diplomatic passport shortly after news of his heinous actions emerged and just a few hours before the first FIR was filed against him.

The revelation comes amidst a political storm surrounding Prajwal Revanna ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. The Karnataka government constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) on April 27 to probe into allegations against Revanna

after explicit videos allegedly involving him surfaced on social media.

Despite the allegations, Prajwal Revanna has vehemently denied the accusations, asserting that the circulated videos are doctored. The formation of the SIT came following recommendations by the state women's commission, indicating the seriousness with which the matter is being addressed by authorities.

K'taka BJP chief plays Cong govt for violence, seeks Governor's intervention

AGENCIES BENGALURU, 25 MAY

Holding the state Congress party responsible for the violence and attack on police personnel in Channagiri town following a custodial death, Karnataka BJP President B.Y. Vijayendra said on Saturday that Muslim vote bank appeasement is driving the state towards anarchy.

Vijayendra demanded that the Governor should immediately intervene and obtain a report from the government on the law and order situation. "I demand the intervention of the Governor to restore law and order in the state in light of the attacks on police stations," he stated.

Vijayendra further asserted



ed that, in cases of arrests of criminals, disruptive forces do not hesitate to attack and burn down police stations under the guise of minority rights. The Congress government is directly responsible for the situation. "The appeasement of the Muslim vote bank is driving the state towards anarchy," he stressed.

He emphasised that the possibility of involvement of terrorist forces, such as those recently arrested in connection with the Bengaluru cafe blast case, cannot be ignored. "There is a situation in the state where even the security of policemen is not ensured, and police stations are not safe,"

Vijayendra criticised. "There is a situation where the police are unable to perform their duties without bias. As a result, the state has become a safe haven for terrorists. The dominance of mafia and rowdies has crossed limits, and rave parties are organised without checks," he stated.

"First it was DJ Halli, recently it was Udipi. Today, the Channagiri incident shows that fundamentalist forces are well-organised to attack and destroy police stations. The concern is growing about the state and society we are living in," he underlined.

"The days of Bihar during the rule of former CM Lalu Prasad Yadav are recurring in Karnataka. The Congress gov-

ernment is turning the peaceful land of Karnataka into a land of insecurity and violence. A systematic network is operating to demoralise the police force in the state," Vijayendra charged.

"When the police and police stations are not safe, the people do not know whom they should approach. The Congress government is weakening the police system. Let the Congress declare that they run the government only for fundamentalist minorities and stand by them. Let them also declare that their aim is to accord liberty to their activities. The people will take care of themselves. The developments in the state are increasing the concern of the people," he opined.

Mullaperiyar dam issue: TN asks EAC to reject Kerala's proposal

AGENCIES CHENNAI, 25 MAY

After conveying objections to the Centre on the Mullaperiyar dam issue, the Tamil Nadu government has asked the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) to reject the Kerala government's proposal for constructing a new dam. The committee is scheduled to meet on May 28. A senior official of the Tamil Nadu Water Resources Department told IANS that the state was expecting the EAC not to go ahead with the proposal of the Kerala government for constructing a new dam at Mullaperiyar.

Tamil Nadu CMM.K. Stalin had on Friday sent a letter to Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav to instruct the officials concerned and member secretary

of the EAC to drop the agenda item on the proposed Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed new dam during the EAC meeting.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to the public at large that my clients have entered into an Agreement for Sale to purchase Premises No.3A, Peary Row, P.S. Burtolia, Ward no. 016, Kolkata-700006, measuring 9 Katha 15 Chittak 39 Sq.ft. more or less together with Dwelling house along with covered Structure / Garage measuring Cemented floor area of 100 square feet and Cemented Mezzanine floor measuring an area of 100 square feet from Prajitha Mitra, Arijit Mitra & Suknya Mitra who are claiming to be the joint owners of the said Property.

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Kerala: Car navigating with the help of Google Maps plunges in canal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 25 MAY

A group of four tourists from Hyderabad narrowly escaped a serious accident when the car in which they were travelling

plunged into a canal on Saturday early morning at Kurupumthara in Kerala's Kottayam after navigating with Google Maps. The accident occurred around 3 am at Kadav Bridge near Kuruppanthara. The tourists were travelling from

Munnar to Alappuzha, relying on Google Maps for directions. The car was completely submerged in the canal. The passengers were rescued by police and locals. The vehicle was pulled out with the help of locals at around 11 am on Saturday. Due to heavy rains, the canal was overflowing and the driver could not identify the canal as he assumed that it was a water-logged road.

"I mistook the canal for a water-logged road. I was driving at a speed of 10 km per hour. We realized the accident only when the backside of the vehicle started sinking in water," the driver said.

Although it is an accident-prone area, the authorities had failed to install a signboard or crash barrier at the site.

TN govt allocates ₹430 crore for children who lost parents to Covid

AGENCIES CHENNAI, 25 MAY

The Tamil Nadu government has allocated Rs 430 crore for the welfare of children who lost their parents to Covid-19.

A statement from the state government said that 382 children in Tamil Nadu have lost both or one of their parents to Covid and related

complications. The statement added that it has earmarked Rs 219 crore for protecting girl children.

The state government will provide Rs 5 lakh each to these 382 children. An amount of Rs 19.10 crore was deposited in their names and the money would be available to them along with interest once they attain 18 years of age.

CANCELLATION OF FEW EMU TRAINS over Howrah Division for upcoming Cyclone

In view of the upcoming severe cyclonic storm (Remal) on Sunday the following EMU trains will remain cancelled over howrah division on 26.05.2024 (Sunday) as precautionary measure: From Howrah: 37211, 37213, 37303, 37215, 37221, 37229, 37235, 37239, 37241, 37247; From Bandel: 37212, 37214, 37218, 37222, 37226, 37228, 37232, 37236, 37240; From Singur: 37304. **Special Note:** Passengers are requested to follow the public address system of stations. Inconvenience that will be caused to the travelling passengers is deeply regretted. **Divisional Railway Manager, Howrah**

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JOIN INDIAN NAVY

INDIAN NAVY INVITES ONLINE APPLICATIONS FOR 02/2024 BATCH FROM UNMARRIED MALE AND UNMARRIED FEMALE CANDIDATES (who fulfil eligibility conditions as laid down by the Govt. of India)

Age: Candidates born between 01 Nov., 2003 to 30 Apr., 2007 (both dates inclusive). Last date of receipt of online applications: **05 June, 2024.**

For eligibility criteria and details, visit: www.joinindiannavy.gov.in and Notification published in Employment Newspaper dated 11 May, 2024.

CBC 10701/11/0009/2425

'We are crossing 400 but Cong is once again falling below 40'

Shah said Rahul & his sister came to Shimla for holidays, but they did not go to the Pran Pratishtha

AGENCIES
UNA, 25 MAY

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi came to Shimla for holidays but did not go to the Pran Pratishtha of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya as they are afraid of their vote bank.

Addressing a rally in support of BJP candidate Anurag Thakur here today, Amit Shah said that there is a person like Narendra Modi who has not taken a leave for 23 years.

"Rahul Baba and his sister came to Shimla for holidays, but they did not go to the Pran Pratishtha of Ram Lalla. They did not go because they were afraid of their vote bank. In this election, on one side there is Rahul Baba who celebrates holidays every six months and on the other side there is Narendra Modi ji who eats sweets with army soldiers on the border without taking any leave even for



Diwali for 23 years," Shah said.

"We are crossing 400 but Rahul Baba is once again falling below 40," he added.

Further, the Home Minister said that the INDIA bloc

does not have any face for the PM post.

"The INDI alliance does not have a candidate for the post of Prime Minister. A journalist asked him who would become your Prime Minister.

So he replied that one person each would become one in turn for one year. Rahul Baba, this is not a grocery shop, this is a country of 140 crore people," he said.

Shah also emphasized that

PM Modi has crossed 310 seats in the five phases of the Lok Sabha election.

"Five phases of elections have been completed, today the sixth phase of voting is going on. PM Modi has crossed 310 in five phases. PM Modi has to be made the Prime Minister again by crossing 400 in the sixth and seventh phases. Those in the seventh phase have the responsibility to let him cross 400," he added.

Praising union minister Anurag Thakur, Shah said that even if the people search with a lamp, no one can find such an MP like Thakur.

"I have known Anurag for a long time. I was the president of the Yuva Morcha when we were together. Then he worked in the Cricket Association and now working in Modi Ji's cabinet. Even if you search with a lamp, you will not find such an MP. He not only cared about his area but also worked to mobilize the youth across the country with the BJP and its ideology," Amit Shah said.

Porsche crash accused Agarwals confined, lured and threatened driver to take 'blame'

AGENCIES
PUNE, 25 MAY

In a shocking revelation, the Pune Police said on Saturday that the accused minor's grandfather, Surendra Kumar Agarwal had confined and threatened the family's driver, forcing him to take the blame for the Porsche car crash of May 19 which killed two techies.

Commissioner of Police Amitesh Kumar told media persons that the Agarwals allegedly lured the driver, Gangaram Poojari with cash to claim responsibility for the accident committed by the minor, and when he didn't agree they threatened and confined him for two days at their home.

Kumar said that the driver -- now a prime witness in the case -- was compelled to make a statement that he was at the wheel of the luxury car at the time of the accident in a bid to save the minor boy, but he refused to oblige.

Agarwal, who was nabbed after interrogation around 3 a.m., was produced before a

Pune court and remanded to police custody till Tuesday (May 28).

The Police Commissioner said that after the crash, Surendra Kumar Agarwal and his builder son Vishal Agarwal -- currently in judicial custody for 14 days -- went and picked up the driver (Pujari) who was going home.

They snatched his mobile, confined him in a room, and barred him from going out or speaking with anybody.

"The Agarwals then pressured Pujari and coached him on what statement to give to the police, tried to bribe him with cash in return for taking responsibility for the accident, and when he was not swayed, they threatened him with consequences," said Kumar.

When Pujari did not return home the next day his anxious wife and some other relatives trooped to the Agarwal home, she screamed and shouted and rattled by the loud ruckus, he was allowed to go.

Scared and shaken by the ordeal, Pujari stayed put at home till the next day when

the Pune Police summoned and recorded his statement when he spilled the beans.

Later on Friday (May 24) during the search of Agarwal's home, the Crime Branch sleuths found Pujari's uniform, which has been seized. The driver will be given police security as he is now catapulted as a key witness in the high-profile case, said the Police Commissioner.

During the court hearing, Vishal Agarwal had claimed that it was Pujari -- and not the minor boy -- who was at the wheel, but the driver's statement proved damning for the minor boy.

"It was not my fault, the Agarwals tried to pressurise me. Initially, I was scared and responded in panic. I was in great mental stress and trauma as the family kept me in a room," the shaken Pujari had told the investigators, said the Police Commissioner.

Agarwal's son Vishal S. Agarwal was arrested and sent to police custody which ended on May 24 and he has now been remanded to two weeks judicial remand.

Vote against politics of hatred, distraction: Kharge

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 25 MAY

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday called upon the people to vote against the politics of hatred, rhetoric and distraction, as the voting for the sixth phase of elections gets underway.

In a post on X, the Congress chief said, "My dear countrymen, this struggle to secure democracy and the Constitution has reached its last two stages. Today is the sixth phase of voting and you have to vote."

"Vote on unity, justice and important issues. Vote against the politics of hatred, rhetoric and distraction. Think twice before pressing the button on EVM," he said.

Kharge, who is also the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha further said, "Remember today is the day when you



will be able to defeat the dictatorship with the power of democracy. If not now, then never."

Mentioning about the last five phases of Lok Sabha elections, he said, "In the last five phases, dictatorial forces suffered a major setback, voices of panic are at their pick. This is the power of your vote."

The Congress chief also appealed to the first time voters to exercise their fran-

chise. "In the first five phases of voting, you have rejected lies, hatred and propaganda and given priority to grassroots issues related to your life. Come out of your homes in large numbers and vote for your rights and the future of family," Congress leader Rahul Gandhi wrote on X after he exercised his franchise at a polling station here in the city.

Voting for the sixth phase of Lok Sabha elections in 58 constituencies spread across eight States and Union Territories (UTs), began on Saturday at 7 am, amid tight security.

According to the voter turnout app of the Election Commission of India (ECI), more than 10 per cent voter turnout recorded till 9 am. Delhi registered 8.94 per cent turnout.

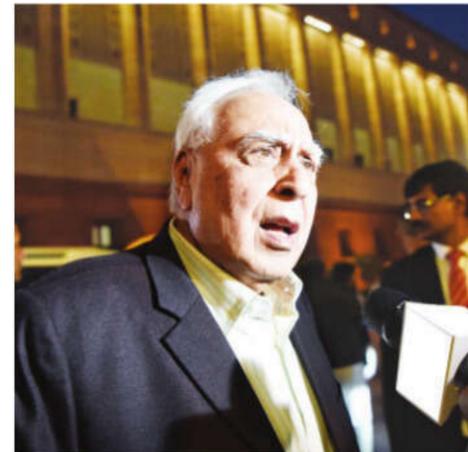
BJP suffered setbacks from fifth phase of LS polls onwards: Kapil Sibal

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 25 MAY

Senior advocate and Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Saturday claimed that from the fifth phase of the Lok Sabha election onwards, the BJP has faced setbacks and people have started talking not about Ram temple but about issues like inflation and unemployment.

"The information that I am receiving is that in the fifth and sixth phases, there have been a lot of changes. The pace that is in the fifth and sixth phases was not there in the earlier phases. People are not talking about the Ram temple but inflation, unemployment and other issues that have an impact on local levels and BJP will see a lot of damage in these phases," Sibal told ANI.

Sibal said that in the 2019 general election, the BJP got a considerable portion of the votes of the Scheduled Castes



and Scheduled Tribes communities but this time this was not the case.

"If the equation of Muslim, OBC, SC, ST and Yadavas is made, this will hurt them (BJP). Don't take it seriously

stituencies spread over six states and two Union Territories. The sixth phase of Lok Sabha polls includes eight seats in Bihar, all 10 seats in Haryana, one seat in Jammu and Kashmir, four in Jharkhand, all seven seats in Delhi, six in Odisha, 14 in Uttar Pradesh, and eight in West Bengal. A total of 889 candidates are in the fray.

Voting for 42 assembly constituencies in Odisha is also underway in the sixth phase. Assembly elections are being held in the state simultaneously with the Lok Sabha elections in the state.

All parliamentary seats in Delhi and Haryana went to polls in this phase.

Some key seats in this phase include New Delhi, North-East Delhi, North-West Delhi and Chandni Chowk in the national capital and Uttar Pradesh and Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh. Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag-Rajouri, West Bengal's Tamaluk, Medinipur,

Haryana's Karnal, Kurukshetra, Gurgaon, Rohtak and Odisha's Bhubaneswar, Puri and Sambalpur are some of the other key seats. Stakes are high for the BJP as also for the Congress, Aam Aadmi Party, and other constituents of the INDIA bloc in this phase of the election.

Polling has already been completed on 428 parliamentary constituencies for 25 states and UTs in the first five phases of general elections. Over 11.13 crore voters include 5.84 crore male, 5.29 crore female and 5120 third gender electors are eligible to exercise their franchise in the sixth phase of Lok Sabha polls. Around 11.4 lakh polling officials will be involved in conducting this phase of the election. The Lok Sabha elections will be completed on June 1 after the seventh phase of polls in which voters from 57 constituencies will exercise their franchise. The results will be declared on June 4.

MP CM asks for ensuring strict ban on loudspeakers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, 25 MAY

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav has passed strict instructions to officials to effectively enforce the ban on the uncontrolled use of loudspeakers at religious places and stringent checking on the open sale of meat.

The CM also instructed police officials to ensure effective measures along with an extensive awareness campaign to combat the increasing cases of cyber crimes.

The MP CM passed these instructions while chairing a review meeting of the law and order situation in the state along with senior officials today. Dr Yadav is also the Home Minister of MP.

The CM said that police must take strict action against those committing crimes against women. He ordered vigilant and prompt action at



all levels to effectively control gambling, betting, property-related crimes, fraud, and

cyber crimes. The CM directed senior police officials to conduct

surprise inspections of police stations, especially at night. Dr Mohan Yadav directed to

install CCTV cameras in high-crime areas.

Dr Yadav highlighted that more than 2,000 villages have benefited from the adjustment of police station boundaries.

During the meeting, it was reported that the boundaries of 627 police stations were redrawn based on feedback from public representatives and other sections, resulting in reduced distances for 2216 villages from their respective police stations.

The day Dr Mohan Yadav took oath as the new Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh on 13 December 2023, his first orders were for banning loudspeakers not meeting the sound limit specifications, from all kinds of places, including religious structures, across the state. The CM's second decision was about taking strict action on those selling meat products and eggs in the open.

Summer-end shock: With only 10pc stocks left, Mumbai faces 5pc water cut from 30 May

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, 25 MAY

With Mumbai lakes on the verge of drying up at the fag end of summer, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has announced a 5 per cent water cut from May 30 which will be doubled to 10 per cent from June 5, an official said here on Saturday.

With barely 10 per cent of water stocks left, the tough move comes as a precaution to ensure that the current available water can last as long as possible, but the BMC assured that there is no reason to panic.

To date, (May 25), the BMC said a total stock of 140,202 million litres of water is available in the dams supplying drinking water to the country's commercial capital.

The city needs 14,47,363 million litres annually, but the



current stock left is around 9.69 per cent, which is 5.64 per cent lower than last year during the same period.

This was owing to lesser October rainfall in 2023, compared with 2021 and 2022 when the rainy season was active till October 15.

However, the BMC is keeping a close watch on the situation and said Mumbai would get an additional

137,000 million litres from the Bhatsa Dam plus 91,130 million litres from the Upper Vaitarna Dam, spelling relief for Mumbaiers.

The BMC's water supply cuts shall apply to the supply given to Thane, Bhiwandi-Nizampur Municipal Corporation and surrounding villages.

The BMC pointed out that the IMD has predicted a timely onset of monsoon in 2024, considered a silver lining, and the water cuts will remain in force till the water stocks improve.

To help tide over the looming crisis, the BMC has recommended a series of water-saving measures for home and commercial uses, wastage of water, closing running taps or repairing leaky faucets, cleaning homes, vehicles, etc with wet rags instead of pipe-wash, etc.

J&K: Anantnag-Rajouri constituency witnesses 51.88 per cent voter turnout

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 25 MAY

Identified as the epicentre of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, the reshaped Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency on Saturday recorded 51.88 per cent peaceful polling till 5 p.m. The final polling percentage till 6 p.m. was awaited.

The newly included areas of Rajouri and Poonch districts, which were earlier in the Jammu Lok Sabha constituency, witnessed brisk polling. The two districts of Jammu division were included in the Anantnag constituency during the recent delimitation of constituen-

cies. In the last parliamentary election in 2019, the old Anantnag constituency consisting of areas of south Kashmir witnessed 8.96 per cent polling.

Enthusiasm among the electorate was witnessed right from the morning when long queues of voters were seen at the polling booths across the constituency. Polling booths recorded 8.98 per cent voting in the first two hours till 9 a.m. The voting percentage increased to 23.34 per cent at 11 am, 35.61 per cent at 1 pm and 44.88 per cent till 3 pm. Early reports indicated a substantial presence of voters thronging and queuing in the

polling stations in all the assembly segments of the Lok Sabha constituency.

The Rajouri segment, which recently witnessed terrorist strikes at Army personnel and civilians, recorded the highest turnout of 61.14 per cent voters till 3 p.m. This was followed by 58.22 per cent in the border segment of Nowshera. South Kashmir's Anantnag and Kulgam were at the bottom with 30.11 per cent and 26.27 per cent polling till 3 pm.

With completion of the sixth phase of the election, polling has taken place in all the five constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir.

CDS stresses importance of professional competence of services to meet quality requirements

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 25 MAY

Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Anil Chauhan has emphasised the importance of professional competence of the armed forces to meet the quality & safety requirements for operational preparedness.

He was visiting the Aircraft and Systems Testing Establishment (ASTE) and the Air Force Test Pilots School (AFTPS) in Bengaluru on Friday.

A ceremonial Guard of Honour was accorded and he laid a wreath at the memori-

al which honours the supreme sacrifice made by the Indian test crew and scientists while undertaking flight testing.

As part of his tour, he was briefed on the ongoing trials at ASTE and flight test training activities of AFTPS alongside aspects of the organisational roles of these unique institutions of IAF.

He was conducted around the facilities available at ASTE and AFTPS with the demonstration of major indigenous projects as part of Atmanirbhara and the training infrastructure.

The CDS also visited the



well-archived ASTE museum which houses artifacts depicting significant historical milestones along the five-decade-long journey of ASTE and AFTPS.

Gen Chauhan presided over the valedictory function of the 46 Flight Test Course, which was conducted at AFTPS.

A total of 17 students have graduated. This event was hosted by the ASTE as the traditional Suranjana Das Dinner where not only the graduating students but also their spouses were given a certificate of qualification.

Five students were also awarded trophies for their outstanding performance under various categories.

The students who were awarded were Sqn Ldr A Berwal with the Suranjana Das Trophy for best Test Pilot, Sqn Ldr Kapil Yadav - CAS Trophy for best flight evaluation, Sqn Ldr V Supriya - Maharaja Hanu-

manth Singhji Sword for best FTE, Sqn Ldr Rajnish Rai - Kapil Bhargava Trophy for best in ground subjects and Lt Cdr Gaurav Tyagi - Dunlop Trophy for most promising FTE and flight evaluation.

In his valedictory address, the CDS complimented Commandant ASTE and all staff of AFTPS for maintaining the highest standards of training in this niche field and their crucial role in capability building and modernisation of the Indian Air Force, including the upgradation of the military aviation environment of the nation.



Fiscal Crossroads

India's next government, buoyed by an unprecedented windfall of Rs 2.11 lakh crore from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), faces a crucial decision that could shape the nation's economic trajectory. This substantial dividend transfer provides a unique opportunity to either bolster fiscal consolidation or ramp up spending on infrastructure and social programmes. Each path offers distinct advantages and challenges, but the broader implications for India's economic health must guide this decision. The RBI's dividend, more than double the initial estimates, arrives at a pivotal moment. India's fiscal deficit has been a pressing concern, particularly after ballooning to 9.2 per cent during the pandemic. While the government has made commendable strides in reducing this to 5.8 per cent, the goal of reaching a 4.5 per cent deficit by 2025-26 remains ambitious. Utilising the RBI's surplus for deficit reduction could accelerate this process, enhancing India's fiscal stability and investor confidence.

A lower fiscal deficit can lead to reduced borrowing costs and lower inflationary pressures, creating a more conducive environment for sustainable economic growth. However, the alternative of increased spending cannot be dismissed lightly. Investing in infrastructure has long-term benefits that can significantly boost economic productivity. The BJP-led government's track record of prioritising infrastructure, with its three-fold increase ~ to Rs 11.11 lakh crore ~ in spending on this sector since 2019, underscores the transformative potential of such investments. Enhanced infrastructure can drive economic growth, create jobs, and improve quality of life. Moreover, targeted social spending, especially in a country with significant income disparities, can stimulate immediate economic activity and uplift vulnerable sections of the population.

Yet, there is a nuanced balance to strike. Excessive populist spending, while politically appealing, risks undermining fiscal discipline. The opposition Congress's promises of substantial cash handouts and debt waivers for farmers could strain the fiscal deficit further, leading to long-term economic instability. In contrast, strategic investments in infrastructure and essential social services can offer a dual benefit: spurring economic growth while maintaining fiscal prudence. The timing of this financial boon also coincides with robust tax collections, with a record Rs 2.10 lakh crore in goods and services taxes collected in April. This fiscal buoyancy provides a cushion, allowing the government some leeway in its spending decisions. However, the administration must avoid the temptation to indulge in short-term populism at the expense of long-term economic health.

The upcoming budget will be a litmus test for the new government's economic philosophy. Opting for fiscal consolidation will send a strong signal of fiscal responsibility, potentially lowering bond yields and attracting long-term investment. On the other hand, judiciously increased spending on infrastructure could catalyse growth, enhance India's competitiveness, and address pressing social needs without jeopardising fiscal stability. Ultimately, the decision should not be seen as a binary choice but rather a strategic balancing act. The government can aim for a prudent mix of both approaches: directing a significant portion of the RBI's dividend towards reducing the fiscal deficit while allocating a measured amount to high-impact infrastructure projects.

Post-poll scenarios

With six of the seven phases of the Lok Sabha polls complete, the election is proving to be far more strategically complex than initially expected. The BJP, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has enjoyed a dominant position over the past decade but has faced a recent challenge from the newly formed INDIA bloc, a coalition of opposition parties led by the Congress. Despite the optimism surrounding the INDIA bloc, and the public pronouncements of a defeat for the BJP, insiders privately admit that even if the Opposition does better than its wildest expectations, it will not be able to unseat the Prime Minister for he will be the leader of the largest single party, and thus the first to be invited to form a government. Of course, the BJP scoffs at such a hypothesis, stating confidently that it will do as well, if not better than it did in 2019. The BJP's strength lies not only in its own numbers but also in its ability to form alliances. Thus, even if it does not cross the majority threshold, a possibility its supporters dismiss, it will not take very long to find new allies to add to those it already has.

The INDIA bloc's strategy will hinge on not just increasing the seat count for Congress but also ensuring that its regional allies perform well. The Congress's performance will be critical, as it needs to significantly improve its 2019 tally to strengthen the opposition's bid. While Congress will not emerge as the single largest party, it will hope that its strong regional allies will shore up the numbers. The litmus test for Congress will be its ability to mobilise the INDIA bloc, maintain coalition unity, and prevent defections to the BJP, all of which is easier said than done. Of course, all that will be relevant only if the Congress is able to at least double its 2019 numbers.

Opposition insiders admit a fractured mandate, where no party or pre-poll coalition secures a clear majority, would lead to intense political manoeuvring and the BJP, with its larger single-party count, would have an advantage in such a scenario. While the INDIA bloc will hope to have a fighting chance, the battle will be far from straightforward. The BJP is and will remain a formidable force with significant political acumen in alliance-building. The outcome of this political manoeuvring will ultimately hinge on the ability, or lack thereof, of the INDIA bloc to consolidate its position and effectively challenge the BJP's dominance. While the Opposition may believe it has acquired some political muscle, the BJP under the Prime Minister is a very strong adversary; not a party that will roll over and give up.

The Chips Universe

Taiwan remains a hotspot for tension not only with China, but also due to the US-China rivalry which introduces an element of uncertainty in the supply chain ecosystem for chips. China is already feeling the brunt of US export controls that have severely limited China's access to AI chips, chip-making equipment and chip design software, much of which are controlled by NVidia. One reason why it so desperately wants to annex Taiwan is its chip-manufacturing capabilities

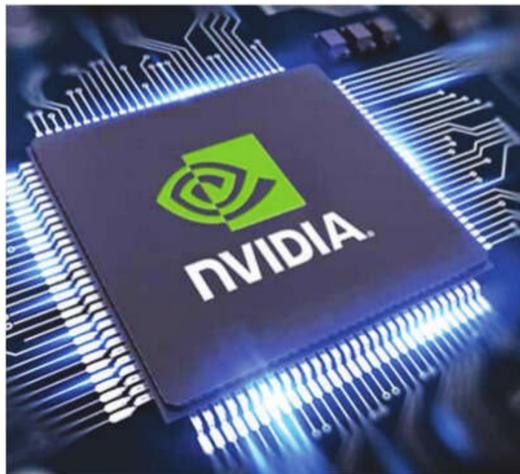
In 2019, the market cap of the two tech giants, Microsoft and Apple, was around \$900 billion each. A tech company called NVidia was a Lilliput compared to them, with a market capitalisation of only \$100 billion. No one would have imagined that just five years later, NVidia's market cap of \$2.2 trillion would be within catching distance of Microsoft's \$3 trillion or Apple's \$2.6 trillion. NVidia's phenomenal growth reflects a paradigm shift that has revolutionised hardware technology. Computers initially worked on their Central Processing Units (CPU) which were nothing but chips that contained millions of tiny transistors. Increasing the computing power meant increasing their number on a single chip.

Till about 2010, this increase was driven by Moore's Law, according to which their numbers doubled every two years, making computers millions of times faster. Companies like Intel or AMD that made these chips raked in billions of dollars from this CPU revolution. But Moore's Law has a physical limit. Transistors used in today's state-of-the-art chips are only a few atoms wide ~ and the width of a transistor cannot be less than the atomic dimension. Moore's Law is thus reaching its limits, slowing down the improvements in transistor density and hence constraining the growth of CPUs. But meanwhile, by 1990s, a more potent tool had taken the computing world by storm ~ the Graphic Processing Unit or GPU. While CPUs process tasks serially or sequentially, GPUs process tasks parallelly, executing multiple instructions simultaneously, and hence are much faster. While CPUs are capable of handling most of our daily computing needs like web-browsing, running software applications or file management, GPUs are far better in terms of computer graphics, video games etc. Their parallel processing ability dramatically reduces the number of transistors needed for the same computation and speeds up memory access many times over, making them suited for the ultra-fast processing demands of advanced AI applications.

CPUs also execute parallelism using multi-core processors where each core executes a different task simultaneously. While they can be used for running lightweight AI models, they cannot match the capability of GPUs with hundreds or thousands of smaller cores, each running separate threads of a larger task like rendering graphics etc.

Today's AI chip design solutions typically use reinforcement learning (RL) which is about learning by interacting with the environment and observing the response, through a process of trial and error. It becomes progressively better as it gathers more data, learning continuously and dynamically. RL facilitates electronic design automation (EDA) ~ the software used to design chips. But it is the generative AI, which can quickly generate texts, videos, images, and audio based on large language models that have given a tremendous boost to development of AI chip design.

Generative AI models are developing astoundingly diverse



abilities as demonstrated by OpenAI's ChatGPT. But they require massive amounts of data for training their models, demanding a significant amount of bandwidth and processing power. AI chips therefore require a unique architecture comprising billions of processors, memory arrays, security, and real-time data connectivity, which can be provided only by the massive parallelism of GPUs, which can serve as AI accelerators, enhancing performance for neural networks and similar AI workloads. AI Chips are emerging as the answer to the slowing of Moore's law. A single AI chip can store an entire AI algorithm. GPUs were originally designed for rendering high-resolution graphics and video games, but adapted quickly to the demands of AI, though they have their limitations since they were not specifically designed for AI tasks and are not always the most efficient option for AI workloads. More specialized AI chips, such as Application-Specific Integrated Circuits (ASICs) and Field-Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGAs) emerged as the next stage of evolution of AI chip technology. While ASICs are custom-built chips developed to execute specific tasks like neural network processing, FPGAs are chips that can be programmed to perform a wide range of tasks.

FPGAs are more flexible than ASICs, and hence suited for a large variety of AI workloads, but they are also more complex and expensive. The latest in AI chip technology is the Neural Processing Unit (NPU) designed specifically for the processing of neural networks, which constitutes a key component of modern AI systems. NPUs are optimized for the high-volume, parallel computations required by the neural networks, with high-bandwidth memory interfaces to efficiently handle large amount of data. Neural network computations being power-intensive, NPUs must be designed to optimize power consumption.

With the help of parallel processing, AI chips can distribute workloads more efficiently than other chips, minimising energy

consumption which can help reduce the AI industry's massive carbon footprint. State-of-the-art AI chips are also dramatically more cost-effective than the corresponding CPUs. One estimate tells us that an AI chip that is a thousand times as efficient as a CPU provides an output equivalent to 26 years of Moore's Law-driven CPU improvements. Older AI chips consume more energy with their larger, slower, and more power-hungry transistors leading to unaffordable costs and slowdowns. Cutting-edge AI algorithms need cutting-edge AI chips that demand continuous innovation and improvement to minimize the huge training cost of AI algorithms which require many tera bytes of data that cost tens of millions of dollars. CPUs or general-purpose chips can never match the economics of scale achieved by the AI chips. AI chips enable AI processing virtually on any smart device ~ from watches, cameras, kitchen appliances to smart homes and smart cities.

This process is known as Edge AI in which processing takes place closer to where data originates instead of on the cloud, thereby reducing latency and improving security and energy efficiency. They can enhance the capabilities of driverless cars by processing and interpreting the huge datasets collected by the car's cameras and sensors, and support sophisticated tasks like pattern and image recognition. They can help vehicles autonomously navigate complex environments, detect obstacles and respond to dynamic traffic conditions.

They are also extremely useful in robotics, in areas ranging from "cobots" or Collaborative robots that work alongside humans and are slowly changing the nature of work from harvesting of crops to humanoid robots providing companionship. The ability of AI chips to perform intricate calculations with high precision makes them an obvious choice for high-stake AI applications like medical imaging or robot controlled surgery. NVidia is currently the leading provider of AI chips. While it con-

trols 80 per cent of the global market share in GPUs, it doesn't manufacture them, sourcing them instead from Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (TSMC) which makes almost 90 per cent of the world's advanced chips that power everything from Apple's iPhones to Tesla's electric vehicles. It is also the sole manufacturer of NVidia's powerful H100 and A100 processors, considered the most powerful AI chips today. NVidia's AI chips are compatible with a broad range of AI frameworks which make them versatile for various AI and machine learning applications.

Other players include AMD and Intel. AMD, traditionally known for CPUs, has entered the AI space with products like the Radeon Instinct GPUs, which are tailored for machine learning and AI workloads, offering high-performance computing and deep learning capabilities. Intel is the world's second largest chip manufacturer by revenue. Besides CPUs with AI capabilities, it has developed dedicated AI hardware like the Habana Gaudi processors specifically engineered for training deep learning models. These processors stand out for their high efficiency and performance in AI training tasks, and are optimised for data centre workloads, providing a scalable and efficient solution for training large and complex AI models. They also have significant capabilities for inter-processor communication, which enable efficient scaling across multiple chips. Others like Microsoft, Google and Amazon are also designing their own custom AI chips to reduce their reliance on NVidia. The USA and Taiwan have a competitive advantage and control a majority of the chip fabrication factories, or "fabs" that fabricate state-of-the-art AI chips.

In the chips landscape, geopolitics between major powers plays an important role. TSMC's overwhelming control of the chip market impacts the global supply chain as its limited domestic capacity and resources are inadequate to meet the soaring demands for AI chips. TSMC has already set up factories in Japan and USA and is in talks with Foxconn which manufactures most of Apple's iPhones and iPads and has more than 30 factories and nine production campuses in India for expanding their chip production footprint in India.

Taiwan remains a hotspot for tension not only with China, but also due to the US-China rivalry which introduces an element of uncertainty in the supply chain ecosystem for chips. China is already feeling the brunt of US export controls that have severely limited China's access to AI chips, chip-making equipment and chip design software, much of which are controlled by NVidia. One reason why it so desperately wants to annex Taiwan is the TSMC. Even as the US tries to limit China's access to AI hardware, it is itself trying to reduce its own reliance on chip fabrication facilities in East Asia, by incentivising TSMC to set up more factories in the USA. India, hitherto a non-player in the chip universe and is just taking some baby steps, should do the same with more vigour to attract companies like NVidia or TSMC.



GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE

The writer is an author, commentator and academic. Opinions expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Resigned to his fate

SIR, Your editorial in today's edition, "Poll bugle," on Rishi Sunak's poll announcement is spot on. However, I would go one step further and call it a resignation speech. The decision to call an early election underscores the fact that Sunak himself knows that things would only get worse. He is thus undercutting his own argument that his plan is working. If it was indeed working, why not wait for a few months to confirm it?

He has also undoubtedly anticipated the upcoming legal challenges to his controversial flagship Rwanda scheme and knows full well that the absence of an actual flight to Kigali carrying deported immigrants would ring its death knell. An early vote would thus enable him to keep projecting the mirage of its realisation on the horizon. The precedent which

he probably has in mind and which he hopes to emulate is that of the 1992 improbable victory of John Major where opinion polls had been consistently predicting a narrow Labour victory for Neil Kinnock or a hung parliament.

The difference here is that the polling gap between Labour and the Tories has been consistently wide ~ in the region of twenty points or so ~ for a very long time and is likely to resemble the 1997 Labour victory of Tony Blair instead. None other than his campaign director, Isaac Levido, argued against holding a summer election.

By overruling the latter, Sunak has displayed yet another error of judgment akin to resigning from Boris Johnson's cabinet which backfired on him. The optics of his poll announcement said it all : his words being drowned out by the

Labour theme song and his own drenched appearance as he stood outside 10 Downing Street.

Yours, etc., Animesh Rai, Noida, 24 May.

INSPIRATIONAL

SIR, Anwesha Santra's article entitled, "The man who showed the way to many a Sherlock", published on the Perspective page of your paper on May 22, is a glowing tribute to the legendary crime fiction writer Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle, the creator of the immortal fictional detective Sherlock Holmes whose novel and incisive investigation techniques unveiled many apparently unsolvable mysteries not only in fiction but also in real life. Ms. Santra has rightly said that Arthur Conan Doyle's works have paved the way for the future authors of detective stories and novels.

As a matter of fact, in *The Honjin Murders*, a mystery novel writ-

NAZRUL

SIR, *The Statesman's* tribute to the great poet Kazi Nazrul Islam on his 125th anniversary today, through Anghuman Kar's article "Nazrul at 125", has delighted the literary community. Kazi Nazrul Islam's poems and songs besides being full of passionate love that characterise youth and a message of religious neutrality, are inspirational with a revolutionary outlook. Without thinking of the consequences, a section of politicians mix religion with politics. And religious fundamentalists take advantage of it. It is dangerous. The young generation should try to understand Nazrul Islam's religious neutrality and love for all religions. To my mind, what the legendary poet envisioned in his time is perfectly suited to modern democracy.

Yours, etc., Rupam Guha, Kolkata, 24 May.

ten by Seishi Yokomizo, first published in Japan in 1946 and translated into English in 2019, the murderer was inspired by the Sherlock Holmes story, *The Riddle of Thor Bridge*. In the aforementioned novel, the author introduces Kosuke Kindaichi, the Japanese Sherlock, who solves a locked-room mystery murder that takes

place in a snow-clad isolated mansion. The murderer who killed his wife committed suicide, making the act look like a double murder. The crucial contraption that was used in the killing was described in the previously cited short story authored by Conan Doyle.

Yours, etc., P S Ghoshdastidar, Kolkata, 24 May.

We are not taking care of our young generation

Recently, the Bangladesh Youth Leadership Centre (BYLC) and Brac University's Centre for Peace and Justice conducted a joint survey involving 5,609 young individuals aged 16-35 from various parts of the country to gauge their perspectives on education, health, livelihoods, justice, climate change, migration, democracy and governance. The findings indicate that 55.3 per cent perceive Bangladesh to lack peace, 71.5 per cent feel uncomfortable expressing their views publicly, and 68.6 per cent feel that the current education system fails to adequately prepare them for employment or entrepreneurship. Moreover, nearly 89 per cent cited corruption, along with unemployment (67 per cent), inflation (51 per cent), and climate change (73 per cent), as adversely impacting their well-being. Similarly, a 2020 World Economic Forum study uncovered that 82 per cent of individuals aged 15-29 expressed a desire to migrate from Bangladesh due to socioeconomic concerns.

These reports raise the question as to why our youth struggle with such feelings of frustration, insecurity, detachment, apathy, and disillusionment, especially when they belong to a generation known for its potential to drive change. Several factors contribute to these sentiments and shed light on the underlying causes.

One significant factor behind young people's feeling of disillusionment is the pervasive corruption committed by businessmen, politicians,

The Daily Star

government officials, and influential figures, among others. When politicians engage in activities like election-rigging, nepotism or bribery, when prominent business leaders evade taxes or commit loan fraud, and when influential individuals manipulate public tenders or get involved in illicit activities like drug trafficking or extortion, the repercussions are felt throughout society.

Often, these corrupt individuals go unpunished, eroding trust in the system, which is particularly disheartening for the youth who dream of a brighter future and a more equitable society, and perceive these incidents as a betrayal of their aspirations for good governance. Moreover, today's political landscape lacks fundamental principles like reconciliation, tolerance, honesty, and respect for human dignity and differing beliefs. Instead of addressing crucial issues like economic development, health and education, politicians resort to criticising and verbally attacking each other with flimsy arguments and offensive language, lacking healthy debates or discussions on matters directly affecting citizens' lives.

Furthermore, political parties are exploiting the youth for their own gains. Student politics was once a domain for the brightest and socially conscious students to engage in and contribute to national affairs. Now it has been hijacked by non-student actors, who manipulate young people as pawns to advance their political agendas. Student politics, once a beacon of idealism, has become tainted by partisan interests, power struggles, and greed for wealth. Consequently, the younger generation is increasingly feeling disinterested and apathetic towards the country's politics and politicians. Recent events, such as the resistance to partisan student politics at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) is a case in point. The economic growth and development that we take pride in regrettably bypassed the majority of the population, benefiting mainly the higher-income groups. The Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2022, conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), reveals a widening rich-poor gap in income distribution within the country.

Challenges to West from the China-Russia summit

WANG SON-TAEK

Last week, the summit between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Beijing was held amid global attention. The summit became famous because it could serve as the starting point for changing the current international order, namely the unipolar order with the United States as the hegemon, into a multipolar order with China and Russia sharing the same status and power as the United States.

During the summit, the two leaders declared the beginning of a new era and shared an impressive hug while criticizing the US' hegemonic behavior. However, according to the meeting results, no specific action plan has been made regarding the change in the international order. The prevailing assessment showed considerable limitations, considering the two nations boasted an alliance with "no limits."

It might be a disappointing result from the camp against the US, but it is a relief for the other side. However, the US and its Western allies must analyze the diplomatic strategies of China and Russia that emerged through the talks. Fortunately, President Xi and Putin have relatively clearly exposed the direction and significant guidelines of their diplomatic strategy at the talks, helping the Western camp establish future diplomatic responses.

The most important part of the diplomatic strategy that Xi Jinping exposed is that he does not participate in the initiative to construct a new Cold War structure. Russia has been seen as actively considering organizing an anti-US alliance with North Korea to challenge the US hegemony directly. The anti-US solidarity is a diplomatic initiative that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has been actively pursuing in recent years.



Since Putin met with Kim in September last year, he has been making bold moves to provide support to North Korea. However, Xi has never signaled that he agrees with the proposal.

In the joint statement signed with Putin, Xi included that the two countries neither sought to form an alliance nor target a third country. He clearly confirmed that he would not agree with the idea of making another world against the US-led community. China's position is the same as that shown over the past few years. China is indeed under pressure from the US as it competes strategically with the US, and it has serious complaints about this.

Nevertheless, China's departure from the US-led order would result in a loss far bigger than a profit, given the level of China's national development. The fact that Putin did not visit North Korea after finishing the China itiner-

ary is also believed to reflect the position of Xi. When visiting North Korea, he has no choice but to emphasize anti-US solidarity, which has been burdensome to exclude China.

During his visit to China, Putin did not hide his fawning attitude toward Xi to the extent that he was criticized for being obsequious in receiving China's economic, diplomatic and military support. This shows that the financial and military difficulties caused by the war against Ukraine are pretty severe.

President Xi's second diplomatic strategy direction is unique because it contradicts the first guideline. China will continue to cooperate economically with Russia, which has decisively deviated from the US-led order. While China does not challenge the US-led order on its own, it has indirectly contributed to undermining it by support-

ing Russia. In the same vein, China continues its role as a background sponsor for North Korea, which is directly challenging the US-led order.

China has serious complaints about North Korea's blatant disregard for China's opposition to some of its moves, such as its nuclear weapons development programme. However, since North Korea is playing a role in disrupting the US-led order, and it is in China's interest, China also supports North Korea.

Xi's third strategy direction is maintaining strategic competition with the United States for the time being. In the short term, China would refrain from provocative actions that include the meaning of a hegemonic war with the United States. Still, it will reject US hegemony and interference in the long run after raising its national power to a target level.

Xi will probably stay in defensive mode until time and conditions are advantageous, such as a politically meaningful period or the level of national power buildup. For instance, China would try to secure military strength to occupy Taiwan by 2027, achieve a nominal per capita income of \$20,000 by 2035, and secure military posture to win an all-out war with the United States by 2049. In that case, China will go beyond strategic competition with the US after 2027 or 2035 and may show a form of hegemonic competition by 2049.

The scenario in which China will ultimately challenge the US for hegemony is very inconvenient. However, just because he made a scenario, there is no guarantee that it will be accomplished 100 per cent as Xi wants. It is important to remember that China has not developed as much as Xi has wanted over the past 12 years because it has used its national strategy in a different direction from the development flow of the world community. China's remarkable growth for more than 30 years since the respected leader Deng Xiaoping took power was due to its active participation in the development trend of the international community.

The good news is that Xi would rather avoid the scenario of directly challenging the US within 2027 or 2035. The US and Western countries will have ample opportunity to persuade and entice China to become a partner country that respects democratic order and liberal norms. If China rejects the order and norms the West demands within that period, the Western camp may engage in deft sabotage to disrupt its economic development. Of course, the best scenario is to upgrade the world order and norms in a way that partially reflects China's demands and to actively incorporate China into the new order.

The Korea Herald/ANN.

NOW AND AGAIN

Entry of television

SHOVANLAL CHAKRABORTY

Television made its grand entry in the mofussil town of Krishnanagar way back in the 1980s. Though colour television sets were available in big cities, they had not reached our picturesque town.

My mother's maternal aunt, also our neighbour, quickly purchased a black-and-white TV set, while my father was firm in his decision about buying only a colour set. Once the TV set was installed by the technician with the antenna on the roof, the excitement in the air was palpable.

We pleaded with the technician to switch on the TV once. "What is the use of switching on the TV now? It's only 4 pm," he said. The transmission time was fixed between 5.30 pm and 11 pm. We waited with bated breath for the clock to strike the hour.

In the absence of a remote, one had to walk up to the TV set to turn on the knob. There were two more knobs to adjust brightness and volume. Mind you, there was no option to change channels, as we had only one channel back then, which was the government-owned Doordarshan.

Whoever sat closest to the TV set invariably became the 'remote'. He or she had to crawl up to the TV to increase the sound or reduce the brightness as needed.

The signature music of Doordarshan greeted us at the appointed hour. Samachar, followed by Krishi Darshan and Chitrahara, kept us entertained for nearly two hours.

Though the 'entertainment' value in news and Krishi Darshan (a programme meant for farmers) was non-existent for us, we watched it intently akin to a thriller web series.

Later, a colour TV set arrived at my house, and by that time we were in Kolkata and the collective happiness of my family members knew no bounds. When the epic serial Ramayana started, the streets in Kolkata and probably across India wore a deserted look. Such was the captivating power of some of the programmes back then.

However, our patience levels would be put to the test at times. The TV screen would suddenly turn blank, or vertical lines would start dancing on the screen, much to our irritation. How did we restore transmission? We had devised our own desi trick. One of the family members would climb onto the roof, where the antenna was located. In my house, my father would take on this role.

A bicycle wheel rim with spokes was used as an antenna. My father would turn the antenna in every possible direction until transmission was restored.

As the years rolled by, the television, once a bulky contraption, became slimmer while the channels on it multiplied by the dozen, turning most of us into couch potatoes! Today, OTT has made its presence felt. What is in store for us next? Like they say, only time can tell!

100 YEARS AGO

STORM FATALITIES

MANY CASUALTIES IN BARISAL DISTRICT

A SEVERE storm swept over Barisal district on Saturday last causing serious damage to property including the Collectorate building and the Deaf and Dumb School. According to the report of a volunteer of the Swaraj Sevak Sangha several deaths have occurred in villages as a result of collapsed houses. At Madhupur an old man and his grandchild were buried under the debris. At Badla a man was killed. At east Sholna a woman and her five year old child died of injuries.

VAIKOM SATYAGRAHA

MR. GANDHI AND PROBLEM OF UNTOUCHABILITY

A DEPUTATION from Vaikom waited on Mr. Gandhi this morning and discussed the Vaikom Satyagraha for over two hours.

Mr. Madhavan Nair the leader of the deputation expects that the deputation will remain here a few days longer. Mr. Gandhi will shortly issue a statement on the subject.

Sympathy for the Vaikom, Satyagrahis was expressed, says a Borsad message, by the Gujrat Depressed Classes. Conference which met there yesterday. Mr. Gandhi sent a message reiterating his conviction that without a solution of the problem of untouchability no real Swaraj would be possible.

Pandit Motilal Nehru, Mr. C. R. Das and Mr. T. A. K. Sherwani interviewed Mr. Gandhi this afternoon and discussed the present situation. Messrs. Nehru and Das are expected to issue a statement on Sunday.

POLITICAL DIARY KALYANI SHANKAR

Political dynamics will change with results

The post-poll scenario will be far from a simple dichotomy of winners and losers. It is a complex and intriguing political landscape, with outcomes yet to unfold.

The post-election scenario is not just about the expected outcomes. It's about the potential for unexpected alliances, dramatic shifts in power dynamics, and the emergence of new political forces. A potential political realignment could reshape the post-election political landscape.

The BJP's victory in the election is more or less certain. Two plausible scenarios are being debated, each with its implications. One scenario envisions a landslide victory for the BJP, even crossing the 400 mark. The other suggests a more modest outcome with fewer seats. A landslide victory for the BJP could potentially lead to realigning political forces.

If the party emerges as the largest, albeit with fewer seats than in the 2019 poll, it will form the government with the help of other parties. This expectation is primarily based on the unwavering faith of BJP supporters in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

The strategic decisions made by the Congress party, such as reducing the number of contested constituencies, highlight the depth and complexity of Indian politics. Each move is a calculated step towards a larger goal.

The INDIA alliance, a key player in Indian politics, could shrink if the BJP returns to power. Some opposition parties, like the Trinamool Con-



gress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab, have opted to refrain from engaging in partnerships, weakening the Congress's position. The BJP's victory could lead to re-evaluating the INDIA alliance's strategy, with some partners choosing to align with the BJP and others seeking new partnerships or independent paths.

If the BJP secures more seats, smaller parties could make a beeline to join the alliance. This significant development, driven by the smaller parties' desire to align with the winning side to secure their political interests, could shape the post-poll

scenario. Some want to oppose Modi, while others see alliances as failed attempts. Some will support the BJP with the best chance of sharing power. However, the remaining parties and leaders would challenge the NDA.

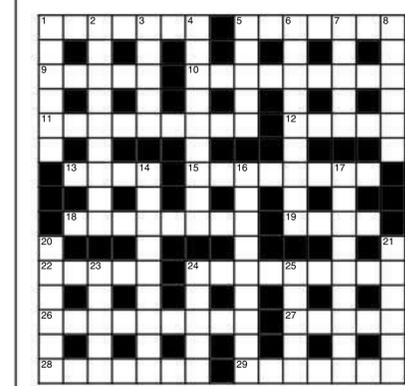
Secondly, even if the BJP gets fewer seats, the party could secure the support of other parties willing to align with the winner. This could also lead to a dismantling of the newly formed INDIA coalition. This alliance has many fair-weather friends who can ally with any party, considering only their self-interest. The BJP's ability to secure more seats or gain the

support of other parties could significantly impact the political landscape, potentially leading to a realignment of political forces.

However, it is important to note that these are potential scenarios and not confirmed outcomes. The future of the NDA coalition, a key player in Indian politics, is always subject to change. Various factors, including the election outcome, can influence it. The NDA could emerge as the majority, leading to the formation of the government. Alternatively, it could fall short and seek support from other parties to form a coalition government. It will try

CROSSWORD

NO-292791



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

ACROSS

- Place to relax from Chinese disease (7)
- Soiled apparel remains in flight (7)
- Ran club, possibly in Rutherford (5)
- 13 on which Tommy wanted to 1A the 5A feeds rig I constructed (9)
- Armour written about in Malachi (5,4)
- It's prickly buying or selling trousers (5)

- Pound home point of fishing tackle (4)
- Strange bloke, Sam - like a pipe, perhaps (8)
- Gets near corrupt police officer (8)
- Expensive Dutch audio equipment (4)
- Yellow mineral companion found inside (5)
- Spooner telling child to cry a river, possibly (4,5)
- Gather hoodlum accepts rule for where to let sleeping dogs lie (9)

- Find out Rector Slope's around (5)
- Soldiers back around Germany? That's amazing! (3,4)
- Long, long ship deserted on river (7)
- Possibly Rumpole's vehicle will turn up in garden (6)
- Explorer gutted with ancient stewed fruit (9)

- Ancient yellow head mislaid (5)
- A lot of water a must as man's eating sandwiches (6,3)
- I'm enjoying this left turn (5)
- Carefully protect Peter mixing a drug (9)
- Here in 21, I'm thinking, is much colder (5)
- Starts to go around Debenham's to buy a handy tool (6)
- Chopper for one British consumer (9)

- Exchanging parts when announcing exits is more important (9)
- Directions help with plate that is repaired very quickly, some say (5,4)
- Insect queen (6)
- Tours location of smell left by German artist (6)
- Sensed one hiding among cattle? (5)
- Corrupt police officer oddly ratty (5)
- Agreement to fulfil orders with the Italian firm (5)

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



THUMBNAILS

JSW Group's paint biz turns profitable; aims Rs 5,000 cr sales by FY26: JSW Paints crossed Rs 2,000 crore in revenue from operation in FY24 and logged its first operating profit in five years of inception, a top company official said. The JSW Group firm, which aims for Rs 5,000 crore revenue in the next two years, is expanding its retail presence in the home decorative business and adding more products in the industrial coating business, company's Joint Managing Director & CEO Sundaresan AS said.

MAI Labs unveils MayaVerse: MAI Labs, a leader in deep tech known for its innovative, immersive, and regulatory technologies, announced the launch of MayaVerse. This state-of-the-art immersive tech platform is embedded with AI and engineered to revolutionise human interactions and creativity within digital realms, offering unparalleled virtual immersion. According to a report by McKinsey, the immersive tech domain presents a vast opportunity, projected to generate up to \$5 trillion by 2030 across consumer and enterprise applications.

International Family Day celebration: On the occasion of International Family Day, Samadhan Abhiyan and India Abhi Pesticides Limited, under the programme 'Chuppi Tod ~Halla Bol' celebrated International Family Day to spread awareness against child sexual abuse. Families, along with their kids, were invited to all 5 Bal Mitra Kendras in their respective police stations - Kotwali Hardoi Dehat, Kotwali Kachhauna, Kotwali Sahibabad, Thana Gorakhnath and Kotwali Siddharth Nagar.

'Medical Dialogues': 'Medical Dialogues', one of the leading digital medical news and information platforms in India, has been awarded the prestigious @Trust Certification by the American Certification Commission International (AACI), recognising its commitment to maintaining the highest editorial standards in medical content publishing. The AACI, a global leader in the certification of medical web content and health-care organisation certification, conducted a rigorous review of Medical Dialogues' editorial processes and content quality.

HCL Foundation, Sesame Workshop India Trust collaborates with the 'Daddy Cool' initiative: To popularise the concept of 'new age parenting', the Sesame Workshop India Trust in an initiative titled 'Daddy Cool' in Daliganj Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh redefines traditional parenting norms. In the areas like Luv-Kush Nagar, and Vinayakpur areas of Lucknow the programme challenges the traditional 'gender-based roles' associated with paternal involvement in child care, and it also encourages fathers to adopt a more active role in the holistic development of their children through workshops conducted with fathers in the communities.

Elgi Equipment: Elgi Equipment, one of the world's leading air compressor manufacturers, has announced an upgrade to the EG series range with the introduction of the EG PM (Permanent Magnet) oil-lubricated screw air compressors available from 11-45 kW. The state-of-the-art EG PM is poised to deliver up to 15 per cent improved efficiency gains, aside from an incremental FAD or free air delivery of 16 per cent for every customer.

Würfel: Würfel, a premium brand known for its modular kitchen and interior solutions, has launched a new studio in South West Delhi. With a vast network of 55 studios, Würfel brings the finest European design and craftsmanship to Indian homes, offering a lifetime warranty on all its products.

Markets hit all-time high amid strong FII comeback

Sensex ends with 1,404 points or 1.90 per cent gains at 75,410 after hitting a new high of 75,636

AGENCIES MUMBAI, 25 MAY

Indian equity benchmarks closed at an all-time high this week as Nifty touched the 23,000 points milestone amid a strong comeback from foreign institutional investors (FII). Nifty closed at 22,957 after touching a new all-time high of 23,026 intra-day, up 455 points or 2.02 per cent. Sensex ended with 1,404 points or 1.90 per cent gains at 75,410 after hitting a new high of 75,636.

The rally has been led by large-cap stocks. The BSE large-cap index shot up nearly 2 per cent this week.

Adani Energy Solutions, HAL, Adani Total Gas, Adani Power, BEL, Adani Enterprises, and Hindustan Zinc were major gainers. On the other hand, Indigo, Zydus Lifesciences, Bajaj Holdings, Sun Pharma, Nykaa, and Zomato were the major laggards.

Midcap and smallcap stocks also saw decent gains



this week.

In midcap, Vodafone Idea, Uno Minda, Solar Industries India, Union Bank of India, ABFRL, Balkrishna Industries, Zee Entertainment, and Sam-

vardhana Motherson Int were major gainers, while Deepak Nitrite, Max Financial, PB Fintech, and Max Healthcare Institute were major losers. In smallcap, RVNL, Bharat

Dynamics, PNC Infra, Cochin Shipyard, Finolex cables, Garden Reach Shipbuilders, and Dredging Corp were major gainers. On the other hand, Parag Milk, Dodla Dairy And

Global Health, and IFGL Refractories were major laggards.

Around Rs 1,165 crore worth of stocks were sold by FIIs in the market this week, which is the lowest in the last several weeks and shows that buying by foreign investors is returning.

At the same time, domestic investors invested Rs 6,977 crore in Indian markets this week. According to market experts, the situation is once again slowly changing in favour of the ruling dispensation.

"The base case scenario appears to be a clear verdict in favour of BJP/NDA. Also, the FII's massive selling has ceased and they have even turned buyers in recent days," they said.

Going forward, as clarity emerges on the election front, FIIs are likely to buy in India since they cannot afford to miss the post-election results rally. "The rally may begin even before the election result," they added.

24 startups raised \$444 m in funding this week

AGENCIES NEW DELHI, 25 MAY

About 24 Indian startups have raised around \$444 million in funding during this week, which include five growth-stage deals and 14 early-stage deals.

Two early-stage startups did not disclose the amount raised, Entracker reported on Saturday.

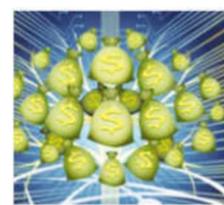
Last week, about 26 early and growth-stage startups collectively secured around \$240 million in funding.

Among the growth-stage deals, seven startups secured around \$394.21 million in funding this week. E-commerce major Flipkart secured the highest funding of \$350 million from Google.

This was followed by financial services platform Navi, which raised \$18 million in debt.

Other startups such as managed accommodation provider Stanza Living, rural financial services firm Save Solution, and NBFC operating in remote rural parts, Dvara KGFS, also raised funding during the week.

In addition, 14 early-stage startups secured funding worth \$49.6 million during the



In addition, 14 early-stage startups secured funding worth \$49.6 million during the week.

week. SaaS (Software-as-a-service) startup UnifyApps topped the list followed by solar energy platform Soleos Solar Energy, NBFC Varthana, and producer of high-quality Single-Walled Carbon Nanotubes (SWCNTs) NoPo Nanotechnologies.

The list of early-stage startups also includes - Collective Artists Network, 8chill, Agrilectric, Fix My Curls, and Infmix -- which kept the funding amount undisclosed.

City-wise, Bengaluru-based startups led with 14 deals followed by Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Ludhiana, and Chennai.

NEWSFEED

THDCIL CMD visits Tehri Power Complex

R K Vishnoi, Chairman and Managing Director of THDC India Limited, led a comprehensive two-day inspection visit at Tehri Complex on 19 to 20 May.

Accompanied by Bhupender Gupta, Director (Technical), and LP Joshi, Head of Project (Tehri Complex), among other senior officers of THDCIL, Vishnoi inspected the ongoing construction works of 1,000 MW Tehri PSP. During the first day, Vishnoi visited Tehri Dam, and conducted an extensive inspection.

LP Joshi, Executive Director (Tehri Complex) provided



updates on various construction activities.

After inspection of the construction sites of the PSP project by the Chairman and Managing Director, a review meeting was convened in which all aspects of the construction works were thoroughly deliberated.

The meeting was attended by Sandeep Singhal, ED (Technical), RR Semwal (CGM EMD), Virendra Singh, CGM (OMS), AK Ghildiyal (CGM Planning and MPS), AR Gairola (GM PSP), MK Singh (GM Mechanical), Dr AN Tripathy (GM HR & Admin) & Neeraj Agarwal (AGM Civil Design), and other senior officers of THDCIL.

'Swachhata Pakhwada': NHPH holds Shramdaan programme

NHPH organised a Shramdaan programme for cleanliness campaign under 'Swachhata Pakhwada 2024' on 21 May.

RP Goyal, CMD, NHPH, Uttam Lal, Director (Personnel), NHPH and RK Chaudhary, Director (Technical & Projects), NHPH, senior NHPH officers and employees performed Shramdaan by running a cleanliness drive in the historic Mughal Bridge over Budhia Wala Nala (a monument of national importance), in Faridabad.

During the Shramdaan programme local people also



took part enthusiastically along with the NHPH employees. NHPH is observing 'Swachhata Pakhwada 2024' at its Corporate Office and all its Regional Offices, Projects and Power Stations across the country from 16 to 31 May 2024 as per guidelines issued by the Govt of India.

NTPC concludes national finale of power quiz & Medha Pratiyogita

NTPC hosted the National Finale of the Power Quiz 2024 and Medha Pratiyogita 2024 at the Power Management Institute (PMI), Noida, celebrating a remarkable journey of learning, knowledge sharing, and healthy competition among employees and their families.

A total of 1,820 teams participated in these events, with 570 teams competing in the Power Quiz 2024 and 1,250 teams competing in Medha Pratiyogita 2024.

The winners of the inaugural edition of NTPC Power Quiz 2024 were Prag Sood from NTPC Telangana and Harmeet



Bagga from NTPC Ramagundam. The winners of the Medha Pratiyogita 2024 final round are Neel Goswami & Avyan Garg from PUJNL, ER 1 (Junior), Rishabh Raj & Ishan Snehi from Vindhyaachal, NR (Middle), Tanmay Verma & Shaurya Deep from Vindhyaachal, NR (Senior), and Arindam Dhar & Satya Ranjan Mahapatra from North Karanpura, ER 1 (Employee) category.

Indian Coast Guard organises two-day pollution response seminar and mock drill in West Bengal



In line with its unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship, the Indian Coast Guard organised a Pollution Response Seminar and Mock Drill in West Bengal.

The two-day event, held on 22 to 23 May, at the headquarters Coast Guard District number 8(WB) in Haldia, brought together key stake-

holders from various central and state agencies, alongside oil handling agencies, to address the critical challenges of combating oil spills at sea.

Distinguished speakers, including seasoned officers from the Indian Coast Guard and representatives from the Haldia Dock Complex, delved into the intricacies of marine

pollution response strategies and exchanged best practices, laying the groundwork for enhanced collaboration and preparedness. Commander, CGDGHQ-8(WB), emphasised the pivotal role of synergy and effective implementation of the National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan, he underscored the collective responsibility in safeguarding our precious marine resources and the Indian Coast Guard's steadfast resolve to uphold its mandate of ensuring safer seas and cleaner coasts.

THDC India Ltd signs MoU with Uttarakhand PWD

THDC India Limited, a prominent Mini Ratna PSU in Power Generation signed a significant Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Public Works Department, Uttarakhand for rendering the technical services of THDCIL as the "Technical Consultant" at the UKPWD Head Office, Yamuna Colony, Dehradun on 21 May 2024.

Speaking on the occasion RK Vishnoi, Chairman and Managing Director, THDCIL, emphasised the pivotal role THDCIL is playing as the "Technical Consultant."



tribute its expertise towards preparing Detailed Project Reports (DPR) and offering technical assistance for slope protection on various state highways, major district roads, and other routes in Uttarakhand.

Vishnoi highlighted THDCIL's commitment to employing cutting-edge technology and flexible treatment meas-

ures alongside conventional methods to tackle site-specific challenges effectively. This collaboration aims to ensure safe passage for vehicles traversing Uttarakhand's terrain. Sandeep Singhal, ED (Technical), THDCIL and Deepak Kumar Yadav, Engineer-In-Chief, UKPWD signed the MoU. During the MoU signing ceremony Dr. Neeraj Kumar Agrawal, AGM - Incharge, Amit Shyam Gupta, Manager (Civil Design), THDCIL and Om Prakash, Chief Engineer; Harish Pangti, SE from UKPWD were also present.

Russian delegation appreciates 'The Cottage' collection



A business delegation from Russia recently visited "The Cottage" and appreciated the impressive collection of Ethnic Art and Craft on display from different parts of India. The Cottage represents the cultural essence of India through traditional art, craftsmanship & indigenous skills passed down through generation.

UPI payment-based ticketing system introduced in ASCRM

UPI Payment Based Ticketing System has been introduced in Automatic Smart Card Recharge Machines (ASCRM) in Mahanayak Uttam Kumar, Rabindra Sadan and Esplanade stations of Blue Line from May 23.

This Ticketing System has already been introduced at all the booking counters in stations of Green Line. As a result, commuters won't have to tender the exact fare in currency notes and coins at these stations. Instead they would now be able to recharge their Smart Cards or buy tokens with the help of this system too.

Metro Railway authorities with the help of State Bank of India and Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) have introduced this Unified Payments Interface (UPI) Based Ticketing System.

Career counselling for children at summer camp

The National Book Trust, India (NBT) is offering a unique and invaluable experience for children through its ongoing 15-day summer camp, which includes comprehensive career counseling sessions.

On 22 May renowned career counselor Dr. Shruti Jain engaged with over 100 children aged 9 to 14, answering their career-oriented questions and providing guidance on building successful futures



in their chosen fields. During the session, Dr. Shruti Jain highlighted various career-oriented courses such as Actuary, Environmental Science, User Interface (UX) Design,

Banking, Software Engineering, Epidemiology, and E-commerce, reflecting current industry demands.

The session was highly informative, helping children understand the necessary preparations and pathways to pursue these careers.

The camp will conclude on 3 June with a special interaction session where children will meet authors selected under the Prime Minister's Youth Mentorship Program.

16 new coaches unloaded at Netaji Subhash Dock, Kolkata

Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata (SMPK) proudly announces the successful discharge of the second batch of Metro Rail Coaches, significantly contributing to the city's transportation infrastructure.

On 23 May, 16 Metro Rail coaches, each weighing 48 tonnes, were unloaded at Netaji Subhash Dock of Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata. Rathendra Raman,



Chairperson, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata expressed gratitude to Eastern Railway for entrusting SMPK with this critical task.

E Rly introduces 500 berths & 108 seats in 6 popular express trains

In an endeavour to meet the passengers' requirement for more berths in some popular long distance trains, additional 500 berths and 108 seats generated by introducing permanent augmentation of coaches in six Mail/ Express trains of Eastern Railway, aimed at enhancing passenger comfort.

As a permanent meas-

ure, Eastern Railway has arranged for augmenting one AC 3-tier Economy coach in each of 12353/12354 Howrah - Lalkuan - Howrah Express & 13025/13026 Howrah - Bhopal - Howrah Express, one AC 2-tier & one AC 3-tier Economy coach with 13071/13072 Howrah - Jamalpur - Howrah Express, one AC 3-tier coach with

12349/12350 Godda - New Delhi - Godda Humsafar Express, one AC 3-tier & one Sleeper class coach with 13415/13416 Malda Town - Patna - Malda Town Express and one non-AC Chair Car coach with 13103/13104 Sealdah - Lalgaola - Sealdah Bhagirathi Express trains.

The decision to augment these trains comes in response

to the growing demand for rail transportation services across Eastern Railway's network.

By permanently adding coaches to these select trains, Eastern Railway aims to provide passengers with more seating and berthing options, ensuring a more comfortable and convenient journey experience.

eDC, IIT Delhi to support students for start-ups

The Entrepreneurship Development Cell at IIT Delhi (eDC, IIT Delhi), in collaboration with some distinguished Institute alumni, conducted the first season of Venture Studio, an entrepreneurship course to support IIT Delhi students in their journey to build successful startups from scratch.

The course was designed to empower the students with the

knowledge and skills to enable them to become successful entrepreneurs. Drawing from a pool of over 350 registrations, 40 outstanding students from diverse academic backgrounds were selected to participate in the first season.

These students were hand-picked for their passion, creativity, and drive to make a difference in the entrepreneur-

ial landscape. Throughout the eight-week course, participants were privileged to learn from the first hand experiences and insights of Dipinder Sekhon (Founder of Kites AI), Gaurav Agarwal (Co-Founder of 1mg), and Vivek Srivastava (Founder & CEO - HCAH India), distinguished alumni of IIT Delhi, who have established successful startups.

Steel Secretary launches NMDC vendor portal

Steel Secretary Nagendra Nath Sinha launched NMDC's Vendor Invoice Management and Self Service Portal at the company's Corporate Office in Hyderabad on Monday.

Foraying ahead on its digital transformation journey, NMDC made the strategic decision to introduce and implement a seamless interface for vendors to engage with the company, streamlining the procurement life cycle while enhancing transparency and business harmony.



Nagendra Nath Sinha along with the company's Senior Management - Amitava Mukherjee, CMD (Additional Charge); Dilip Kumar Mohanty, Director (Production); Vinay Kumar, Director (Technical); and BVishwanath, CVO were acquainted with the features of the Portal by the

concerned NMDC officers and vendors.

"In our standing as a national mining company, NMDC strives to stay ahead of the curve, embracing innovation and leveraging technology to drive efficiency and transparency. This digital platform is a testament to our resolve towards Responsible Mining!" said Amitava Mukherjee. Thriving on the momentum of 45 MT, NMDC delivered a promising start to FY25.

POWERGRID's Swachhata Pakhwada from 16-31 May

POWERGRID is celebrating Swachhata Pakhwada 2024-25 from 16 to 31 May, a fortnight dedicated to promoting cleanliness and hygiene across the nation.

As part of this initiative, RHQ, Kolkata took a proactive stance in engaging the community. On 23 May, they organised a Nukkad Natak at Axis Mall, Kolkata which captivated the audience with its powerful message on the



importance of cleanliness and hygiene. And on 24 May, the RHQ orchestrated a dynamic plogging activity combined with a cleanliness rally. This event saw enthusiastic participation from employees of RHQ, Kolkata.

Petronet LNG quarter 4 results

During the current financial year ended 31 March, 2024, Dahej terminal processed 865 TBTU of LNG as against 704 TBTU processed during the previous financial year ended 31 March, 2023.

The overall LNG volume processed by the Company in the current financial year was 919 TBTU, as against the LNG volume processed in the previous financial year, which stood at 752 TBTU. The Company has reported PBT of Rs 996 crore in the current quar-

ter, as against Rs 1,597 crore in the previous quarter and Rs 818 crore in the corresponding quarter. The PAT of the current quarter is reported at Rs 738 crore as against the PAT of the previous and corresponding quarters of Rs 1,191 crore and Rs 614 crore respectively. The company has reported highest ever PBT and PAT of Rs 4,757 crore and 3,536 crore in the current financial year as against Rs 4,335 crore and Rs 3,240 crore respectively in the previous financial year.



China says it wants to maintain good relations with the West. At the same time, however, Beijing is fuelling the war in Europe. You can't have it both ways

JENS STOLTENBERG NATO SECRETARY GENERAL

WEATHER

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

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

Israel rejects IJC order to halt Rafah assault

'Israel is acting in self defence and in compliance with international law'

AGENCIES TEL AVIV/AMSTERDAM, 25 MAY

In a move rejected by Israeli officials, the UN's top court on Friday ordered Israel to "immediately" halt its military assault on the southern Gaza city of Rafah...



Israel on October 7, 2023, Israel embarked upon a defensive and just war to eliminate Hamas and to secure the release of our hostages...

The ruling read aloud by Judge Nawaf Salam at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague was in response to an urgent application submitted by South Africa.

South Africa justified its application to the ICJ by arguing that the court's previous measures in connection with the Gaza war were inadequate.

Israel rejected Friday's ruling. "The charges of genocide brought by South Africa against Israel at the International Court of Justice in the Hague are false, outrageous and morally repugnant..."

Israel "will continue its efforts to enable humanitarian assistance and will act, in full compliance with the law, to reduce as much as possible harm caused to the civilian population in Gaza."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was discussing the decision with key Cabinet ministers, according to Israeli media reports.

South Africa has previously demanded measures against Israel several times in summary proceedings. This is part of the genocide lawsuit that the country filed with the court in December.

In two emergency rulings, the UN judges had obliged Israel to do everything possible to prevent geno-

cide and to allow humanitarian aid.

The Palestinian Islamist Hamas movement welcomed the ruling. In a statement published on Friday, Hamas called on the international community and the United Nations to exert pressure on Israel.

Egypt and Jordan also welcomed the ICJ's ruling and urged the UN Security Council to put pressure on Israel to end its operation.

The Palestinian Authority called for increased international pressure on Israel following the ICJ decision. The international community should force Israel to implement the decision, it said in a statement published in Ramallah on Friday.

South Africa on Friday also welcomed the ICJ's decision. The ruling African National Congress (ANC) called the decision a confirmation of the principles of justice, human rights and the rule of law.

Egypt agrees to send aid trucks through Israeli crossing to Gaza but impact is unclear

AGENCIES TEL AVIV, 25 MAY

Egypt said Friday it has agreed to send United Nations humanitarian aid trucks through Israel's main crossing into Gaza, but it was unclear if they will be able to enter the territory as fighting raged in the southern city of Gaza amid Israel's escalating offensive there.



International Court of Justice - ordered Israel to halt the Rafah offensive, though Israel is unlikely to comply.

Meanwhile, the bodies of three more hostages killed on Oct. 7 were recovered overnight from Gaza, Israel's army said Friday. The CIA chief met in Paris with Israeli and Qatari officials, trying to revive negotiations for a cease-fire and a hostage release.

Gaza's humanitarian crisis has spiraled as the U.N. and other aid agencies say the entry of food and other supplies to them has plunged dramatically since Israel's Rafah offensive began more than two weeks ago.

Kerem Shalom to pick up aid as it enters because fighting in the area makes it too dangerous.

As a result, the U.N. says it has received only 143 trucks from the crossing in the past 19 days. Hundreds of truckloads have been sitting on the Gaza side of the crossing unretrieved, according to Israeli officials, who say U.N. manpower limitations are to blame.

U.N. and other aid agencies had to rely on the far smaller number of trucks entering daily from a single crossing in northern Gaza and via a U.S.-built pier bringing supplies by sea.

Humanitarian groups are scrambling to get food to Palestinians as some 900,000 people flee Rafah, scattering across central and southern Gaza. Aid workers warn Gaza is near famine. UNRWA, the main U.N. agency in the humanitarian effort, had to halt food distribution in Rafah city because it had run out of supplies.

Families of US school shooting victims sue Meta, game developer Activision



NEW YORK, 25 MAY

Meta and Call of Duty (CoD) game developer Activision have been sued by the families of the victims killed in a US school shooting over alleged promotion of the use of firearms to minors.

In May 2022, an 18-year-old Salvador Ramos opened fire at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, killing 21.

According to the lawsuit, filed in the Los Angeles Superior Court in the US, both the companies "knowingly exposed the shooter to the weapon, conditioned him to see it as the solution to his problems, and trained him to use it."

The families of the victims accused Meta and Activision of "grooming" young men and putting them on a path toward violence.

Ramos played 'Call of Duty' obsessively, developed skill as a marksman, and obtained rewards that became available only after a substantial time investment," alleged the lawsuit.

The lawsuit also claimed that the game features the AR-15 used in the shooting. Apart from Meta and Activision, the families of the Uvalde victims are also suing Daniel Defense, the company that made the AR-15 used in the shooting.

In a statement given to media, Activision said that "millions of people around the world enjoy video games without turning to horrific acts."

French court sentences 3 Syrian officials to life in prison in absentia for war crimes

AGENCIES PARIS, 25 MAY

A Paris court sentenced three high-ranking Syrian officials in absentia to life in prison Friday for complicity in war crimes in a landmark case against the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad and the first such case in Europe.



The trial focused on the officials' role in the alleged 2013 arrest in Damascus of Mazen Dabbagh, a Franco-Syrian father, and his son Patrick, and their subsequent torture and killing.

The trial focused on the officials' role in the alleged 2013 arrest in Damascus of Mazen Dabbagh, a Franco-Syrian father, and his son Patrick, and their subsequent torture and killing. The four-day trial featured harrowing testimonies from survivors and searing accounts from Mazen's brother.

Though the verdict was cathartic for plaintiffs, France and Syria do not have an extradition treaty, making the

outcome largely symbolic. International arrest warrants for the three former Syrian intelligence officials - Ali Mamlouk, Jamil Hassan, and Abdel Salam Mahmoud - have been issued since 2018 to no avail.

They are the most senior Syrian officials to go on trial in a European court over crimes allegedly committed

during the country's civil war.

The court proceedings came as Assad has started to shed his longtime status as a pariah that stemmed from the violence unleashed on his opponents. Human rights groups involved in the case hoped it would refocus attention on alleged atrocities.

Clémence Bectarte, the Dabbagh family lawyer from Geneva, said the verdict was the "first recognition in France of the crimes against humanity of the Syrian regime." "It is a message of hope for all Syrian victims who are waiting for justice. It is a message that must be addressed to states so that they do not normalize their relations with the regime of Bashar al-Assad," she said.

The trial began Tuesday over the alleged torture and killing of the French-Syrian father and son who were arrested at the height of Arab Spring-inspired anti-government protests.

The two were arrested in Damascus following a crackdown on demonstrations that later turned into a brutal civil war, now in its 14th year.

Taiwan detects 62 Chinese warplanes in airspace amid military drills

AGENCIES TAIPEI, 25 MAY

Taiwan's Defence Ministry on Saturday said it had registered 62 Chinese warplanes operating around Taiwan within 24 hours, the highest number of Chinese daily sorties so far this year.



to these activities, the ministry said.

Among them, 47 Chinese military aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, the ministry said.

Meanwhile, on Friday, 27 Chinese navy vessels operating around Taiwan were also detected, the ministry said in a statement.

Taiwan had monitored the situation and had tasked Combat air patrol aircraft, Navy vessels and land-based missile systems to respond

The previous record number of daily sorties of Chinese warplanes for this year, 49, was reported just one day earlier.

China on Thursday launched a major military exercise around Taiwan, apparently to simulate a blockade around the island. Such drills came three days

after the inauguration of Taiwan's new president, Lai Ching-te.

Tensions across the Taiwan Strait have risen since presidential and legislative elections were held in democratic Taiwan in January.

Taiwan has had an independent government since 1949, but China considers the self-ruled democracy part of its territory.

Efforts to draft a pandemic treaty falter as countries disagree on how to respond to next emergency

AGENCIES GENEVA, 25 MAY

A global treaty to fight pandemics like COVID is going to have to wait: After more than two years of negotiations, rich and poor countries have failed - for now - to come up with a plan for how the world might respond to the next pandemic.

After COVID-19 triggered once-unthinkable lockdowns, upended economies and killed millions, leaders at the World Health Organization and worldwide vowed to do better in the future. In 2021, member countries asked the U.N. health agency to oversee negotiations to figure out how the world might better share scarce resources and stop future viruses from spreading globally.

On Friday, Roland Driech, co-chair of WHO's negotiating board for the agreement, acknowledged that countries were unable to come up with a draft. WHO had hoped a final draft treaty could be agreed on at its yearly meeting of health ministers starting Monday in Geneva.

"We are not where we hoped we would be when we started this process," he said, adding that finalizing an international agreement on how to respond to a pandemic was critical "for the sake of humanity."

Driech said the World Health Assembly next week would take up lessons from its work and plot the way forward, urging participants to make "the right decisions to take this process forward" to one day reach a pandemic agreement "because we need it."

UK Parliament breaks up ahead of election day with pomp, ceremony and hard-nosed politics

AGENCIES LONDON, 25 MAY

Britain's lawmakers left Parliament on Friday for the last time before an election is held in six weeks. Some will never return. About 120 of the 650 members of Parliament are stepping down, and they and those who lose their seats on July 4 face an abrupt readjustment to life outside politics.



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's surprise decision to call a summer election with his Conservatives trailing in opinion polls means that

some key pieces of legislation had to be abandoned -- including his flagship plan to ban tobacco sales to future generations.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL? On the second full day of campaigning, Sunak and his main opponent, Labour Party leader Keir Starmer, have already covered hundreds of miles (kilometers) crisscrossing the U.K. on carefully stage-managed visits to businesses and communities. Sunak visited Northern Ireland -- making a stop at the Belfast shipyard where the doomed Titanic was built -- and central England on Friday, while Starmer was in Scotland and northwest England.

Labour is the strong favorite to win the election after moving from the left toward the political center under Starmer,

its leader since 2020.

The party got a reminder of its recent past on Friday, when Starmer's predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn, said he would run for Parliament as an independent against Labour's candidate. Starmer suspended Corbyn and barred him from running again for Labour after the former leader accused opponents of exaggerating the problem of antisemitism in the party.

Starmer apologized for antisemitism, a move welcomed by many Jewish Labour members and others. But supporters of Corbyn said he was being smeared because of his longtime support for the Palestinian cause.

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-NOTICE INVITING TENDERS Divisional Railway Manager, N.W. Ry. Bikaner for and on behalf of President of India invites sealed open tender for the following work on the date shown as below: (1) Tender No.: S&T-BKN-ET-290 (2) Name of work with its location: Provision of Coach Guidance System at Napasar, Sri Durgagarh, Rajaldesar, Tehsil Bhadra, Hanumangarh Town, Swani, Jharli and Kalanur Kalan Railway stations over Bikaner Division having stoppage of 06 or more reserved coaches Trains (3) Approx. cost of the work: ₹ 21876623.24/- (4) Bid Security Amount: ₹259400/- (5) Date & Time for submission of tender & opening of tender: Upto 15.00 Hrs. on 14.06.2024 (6) Website on which complete Tender details can be seen & downloaded: www.ireps.gov.in 604-DK24

PROVISION OF RO/RUB AT LUMDING DIVISION

Tender Notice No. LMG/ENGG/78 of 2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: SI No. 1. Name of work: Feasibility study and detailed project report for elimination of 31 Nos. Level Crossings by provision of RO/RUB under the jurisdiction of DEN/V/ Lumding Division. Tender value: ₹ 1,30,60,484.14/- Earnest Money: ₹ 2,15,300/- Date & time of Closing of tender: 17-06-2024 at 15:00 hrs. Date & time of Opening of tender: 18-06-2024 at 15:00 hrs. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available up-to 15.00 hrs. of 17-06-2024 in website http://www.ireps.gov.in. DRM (Works), Lumding NORTH EAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tender is invited on behalf of the President of India for the under mentioned work: 1. e-Tender No.: ECR-CAO-C-S-ETEN-07-24-25 in two packet system, Name of work: Earth Work in Cutting, filling, blanketing, turfing, construction of RO/RUB/LHS, RCC and PSC minor bridges, Retaining wall, Drain, supplying and fixing various Board, Land Boundary pillars, bridge inspection steps and other associated works for civil Engineering work of Garhwa Road ROR-Phase-II (4.11km) between Garhwa Road-Jispaig Station of Dhanbad Division under jurisdiction of Dy CE/CBRKA. Approx cost of the work in (Rs.): 26,64,31,583.94, Bid Security in (Rs.): 14,82,200.00, Period of work completion: 12 (Twelve) Months, Date and time for closing of tender 13.06.2024 at 15.30 hrs. Any e-tenders which is sent by Post/Courier/Fax or by hand will not be accepted. All such manual submission of tender even if it is on firm's letter pad or received in time will not be accepted. The above e-tender document alongwith full information is available on website http://www.ireps.gov.in. Note: In case of any discrepancies found in tender notice, English version will be final. Tenderers are requested to visit the website http://www.ireps.gov.in atleast 15 days before last date of closing, for latest corrigendum/corrections etc in connection with this e-tender. मुक्त प्रसारित अधिकार/निर्माण/दखिन पूर्व नव रेलवे, मेघदुधुवा, पटना PR/00349/CONS/ENGG/24-25/44

TENDER

E-PROCUREMENT

Tender Notice No.: 04/2024 Dtd:22-05-2024. The under signed on behalf of the President of India, invites sealed Tenders for the following works:

Table with 3 columns: Description of works, Tender Quantity, Tender Due Date. SI No. 1; Tender No. 01249106 RC. 2 years Rate Contract for (i) PL No. 6015N001= 1132500 Nos. (ii) supply of Metal Lining RDSO PL No. 6015N002= 1386080 Nos. Drg No. T-8748, (iii) Manufacturing and supply of Metal Liner RDSO Drg No. PL No. 6015N003= 38334Nos. T-3740.

Note :- For full details of Tender Notice and Tender Documents, Tenderer may log on to the website (www.ireps.gov.in) prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tenders are required to log in themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with IREPS. In case they are not registered with IREPS, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act 2000 and participate in the above tenders.



NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Procurement Tender Notice: 08/2024 Tender Opening on: 18.06.2024

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

Table with 5 columns: S.N, Tender No., Description, Qty., EMD (Rs.), Tender Opening Date. 1 13245143A Thermal UTS Ticket Printer as per attached CRIS Specification. Nos 140 ₹ 65,840/- 18.06.2024

Note: (1) The complete information of above E-Procurement Tender are available on IREPS website in http://www.ireps.gov.in. (2) Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above Tender. For this purpose, Vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with class III digital signature certificates issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. (3) Rates entered into Financial rate page and duly signed digitally shall only be considered. (4) Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letter head if attached by vendor shall be straight away ignored and shall not be considered. (5) Documents being attached should be signed on their body. (6) Allocation for "Cost of Drawing" is 2-650 and for "Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)" is Deposit Misc, stores -00844517. In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the IREPS website may be approached. 903/24 (A) North central railways www.nzr.indiarailways.gov.in @northcentralrailway @nrcpoc

PM SHRI KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA BARDHAMAN NOTICE FOR FIRM REGISTRATION AND ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Session 2024-25

Firms and companies are invited to register with this Vidyalaya for providing Annual Maintenance Contract and Services of PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya Bardhaman. Firms and companies interested in registration can download the registration form from the office and school website: https://burdwan.kvs.ac.in and submit it to the school office by 12-00 noon on 06-06-2024 (For more information you can visit the website of the abovementioned school).

- (1) Canteen Services and Catering (2) Annual Maintenance Contract for Plumbing (3) Annual Maintenance Contract for Electrical Appliances (4) Annual Maintenance Contract for Repair and Maintenance of Desks and Benches etc. (5) Services of Paint, Table and Chairs (6) Annual Maintenance Contract for Air Conditioner (7) Printing of Flex & Banners (8) Services of Tractor, JCB and Roller (9) Signed Board Artist Supplies (Signed board artist supply) (10) Paver Blocks laying (11) False ceiling work etc.

Sd/- Principal

GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER GANGA PUMP CANAL DIVISION, SAHIBGANJ

e- Procurement Short Tender Notice (1st Call)

e-Tender Reference no.- WRD/GPCD/IV/SBG/SBD/01/2024-25, Dated :24.05.2024

Table with 2 columns: S.No, Description. 1 Name of Department: WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT, GOVT. OF JHARKHAND. 2 Name & address of office inviting tender: Executive Engineer, Ganga Pump Canal Division, Sahibganj. 3 Name of Work: Anti Erosion work on the right bank of river Ganga from East Praspur to Shridhar Colony no. 10 in Uduba block under district Sahibganj in 600M under total length 1200M. [14 nos Stud of 21m length each @ 60M C/C with construction of Launch Apron in 12m length.] (Lat-24.921153°, Long-87.91566°). 4 Estimated Cost of BOQ: 750.709 lakh. 5 Time of Completion: 300 Days. 6 Cost of BOQ (Tender Fee): Rs. 10,000.00. 7 Earnest Money required: Rs. 7,51,000.00. 8 Date of Publication of Tender on website: 06/06/2024. 9 Bid downloading period: 07/06/2024 to 15/06/2024. 10 Last date / Time for receipt of bids online: 15/06/2024 up to 05:00 pm. 11 Date and Time of Opening of Tender: 18/06/2024 at 03:00 PM. 12 Contact no. of Procurement officer: 7677240428.

Note: Further details can be seen on website http://jrharkhandtenders.gov.in (14) Only E tender will be accepted. Estimated cost may be changed. Earnest money will be applicable as per estimated cost. (15) Tender Fee & Earnest money will be accepted only in online mode in accordance to letter no. 120 dated 03.10.2023 of Ministry of Electronics and IT dept. Govt. of Jharkhand and Letter no. 907 dated 04.10.2023 of WRD Jharkhand. (16) Additional Performance Security will be applicable for the bid rate more than 10% below of cost of BOQ acceptable in guidance of lettrw no 430 dated 19.11.2020 of C.E (Monitoring) WRD Jharkhand. Note: Permission for this work is granted by Election Commission of India vide letter no. 437/6/ES-1/JKD-HP/2024 dated 07.05.2024. Executive Engineer Ganga Pump Canal Division Sahibganj PR 325099 District(24-25)D

'Modi is the watchman of the rights of the deprived'

PM said he will staunchly defend the reservation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE CHAZIPUR, 25 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday lashed out at the INDI alliance in Uttar Pradesh, alleging that the SP and the Congress can stoop to any level in their pursuit of votes and power.

"The prince of SP had once said that he would stop the entry of the mafia but ended up making them sit in his lap. He nurtured mafias instead. Within the INDI alliance, all parties exhibit traits of being extremely communal, casteist, and promote nepotism within their own families," he charged.

Modi said that as long as he is alive, he will staunchly defend the reservation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Modi is the watchman of the rights of the deprived, he added.

Besides, the PM said, "Congress obstructed the recognition of Baba Saheb with the Bharat Ratna. They united to defeat a Dalit President. The



members of the INDI alliance are engaged in looting the reservation rights of Dalits and backward communities. They are trying to snatch the reservation of Pasi, Noniya, Yadav, Bind, Kurmi, and Patel by giving reservation to Muslims in Karnataka overnight. Reservation for backward classes was given to Muslims".

Addressing an election meeting here in support of BJP candidate Paras Nath Rai, the PM

said that the Congress had even made fun of the dignity of the Army soldiers.

"Every effort was made to fool them. When the BJP nominated me as the PM candidate in 2013, I had announced to implement One Rank One Pension in Haryana. This shook the Congress as it had insulted the ex-servicemen. Whether it was Ghazipur, UP, or the entire country, the leaders of the family started building

palace after palace for their family, while the rural poor, farmers and deprived people continued to struggle for basic necessities of life. Modi has brought 25 crore people out of poverty in ten years," he claimed.

Modi said that earlier, the mafia freely roamed around in vehicles with red beacons, and riots had become synonymous with UP's identity. Traders and businessmen suffered losses due to this. The SP nurtured mafias and gave them tickets.

He said that similar habits persist within the SP and Congress as their priorities revolve around nepotism, casteism, and corruption.

Modi said, "Remember how Congress used to run governments. The foundation stone of Tadighat was laid by Gahmari Babu, yet the project remained pending for six decades despite INDI alliance parties forming governments in succession. But the bridge was not built. This bridge was constructed when you gave Modi a chance to serve.

It was my good fortune to fulfil Babuji's dream and come here to inaugurate it. The Congress has expertise in postponing projects and disregarding rights. It also did not allow the implementation of One Rank and One Pension scheme for our army personnel."

PM Modi said that the old people of Ghazipur are well aware of how Gahmari ji endured the pain.

"With tears in his eyes, he recounted to Nehruji how the people here used to collect wheat in the cow dung. Political dramas unfolded in the Congress government; the Patel Commission was formed to throw dust in the eyes of the people, yet the files gathered dust without any action. In contrast, our government is giving free ration to every poor. Even during the Covid crisis, the government arranged food for everyone. We allocate lakhs of crores of rupees for free ration so that no poor person faces problems," he claimed.

54.02 per cent voting in sixth phase of LS polls in UP amid severe heat wave conditions

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, 25 MAY

An estimated 54.02% of 2.70 crore voters have used their franchise in the sixth phase of polling in 14 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday, amid severe heat wave conditions.

This could be the lowest polling percentage in this elections in UP as in earlier phases the voting was recorded between 58% to 60%.

Except of reports of minor brawls between supporters of BJP and INDI alliance in Azamgarh, Basti, Machilshahar, Phulpur and Ambedkarnagar, the polling was peaceful.

In the early hours, reports also poured in over malfunctioning of EVMs which led to delay in starting the polling in several booths.

Voters reached the polling station hours before the voting started at 7AM to avoid the heat wave. But the polling turned dull as the sun rose.

A voter aged 65 died due to heat stroke in Shravasti, while a booth officer was admitted to the hospital in Basti.



ECI officials here said that the voting was 52.02% at 5PM and in next one hour it reached to just 54.02%.

A total of 162 candidates fate were sealed in the EVMs in the sixth phase polls in the state.

Maneka Gandhi from Sultanpur, Bhojpuri actor and BJP candidate Dinesh Lal Yadav Nirahua and SP candidate Dharmendra Yadav from Azamgarh, TMC candidate Laliteshpati Tripathi from Bhadohi and Congress candidate Ujjwal Raman Singh from Allahabad Lok Sabha seat were the prominent candidates in the fray in this phase.

Along with 14 Lok Sabha seats, EC also held by-election of Gansadi assembly segment in Balrampur district. The

polling percentage till 6PM was 51.10% in the assembly by-election.

State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Navdeep Rinwa said here on Saturday that polling was completed in a peaceful note. CEO said based on the information received from the districts till 6pm, the total average voting in 14 Lok Sabha constituencies of the state was 54.02 percent, in which 55.50% in Sultanpur, 51.60% in Pratnagar, 51.75% in Phulpur, 61.54% in Ambedkarnagar, 52.76% in Shravasti, 51.94% in Dumarivaganj, 56.6% in Basti, 52.63% in Santakbarnagar, 54.14% in Galganj (SC), 56.07% in Azamgarh, 55.52% in Jaunpur, 54.43% in Machilshahar (SC) and 53.07% in Bhadohi.

SP candidate protests supporter's detention in Ambedkarnagar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE AMBEDKARNAGAR, 25 MAY

Samajwadi Party's Lok Sabha candidate from Ambedkarnagar, Lalji Verma, engaged in a heated argument with the police when they tried to take his close aide and former block member, Lavkush Verma, into custody on the day of voting here on Saturday.

This altercation followed a midnight incident where police claimed to have recovered Rs 1 lakh in cash from a vehicle belonging to Lavkush in the Tanda area. The police confiscated the money for investigation and registered a case under the Model Code of Conduct.

On Saturday, the police arrived at Lavkush's house and forcibly entered the premises by jumping over the gate when no one responded to their call to open the main entrance. Subsequently, other members of the police team also entered the house.

Upon receiving the news, Lalji Verma rushed there and contested the police claim. He also objected to the police action of taking Lavkush into custody. Later, Lalji Verma took away Lavkush in his car.

Meanwhile, the officials of the Samajwadi Party complained to the ECI, alleging that Lalji Verma had been placed under house arrest and the police were not allowing him

to leave his residence.

On the other hand, the police said that during a routine check by the FST team on Friday night, Lavkush Verma was caught distributing money from his vehicle to influence voters and that a sum of Rs 1,00,000 was recovered from him. Subsequently, a case (crime number 117/24) was under sections 188 and 171D of the IPC at the Aliganj police station.

In a statement, the police said that when they went to question Lavkush at his residence regarding the aforementioned case, SP candidate Lalji Verma intervened and protested against the police action despite being briefed about the entire situation.

'Government has already been formed in first five phases'

AGENCIES PATNA, 25 MAY

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday expressed confidence in BJP's victory in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections and claimed that the government has already been formed in the first five phases of elections.

Speaking with a news agency, Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "The government has already been formed in the first five phases of elections... The sixth and seventh phases are just for seat margins... We (BJP) are quickly going towards the 400 mark..."

The Assam Chief Minister also took a sarcastic jibe at Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav and said, "Tejashwi has nothing to do



except singing... The government is of BJP, elections are in 2027... There is a good government of JD(U) and BJP... In Delhi, PM Modi will run the government so Tejashwi will have to sing songs only. So, it is nice that he (Tejash-

wi) has started singing and practising"

Sarma also expressed his views on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and said, "It is written in our Constitution to bring Uniform Civil Code. Today, Rahul Gandhi reads the 'red Constitution', Tejashwi Yadav reads the 'red Constitution'... But we read the Constitution by BR Ambedkar and that is why, we want to bring UCC."

Notably, Sarma had alleged that Rahul Gandhi carries the Chinese Constitution in his rallies. Taking to his official X handle, Sarma on May 17 had posted, "The original copy of the Constitution of India has a blue cover. The original Chinese constitution has a red cover. Does Rahul carry a Chinese Con-

stitution? We will need to verify."

Sarma also spoke about his visit to the late BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi and said, "I also went to his place and paid tribute to him."

Sarma also took to his official X handle and posted about his visit to the residence of Sushil Kumar Modi. He said, "I had the privilege of working closely with respected Sushil Modi ji. I learnt a lot from him..."

He added, "Struggle was an important part of Sushil Modi's public life. He fought for democracy during the Emergency and when the clouds of Jungle Raj were looming over Bihar... His absence from among us today is a big loss for the BJP and the state of Bihar."

1,430 Myanmarese nationals took shelter in Mizoram in last 10 days

AIZAWL, 25 MAY

A total of 1,430 Myanmarese nationals took shelter in the north-eastern state of Mizoram in the last 10 days amid fresh clashes in the neighbouring country between the army and 'pro-democratic forces', an official said on Saturday.

According to an official, at least 400 Myanmarese nationals including women and children crossed the India-Myanmar forested border on Friday and Saturday. They took shelter in Mizoram's Saitual and Champhal districts.

Villagers of the two districts are providing food and shelter to the refugees, sources said.

According to a Mizoram government official, the refugees, mostly belonging to Myanmar's Chin state, fled to different villages of Mizoram due to fear triggered by the armed clashes between 'Tatmadaw' (Myanmar military) and pro-democratic forces led by the Chin National Army.

Villagers claimed the migrants also feared air raids by the country's Air Force.

District officials, meanwhile, have been collecting the details of the Myanmarese nationals. Meanwhile, opposition Mizo National Front (MNF) leader T.C. Pachhunga said that despite continuous demands, the Centre has not yet provided any assistance to the Mizoram government to provide relief to the refugees from Myanmar, Bangladesh and internally displaced people from Manipur.

Indi Alliance is anti-Hindu, seeking power at nation's cost: CM Yogi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE GORAKHPUR, 25 MAY

In a strong reaction to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's controversial remarks about globally renowned Sanatani spiritual institutions like Bharat Sevashram Sangha and Ramakrishna Mission, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath claimed that the entire Indi Alliance, including the Congress, TMC, RJD, and SP, were engaged in anti-Hindu politics.

Talking to the media in the Gorakhnath Temple complex before leaving for Ballia to campaign for the Lok Sabha elections on Saturday morn-

ing, CM Adityanath accused the alliance of prioritising power over nation. "These parties want power at the cost of the country and no Indian will accept this", he remarked.

Referring to the controversial statement made by TMC chief Mamata Banerjee against Bharat Sevashram Sangha and Ramakrishna Mission in West Bengal, the CM emphasised that both organisations were esteemed religious and spiritual institutions in India. He praised Ramakrishna Mission, which follows the ideals of Swami Vivekananda, for its commendable work in promoting the values and principles of Sanatan Dharma and India's spiritual her-



itage across the country and the world.

"Similarly, Bharat Sevashram Sangha is an influential spiritual organization, which has done commendable work in promoting the values and principles of

Sanatan Dharma both within India and globally, following the ideals of Swami Pranananda. Both organizations have also acted in advancement of numerous service projects worldwide", he stated.

The CM further pointed that opposing Sanatan Dharma and Hindus, is the foundation of the politics of the Indi Alliance and all its constituents including Congress, SP, TMC, RJD and Aam Aadmi Party and the statements made by its leaders, including Mamata Banerjee, reflected their frustration over their impending defeat.

Praising Ramakrishna Mission and Bharat Sevashram Sangha for their extensive efforts in promoting spirituality and culture through commendable service projects, both in India and around the world, the CM cited Swami Vivekananda, who had proudly declared, "We should say

with pride that we are Hindus."

Adityanath stated that the followers and devotees of these esteemed organizations will give a befitting reply to Congress, TMC, and the Indi Alliance. He compared the current situation to the era of Ravana when sages were threatened, asserting that Sanatan Dharma will not be intimidated by such provocations and will respond in a decisive manner.

The CM stated that while the Indi Alliance parties were threatening Hindu religious and spiritual institutions, they were also undermining the rights of backward caste people.

He pointed out that in 2010, the TMC government in West Bengal diluted OBC reservations by including 118 Muslim castes in the OBC category, depriving millions of individuals from backward castes of reservation benefits over the past 14 years. He demanded an apology from Mamata Banerjee's TMC government and Congress for this injustice meted out to the OBC community.

He emphasised that taking away the rights of youth and citizens was unacceptable and contrary to the principles of Dr. Bhrimrao Ambedkar, who clearly stated that reservations should not be based on religion.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1 Cereal grass (3)
 - 3 Accepted (4)
 - 7 Surround (7)
 - 8 Serenite joy (5)
 - 10 Melodist (4)
 - 11 Broken-off piece (8)
 - 13 Football pitch section (7, 4)
 - 16 Forefather (8)
 - 18 Chest muscles, in short (4)
 - 20 Rub hard (5)
 - 21 Antiquated (7)
 - 23 Snooze (4)
 - 24 Indicate assent (3)
- DOWN**
- 1 Vengeance (7)
 - 2 Snake-like fish (3)
 - 3 Sledge (8)
 - 4 Yellowish-green (5)
 - 5 Amphibian (4)
 - 6 In working order (11)
 - 9 Badger's burrow (4)
 - 12 Adequate (8)
 - 14 Green gemstone (7)
 - 15 Singing voice (4)
 - 17 Freight (5)
 - 19 III (4)
 - 22 Tin (3)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS: 12 Domestic, 13 Hell, 14 Doubt (held out), 15 Amnesia, 16 Ownership, 17 Dungeons, 18 Owl.

DOWN: 1 Hoards, 2 Lemon sole, 3 Beekeeper, 4 Light, 5 Toppie, 6 Donate, 7 Anaesthetic, 8 Antipasto, 9 Clergy, 10 Shares, 11 Prince, 12 Bison, 13 Vic.

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovalski



NEED TO KNOW

- Ambulance**
FD Block Association (Amb) 983045236, 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 2455-5164/5557
RK Mission Seva Pratishthan 2475-3636/39
- Police/Fire**
Lalbaraz (Police Control Room) 22143230
S. P. (North 24-Pgns) 25423005
S.P. (South 24-Pgns) 2479-3333/1311
Bhawanani Bhawanani 24791761/9, 24791933
Fire Service Station Salt Lake: 2357-5293;
- Howrah** 2666-8111; Behala 2497-6285
- Civic Services**
Kolkata Municipal Corporation: 2266-1000
Water: 2543-1502
- Calcutta Telephones**
Changed Number Announcement 1951.1952.1953
- Taxi Refusal**
SMS 575756: Complaint and registration
- Police Toll Free No.** 1073
Transport Deptt. No. 6451-6718
- CESC Fault Reporting**
1912 and 4403-1912
- Trains**
Howrah Station Old Complex 1331/1332 (Auto Telephone Numbers), 1310, 2638-7432/3642/7381 (manual).
Sealdah: 2350-3535/3537
Shalimar Station: 2668-1121, Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway: 139.

SCRIBBLE

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: ★★

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

1. 4 2. 3 3. 1 4. 2 5. 1 6. 3 7. 2 8. 1 9. 4 10. 3 11. 2 12. 1 13. 4 14. 2 15. 1 16. 3 17. 2 18. 1 19. 4 20. 3 21. 2 22. 1 23. 4 24. 2

SUDOKU

Concepts: **Sudoku**

By: Dave Givens

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

Difficulty Level: ★★

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

1. 4 2. 3 3. 1 4. 2 5. 1 6. 3 7. 2 8. 1 9. 4 10. 3 11. 2 12. 1 13. 4 14. 2 15. 1 16. 3 17. 2 18. 1 19. 4 20. 3 21. 2 22. 1 23. 4 24. 2

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.



THUMBNAILS

Bihar Cricket Association to organise women's domestic tournament from June 2024: The Bihar Cricket Association (BCA) is going to organize a domestic tournament for women of the state of all categories (Senior, Under-23, U-19, U-15) in June 2024 with a view to give competitive exposure to its women players. The main goal of the BCA Women's Domestic Tournament is to make the women players match fit for the upcoming Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) domestic season 2024-2025. BCA under the leadership of its president Rakesh Tiwari will organize the domestic tournament from the first/second week of June 2024, a release said. For the women's domestic tournament, the BCA will conduct selection trials for women players of all categories (Senior, Under-23, U-19, U-15) from May 26 in Patna. All players must report at the Sakha Ground Rajendra Nagar premises by 9 am. The trials will be held in Patna only and players from different location can take part in the trials according to the schedule mentioned above. The BCA chief has assured that talented players would not be overlooked based solely on their team's performance and individuals showcasing promising skills will receive opportunities.

Surfing Federation of India launches 5th edition of Indian Open of Surfing: The Surfing Federation of India (SFI), the governing body for the sports of Surfing and Stand-Up Paddling in the country, has officially launched the fifth edition of the Indian Open of Surfing, a premier national surfing competition, here on Saturday. Scheduled to take place from May 31 to June 2 at the picturesque Sashithlu Beach in Mangalore, the three-day event will be organised by the Surfing Swami Foundation and hosted by the local Mantra Surf Club under the aegis of SFI.

Boxing: Abhimanyu Laura beats Kristiyan

The Indian started slow as the 10-time Bulgarian National Champion took an upper hand



HARPAL SINGH BEDI
NEW DELHI, 25 MAY

National championships bronze medalist Abhimanyu Laura put

up a dominating display to pack-off Bulgaria's Kristiyan Nikolov in the 80kg category of the 2nd Boxing World Qualifiers for Paris Olympics in Bangkok on Saturday.

The Indian started slow as the 10-time Bulgarian National Champion took an upper hand in the opening round.

But the 21-year-old Indian quickly switched gears and went on the offensive in

the second round and earned the bragging rights for the round with four of the five judges voting in favour of him.

The Indian continued the flurry of punches in the third and final round too, to finally clinch the bout 3-0 and ensure two wins out of two for the Indian contingent in Bangkok.

Earlier, it was Sachin Siwach who had opened India's account with a win in the 57kg category against Alex Mukuka of New Zealand on Friday.

India has fielded seven men and three women in the 2nd world qualifiers and Abhinash Jamwal (63.5kg) and Nishant Dev (71kg) will take the ring on Sunday for the first time.

Jamwal faces Andriejus Lavrenovas of Lithuania in his opening bout while Nishant takes on Amanda Bighafa of Guinea-Bissau. Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Preeti (54kg), and Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) have already secured their spots for Paris.

Junior Women's Hockey: India pips Belgium



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI 25 MAY

Striker Kanika Siwach scored an impressive brace as India Junior Women's Hockey Team beat Belgium, winning in the shootout 4-2 after the score was tied 2-2 at the end of regulation time at Antwerp on Saturday.

The Indians were quick to find their form and assert themselves in the first quarter. An early penalty corner

resulted in Kanika Siwach sounding the boards to take the lead. Soon after, Kanika scored her second goal for the night in the same quarter to make it 2-0.

Maintaining their momentum, India saw through a goalless second quarter to restrict the Belgian unit and find themselves in a commanding position at halftime.

Belgium found opportunities in the third quarter, including a crucial penalty corner, however, the Indian defensive unit managed to restrict Belgium and maintain the surplus.

In the final quarter, Belgium finally broke the shackles, scoring twice in quick succession to tie the score at 2-2, minutes before fulltime. In the ensuing shootout, India emerged victorious to win the contest 2-2 (4-2 SO).

The Indians Junior will play their next match against Germany in Breda on 26th May.

Bangladesh 'hopeful' of Taskin Ahmed's return for T20 World Cup opener against Sri Lanka

AGENCIES
DHAKA, 25 MAY

Bangladesh Cricket Board's chief physician Debashish Chowdhury has confirmed that pacer Taskin Ahmed, who is undergoing rehabilitation in the USA, will recover in time from his injury and will be available for their T20 World Cup 2024 opening match against Sri Lanka on June 8.

Taskin was named in Bangladesh's 15-member squad for the T20 pinnacle despite healing from the displaced fracture in the rib region on the right side. However, Debashish Chowdhury is satisfied with the pacer's progress following the recent MRI scan result.

He added that Taskin will resume bowling with the short run-up in the coming days.

"Taskin's improvement is very good and satisfying. He



is going through a rehabilitation process and undergoing gym training. He is doing running sessions and we will introduce bowling later," Debashish Chowdhury told Cricbuzz.

"We just got the reports (of the MRI scan) and talked to the doctor, and it seemed the fracture is almost healed and now we will slowly introduce him to short run-up bowling and later increase the intensity. He is not having any problem with running and now we will be doing throwing sessions in the coming days before starting to bowl with

short run-ups. We are hopeful he will be available from the opening game of the World Cup if he continues to progress in this manner," he added.

The 29-year-old pacer is currently travelling with the team for the three-match T20I series against the USA. Bangladesh lost the first two matches and will play for pride in the final game of the series on Saturday.

Taskin last featured in the first four T20Is against Zimbabwe before missing out on the final match of the series. He scalped eight wickets and was named Player of the Series for his performance.

Bangladesh have also added pacer Hasan Mahmud as a travelling reserve for Taskin to tackle any adversary. Before heading to the T20 World Cup, Bangladesh will play two warm-up fixtures against the USA on May 28 and against India on June 1.

Malaysia Masters Open; Sindhu in Semi-finals

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI 25 MAY

Former world champion PV Sindhu stormed into the semi-finals of the Malaysia Masters badminton women's singles event after a three-game victory over China's Han Yue at the Axiata Arena in Kuala Lumpur.

Sindhu, 15th in the latest badminton world rankings, defeated the top-seeded 21-13, 14-21, 21-12.

Despite losing the second game, the Indian seeded fifth, managed to keep her composure in the decider to secure the win over her world No. 6 opponent in 55 minutes.

The two-time Olympic medallist clinched five consecutive points to win the first game from a 16-13 lead. Han Yue began the second game on a positive note and opened up a 15-3 lead at one point. Although Sindhu was able to close the gap to 18-13, she failed to over-



turn the initial deficit and was forced to play a decider.

In the final game, the 28-year-old showed her intent early on and took a 9-1 lead. That initial dominance was enough to see her through the third game and secure her progress to the last four.

Sindhu, who had recently skipped the Uber Cup and Thailand Open, will be up against world No. 20 Busanan Ongbamrunphan of Thailand for a place in the final of the BWF Super 500 tournament.

The Indian is looking to win her first BWF World Tour title since winning the Sin-

gapore Open back in 2022. Meanwhile, Ashmita Chaliha's campaign in women's singles ended in the quarter-finals after she lost to sixth seed Zhang Yi Man of China in straight games.

Chaliha, ranked 53rd in the world, suffered a 21-10, 21-15 defeat to her world No. 16 opponent in 30 minutes. She had earlier stunned world No. 10 Beiwen Zhang of USA 21-19, 16-21, 21-12 to secure a place in the quarter-finals.

Sindhu is now the lone Indian still alive in the BWF Super 500 tournament.

Kiran George, who was the only Indian in men's singles, had crashed out of the tournament in the second round. The women's doubles pairs of Treesa Jolly-Gayatri Gopichand and Simran Singhi-Ritika Thaker also failed to get past the second round along with mixed doubles pair B Sumeeth Reddy and Sikki Reddy.

ISL Cup winner Mumbai City FC to release seven players at end of the month

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, 25 MAY

Indian Super League 2023-24 Cup winners, Mumbai City FC have announced the release of seven players after their contracts conclude at the end of this month. Naocha Singh, Bhaskar Roy, Mohammad Nawaz, Gurkirat Singh, Rowlin Borges, Tondomba Singh and Jakub Vojtus will leave the club on May 31.

"We express our gratitude to these players for their valuable contributions and wish them all the best for their future," the Indian Super League champion said in a statement on Saturday.

Naocha Singh -- on loan this season at Kerala Blasters -- signed on a free transfer, will be leaving the club at the end of his contract on May 31. During his several loan stints, Naocha proved to be an important part of multiple squads, also winning the I-League with Punjab FC in the



2022/23 season.

Bhaskar Roy, who joined the club in 2022, will also depart after his contract expires with the Islanders, having won the ISL Shield and Cup

during his time at the club.

Mohammad Nawaz, who joined the club from FC Goa on a three-year deal, will depart at the end of May as well. For the Islanders, Nawaz

made 28 appearances and kept eight clean sheets during his time at the club.

Gurkirat Singh will also leave the Islanders after the end of his three-year contract.

The Chandigarh native signed in September 2021 from Indian Arrows had 49 appearances and scored two goals for Mumbai City FC.

Rowlin Borges -- on loan this season at FC Goa -- who was an integral part of the ISL double-winning squad in 2020/21, will be concluding a successful five-year stint with Mumbai City FC at the end of this month. Having signed for the club in 2019, Borges made 59 appearances and scored four times.

Tondomba Singh, who is on loan this season at Delhi FC, will leave the club after four seasons, having joined in 2020. Jakub Vojtus who joined the team in March 2024 on a short-term contract to replace the injured Iker Guarrotxena will depart upon the expiration of his contract.

Mumbai City FC lifted their second ISL title earlier this month after a 3-1 win over Mohun Bagan in the final.

T20 World Cup: Pakistan's biggest chink is always going to be fielding, says Hayden

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 25 MAY

Former Australia batter Matthew Hayden has asserted that Pakistan's squad for the next month's T20 World Cup looks solid with a star-studded line-up but their fielding remains a 'biggest chink' for them. Babar Azam will lead Pakistan in the showpiece event in the USA and the West Indies, commencing on June 2. The runners-up have named a strong squad consisting of four lethal pacers - Shaheen Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf.

Hayden lauded the fast-bowling attack and termed the quartet 'amazing' talents.

"Looking at the Pakistan squad as usual Pakistan are always dark horses when comes to the World Cup. In particular, their fast bowling stocks are amazing. Shaheen

Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah, who wasn't available for selection in the last World Cup - that's a big comeback, and then you have got Mohammad Amir as well and Haris Rauf. You have four major (bowlers) from the pace attack," Hayden said in a video posted by Star Sports on X.

The veteran cricketer further highlighted Pakistan's batting prowess, having the likes of Babar, Mohammad Rizwan and Fakhar Zaman in the side.

"You've got Shadab Khan through the middle for spinning and also a power-hitter and at the top you've got big three - captain Babar Azam, glad to see him back at the helm. He is the natural leader and should be there and you've got Mohammad Rizwan as well that more than likely will partner with him and Fakhar Zaman, who

is dangerous left-hand striker of the ball," the 52-year-old said.

Hayden feels Pakistan have a solid team and they have to work on their fielding to improve their chances in the forthcoming tournament.

"So, all in all, generally speaking, their biggest chink is always going to be fielding. Their defensive efforts in the field have and hopefully, in this case, won't diminish their performances. But they're a solid team and a dangerous team and certainly a team to watch out for in this T20 World Cup across America and Barbados," he added.

Pakistan are currently playing a four-match T20I series against England and will take on co-host USA in their opening T20 World Cup match in Texas on June 6 before facing arch-rivals India in New York on June 9.

Para-Athletics Worlds: Indian contingent records highest-ever medal tally

AGENCIES
KOBE, 25 MAY

Simran Sharma won gold in the Women's 200 metres T12 category as medals continue to pour for India in the 2024 Para-Athletics World Championship in Kobe, Japan. Preethi Pal won her second medal of the Championship with a bronze in the Women's 100 metres T35 category.

Preethi had earlier won bronze in 200 metres in the same category.

India's Navdeep won a bronze medal with a season-best performance of 42.82 meters in the Men's Javelin Throw F41 category.

With Saturday's medals, India's tally reached 17 includ-



ing six gold, five silver and six bronze, their highest ever in the history of the esteemed competition surpassing the 2023 tally.

The Indian para-athletics team's performance in Kobe is a testament to their hard

work, resilience, and the robust support system provided by coaches, support staff, and the Athletics Federation of India.

Their success serves as an inspiration to aspiring athletes across the country and

reinforces India's growing stature in international para-athletics.

Deepthi Jeevanji on Monday set a world record of 55.06 seconds in the Women's 400m T20 category which secured the gold medal in an incredible display of hard work and motivation.

"Breaking the world record and winning gold at the World Championships is a dream come true. I am grateful for the support of my coaches, family, and the entire Indian contingent. This is just the beginning, and I am excited for the future, especially with the Paris Paralympics on the horizon," said Deepthi Jeevanji after breaking the world record.

Guardiola praises Vincent Kompany ahead of rumoured Bayern Munich move

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 25 MAY

Following the rumours suggesting the arrival of Vincent Kompany in Bayern Munich, Pep Guardiola spoke nothing but heaps of praise for Kompany.

Bayern Munich has been scouring the depths of the managerial market and it appears as though their search is nearing completion with reports suggesting the Bavarian club may be close to securing Vincent Kompany's signature. Vincent Kompany is a legend at Manchester City and played under Pep Guardiola during his twilight years.

"I'm happy with the link between Bayern and Vinnie.



I have a huge opinion of Vinnie, doesn't matter if he got relegated with Burnley. I have the highest opinion about his work, his personality, knowledge of the game, and

the way he handles the media. I would love Bayern to take the best decision, they deserve it. I love that club. I'm in love with Bayern Munich for many, many reasons — especially the

people there," said Guardiola during his pre-match press conference.

Kompany joined Burnley in 2022 and led the Clarinets back to the Premier League in the subsequent season. His time in the league was disappointing as Burnley got relegated at the end of the 2023/24 season.

A jump from a relegated Burnley to Bayern Munich is something that is unheard of in football but the Spaniard trusts in Kompany to do a great job.

"Vincent Kompany will become a future Man City manager, mark my words. Yeah, it will happen for sure. You will call me when this is going to happen," added the Spaniard.



'YUVAJ SAID I CAN BE A BETTER BOWLER THAN HIM'
Following a match-winning performance with the ball in qualifier two against Rajasthan Royals (RR), Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) batting all-rounder Abhishek Sharma said that he often had conversations about his bowling with his mentor and legendary Indian all-rounder Yuvraj Singh, who encouraged the youngster that he could be a better bowler than him. Spinners reigned supreme in the Qualifier 2 and orchestrated Rajasthan Royals exit from the Indian Premier League by helping Sunrisers Hyderabad walk away with a 36-run win at the Chepauk on Friday. SRH skipper Pat Cummins' gamble to put spinners as their frontline attack against RR's power hitters worked like a charm for them.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

IPL 2024 Final: Cummins faces Gambhir test

The IPL crown will be the icing on the cake for Cummins, who is leading a T20 franchise for the first time in his career

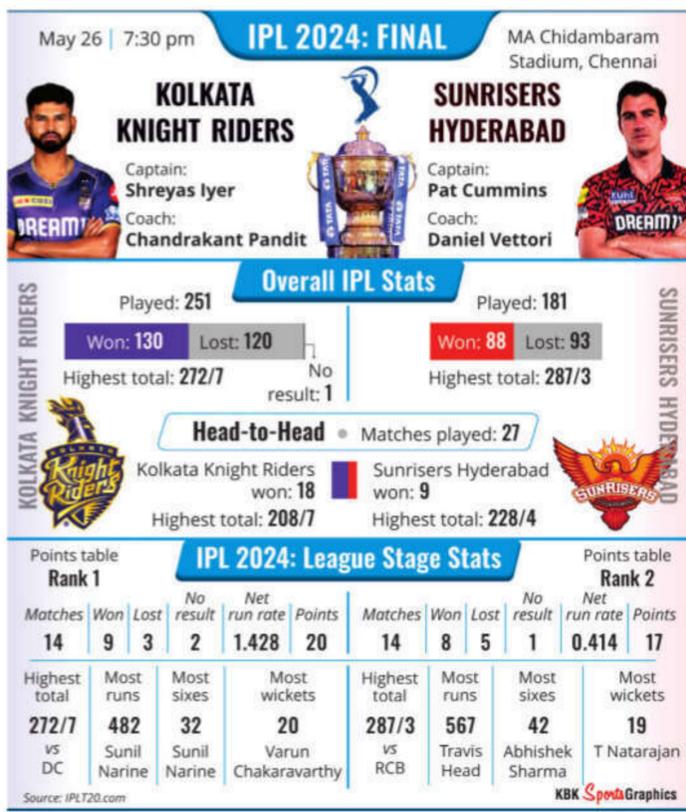
TRIDIB BAPARNASH
NEW DELHI, 25 MAY

The stage is set for a clash of wits between two fiercely competitive but contrasting characters in Gautam Gambhir and Pat Cummins as the Kolkata Knight Riders chase a third Indian Premier League (IPL) crown against the unpredictable 2016 champions Sunrisers Hyderabad at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Sunday.

Both Gambhir and Cummins have been handed over the reins of their respective sides ahead of this season after both teams endured mid-table finishes over the past few seasons.

For Cummins, who has his hands full after leading Australia to the World Test Championship title, the 2023 ODI World Cup and the Ashes in a space of six months, the IPL crown will be the icing on the cake for the pacer, who is leading a T20 franchise for the first time in his career.

"A very practical guy, very humble, very empathetic to his fellow teammates and coaching staff. He is into the statistics and gets the information that he needs against a particular opposition in certain conditions," SRH assistant coach Simon Helmot described the skipper in a nutshell after the team's win against Rajasthan Royals in the second qualifier on Friday.



"He doesn't waste time in (team) meetings. Our team meeting today was 35 seconds. But, a lot of information has already been spoken about," he said. On Sunday, going by popular sentiment, the KKR side will enter as the favourites but one can't discount the Australian cricketers in big-ticket finals, with the hero of the

ODI World Cup final—Travis Head in red-hot form for the Sunrisers, and Cummins with his fondness to "silence the crowd".

Amidst the captivating duel between Cummins and Gambhir, KKR's captain Shreyas Iyer finds himself under the shadows of the KKR mentor, but the Mumbai cricketer will have his reasons to win the trophy after being dropped from the BCCI's annual central contracts ahead of the IPL. Winning the IPL crown could bolster his chances of winning back his lost pride.

The two teams met in the first qualifier in which KKR outsmarted SRH with clever bowling plans on a massive Motera ground and in Chennai, SRH carried out a similar heist to outwit the Rajasthan Royals on Friday. As such, it promises to be another exciting battle on the cards.

The last time KKR played an IPL final in Chennai, it was against the home side—Chennai Super Kings in 2012 under Gambhir, who also knows a bit to silence a vociferous crowd. He went on to lead KKR to a second crown in 2014, and with a bigger prize in the India head coach's position awaiting, taking the KKR to a third crown will also bolster his chances to prove himself before the Cricket Advisory Committee.

One look at the overall

team compositions, the KKR side finds all their bases covered with Sunil Narine, Andre Russell, Rinku Singh, the two Iyers -- Shreyas and Venkatesh -- the two Ranases -- Nitish and Harshit -- and spinner Varun Chakravarthy in their ranks.

The SRH, on the other hand, will take a lot of positives from their Friday night's show, especially from the bowling perspective with their part-time spin options in Abhishek Sharma and Shabbaz Ahmed effectively taking the Royals out of the game.

Abhishek will also be expected to fire with the bat along with Head—a luxury that the SRH still can boast in contrast to KKR after the departure of Englishman Phil Salt, back for national duty. Head and Heinrich Klaasen did get runs on a tricky surface but the likes of Abhishek, Rahul Tripathi and Nitish Reddy would need to raise their hands for SRH to lift the title. On a track where taking the pace off deliveries will be the key, young KKR pacers Harshit and Vaibhav Arora will have to think out of the box against Head, who has so far amassed 567 runs. Another interesting aspect of the IPL final is that the match features no member from India's main T20 World Cup squad. The only Indian player associated with the final will be Rinku Singh, who is in the travelling reserves.



'AIFF U-17 Youth League offers both players, coaches growth opportunities'

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 25 MAY

Football 4 Change Academy head coach Lam Lun Mang believes that AIFFU-17 Youth League offers both players, coaches growth opportunities.

The Football 4 Change Academy have come a long way from competing locally, to reaching the semi-finals of the AIFFU-17 Youth League, in what was only their second participation in the national level league.

The side hailing from Manipur have played 13 matches in the league, and head coach Lam Lun Mang believes that these have allowed his boys to learn and improve.

"We participated in this league for the first time last year and only played till the zonals. This time, the AIFF launched this tournament on a home and away basis in the Group Stage, and I feel that was a very good initiative," said Mang to AIFF.

"We're dealing with kids here, so when they start playing at this level, they don't immediately perform. But this format allowed us to play, learn and improve over time, and that helped our boys," he said. "The more



games we play, the better we perform."

Football 4 Change finished top of Group C in the Group Stage, overcoming opponents like Shillong Lajong, NorthEast United, Aizawl FC, and Harisinga Town Club. They followed that up with a second-placed finish in Group C of the Final Rounds, behind Zinc Football Academy, and a victory over Kerala Blasters (2-0) in the quarter-finals. However, their campaign came to an end in the semi-finals with a 0-4 defeat at the hands of defending champions Classic Football Academy. "The Group Stage was quite difficult for us, as we faced some very good teams, but our boys did well, and that prepared us better for the final rounds," said Mang. "The teams in the finals were also very good, of course, but I felt that our side was much more prepared as a unite when we played them, than when we played in the Group Stage."



Royals return with handful of positives after SRH ends their IPL campaign



TRIDIB BAPARNASH
NEW DELHI, 25 MAY

For Rajasthan Royals, it was yet again a missed opportunity to reach their second IPL final in three years after Sanju Samson & Co were caught off-guard by a shrewd Sunrisers Hyderabad that banked on their left-arm part-timers for a 36-run win to set their date with Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL 2024 final on Sunday.

The Royals' batting unit, which had fired on all cylinders throughout the tournament, lost fuel when it mattered the most for the side in their pursuit of a second IPL trophy, resulting in their exit, one step before the title clash.

Analysing the defeat that ended their presence in this season, Samson felt that the Royals lacked a proactive batting approach against Sunrisers Hyderabad's left-arm finger-spinners on a dry Chepauk pitch, which offered more purchase to the slower bowlers in the second innings. "I think we were found

short of options in the middle overs against spin, and I think that's where we lost the game. Against left-arm spin, we had three-four right-handers in the middle and the ball was stopping. But we could've tried a bit more (options) - reverse-sweep or use of the crease a bit more - and they (SRH) also bowled really well, actually," Samson said.

SRH captain Pat Cummins' smart move to employ his part-time left-arm spin options in Shabbaz Ahmed (3 for 23) and Abhishek Sharma (2 for 24) broke the backbone of the Royals during their chase of 176.

The Chepauk track had offered an average turn of 1.8 degrees when Royals spin duo of Ravichandran Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal were operating, but that number jumped up to 3.3 degrees in the second, according to the host broadcaster. SRH had left out their main spinners, Vijaykanth Vijaykanth and Mayank Markande, for this knockout game and instead

opted to employ the part-time left-arm spin duo that paid dividends. In fact, Aiden Markram also found a sharp turn in the only over that he bowled.

Samson also said that the Royals were expecting dew to be a factor, but it never materialised as the Chepauk track remained sticky till the very end on Friday night.

"It's actually very hard to guess - when we can expect dew or not (in Chennai). So, the wicket started behaving differently in the second innings. The ball started turning a bit and they used the advantage and bowled spin in the middle overs against our right-handers and that's where they were one-up against us," he assessed.

Positives from the campaign

Samson felt that the season was a productive one not only for the Royals but from Indian cricket's point of view as a number of young players like Riyan Parag and Dhruv Jurel stepped up through the season. Assam's Parag ended the season with 573 runs in 14 innings at a strike rate of just

under 150 - only Ruturaj Gaikwad and Virat Kohli have scored more runs than him this season - while Jurel played some sparkling cameos.

"To be very honest, we've had some brilliant games not only this season, but the last three years have been a great project for our franchise," Samson said. "We've found some really

great talent for the country, I think. Riyan Parag coming out of this season and Dhruv Jurel and a lot of them are looking really exciting, not only for RR but for the Indian cricket team," he added.

Royals' Director of Cricket Kumar Sangakkara said he was pleased with how the season panned out for them overall. RR were the early pace-setters winning eight of their first nine games before

undergoing a five-match winless streak and somehow scrapped to the second qualifier, despite Jos Buttler leaving the IPL for England duty and Shimron Hetmyer sitting out with an injury towards the business end of the tournament. "I think it was a great season for us. We started really well and then we lost a close game to SRH in Hyderabad. And then in Delhi also we put ourselves in winning positions and sometimes you have streaks. RCB lost almost every game at the start and then caught up. That's how T20 goes," he said.

"All we can do is to put ourselves in positions for playoffs and vying for finals, which we did. I think all the guys through the season played really phenomenal cricket and there was a little bit of fatigue, of course, at the back end. But it doesn't really matter when you're in games like this - you've got to turn up and perform," the Sri Lankan legend added.

Samson was also effusive in his praise for medium pacer Sandeep Sharma, who answered critics despite the snub at the IPL auction, and joined the Royals as a replacement. In 11 games he played in the ongoing season, the Punjab pacer picked up 13 wickets at an average of 23.92 and 8.18. "I am happy for him. By not being picked in the auctions and coming back as a replacement, the way he bowled, he has delivered. If we look at the numbers, Sandeep Sharma in the last two years, will be the next guy after Bumrah. He has done a great job," he said.



Dead-ends full of life in Manhattan, New York

Page 15

Tatini Haat brings tradition back to Hooghly

TARUN GOSWAMI

In a bid to revive history, Bhraman Adda and Bhadreswar Municipality in Hooghly district have taken a major step to revive a haat at Srimani Ghat every Wednesday. Haats have played a major role in the lives of semi-urban and rural people for the past 500 years. Haats were organised once a week, and the days were fixed. In Kolkata, we get two major haats, namely, the Harisha haat on Saturday, which is basically a haat to sell garments, and the Pakhir haat on Grey Street on Sunday, where animal cubs, birds, and ornamental fish are sold. In Howrah, Mangla haat is held every Friday. Earlier, in the haats, saris and dhotis made by local weavers, different types of food items, local sweets, and locally made toys were sold. Mr Sanjay Bhattacharya, joint secretary of Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo Nilay, a sociocultural organisation in Chandernagore, says, "The local artisans and business-

men are doing brisk business. Many people, particularly the younger ones, are visiting the haat regularly and are buying wares made by the local artisans to encourage them. Nilay has also opened a stall, and books and different items are being sold." An interesting feature of the Tatini haat is that both buyers and sellers have to sit on the ground to see various items and buy them. The organisers of the haat say, "Local items like bori (dried lentil dumplings) of different types are being sold along with achar, which is close to pickles, which is a hot favourite among the buyers. There was a time when the elderly women used to make bori, which was added to improve the taste of various food items like mixed vegetables and some fish items." Earthen pitchers, which were used to store water, are being sold at the haat. In addition to this, tree saplings, garments, locally made toys, books, tea, and locally made costume jewellery made by the local artisans are being sold. The farmers bring some locally pro-

duced vegetables. A unique feature of the haat is that people can bring old, unused garments, and those who want them can get them free of charge. Stories narrated by some local historians on the history of the haats have become very popular. Local singers are presenting music without microphones; the way earlier, singers used to present their songs at local gatherings. Bhadreswar, at one point in time, was called a "ganja", which means in between a town and village. There was Saptagram Port, where traders used to come. However, this port slowly became defunct as big ships could not enter the port. It was situated at the confluence of the Hooghly and Saraswati rivers. History says that in Bhadreswar haat, English, French, Dutch, and German traders used to come to the haat with various products. In many households, toys made in England, Germany, or Italy are still found. It shows that people used to attend the haat more than a century ago and buy those items. Bamboo-made baskets made in Europe are still found in some households today. Bhadreswar is situated at the border of Chandernagore, which was a French colony. There were landed aristocrats and peasants. One of the highly appreciated items in the haat of Bhadreswar many years ago was matki ghee, made of buffalo milk. It used to be brought from Bihar. In Rabindranath's poem on Damodar Seth, one gets a reference to Matki Ghee. "Anbe Katki juto, Matki ghjee o ano" (bring shoes made in Odisha along with Matki ghee). History books said 2.5 maunds of Matki ghee were priced at Rs 100. In the books written by Bipradas Pillai more than five years ago, one gets reference to the haats of Bhadreswar. "People are now habituated to going to the big shops and shopping malls that have come up across the state. But haats have a different flavour. Here, people get a chance to meet the producers of different items, be they food or weavers. There is a taste of rural Bengal, and some old food items and sweets are being sold. People get a chance to know the history and heritage of haats, which played a major role in the lives of our ancestors," says one of the organisers of Tatini haat. He hopes that people from other areas along the Hooghly River will bring back the haats to set up a bridge between the past and present.



Stolen heritage: Textile appropriation during colonial era

SHAMBHAVI NAIETHANI

Actress Alia Bhatt recently made headlines for her glorious ensemble at the Met Gala 2024, where she donned a Sabyasachi saree studded with countless precious and semi-precious stones. However, the Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla Ajrakh saree she wore on the red carpet at the Joy Awards 2024 must get the hype it deserves. The deep indigo and red of the saree were brightened with tasteful sequins embroidered along the edges. Ajrakh can be deemed the mother of Indian textiles, as found in "The Great Priest", fondly mentioned in NCERT history books. The priest's shawl is said to be a prototype of the Ajrakh we wear today. It is positively reassuring to see its comeback, but what of other textiles that were not lost to time but systematically forgotten? Chintz, Muslin and Paisley, or rather Cheent, Mulmul and Boteh, represent just a few of the numerous crafts that were appropriated, exported, and ultimately

decimated by the British. These time-honoured practices passed down through generations within various families now exist only as remnants of a bygone era. With the swiftness of a brain-eating parasite, the colonisers hollowed out the Indian textile industry, leaving it with only a fraction of its former glory. Prior to the British exploitation of the textile industry, India held a 25 per cent share in fabric exports. However, the British pillaged this industry and commandeered Indian textiles for the use of European aristocrats who deemed them exotic. It rather shocked me when, in the Emmy award-winning Netflix series *The Crown*, the exiled former King Edward VIII referred to the snobbery and ostentatiousness of the monarchy with the use of the metaphor 'Chintz curtains'. It shocked me because Queen Mary of Teck quite famously had Chintz curtains in her bed chamber, such was the popularity of this beautiful fabric. The delicate and sophisticated depiction of

flowers and foliage, as well as cotton, both alien to the European aristocracy in the 17th century, sent the demand for this fabric to great heights. God forbid the sophisticated aristocracy wear Indian designs! So to please their patrons, the Europeans started switching Indian designs with English flowers in order to appeal to the aristocracy. Similarly, Paisley fell victim to the same. The tear-dropped or mango-shaped designs that one can find on Henna designs were a gift from Persia. Queen Victoria used to own Kashmiri shawls with Paisley designs, a symbol of exotic luxury. And much like other Indian textiles, they tried to duplicate the design in a Scottish town called Paisley. Ultimately forming a monopoly over this Indo-Persian art. India, especially Bengal, held a craft particularly close to their hearts. The Dhaka muslin was said to be 'baft-hawa' or as light as woven air, and so much so that it caused quite a scandal in elite circles as ladies donned gowns

that were positively transparent! The only thing more transparent and brazen was the imperialists' attempt to destroy this craft and create a cheaper version of this luxurious fabric. Their efforts led to a decline in demand and the sad demise of Dhaka muslin. It's like the dodo of the fashion world—extinct, thanks to colonisation! While efforts are being made by the Government of Bangladesh to revive the lost art of weaving the Dhaka Muslin, India has come up with something just as interesting, if not more. The issue of water hyacinths choking various water bodies in Bengal and Bangladesh has led to the death of numerous ecosystems in several ponds, lakes, and rivers. Gaurav Anand, the director of an NGO known as 'Swachhata Pukare', has hit two birds with one stone, solving both environmental and job crises in one go. They form threads out of the fibre extracted from dead water hyacinths, turning them into 'Tant' sarees. All hope is not lost! There has been a shift in the practice of buying clothing from fast fashion brands, and people have been spreading awareness about the importance of buying local or shopping from small-scale businesses in order to minimise environmental issues and child labour and foster responsible waste management practices. A textile design student at National Institute of Fashion Technology, Anamitra Golder, spoke at length about Indian textiles being environment-friendly and sustainable. "Indian textiles never go out of style, and they carry a historical aesthetic that adds value to your wardrobe. One should embrace this because using these textiles helps preserve and promote traditional craftsmanship, artisanal techniques, design, and traditional motifs that are unique to different regions of India." It is important to recognise the ongoing ingenious innovations happening every day in India, and while it is true that reminiscing over the past is the least productive of all solutions, the pain of losing valuable art and heritage at the hands of imperialism is a loss that one can only hope is restored.



Super storms Desktop doodles

DOLA MITRA



At the dead of night, Cyclone Remal, still circling around the Bay of Bengal at speeds of hundreds of kilometres per hour, will crash land off the coasts of West Bengal and Bangladesh. Days ago, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) issued the following alert: "Depression formed over central Bay of Bengal is very likely to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm (scs) by the night of 25 May. It is then likely to cross Bangladesh and adjoining West Bengal coasts between Sagar Island and Kheupura around 26 May midnight."

The dread of cyclones still haunts Kolkata, which witnessed two devastating and back-to-back super cyclones in the middle of the pandemic. Cyclone Amphan stampeded through the city between 16 and 21 May 2020, destroying anything that came in its path, uprooting trees, taking down overhead electrical wiring and blowing away asbestos rooftops of shanties in slums. Cyclone Yaas ripped through the eastern coastline between 23 and 28 May 2021, causing similar and untold damage. Indeed, May seems to be the preferred month for these superstorms. Who can forget the evil Aila, which arrived unannounced on 25 May 2009, ripping through the unsuspecting Sunderbans, wiping out entire villages, and killing an estimated 339 people?

"At that time, there was less dissemination of information than now, and the cyclone caught islanders in the Bay of Bengal off guard," explains an environmental scientist. "Now the cyclone alerts are much more proactively issued, and it allows the administration to take precautionary safety measures and lets islanders in the vulnerable areas prepare beforehand." Indeed, summer is a time of intense worry for residents of the Sunderbans delta area. "The dread of another cyclone keeps us awake at night," Gouranga Mete tells me. He is a resident of Ghoramara Island, which is disintegrating into the sea day by day anyway. Ghoramara, the closest island to Sagar Island, will be right in the middle of Cyclone Remal's path.

Cyclones are more man-made than meets the eye. These twisters, though thought to be largely natural phenomena, are closely linked to climate change and global warming. "When the surface of the sea or the ocean gets excessively heated, hot air rises, causing a depression to occur," the environmental scientist explains. "This creates a hollow centre from the depth of the waters to the surface of the sea or ocean, and this vacuum pulls water into its centre as it

twists and twirls around the sea or ocean, only stopping when it crashes into a coastline or land."

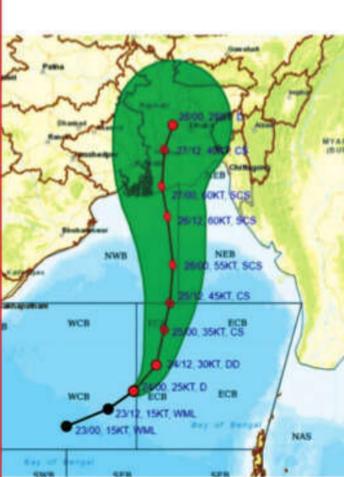
This hollow is known as the "eye of the storm" and when it passes through a region, there is a stillness of sound, almost like a numbing silence, which is popularly called the "lull before the storm."

I want to share a story from survivors who witnessed the eye of the storm during a cyclone. This account is from Ambarish Nag Biswas, president of the West Bengal Radio Club (Ham Radio), which was deployed as a disaster management team to coastal West Bengal for rescue work during Cyclone Foni in May 2019, quoting one of the boys present during the operation. "We were cowering in our car at the side of the road, which had turned into a river that was swelling every second. It was too late for us to move to safety. The super cyclone had landed near Digha, where we had been deployed for rescue work. The sky had turned completely black, and visibility was zero. Rain pounded the ground, and winds, blowing at over 190 kilometres per hour, swished around us, sweeping everything into the vortex. We just had to anchor our vehicle, which became like a boat, bobbing up and down on the coastal street that had merged with the sea. It is a miracle that we lived through the ordeal to tell the story, narrating which still gives us goosebumps."

They fell into the path of the "extremely severe cyclonic storm" as it was called, and they saw the "eye", the hollow centre of the cyclone, with their own eyes. According to one of the men who had witnessed the twister as it passed them, it was like a giant with a massive, spherical body that stretched up to the sky. "We could not take our eyes off it," he says, recalling the terrifying moment. "It is truly a miracle that we survived."



TRACK ALONG WITH CONE OF UNCERTAINTY IN AS OVER CENTRAL BAY OF BENGAL BASED ON 0000 UTC 24.



It is ironic that the brunt of the adverse impact of cyclones is borne by those who least contribute to the production of greenhouse gases, which have caused the earth to heat up over the decades and punched holes into the ozone layer. Such as the poor people of the delta areas of the Bay of Bengal: they who do not even own refrigerators or air conditioners, which give off environmentally damaging heat; they who don't travel in vehicles, which give off environmentally harmful fumes; that they whose lifestyles are closest to nature should bear the brunt of nature's fury is something I cannot fathom. Says Joydeep Gupta, South Asia director of international environmental organisation The Third Pole, "Part of the damage to the Sunderbans post or during cyclones is a result of excessive deforestation." He too points out the irony that the local population, which contributes almost nothing to the carbon footprint, bears the brunt of climate change-related superstorms. He explains that the indigenous mangrove forests of the Sunderbans have always served as a natural buffer for cyclones, blocking off high winds and water inundation.

Recently, the state administration has taken steps to plant mangrove trees in the coastal region to try and minimise the damage caused by cyclones. "The Mamata Banerjee government is committed to preventing damage to localities in the delta and has initiated a number of projects in the delta area," says Dola Sen, a Rajya Sabha member of the Trinamul, the state's ruling party.

In the meantime, in anticipation of Remal, the islanders have been evacuated to safe buildings and shelters.



CMYK

Breaking silence: Confronting the hidden epidemic of domestic violence

ANWESHA SANTRA

"I thought that if *lokas* existed at all, good women would surely go to one where men were not allowed so that they could be finally free of male demands."

— Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *The Palace of Illusions*

Kolkata was shaken by yet another case of domestic abuse leading to murder a few days back when a 22-year-old woman was repeatedly stabbed by her estranged husband, first inside a café in the Beck Bagan area of Kolkata, and then again on the road outside, forcing her to flee while screaming for help. According to reports, locals apprehended the assailant and handed him over to the police. The woman was taken to SSKM Hospital, where she was declared dead on arrival. The 29-year-old husband had previously been arrested on charges of domestic abuse filed by his wife and was later released on bond.

Another man in Pune drilled in iron nails and put a lock over his wife's genitals after he cast aspersions on her character.

Domestic violence against married women remains a significant and deeply concerning issue worldwide, encompassing various forms of physical, emotional, sexual and economic abuse within intimate relationships. Despite considerable efforts to raise awareness and enact legislative measures, it persists as a pervasive violation of human rights, affecting women of all ages, backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses.

One in three women in India is likely to have experienced intimate partner violence. However, only one in ten of these women formally reports the offence. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2019-2021, 29.3 per cent of married Indian women aged 18 to 49 have experienced domestic or sexual violence, and 3.1 per cent of pregnant women in this age group have endured physical violence during pregnancy. These figures, again, only reflect the cases reported by women.

Domestic violence extends beyond spousal or partner relationships, encompassing various familial bonds. In India, the legal framework has broadened this definition to include sisters, widows, mothers, single women, and any woman living in the same household. Consequently, domestic violence encompasses both intimate partners and family members. According to Section 3 of The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005, any act or omission by the respondent that causes harm, injury, threats or abuse—whether physical, sexual, verbal or economic—constitutes domestic violence.

In India, certain laws specifically address the safety of married women from their husbands and their husbands' families.

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005: This law aims to protect women from domestic violence, encompassing physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse. It provides explicit definitions of these abuses and extends its protection to women in live-in relationships, as well as family members such as mothers and grandparents, thereby safeguarding women from male family members.

In *Bhartiben Bipinbhai Tamboli v. State of Gujarat* (2018), the categories of violence covered by the Act were further clarified.

Sexual Violence: Sexual violence involves compelling a woman to engage in unwanted, dangerous or demeaning sexual acts, including name-calling, using objects or weapons during sex, and being forced to have sex by a spouse or intimate partner.

Physical Violence: Physical violence entails using force to cause bodily harm or injury. This includes physical assault, threats, abandonment in dangerous places, intimidation with weapons, coercing her to leave her home, harming her children and/or using force in sexual situations.

Emotional Violence: Emotional violence involves non-physical abuse that can be as damaging as physical violence. It includes name-calling, accusations, isolation, intimidation, domineering behaviour, insults and constant criticism.

Economic Violence: Economic violence occurs when a woman is deprived of financial support necessary for her and her children's basic needs, prohibited from working, evicted by withholding rent, denied financial resources, or restricted access to shared domestic resources. It also includes selling or alienating her assets without consent.

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961: This criminal code prohibits the giving and receiving of dowry. Under the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, the practice of dowry is outlawed, and anyone found providing, accepting, or demanding dowry can face imprisonment for up to six months or a fine of up to 5,000 rupees.

Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860: This criminal law addresses cruelty towards women by their husbands or the husbands' relatives. Harassment for dowry, whether physical or mental, by the husband or his family is a punishable offence under Section 498A of the IPC. Although marital rape is yet not criminalised in India, coerced sex with one's wife may be considered 'cruelty' under this section. Section 498A also includes any deliberate behaviour that drives a woman to commit suicide or poses a threat to her life, limb, or overall health, encompassing both physical and mental well-being.

The Statesman spoke with a few women who had survived domestic violence at the hands of their husbands and in-laws. They shared their stories of resilience and how they moved forward with their lives. The names of the following individuals have been changed to protect their identities.

Moneesha speaks

"Growing up as a girl, my education wasn't deemed important. Despite excelling in sports and having the opportunity to represent my school, my parents disapproved of girls participating in games, forcing me to stop. I was forcefully wedded to a boy my parents found on a matrimonial site, and problems arose almost immediately. Contact with my parents was severely restricted, and

my husband was absent all day, only returning at midnight. My mother-in-law constantly complained about my dowry, and my husband joined in, demanding expensive items. When I didn't conceive after six months, my mother-in-law declared me infertile, and my husband threatened to take a new wife. I wasn't allowed to step out of the house or even make a phone call. Eventually, I became pregnant, but conditions worsened. My husband began gambling and drinking, leading to frequent arguments where he would beat me and even kick me out of the house. I miscarried then. Our househelp alerted my father, who took me to the hospital. No one from my husband's family came to check on me, and I gradually stopped expecting them to. My father was incredibly supportive, and when I decided to file a criminal suit against my husband, he stood by me throughout the difficult process. Now I work in a boutique and earn well enough to support myself and my parents. Marriage, surely, is a good thing, but I do not see myself marrying again anytime in the foreseeable future."

Srabani speaks

"At the tender age of 19, I found myself married to a man 21 years my senior. Tragically, my parents passed away while I was in my first year of college, leaving me under the care of my uncle and aunt who arranged my marriage within a year. Soon after, I became pregnant, but the joy of impending motherhood was marred by constant pressure from my mother-in-law to bear a son. Despite my husband's absence on weekdays due to work, his weekend visits were fraught with insults and infliction of sexual violence upon me, even during my pregnancy. Feeling trapped and oppressed, I resented carrying my husband's child. Initially, my father-in-law appeared kind, but when I approached him to explain the situation, he instructed me to remain silent, citing that 'good women' never spoke unfavourably of their husbands and intimate details shouldn't be talked about outside the marriage. He even resorted to burning my lips with a cigarette he was smoking as



a form of punishment. Determined to protect myself, I made the decision to leave my marital home upon giving birth to my son and renting a flat. Despite legal battles for custody initiated by my husband, I emerged victorious. In the initial months, we relied on my savings and the proceeds from selling my late mother's jewellery. Subsequently, I secured a sales job, entrusting my son to the care of a compassionate neighbour who became like family to us. Today, my son, now almost 12, thrives in his studies at a reputable institution, reflecting the decency and understanding I had hoped for. Meanwhile, I have advanced in my career, grateful to have escaped the cycle of abuse and built a brighter future for myself and my son."

Sweta speaks

"Ours was a love marriage. He had been my partner for three years. A few months after our wedding, my husband lost his job and decided to start a business, asking me for money to fund it. Wanting to support him, I gave him part of my savings from my job as a professor. After a couple of months, he asked for a larger sum, which I didn't have. He then insisted I ask my parents for the money. When I refused, the abuse began. He would frequently beat me, and I would hide

the bruises with makeup before going to work. A few of the other female professors noticed and approached me, but I initially denied their claims of domestic violence. After a year, I couldn't endure it any longer. My body was covered in bruises, blue and red. I moved back to my parents' house and sent him divorce papers. Now, I'm happily married to my second husband, who has been incredibly supportive. He's an angel, and we're expecting twins soon."

Addressing domestic violence requires a multifaceted approach involving legal, social, and educational interventions. Additionally, providing accessible resources for survivors, including counselling, legal aid, and safe shelters, is imperative for their recovery and empowerment. Continued advocacy, awareness, policy and societal reforms are essential to create a future where every woman can live free from the fear of violence in her own home. Ending domestic violence requires a collective effort from all sectors of society, ensuring that the voices of survivors are heard and their rights upheld. Sure, the journey is challenging, but with collective effort and unflinching commitment, it is possible to build a safer and more just society for all.

The writer is a lawyer, and a journalist who is on the staff of The Statesman

The anatomy of good touch and bad touch

PURBASHA KARMAKAR

Abuse against children and adolescents, especially sexual abuse, has been alarmingly high during the last few years. It is evident that reported cases of the issue have significantly increased, yet many cases still remain unreported due to societal stigma, fear and limited awareness.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), India has seen a 26 per cent increase in crimes against children over the past two years, based on cases registered under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The number rose specifically amidst the backdrop of the pandemic, which induced lockdowns, highlighting a disturbing trend in crimes against children. India, in 2022, witnessed a staggering 8.7 per cent increase in child abuse cases, reaching a total of 162,000 incidents.

'Touch' is a positive experience that gives a safe feeling from a loved one. Good and bad touch are two very crucial aspects that a child must be taught at an early age, both for protection from any potential harm and to prevent them from becoming a threat to others in society.

'Good touch' gives reinforcement and makes you feel loved, safe and comfortable; for instance, warm hugs from family and friendly handshakes from friends. Whereas 'bad touch' is something you don't want and will make you feel uncomfortable, scared, unsafe and unwanted. Bad touches include touching parts that are normally covered by undergarments. A bad touch is not only limited to touch; it also extends to views.

Dr Sarmishtha Chakrabarti, a consultant psychiatrist at Manipal Hospitals and founder-director at Insight Medical Centre, shed light on the traumatic after-effects of inappropriate touches experienced during childhood and adolescence. "Bad touches have a significant impact on mental and emotional well-being. First are anxiety and depression, emotional distress, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Next come trust issues; therefore, such people may

face challenges engaging in emotional and physical relations with their partner. Self-esteem and body image issues are also there. Besides that, victims may have anorexia nervosa (an eating disorder) as an outcome if not treated properly. There are also physical symptoms like headaches, stomachaches, backaches, and other physical ailments. Sometimes, victims do deliver self-harm by cutting themselves as they feel emotionally empty."

Child abuse in India thrives on a complex web of social and economic factors. Sometimes, due to poverty, lack of education, and stressful living conditions, it creates pressure for carers, therefore increasing the risk of outbursts and violence. Additionally, deep-rooted social stigmas surrounding mental health and a general lack of awareness about child abuse make it difficult to identify and address the issue.

As childhood is the most important stage in the development cycle, it should be kept in mind that the child acquires knowledge from their surroundings. Accordingly, they learn good touch and bad touch through the environment of their upbringing. Therefore, sex education is a fundamental need of our children for their bright future. It becomes a problem if the parents or the utmost caregivers of the child feel shy about taking up such sensitive topics with their own children.

Sudeshna Roy, an advisor in the West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights (WBCPCR), says, "This has been something that NGOs, commissions, and the government have been working on for over 5-6 years, and gradually it is gaining momentum. It is even included in the curriculum of government schools early in junior classes. Awareness of touch should be taught to both girls and boys; it's not just girls who get molested. Most importantly, parents should also be made aware of it. Parent-teacher meetings should include a talk about it."

She adds, "Parents, especially in rural and semi-urban sections, should be taught and made to understand the importance of talking to their children about sensitive top-

ics because it is seen that they are often not careful when discussing such matters, which can have negative consequences. However, I must say that change is taking place and age-old stereotypes are gradually being eliminated."

The SPK Jain Futuristic Academy in Newtown, Kolkata, hosted a crucial workshop on 'Good Touch and Bad Touch' on 15 May 2024. Organised by Young Indians, the session aimed to educate and empower young students about personal safety and boundaries. The institute considers such education an essential component of education.

Children with disabilities are at least three times more likely to be abused than those with abilities and are more likely to be seriously injured or harmed by maltreatment. The Statesman reached out to an individual (who requested anonymity) working on community-based programmes to protect abled children and children with special needs, providing home-to-home teaching and guidance for children, families and extended families.

She said, "The modules for teaching abled and disabled children are the same. It is only for those who are visually and hearing impaired that we use an ISL (Indian Sign Language) interpreter. We start by introducing the male and female bodies by drawing charts and making posters. In most cases, children could only recognise body parts that were noticeable, and then we made them learn about the private body parts. We teach them rights over one's own body and how to differentiate good and bad touch through various stories and incidents."

"It's not only the child who must be made aware, but also the immediate family and beyond them. Bad touches come in every form and are irrespective of gender. Societal stereotypes often portray young boys as strong and hard. This can create a culture of silence around abuse, as boys may feel hesitant to speak out or discouraged from addressing it due to societal pressures. We see cases, such as in family gatherings, where the parents fail to recognise inappropriate touching of their children



by strangers or relatives, even in front of their eyes, due to a lack of awareness. There are many cases where the mother abides by their in-laws and cannot speak blatantly when her child is touched inappropriately. Moreover, many parents or primary caregivers leave for work and entrust their children to the care of extended family members, which can sometimes lead to the child facing such issues. Such touches might also be unintentional or habitual due to a lack of awareness, making the child feel uncomfortable, unwanted, and scared," she added.





A dead end full of life

KOLI MITRA



Among the more striking features of Manhattan is its rectangular grid layout, which was put in place in the early-mid 19th century. Of course, the grid has been upgraded over time to accommodate motor-vehicle traffic, but it has remained very pedestrian friendly, thanks in great part to grass-root activists of the 1960s, like those led by journalist Jane Jacobs, who shut down government efforts to raze much of the city's street-level, organic, socially and commercially evolved structures, in order to put up an elaborate freeway system with overpasses that would have destroyed much of the city's skyline as well as its street-life.

The grid can be accessed (and exited) almost everywhere by foot, bicycle, car or other vehicle, making New York City, especially the island of Manhattan, the most painlessly navigable American city, in my opinion.

So, one thing you don't expect to find here are dead-end streets or cul-de-sacs. You can generally find an access point through or around most places. Even when you reach the waterfront, on either side of the island, you can keep walking/bicycling on the promenades, or driving on the parkway, as the case may be, and take a turn somewhere.

But, to my astonishment, there ARE actually a few cul-de-sacs in Manhattan! I found five of them on the east side, most of which basically serve as a bit of a secluded park or interconnected terrace area for the surrounding residential buildings, which are rather old and exclusive looking. Probably old-money aristocrat types live there, if I had to guess! One of them was more modest-looking, but secluded and serene in the same way as the others. These are not private areas, however, and access to them is not cut off from the main grid. But they're just hidden enough that most people probably don't notice them. Also, the access is one-way. You can

go and explore (and there are actually several levels that you can reach via bridge or a rather steep set of stone staircases) but you have to exit the way you entered, so a lot of climbing may be involved, depending on how far into the spaces you go. I went all the way to the water.

There were several areas, including a small dog park, a garden with stone tabletop chessboards that visitors can play on, a brick-paved piazza with a small free lending library where people can leave books or take them out (this is on the honor system, you're expected to return them); and a couple of terraces overhanging the riverfront from where you can watch, at almost eye-level, but not reach (!) the river-side promenade.

For a "dead-end" it was quite exhilarating and life-affirming!

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



Vote for someone who is passionate about causes'

NISHAT NIZAMI

As the 18th Parliamentary Elections head towards the seventh and last phase in West Bengal, the Kolkata South constituency, often touted as "Mini India", gears up to exercise its right to adult franchise on 1 June. The seat holds immense significance, as it is not only the ruling party's bastion but also the home of the incumbent chief minister, Mamata Banerjee. Interestingly, in the ongoing polls, the three prominent political parties—the ruling Trinamul Congress, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Bharatiya Janata Party—have all put up strong women as candidates. CPI(M)'s Saira Shah Halim is contesting against TMC veteran Mala Roy, who is the sitting Parliamentarian from the South Kolkata seat and also the chairperson of Kolkata Municipal Corporation. She is also contesting against BJP candidate Debasree Chaudhury, who is a former Union minister of state and the Raiganj MP from the saffron party. Saira Shah Halim rose to prominence when she was fielded against TMC's Babul Suprio and BJP's Keya Ghosh for the Ballygunge seat in 2022. Securing 30,971 votes against Babul Supriyo's 51,199, she emerged second by a margin of 20,228 votes. In a candid interview with The Statesman's Nishat Nizami, the CPI(M) candidate, who is being supported by the other opposition party in the state, Congress, opens up about her party's strengths, its chances in the ongoing elections, and other issues.

A: I was in the corporate sector for 17 years, working for multinational organisations. I started writing when I felt democracy was being curtailed in the country. It was then that the national media started approaching me about participating in various political debates. So I have been debating and talking about issues like bills, policy governance and other issues for the past ten years. It was in 2022 when the party approached me about contesting the bypolls for the Ballygunge seat, and I readily accepted the offer.

Q: Though you are married to a political family, you have spent years taking care of your family as a homemaker. What made you decide to join active politics at this point in time?

A: Actually, I did not choose to enter politics, nor was there any particular plan for timing. The fact is, the party leadership chose me as the by-poll candidate even though I was not a member, perhaps having noticed my proactive political activism and writing. Having said that, however, I have been actively associated with the Left through my family, as my father-in-law, Mr Hashim Abdul Halim, was the longest-serving Speaker of the West Bengal Assembly. Although I was not a card-holding member of the party, I always supported it. I have also campaigned for my husband since 2011, and it was then that I started getting interested in politics. I have launched authors and have also participated in peace initiatives and gotten awards for them. Because of my contribution to peace initiatives and in the sphere of literature, the party approached me in 2022 for the Ballygunge bypoll as they wanted a face that was associated with civic rights movements, and I agreed to it.

Q: As far as these elections are concerned, you have a TMC veteran on one side and a former Union minister on the other. The seat is known as the ruling party's bastion. Despite the tough fight, what gives you the confidence to remain firmly in the fray?

A: My candidature is very cosmopolitan. I am a very good debater and can speak in four languages. It is my energy that makes me different from the others. I think people are realising that one needs to look beyond the party symbol and vote for the candidate who can raise their issues in Parliament.

Q: During your campaign, you have often claimed that CPI(M) is the only alternative for the people of West Bengal, while many are of the opinion that the ongoing Lok Sabha Election is a fight between the BJP and the TMC. What would you say to that?

A: This binary was created, but we broke it. When we look at the civic polls, the panchayat polls, and the bypolls, we have broken the binary of BJP versus TMC.

Q: What, according to you, is your party's path of revival?

A: The party feels that they need to infuse fresh faces and younger blood so that the old image of the Left somehow sheds off. This has shown very good results when we look at candidates like Srijan, Minakshi and Dipshita, who are honest, hard-working, and principled people. Also, having Mohammed Salim at the helm of affairs has really boosted the morale of the party. He is the general secretary and has made some critical decisions that have enabled the resurgence of the Left.

Q: On one side, the BJP at the Centre has a strong base,

while the TMC in the state is the largest party. Why should voters opt for CPI(M)?

A: We are offering a very clean and honest campaign, which is something that is attracting the youth, the middle class, and first-time voters who do not vote blindly and are well-read.

Q: What kind of performance of your party do you see in the ongoing polls and the state assembly elections?

A: We, that is, the Left and the Congress, are fighting the elections together. Both parties combined are reading up to gain at least 11 to 12 seats and many more in the Assembly elections. This is how the resurgence is happening. We are doing it very gradually.

Q: Talking about your Lok Sabha seat, what are the top three areas where you would like to focus if you become the next MP?

A: Urban poverty alleviation is a big issue in Kolkata South. I have been spending a lot of time in the slum areas and know the kinds of problems that the people face. Other areas that I would like to focus on are employment, healthcare, improvement in living standards, creating a better air index, better roads, and sanitation. I would also like to debate in Parliament on issues like price hikes if I become the next MP.

Q: What advice would you like to give the voters of your constituency?

A: I would say to vote for someone who is visible, who is a debater, and who is passionate about causes. I would appeal to them to vote for the candidate and not for the party because it is the MP who will work in your area and highlight and amplify your voices.



Bangabasi Morning College: Aiding excellence through strong bond

TARUN GOSWAMI



Few people know that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose went to educationist Girish Chandra Basu to take admission at Bangabasi College. Girish Chandra took him to Presidency College and got him admitted there. Subhas Chandra developed differences with Professor Otten and took a transfer to Scottish Church College, from where he became a graduate.

Bangabasi College played a major role in the Indian freedom movement. Jatin Das, who died in Lahore jail after observing a fast for 63 days, was a student of this college. Sri Aurobindo had stayed in the locality for some time. Young revolutionaries used to hold meetings on the college campus. In recent times, former mayor Subrata Mukherjee and current deputy mayor Atin Ghosh were students of this college. Famous teacher Lady Mitra used to teach chemistry at the college, and the best students of Presidency College and Scottish Church College used to attend his classes.

Acharya Girish Chandra set up Bangabasi College in 1866, when Rabinranath was five years old and Nar-

dranath Dutta, who later became Swami Vivekanada, was just three years old.

His son, Prasanta Basu, who dedicated himself to spreading education among middle-class Indians, found that the college needed expansion as the number of students went up. This gave rise to Bangabasi Morning College, Bangabasi College, and Bangabasi Evening College in 1965, almost a century after the formation of the college. The three colleges have separate administration, different principals and teaching staff and non-teaching staff.

The student strength of Bangabasi Morning College, which has maintained the standard and legacy because of the sincere efforts of the teachers, is around 5,000. The college got an A on the NAAC list.

Professor Amitava Dutta, principal of the college, said, "As the college is close to Sealdah railway station, many students come from the northern suburbs. Because of the good connectivity, students from Howrah and beyond also join the college. There are many first-generation learners. During the Covid pandemic, tuition fees for 80 per cent of students were waived. Many of the students come from families below the poverty line. So, our purpose is to guide the students in the best possible way. There are 75 teaching staff, including the

principal, and 39 non-teaching staff who work tirelessly to make the dreams of the students come true."

The college offers science, arts and commerce streams. Four-year honours courses are offered in physics, chemistry, mathematics, computer science, zoology and botany. In the arts stream, the subjects that are taught include English, Bengali, political science and history. The courses in the general stream include geography, economics and philosophy.

Professor Dutta said the college has entered into an MoU with the George Telegraph to give internships to students in skilled development. The classes are held on the second campus of the college, which is situated close by. The internship is offered in subjects like data entry operators, GST and hospitality management. The college is following a four-year graduation course as per the recommendation of the National Education Policy (NEP).

Bangabasi Morning College has an allotted playground in the maidan. It may be mentioned that the other college that has an allotted playground is Asutosh College. The annual sports are held both indoors and outdoors. The college has cricket and football teams. Indoor games like carrom,

table tennis and billiards are played by the students.

The college publishes a magazine annually, to which students and teachers contribute.

Bangabasi Morning College has a strong cultural wing, and festivals like the observance of Republic Day, Independence Day, the birthday of Netaji, Rakhi Bandhan and Basanta Utsav are held with great enthusiasm. Teachers' Day is observed every year.

The college uses solar power and does rainwater harvesting.

"The USP of our college has the most cordial relationship between the students and the teachers. The students firmly believe that the teachers will provide them with the best education. The students' union works hand in hand with the administration, and that has helped to run the college smoothly. The students are our asset, and we always try hard to give them the best education using the available resources. Mayor Subrata Mukherjee, who was our past pupil, helped us have the second campus. It is true that the number of students taking admission in the college has gone down after the Covid due to various reasons, but we hope that this situation will improve and we will have an earlier flow of students," Prof. Dutta mentioned.

Roar launched as Project Tiger hits golden jubilee

STATESMAN FEATURES DESK

Kolkata witnessed a discussion commemorating the 50 years of Project Tiger involving two prominent wildlife conservationists, Sunil Limaye, IFS (Retd), former principal chief conservator of forest, government of Maharashtra, and Pradeep Vyas, IFS (Retd), former principal chief conservator of forest, government of West Bengal, along with Shiladitya Chaudhury, wildlife enthusiast and entrepreneur, and Ketan Sengupta, real estate professional and elocutionist, who is also passionate about wilderness. The discussion moderated by Soham Sengupta was followed by the launch of a one-of-a-kind coffee table book named *Roar*, published by Word-

phonics, that features a stunning collection of photographs from various tiger reserves across India. It is the creation of tiger enthusiasts Shiladitya Choudhury and Ketan Sengupta. Ms Melinda Pavak, Consul General, US Consulate, Kolkata, was the chief guest at the event.

Project Tiger was launched by the Government of India on 1 April 1973. It came into being to arrest the rapidly dwindling population of the Indian tiger and work towards well-strategised conservation of this majestic beast. Today, more than 50 years from the day it was launched, Project Tiger is hailed as a success story that has come to occupy pride of place in environmental, ecological, and wildlife studies around the world. It has ensured a

significant rise in the tiger population of the country, taking the count beyond 3,000 from approximately 1,800 in the late 1970s. The panellists shared invaluable insights and personal experiences from the speakers on tiger conservation. The discussions provided attendees and wildlife enthusiasts with a deep understanding of the significance of Project Tiger and the relentless efforts involved in protecting these magnificent creatures.

"As an Indian, I take pride in thinking I live in a country that is home to more than 70 per cent of the world's tiger population. As the readers browse through the book's pages, they will be able to witness some of the majestic traits of the Royal Bengal Tiger. I am

sure the readers and wildlife enthusiasts will be just as excited to go through the pages of *Roar* as I was while clicking the same," said Shiladitya Chaudhury.

"The sound of animals treading on dry leaves, the forest darkness during the day mingling with feeble sunrays piercing the dense cover of the foliage, and little forest paths leading into unknown places are clearly magical. Every visit I have made to an Indian forest has turned out to be unique. The indomitable urge to be in a dense forest in the country has mostly been driven by the expectation of catching a glimpse of the majestic Royal Bengal Tiger, and how that expectation turned into a reality is captured between the hardcovers of the book," said Ketan Sengupta.

Roar is priced at Rs 3,000 and will be available across all leading bookstores in Kolkata and beyond.



'She is definitely the best thing that ever happened to me'

KAKALI MITRA

They say to expect the unexpected. We need to accept the fact that there will always be things that cannot be controlled, yet they may surprise us so dearly that we, over time, acknowledge it as the most fortunate circumstance that happened in life. Arranged marriage may stand out as one of them. The debate comparing love marriage and arranged marriage is an age-old one. We must embrace every form of union if it has love and mutual respect between the partners involved in it.

This week, The Statesman interviewed the Ghosh couple, Arup Ghosh and Shikha Ghosh, who exchanged vows and tied their knots back in 2000, and have stood by their commitment in sickness and in health.

After the initial disappointment from his prospective matches, it was Shikha who captivated his heart. It was love at first sight for Arup. Therefore, with the assistance of a ghatok (matchmaker), who is also a very close friend of Shikha's father, he formally selects and declares to marry her



after taking permission from both families.

Shikha says, "Our marriage was held within a month, as both sides didn't want to delay such a sacred union. The marriage date was fixed by my aunt-in-law in remembrance of the well-known movie *Unish April*, directed by Rituparno Ghosh."

The Ghosh couple then reminisced about how they were unable to go on their honeymoon during the first year and then finally decided to take a trip to Jalpaiguri to make up for it.

Shikha then discloses more about her adventurous marriage journey. "We enjoy every moment. We slip, we fall, and we rise again for a new start, but we never get tired of each other. Instead, this cycle is what encourages us to grow more

in life. We married at quite an early stage and therefore lacked maturity. During my early days as a bride, I faced challenges to adjust to my in-laws. However, with the love, respect and support of my husband, we were able to overcome such difficulties. Hence, our bond grew stronger in the process."

Arup also adds his insights and experience. He says, "She is definitely the best thing that ever happened to me. During my midlife, when I was critically unhealthy, she stood by my side and, with a heart filled equally with love and courage, cured me."

"We have no offspring of our own. We accepted it, and we are happy and content with our lives with each other. If asked, my wife earlier faced painful miscarriages and couldn't bear the labour pain. Although it was truly sad at the beginning, we adore the truth now," adds Arup.



If you have a story of success to share about your marriage, you may write to us at the email id given in the **Comments Corner** mentioning your name and phone number, and we will contact you



Comments Corner

readers@thestatesmangroup.com



The article titled "Auld lang syne in the saddle: Kolkata's Mounted Police through time" dated 19 May 2024 by Anwesha Santra draws much-needed attention to the often-forgotten heritage of the city of joy. The centuries-old police force, despite being the relic of a bygone era, has still remained effective at sniffing out crime and keeping citizens safe. The article's primary focus is on the backbone of the force—the horses themselves. Their daily routine surrounding exercise, patrolling and maintenance is sure to intrigue readers worldwide. The article also focuses on the reduced reliance on imported horses and on better trained stallions which builds renewed trust in the heritage police force. The anecdote to round the story off proves that the unique natural ability garnered by our four-legged friends are still indispensable to our efforts in alleviating crime in the city.

Yours etc., Soumyanil Chakraborty
London, United Kingdom,
23rd May, 2024

