

WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky. Light Rain / Thundershower likely to occur in some areas. Maximum and Minimum Temperature most likely be around 33°C and 27°C respectively.

RAINFALL: 1.5 mm

RELATIVE HUMIDITY
Max. 92% Min. 75%

TEMPERATURE
Max: 33.1°C (+0.1) Min: 27.8°C (+1.0)

SUN RISES
04:53 hrs 18:24 hrs

MOON RISES
19:1 hrs 04:42 hrs

New Moon on 06 July

THUMBNAILS



An artist with his decorated camel arrives to take part in the camel decoration competition organised on the occasion of World Camel Day in Bikaner on Saturday. ■ ANI

Death toll rises to 53 in Kallakurichi Hooch tragedy: The death toll in the Kallakurichi Hooch tragedy has risen from 50 to 53, officials said on Saturday. Kallakurichi District Collector MS Prasanth said that out of the total 193 patients, who consumed illicit liquor, 140 are currently safe. "193 people who have consumed illicit liquor have come to the hospital. Out of the 193, 140 are currently safe, while few of them are on ventilators. Right now, 53 people have passed away," he said. Meanwhile, in the wake of the deaths in Kallakurichi in Tamil Nadu, 250 litres of illicit liquor were seized and disposed off in the state's Tiruchirappalli district (Photo).

Services provided by Indian Rlys like platform tickets exempted from GST

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Services provided by the Indian Railways to common man, sale of platform tickets, facility of retiring rooms and waiting rooms, battery operated car services are being exempted from GST, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said while addressing a press conference after 53rd GST Council meeting on Saturday. Further, intra-railway supplies are also being exempted.

Another key announcement that the minister made is that now hostels which are for students but are not in educational institutions are also getting exempted.

The minister said that the service by way of hostel accommodation is presently not exempted, which are provided to students if they are outside of educational institutions. If they are within the educational institutions, then they are already exempted. Hostels which are for students which are within an educational institutions are also getting exempted.

The Finance Minister further said: "Council recommended to prescribe a uniform rate of 12per cent on all milk cans meaning steel, iron, aluminium which are irrespective of the use. They are called milk cans but wherever they are used that will be the rate applicable so that no disputes arise out of it."

The council also recommended to prescribe a uniform GST rate of 12per cent on all carton boxes and cases of both corrugated and non-corrugated paper or paper board.

(More on Page 8)

Govt sets up panel to reform exam process

NTA head Subodh Kumar Singh removed; NEET-PG exam postponed



Members of the All Assam Students Union stage a protest against the alleged irregularities in NEET 2024 exam results, in Guwahati on Saturday. ■ ANI

» The committee, led by former ISRO chairman K Radhakrishnan which also includes Dr. Randeep Guleria, Former Director, AIIMS Delhi, will make recommendations on reform in the mechanism of the examination process, improvement in data security protocols and structure and functioning of NTA.

» The committee will analyse the end-to-end examination process and suggest measures to improve the efficiency of the system and to forestall any possible breach. It will also conduct a thorough review of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)/Protocols of the NTA.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

The Ministry of Education on Saturday said it has formed a high-level committee of experts, headed by former ISRO chief K Radhakrishnan, to ensure transparent, smooth and fair conduct of examinations through the National Testing Agency (NTA). The decision comes amid the ongoing crisis around irregularities in holding competitive examinations.

In a late night development, the government also shunted out the NTA's director general, Subodh Kumar

Singh. The Ministry of Personnel announced that retired Indian Administration Service officer Pradeep Singh Kharola, who is the chairman and managing director of the India Trade Promotion Organisation, has been given additional charge as director general of the NTA till the appointment of a regular incumbent.

In another development, the Union Health Ministry on Saturday announced that the NEET-PG entrance exam scheduled to be held on Sunday has been postponed and a new date will be notified at the earliest.

In a statement, the Health

New stringent 'anti-paper leak' law comes into effect

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Amid the ongoing row over the alleged malpractices in conducting the NEET and UGC-NET examinations, the Centre has notified the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, to prevent paper leaks and cheating.

The Act, passed in February this year, prohibits disclosing exam-related confidential information before time, and unauthorised people from entering exam centres to create disruptions.

According to the new stringent law which came into effect on 21 June, any

person or persons found guilty of leaking a paper or tampering with answer sheets will receive a minimum jail term of three years.

This can be extended to five years with a fine of up to Rs 10 lakh.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (2) of section 1 of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 (1 of 2024), the central government hereby appoints the 21st day of June 2024, as the date on which the provisions of the said Act shall come into force," a gazette notification issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions said.

Ministry said: "Taking into consideration the recent incidents of allegations regarding the integrity of certain competitive examinations, Ministry of Health has decided to undertake a thorough assessment of the robustness of processes of NEET-PG entrance examination, conducted by the National Board of Examination for medical students."

The NTA is facing criticism over alleged irregularities in this year's National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) exam, even as the UGC-NET exam was cancelled due to apprehensions that its integrity had been compromised. This

has led to protests across the country with protesters and political parties demanding to disband the NTA.

Dr. K. Radhakrishnan, who heads the newly appointed seven-member committee, is former chairman, ISRO and chairman BoG, IIT Kanpur. The committee, which also includes Dr. Randeep Guleria, former director, AIIMS Delhi, will make recommendations on reform in the mechanism of examination process, improvement in data security protocols and structure and functioning of the NTA. The committee will submit its report within two months. (More on Page 5)

India, Bangladesh sign 10 major accords, aim to bolster defence partnership

ASHOK TUTEJA
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday reassured his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina of India's commitment to realising 'Bangabandhu' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's vision of a stable, prosperous and progressive Bangladesh as the two neighbouring nations signed ten major accords in diverse fields, including defence.

The two sides also announced the launch of a new train service between Rajshahi and Kolkata and a bus service between Chittagong and Kolkata.

"We had extensive discussions on further strengthening defence cooperation, from defence production to modernisation of armed forces. We have decided to strengthen our engagement on counter-terrorism, de-radicalisation and peaceful management of borders. We share a common vision for the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative," Mr Modi said at a joint media interaction with Sheikh Hasina after wide-ranging talks between the two leaders. The Bangladesh PM is the first top foreign leader to pay a state visit to India after the formation of a government by Mr Modi for the third successive time.

The Indian leader said the two countries have prepared a futuristic vision for cooperation in new areas. The youth of both countries will benefit from the consensus reached on cooperation in many areas such as Green partnership, Digital Partnership, Blue Economy, Space and Maitri Satellite. Mr Modi said the two countries have decided to start negotiations at the technical level for the renewal of the 1996 Ganga Water Treaty.

He said the two countries also propose to take their economic relations to new heights and have agreed to start negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

Sheikh Hasina, on her part, described India as a major neighbour, trusted friend and regional partner of Bangladesh. "Bangladesh greatly values our relations with India, which were born during our war of liberation in 1971. I pay homage to the brave, fallen heroes of India who sacrificed their lives during our war of liberation in 1971," she said.

Briefing reporters on the meeting between the two leaders, Foreign Secretary



PM Narendra Modi with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina upon her arrival for the ceremonial reception at the Rashtrapati Bhawan on Saturday. ■ SUBRATA DUTTA

Vinay Kwatra said a technical committee has been constituted to look at the Teesta Water restoration Project. The committee's mandate has more to do with the management of water flow than water sharing.

On the decision to enhance defence cooperation between the two countries, Mr Kwatra said India will help Bangladesh's armed forces in modernisation and capacity-building. India will also see how it can fulfil the needs of the Bangladeshi forces. The MoU between the two countries, he said, pertains to cooperation concerning military education in the field of strategic and operational studies.

Mr Kwatra said the two leaders agreed to give an impetus to bilateral and sub-regional cooperation in a vision document that seeks to realise India's vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047 and Bangladesh's vision of a 'Smart Bangladesh' by 2041. (More on Page 10)

'Passed without proper debate': Cong backs call to defer implementation of new criminal laws

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

The Congress on Saturday said the implementation of the three new criminal laws should be deferred and added that they were passed "without" proper debate and discussion in Parliament.

The demand came after Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to defer the implementation of the three criminal laws - the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, the Bharatiya



Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 which will replace the India Penal Code, 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 respectively, and will come into effect on 1 July.

Congress General Secretary in-charge of Communications Jairam Ramesh in a post on X wrote: "On December 25, 2023, the President of India had

given her assent to the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023. The three far-reaching Bills had been bulldozed through Parliament without proper debate and discussion, and at a time when 146 MPs had been suspended from the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha."

Mr Ramesh said: "Earlier the Bills had been 'bulldozed' through the Standing Committee on Home Affairs without any detailed interactions with stakeholders across the country and completely ignoring the written and very detailed dissent notes of a number of MPs belonging to different

political parties, including the Indian National Congress, who were members of the Standing Committee."

"The three new laws are to come into effect from July 1, 2024. The Indian National Congress is of the firm opinion that this date should be deferred so as to enable a thorough review and re-examination by the reconstituted Standing Committee on Home Affairs which should have more extensive and meaningful consultations with various legal experts and organisations who have serious concerns on the three laws as they stand - thereafter by the 18th Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha as well," he said.

DEVOTION



Devotees perform Snan Yatra at the Jagannath temple in Puri in Odisha on the occasion of Deva Snana Purnima, on Saturday. ■ ANI

New Telecom Act: Central government can take control of telecom networks during emergency

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

With the partial notification of the Telecommunications Act, 2023, starting from 26 June, the central government will have the authority to control any telecommunications services or networks during emergencies.

The Central government on Friday partially notified the Telecommunications Act, intended to replace century-old colonial laws, making sections 1, 2, 10 to 30, 42 to 44, 46, 47, 50 to 58, 61 and 62 of the new law effective from 26 June. Among other key provisions, Section 20 of the Telecommunications Act 2023 stated that the central government of a state government will be able to take control of any telecommunications services



or networks in times of emergency after the implementation of the Act.

On the occurrence of any public emergency, including disaster management, or in the interest of public safety, "the Central Government or a State Government or any officer specially authorised in this behalf by the Central Government or a State Government can take temporary possession

The Central govt on Friday partially notified the Telecommunications Act, 2023, intended to replace century-old colonial laws, making sections 1, 2, 10 to 30, 42 to 44, 46, 47, 50 to 58, 61 and 62 of the new law effective from 26 June.

of any telecommunication service or telecommunication network from an authorised entity; or provide for appropriate mechanisms to ensure that messages of a user or group of users authorised for response and recovery during a public emergency are routed on priority," according to the Sector 20 of the Act. Any telecom player who wants to establish or operate

telecommunication networks, provide services or possess radio equipment will have to be authorised by the government.

"The Telecommunications Act, 2023 aims to amend and consolidate the law relating to development, expansion and operation of telecommunication services and telecommunication networks; assignment of spectrum and for matters connected therewith," said the Department of Communication (DoT).

The Telecommunications Act, 2023 seeks to repeal existing legislative frameworks like Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and Indian Wireless Telegraph Act, 1933 owing to huge technical advancements in the telecom sector and technologies. The Act also provides measures for protection of users from unsolicited commercial communication and creates a grievance redressal mechanism.

When it comes to the Right of Way (RoW) framework, public entities shall be obligated to provide right of way except in special circumstances. "The fee for right of way would be subject to a ceiling. The Act provides a complete framework for RoW in respect of private property based on mutual agreement. The Act also provides that the RoW to be granted shall be non-discriminatory and as far as practicable on a non-exclusive basis," said the DoT.

It also provides that telecommunication infrastructure shall be distinct from the property it is installed on. This will help reduce the disputes when property is sold or leased.

BIS introduces new standards to enhance safety of E-vehicles

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has introduced two new standards, IS 18590:2024 and IS 18606:2024, aimed at enhancing the safety of electric vehicles in the L, M, and N categories.

These standards focus on the critical component of electric vehicles - the powertrain - ensuring it meets stringent safety requirements. Additionally, they emphasize the safety and performance of batteries, ensuring they are both powerful and secure.

However, the shift to electric mobility extends beyond cars and trucks. E-rickshaws and E-Karts are gaining popularity across India. To address this, BIS has introduced IS 18294:2023, which establishes safety standards specifically for these vehicles.

These standards cover various aspects, from construction to functionality, ensuring the safety of both drivers and passengers.

With these new standards, BIS has raised the bar, now having a total of 30 Indian Standards dedicated to electric vehicles and their accessories, including charging systems. These standards are crucial in driving the transition to a more sustainable, environmentally friendly, and an efficient transportation system in the country.

The land belonging to water resources dept had been leased out to YSRCP over the then chief engineer's objections: TDP



He recalled how the YSRCP had derided the TDP saying they had won only 23 seats but now it has been reduced to 11 which is the number you get after adding all digits of the 164 (seats won by the NDA). He also recalled how the YSRCP had vowed not to allow Jana Sena to even touch the gates of the Assembly but the party won all the seats it contested with 100 per cent strike rate. Praising his deputy chief minister Naidu said, "Pawan Kalyan knows where to win and where to bow down."

ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

e-Tender Reference No. :- WRD/MID/MEDINAGAR/E-/11/2024-25 Dated :-/06/2024

1. ई-निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी के कार्यालय का नाम एवं पता:- कार्यपालक अभियंता, लघु सिंचाई प्रमंडल, मेदिनीनगर

2. ई-निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का मोबाईल नम्बर :- 06562-240100

3. वेबसाइट में ई-निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि एवं समय :- 29/06/2024 (अपराह्न 04.00 बजे से)

4. वेबसाइट में ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय :- 15/07/2024 (अपराह्न 12.00 बजे तक)

5. तकनीकी ई-निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय :- 16/07/2024 (अपराह्न 01.00 बजे)

क्र०	योजना का नाम	प्रखण्ड	प्राकाल्पिक राशि (रुपये में)	अद्ययन राशि (रुपये में)	परिणाम विपत्र का मूल्य (रुपये में)	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	बखारी सोलर पंपवह सिंचाई योजना का निर्माण कार्य	मेदिनीनगर	1,08,14,450.15	2,16,300.00	10,000.00	11 माह

(1) केवल ई-निविदा ही स्वीकार किया जायेगा।

(2) निविदा शुल्क एवं अद्ययन की राशि केवल **Online Mode** द्वारा ही स्वीकार्य होगी।

(3) निविदा शुल्क एवं अद्ययन की राशि का ई-मूल्यांकन जिता खाता से किया जायेगा, उसी खाते में अद्ययन की राशि वापस होगी। अगर खाता को बंद कर दिया जाता है तो सारी जवाबदेही संबंधित निविदादाता की होगी।

(4) प्राकृतिक राशि देना बंद सकती है। अद्ययन की राशि परिणाम विपत्र की राशि के अनुसार होगी।

(5) राशय के द्वारा निरित सनी अद्ययन संदेश/परिपत्र लागू होंगे।

(6) वित्तुत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाइट <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> मेंलौगअग्र करे।

(7) Work will be awarded to those bidders (specially) M/NRE approved channel partners/ M/NRE approved manufacturers/M/NRE approved PV system integrators/ A registered manufactures/ company/ approved manufacturers (including MSME of Jharkhand) of at least one of the major sub system namely pumps or PV System electronics conforming to National/International Standards/ any other agencies having experience of installation and commissioning of such solar powered Irrigation Schemes), Empanelled Indigenous Manufacturers/ Manufacturers of 10 Hp Pumps (AC/DC Surface water Pumps) in the department with all accessories for off-grid stand alone SPV water pumping systems can also take part in the bid for executing the whole work of the bid. However those bidders who have not yet registered in Water Resources Department can also submit their bid provided they will provided they will have to get the m elves registered in water Resources Department within two months from the date of allotment of work.

कार्यपालक अभियंता
लघु सिंचाई प्रमण्डल, मेदिनीनगर।

PR.NO.327325 Minor Irrigation(24-25):D

The Sunday Statesman

With which is incorporated
The Englishman ~ Founded 1821

Job Creation

India stands at a pivotal juncture. Despite its status as the world's fastest-growing major economy, the country grapples with an acute unemployment crisis. The challenge of job creation looms large over the government, demanding immediate and innovative strategies to harness the demographic dividend and ensure inclusive economic growth. The conundrum of high economic growth without corresponding employment gains is a paradox that India must urgently address. The nation, boasting a population of 1.4 billion with a significant proportion of young aspirants, finds itself in a situation where economic expansion does not translate into job creation. The recent electoral setback for the BJP underscores the electorate's frustration with widening inequality, persistent inflation, and a dearth of well-paying jobs. The solution to this complex problem requires a multifaceted approach. As suggested by several development economists, a job-specific strategy is imperative. This involves significantly ramping up public employment in essential sectors such as health, education, nutrition, and sanitation. These sectors not only create immediate employment opportunities but also lay the foundation for long-term economic resilience and social wellbeing. However, the government alone cannot shoulder the burden of job creation. The private sector must play a pivotal role. Historically, India's gross fixed capital formation ~ a key indicator of private investment ~ has lagged behind its potential. To stimulate private sector investment, the government must identify and eliminate policy hurdles that stymie business growth. Simplifying regulatory frameworks, ensuring policy stability, and providing incentives for private investments are critical steps that can unlock the entrepreneurial potential of Indian businesses. Education reform is another cornerstone of sustainable job creation. The quality of education in India needs a substantial uplift to equip the workforce with the skills demanded by a dynamic and evolving job market. This entails not just enhancing the curriculum but also investing in teacher training and modern educational infrastructure. A collaborative approach involving both central and state governments can ensure that education reforms are implemented uniformly and effectively across the country. Tax reform is equally crucial. A simplified and fair tax system can boost business confidence and spur investment. Moreover, a progressive tax policy that ensures equitable distribution of resources can help address income inequality, thereby creating a more balanced and just economic landscape. The unorganised sector, which employs a vast majority of India's workforce, presents a unique challenge. Accurate measurement of employment in this sector is difficult, leading to discrepancies in official unemployment data. Recognising and formalising the informal economy can provide more reliable employment statistics and enable targeted policy interventions. Strengthening social security nets for workers in this sector and facilitating their transition to formal employment can also enhance job security and improve living standards. Ultimately, addressing India's employment crisis requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders ~ government, private sector, and civil society. It is not just an economic imperative but a social one, as well. Creating meaningful employment opportunities is essential to harnessing the potential of India's youth, fostering social stability, and achieving sustainable development.

Pushed into graves

The humanitarian crisis unfolding in Sudan's Darfur region is a tragic testament to the devastating consequences of war. As the conflict between the Sudanese military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) rages, the victims are ordinary people, particularly children, caught in the crossfire. The rapid expansion of cemeteries, a grim marker of escalating mortality, underscores the dire situation on the ground. This crisis demands urgent attention and action from the international community. The situation in Darfur is not merely a result of natural disasters or economic downturns but is profoundly man-made. The blockade of food and medical aid by combatants has turned a challenging situation into a catastrophic one. The deliberate obstruction of humanitarian assistance is a violation of international law and a moral failing of the highest order. The harrowing stories from displaced persons' camps, where families are forced to survive on one meal a day and children die from preventable diseases, should shock the conscience of the world. The lack of food, medicine, and healthcare has created a lethal environment where the most vulnerable ~ children and the elderly ~ are perishing in alarming numbers. This tragedy is compounded by the fact that aid organisations are unable to deliver critical supplies due to security threats and logistical barriers imposed by warring factions. The data on food insecurity is staggering. With an estimated three-quarters of a million people facing catastrophic food shortages and nearly nine million in an emergency food situation, Sudan is on the brink of a famine. This projection should serve as a clarion call for immediate international intervention. Yet, the response from the global community has been tepid at best. The focus must shift from diplomatic platitudes to concrete actions that ensure the delivery of aid to those in desperate need. Moreover, the international community must hold those responsible for obstructing aid accountable. Both the Sudanese military and the RSF bear responsibility for the suffering of civilians. Reports of the RSF looting aid warehouses and the military hindering access to border areas highlight the need for accountability and justice. The world cannot stand by as these atrocities continue with impunity. The impact of this crisis extends beyond immediate hunger and health issues. The breakdown of healthcare systems and the rise in diseases such as measles, malaria, and cholera threaten to create a "deadly cocktail" that could decimate entire communities. The long-term consequences for Sudan's population, particularly its children, are severe. Without urgent intervention, the country risks losing an entire generation to hunger and preventable diseases. As we witness the rapid expansion of graveyards in Darfur, we are reminded of the human cost of this conflict. These graves are not just numbers; they represent individuals ~ mothers, fathers, children ~ whose lives were cut short due to a lack of food, medicine, and compassion. The international community must act decisively to end this crisis. Humanitarian corridors must be established, and aid must flow unimpeded to those in need.

Goals for Education ~ I

The NEP launched in the second half of 2020 aimed at overhauling India's education system, but the pandemic situation turned the academic calendar topsy-turvy. It is time to review how far the NEP can be made relevant to the new normal in education. A UNESCO report explained the scenario: 'Education systems responded with distance learning solutions, all of which offered less or more imperfect substitutes for classroom instruction'



Under the NEP-2000, the name of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) was changed to Ministry of Education (MoE). There was a serious dimension to this change in nomenclature. The term "human resource" induced the person in charge to look at teachers and academics as part of a labour force and therefore not worthy of too much respect. The renaming of the department could well initiate the process of refashioning the government's attitude to educational institutions and to those who teach in them.

The attitude, as articulated by present Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's predecessors, had been for the government to curtail the autonomy of academic institutions as much as possible on the ground that most universities were fully or partially funded by the government. The presence of the government ~ often bordering on interference ~ tended to stifle the pursuit of excellence in bodies of higher learning. It was expected of Mr Pradhan to step back and allow the heads of universities to run the institutions. Admittedly, this would be one of the first steps in the government's gradual withdrawal from the sphere of higher education and to opening it up for private players.

So the task before Mr Pradhan as the minister of education for a second time is to cut the Gordian knot. While the policies of successive governments have failed to live up to the country's much-trumpeted goals in the sector ~ inclusion, expansion and excellence ~ electoral politics have always prevented our planners from thinking creatively. Drawing the border between populism and pro-people policies is often forgotten.

Our country's Constitution cannot be faulted. The directive principles of state policy offer great promise. Article 41 says: "The State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want." However, there is a rider: the State will perform such tasks "within the limits of its econom-

ic capacity".

The ground reality is daunting though. There has been an unmistakable imbalance in the allocations for the different facets of the social sector in the union budgets for decades. One can easily plead that the economics of learning is yet to be calibrated in our country.

A notable trend, particularly in the past three decades, is that private expenditure on education is growing faster than that of the public, which reflects increasing privatization of education in India, and has far-reaching policy implications. Growing demand for education coupled with inadequacy of public expenditure on education has resulted in growing private expenditure. The non-fulfillment of the public education system due to inadequate state funding strained the private pockets in meeting the growing demands. NEP-2020 intends to curb the commercialization, but not privatization.

According to All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report estimates, Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education in India was 28.5 per cent in 2021-22. Private educational institutions account for nearly 46 per cent of the total school enrolment and 70 per cent of higher education enrolment. Most of the studies on private expenditure on education infer that education being a public good, public investment in education is a must. Unfortunately such expenditure is found to be insufficient in achieving the educational goals of our country.

Whereas the private expenditure on education (PFCE) increased from Rs 86.5 crore in 1951-52 to Rs. 509961.6 crore in 2018-19 and to Rs 728197.6 crore by 2022-23, public expenditure increased from Rs 64.5 crore to Rs 736581 crore and further to Rs 1098589.4 crore for the same periods. It goes without saying that the government's intent on faster digital integration and creating a high-quality and equi-

table public education system needs to be supported by adequate fund allocation. Though NEP-2000 notes the criticality of enhancing public funding, it is discouraging that the budgetary allocation does not provide proper support to make a convenient roadmap for achieving the target.

While it was expected that some specific allocation would be announced keeping in view the objectives of NEP-2000, much to our dismay a sum of Rs



A K GHOSH

The writer, a former Associate Professor, department of English, Gurudas College, Kolkata, is presently with Rabindra Bharati University

1.206 lakh crore was allocated to the ministry of education in the interim budget (2024-25) which is a mere 6.8 per cent increase in comparison to FY 2023-24. Of this, Rs 47619.77 crore has been set aside for higher education departments. However, the budgetary allocation for education as a percentage of total expenditure has dropped over the last seven years from 10.4 per cent to 9.5 per cent, according to the Economic Survey 2022-24. The allocation is not encouraging in view of the NEP 2000 schemes that aim at improving infrastructure and teaching in educational institutions post-Covid 19.

While the government is and should be intent on an overall implementation of the NEP 2000, which aims at universalisation of education from pre-school to the secondary level, the budget for Samagra Shiksha Scheme, the main vehicle for implementing the Right to Education Act is at Rs 37500 crore, slightly higher than Rs 37435.47 crore allocated for 2023-24.

The NEP launched in the second half of 2020 aimed at overhauling India's education system, but the pandemic situation turned the academic calendar topsy-turvy. It is time to review how far the NEP can be made relevant to the new normal in education. A UNESCO report explained the scenario: "Education systems responded with distance learning solutions, all of which offered less or more imperfect substitutes for classroom instruction".

(To Be Concluded)

A MEMBER OF THE

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ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES

Living in a furnace: Is there any way to beat the heat?

Stepping outside in Dhaka these days feels like venturing into a furnace. A scorching sun beats down on a city choked by concrete, and temperatures routinely surpass 35 degrees Celsius ~ a far cry from the balmy days many of us remember. This relentless heat isn't just uncomfortable; it's a growing public health crisis. Studies by the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr.b) paint a concerning picture: rising temperatures are linked to a surge in heatstroke and dehydration cases, particularly among vulnerable populations like the elderly and children.

The culprit behind this urban inferno is a well-documented phenomenon known as the "urban heat island (UHI)" effect. Dhaka, like many rapidly urbanising cities around the world, has prioritised development at the expense of green spaces. Lush parks and verdant gardens have been replaced by towering buildings and sprawling infrastructure, all constructed from heat-absorbing materials like concrete and asphalt. This transformation has fundamentally altered Dhaka's microclimate. The city now acts like a giant heat sink, absorbing and trapping solar energy throughout the day. With limited vegetation to provide shade and cool the air through evapotranspiration, these heat-soaked surfaces continue to radiate the energy long after sunset, creating a microclimate significantly warmer than surrounding rural areas. This urban heat island effect not



only exacerbates the discomfort of daily life but is also overburdening our healthcare system due to heat-related illnesses.

Dhaka's predicament is far from unique. Similar stories of scorching cities are unfolding across the globe. A 2019 study published in the journal Environmental Research Letters found that the UHI effect in Beijing, China, could be as high as 8 degrees Celsius warmer than surrounding areas. This extreme heat contributes to a rise in respiratory problems, with a direct correlation between UHI intensity and hospital admissions for asthma and other respiratory illnesses. In Ahmedabad, India, a 2012 study documented how the UHI effect can raise nighttime temperatures by as much as 7 degrees Celsius compared to rural areas. This dramatic rise in nighttime temperatures translates to a significant increase in energy consumption as residents resort to air conditioners for relief. The overburdened power grids struggle to meet this surge in demand, leading to blackouts and further exacerbating the heat crisis.

The crisis isn't limited to just scorching temperatures. The UHI effect also disrupts natural weather patterns. A 2020 study by the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi found that increased heat island intensity in Delhi led to a decrease in monsoon rainfall by up to 10 percent. This translates to water scarcity, impacting not only residents but also agriculture in surrounding regions, further straining food security. Globally, countries are grappling with the consequences of unchecked urban sprawl and diminishing green spaces. The science is clear: the UHI effect is a real and growing threat to our health and well-being.

Fortunately, there's hope. Cities around the world are implementing effective policies to combat UHIs. We in Dhaka can follow suit with a multi-pronged approach, starting with a greening transformation. Singapore, a global leader in urban sustainability, offers a compelling example with its "City in a Garden" programme. This initiative has demonstrably increased the city's green cover from 30 percent to over 50 percent in recent decades, transforming Singapore into a model metropolis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

11 p.m. please

SIR, The Kolkata Metro railway authority has recently taken a decision to reschedule its last train from 11 p.m. to 10.40 p.m. The reason given is lack of enough passengers on the 11 p.m. trains causing financial loss to Metro Rail.

This theory cannot be accepted. In a welfare state the government has to spend money to run various services for its citizens. The question of profit or loss should not and cannot come into consideration.

So inadequate number of passengers on the late evening trains cannot be acceptable logic. Moreover, during peak hours the trains remain overcrowded.

The excess revenue earned at the peak hours can compensate

for the lack of passengers in late evening trains.

There are some remote areas in the country, where facilities are scarce. Government runs trains in these areas for the facility of those marginal people living in remote areas. Can the government say that because these trains do not earn enough revenue, the services will be discontinued?

In the good old days there was a Howrah-Amta Martin rail. As the story goes, these trains used to incur considerable loss. Yet the services continued, as there were hardly any standard means of transport in that area.

The same logic stands for running metro at 11 pm, because at that hour of the night, safe and secure means of transport is

scarce in the city. Government is not a business house that it would weigh profit and loss for services rendered to its citizens. Hence we appeal to the metro railway authority to continue its last train service at 11 p.m..

Yours, etc.,
Dr Prottyush Chatterjee,
Kolkata, 21 June.

PARCHED PRIDE

SIR, For the past two weeks, around 2.8 million Delhi residents have been suffering from a severe water crisis. Water is an essential part of human life, and survival without it is impossible.

In a city like Delhi, the capital of India, which houses numerous ministerial residences, including those of the Prime Minister and the President, the public is craving every drop of water.

Such a situation is enough to tarnish the country's reputation globally, despite our desire to see

NO TO FLOWERS

SIR, Should we start the practice of giving vegetables instead of flower bouquets on birthdays or other functions? Recipients often leave the given bouquets behind. Vegetables, on the other hand, can be consumed.

Instead of a rose, you can also give an inexpensive seasonal fruit such as guava, raw mango, lemon, amla, sapota, etc. The size of the basket can be trimmed according to one's budget. Instead of wrapping the basket with plastic, we can use cotton cloth, which can also be used later.

This change will also mark our gratitude to farmers and and will help improve their economic status. Adopting our indigenous culture is always better than aping Western customs. Such small changes will definitely bring about a revolution in our society.

Yours, etc., V S Jayaraman,
Chennai, 20 June.

India in a leading position.

While the rule of every party will eventually end, we patriots must live with pride and be able to say, "I belong to India". It is the government's responsibility to

promptly address such crises, ensuring that its citizens do not face difficulties, while upholding the pride of India worldwide.

Yours, etc., Jakir Hussain,
Kanpur, 21 June.

Is the Constitution being followed in Manipur?

YAMBEM LABA

At the height of the turmoil in Manipur last year, the Chief Justice of India had remarked that “apparently the provisions of the Indian Constitution do not seem to apply in Manipur.” Thereafter, the apex court had appointed a high-level committee to oversee developments and to monitor steps being taken, including the registration of 6,000 plus FIRs.

On the court's directive, the State had been quick to respond at least in two cases - notably those of the parading naked of two tribal girls by Meitei youth, and the abduction and subsequent killings of two Meitei students - a boy and a girl - by Kukis. The culprits have since been booked; one of them in the latter case from a place as far away as Pune.

But in matters relating to 200-plus deaths, thousands of houses burnt and over 60,000 people displaced, those deviating from the Constitutional path are still active. Here one is not talking about the gun-toting youngsters on either side or the odd men in uniform allowing ethnic affinity to override allegiance sworn to the State and the Constitution, but people in high places duly enjoined to safeguard the Constitution of India.

To start with, we have the Chief Minister, the head of the government of the State who was duly sworn in by the Governor. He is on record stating that Article 355 of the Constitution of India has been invoked in the State. This statement is supported by the fact that Chief Minister N. Biren Singh has been stripped from his position as the Chairman of the Unified Command - the apex body comprising the Army, Para-Military Forces and the



State Police to oversee the law and order situation in the State - and in his place one Kuldiep Singh was appointed as Security Advisor.

Additionally, the Director General of Police was replaced without notice to the Chief Minister. Finding a landing place was Rajeeve Singh, a Tripura cadre IPS officer said to be a favourite of Kuldiep Singh. Then we have the Governor of Manipur, Anusuiya Uikey, who stated that Article 355 of the Constitution of India has not been invoked in Manipur, as the law and order situation in her State had not so completely broken that the Central government had to take charge of law and order. She did not bother to explain the circumstances leading to the appointment of the Security Advisor as the Chairman of the Unified

Command and appointment of the Director General of Police without notice to the State Government.

It appears that Article 355 of the Constitution of India had been invoked in Manipur by proxy. Whether the Constitution has such provisions is for the court to examine.

Then came the meeting on 17 June convened by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah at New Delhi's North Block. Present were the Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Director of the Intelligence Bureau Tapan Kumar Deka, Chief Secretary Vineet Joshi, Security Advisor Kuldiep Singh, DGP Rajeeve Singh of Manipur, the Chief of Staff of the Indian Army General Manoj Pande and others dealing with the law and order situation. And although the meeting was

conveyed to discuss the law and order situation in Manipur, conspicuous by their absence was the Chief Minister of Manipur or any elected representative from Manipur.

Law and Order is a State subject in the Constitution but the Chief Minister of the state, one belonging to the Bharatiya Janata Party, was ignored despite the party having lost both parliamentary seats from the state. These acts suggest that in effect, not just Article 355 but also Article 356 - whereby the elected government is dismissed and President's Rule imposed - has also been invoked by proxy.

The meeting is said to have deliberated upon the developments in Manipur at length and concluded that more troops would be stationed in the state, with orders to take action against anybody using violence, while initiating steps to commence talks between the two warring sides. But on the surface it appears that steps are planned to be taken to disarm the few thousand Meitei youth who had taken away guns from police armouries last year. Ignored for now seems to be any examination of the role of Assam Rifles, accused of bias for the Kukis.

As early as January this year the Chief Minister's office had notified the DGP about the impending attack by Kukis at Jiribam, the district bordering Assam. The input was kept under wraps. Earlier this month, suspected militants beheaded a Meitei farmer and began attacking Meitei villages in the fringe area of the district. The Chief Minister was in New Delhi at that time and was scheduled to visit the district upon his return to Imphal. But his advance security team was ambushed by Kuki militants and the convoy had to turn back. CM Biren upon arrival at Imphal then decided

not to venture to Jiribam for reasons best known to him.

On the peace parleys, there will definitely be hardliners on both sides who would call for complete annihilation of the other as the only solution. But this reminds me of the Track-2 meetings the Meiteis had with the Nagas in 2000. Tension was running high then between the two indigenous communities of Manipur. Present as mediators were Lt.General V K Nayar (Rtd), former Governor of Manipur, Chaman Lal, former DGP of Nagaland and Jayant Madhav, former Chairman of the Assam Finance Corporation. The Nagas of Nagaland were represented by Church leader Wati Aier, Gandhian Niketu Iralu, Rev. Shishak, Principal of Patkai College, while the Nagas from Manipur were represented by PA Thekko, then Editor of Horn Bill Express from Senapati and Naga academic Dr Jina Singham. Representing the Meiteis were writer and author Pradip Phanjoubam, noted social commentator Dhanabir Laishram, Arun Irengbam, former Media Advisor to the Chief Minister, this writer and a former editor, now the current Chief Minister of Manipur, N. Biren Singh.

The move initiated by former Consultant Editor of the Statesman, Sanjoy Hazarika, had three rounds of meetings - first at Shillong, then at Barapani and finally at Kaziranga.

Both sides spoke their hearts out and a lot of goodwill was earned. We did not agree on anything but we were able to have a friendly football match at Senapati between the Meiteis and the Nagas. But the process broke the tension between the two sides. The rest is history but we broke the tension between the two sides. I am making this point to show that a start has to be made somewhere, sometime by somebody.

(The writer is a senior journalist with The Statesman.)

POLITICAL DIARY KALYANI SHANKAR

Priyanka's foray should boost Congress

Amidst a flurry of speculation and anticipation, the Congress party has made a strategic and significant move by fielding Priyanka Gandhi in the by-election in Wayanad, Kerala. This seat became available after her brother Rahul Gandhi decided to retain Rae Bareilly and step down from Wayanad, after winning both seats. If she succeeds, it could be a game-changer for Priyanka, her party and Indian politics. It has sparked excitement and scepticism among the public and political class.

"I am glad to represent Wayanad and will ensure the people don't feel Rahul Gandhi's absence," she said when her candidacy was announced. "I chose to run in Wayanad to continue my family's political legacy and the Gandhis' presence in the South. My grandmother, Indira Gandhi, had a strong connection with the people of Wayanad, and I hope to build on that."

Rahul and his mother, Sonia, have led the Congress party for many years and served as MPs. The upcoming Wayanad elections will be a critical test for Priyanka, as this will be her first litmus test. The entire nation, including the BJP, will closely observe her performance.

Born into a political family, Priyanka has actively participated in her mother's election campaigns. She also campaigned for her brother when he entered politics in 2004.

In 2014 and 2019, there were rumours that Priyanka might contest against Prime Minister Modi from Varanasi. Before the 2024 elections, she stated that the party aimed to



avoid fielding three Gandhis to counter the BJP's criticism of dynastic rule.

The Gandhis changed their mind, seeing the 2024 polls as an excellent opportunity for the Congress. They decided it was the perfect time to introduce Priyanka to electoral politics as an MP from Kerala. Wayanad is considered a safe seat for the party.

Priyanka, who bears some resemblance to her grandmother, Indira Gandhi, has been in the spotlight since entering politics in 2019. She became the general secretary of the Congress and played a vital role in the party's campaign. Priyanka is given some credit for nearly doubling the Congress's tally in the 2024 election and rejuvenating the party.

In Uttar Pradesh, Priyanka had struggled to make an impact. She wasn't held accountable when Congress performed poorly in the 2022 assembly polls under her watch. She had messed up Punjab during the Assembly polls. However, her extensive campaigning in Himachal Pradesh was said to be responsible for the success of the Congress in the state.

In 2024, Priyanka decided not to run for a Lok Sabha seat, focusing on nationwide party campaigning. She held 108 public meetings, participated in roadshows, and campaigned in 16 states and one union territory.

The decision to contest from Wayanad presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities for

Priyanka. On the one hand, she faces attacks from the BJP on the issue of dynastic politics, a hurdle she must navigate with tact and resilience. On the other hand, it gives her a golden opportunity to prove herself and connect with a new constituency, a chance she must seize with determination.

The Wayanad constituency, located in north Kerala, has a voter base of 1.46 million. It has consistently elected Congress MPs in the past four elections, indicating solid support for the party. The constituency also enjoys broad support for the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), with Muslims and Christians comprising about 60 per cent of the voters. IUML will back Priyanka.

If Priyanka wins, all three members of the Gandhi family will be in Parliament. This could strengthen the family's position within the party but will also invite attacks from opponents.

Overall, Priyanka's candidacy in Kerala is a strategic move by the Congress to strengthen its support base in the South, potentially reshaping its regional dynamics. The party acknowledges the importance of the South and aims to strengthen its presence there. Thus, Rahul will focus on the North, while Priyanka may concentrate on the South. Her win could bolster the party's position in the region.

There is more to it, as Priyanka's husband, Robert Vadra, also wants to join politics. He said Priyanka should be in Parliament before him, and he could follow her at a suitable time.

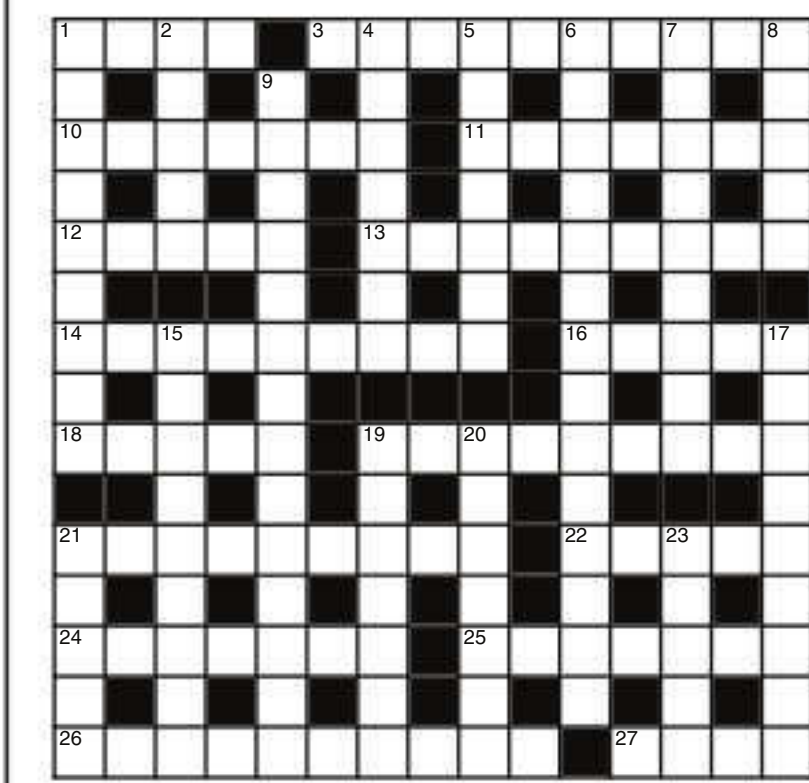
The CPI plans to contest to ensure non-Congress votes do not go to the BJP.

Overall, the move shields the Congress from criticism for neglecting the South. Priyanka's candidacy from Wayanad is part of the party's mission to leverage anti-incumbency in Kerala for the 2026 assembly polls.

Priyanka has advantages - she is well-known and has a strong command over Hindi. However, her husband is seen as a liability due to his legal issues.

If elected to Parliament, Priyanka should strive to become a good parliamentarian. The two Gandhi siblings must strengthen the organization and return the party to its former glory.

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

PITTS DISCIPLINE
I T A D S I R V
LABOUR INTENSIVE
C E T V H E N N
HARMONIUM MACE
A C O E R I
ROULADE SITUPS
D N T O A F
SHRIMP REGULAR
A C O E R I
PROP DISPARAGE
I N T C I P L N
NEEDLE AND THREAD
C S O S E Y R L
HESITATE STAY

ACROSS

- Character to eviscerate Nazarene (4)
- Pull on weed relentlessly shackles donkey (5-5)
- Left at sea, aim to make forecast (7)
- Sons in poor health - would this bring on nausea? (7)
- Singer in a wooded hollow heard (5)
- Poor snail one Yankee cooked with onions (9)

- Ruthless to spread lies about terrible truth (3-6)
- Weapon, returned to court, that causes bleed (5)
- Discharge of gas put through drink (5)
- Fitting fresh cover for metal bearings (9)
- Right arm is not broken in heavy fall (9)
- Inventive sort decorates Lancastrian houses (5)

- Energy cuts must stop (5,2)
- Annoyed when struggling to find pain reliever (7)
- Ice for this lolly? (5,5)
- Goddess wants case dropped in Boeotian city (4)

- Covered earlier clothing left for Spanish gentleman (7)
- Republican on camera coming round to sum up (2,5)
- Genre briefly returned in horrific series (7,7)
- One trap set during harangue in spring (9)
- Hunter and dog requiring no introduction (5)
- Border teams helped to build new town (5,9)

- Make hit plays and perform amusing opera (3,6)
- Repetitive notes written about adult in private meeting (4-14)
- Enquiry ended early on ring with no charges (3,4)
- Servant goes with crowd for violent disorder (7)
- What's taken into staff about to give treatment (5)
- Reportedly steps over fence in dash (5)

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

NOW AND AGAIN

Discovering ignorance

BUDDHADEV NANDI

I attend a religious congregation almost every evening. The Maharaj answers questions of the attendees after the spiritual conversation. One day a college student asked him a curious question. He asked, "What is the use of reading so many books in life as our memory preserves very little that we read?"

Then the Maharaj related a fine story in defence of reading good books. He said that the same question was asked by a student to his teacher who was an avid reader. Hearing the question, the teacher took the student to the bank of a river. There they found a clay pitcher lying half buried in the slushy sand. The pitcher had several holes and was full of mud and slush.

The teacher sitting a little away from the river instructed his student, "Fetch water from the river with the help of this pitcher." The student was quite confused by the unreasonable instruction. However, the obedient student could not turn down his teacher's order. He tried to fetch water with the apparently useless pitcher several times, but in vain. At last, the exhausted student said to the teacher, "I am extremely sorry to say that I have failed to execute your order. Please pardon me." However, he could not restrain his inquisitiveness and asked why he had been given such a seemingly unjustified order.

The teacher smiled and said, "No, you have not failed at all. Look inside the broken pitcher. Though the pitcher has failed to hold water, it is now quite clean as all the mud and slush stuck inside have washed away by the force of the water leaking out through the holes. Our brain is like that pitcher with several holes and impure thoughts, evil ideas and superstitions in it. Our brain may fail to remember everything that we read. But all the noble ideas, realisations, feelings, emotions, knowledge and above all truths inherent in a good book play the role of cleansing a reader's mind and soul. And this should be the real objective of reading books."

We often make the mistake of judging a person to be educated on the basis of his or her academic qualifications and numbers obtained by him or her in examinations. But this is not right.

I once read the memoir of a literature scholar. When he met an old teacher who was an avid reader, and shared the news of his passing the M.A. examination with a gold medal, the teacher advised him to start reading. Though he felt diminished by the comment of his teacher, he later realized that studying for educational qualifications and reading were very different. He concluded in his memoir that the more we read the more we discover our ignorance.

100 YEARS AGO

WEEK-END TRIPS

Clarke was the author of remarkable novel now very scare called Jasper Tristram, which should have a high place in any anthology of school stories. He married late in life a daughter of General Milman. For all his exuberant sense of the absurd. Clarke was a real diplomat and a man of statesman like mind. Zanzibar had nothing but deficit budgets till he took charge of its affairs in Downing Street. But undoubtedly his greatest contribution to the work of his profession consisted in the personal negotiations which he was called upon to conduct with the late king of the Belgians over the Congo difficulties.

Clarke would leave London on a Friday night with plenipotentiary powers in his pocket, and be back in his office on Monday, having spent the week-end cloistered with the most astute monarch in Europe. The settlement ultimately arrived at was largely Clarke's work.

To wind up with a word as to bigger folk. If the line of British Foreign Secretaries includes no Bismarck or Cavour, the list of permanent heads of the Foreign Office contains the names of a good many people of the first distinction And the Permanent head one must remember have had their say in shaping our foreign affairs. There was one person who particularly trusted their judgments and that was his late Majesty King Edward VII. He was, indeed, commonly accompanied by the, permanent Head of the foreign office on occasions when he was said personally to effect so much in the diplomatic field. One hopes that the present generation may get some enlightenment on these matters. History now elamours to be "up to date" and a public which demands "open diplomacy" whatever that may mean might just as well begin by compiling true records of its immediate past.

MADRAS BEGGARS

COMMITTEE TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM

WITH the object of gauging public opinion as to the best means of dealing with the beggar problem in Madras, a committee of councillors of the Madras Corporation has framed a questionnaire and forwarded it to a number of prominent people and public institutions in the city. The first part of the questionnaire relates to religious mendicants such as Sadhus, Bairagis, etc., while the second relates to Moslem Fakirs.

THUMBNAILS

Delhi Book Fair to commence from August 7: The 28th edition of the Delhi Book Fair will be organised by the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), a Government of India Enterprise under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Publishers (FIP) in Hall No 12A & 12, Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi from August 7 to 11.

Sylvan Plyboard (India) Ltd to raise up to Rs 28.05 crore through a public issue; IPO to open on June 24: West Bengal-based Sylvan Plyboard (India) Ltd, manufactures of various wood products such as plywood, blockboard, and flush door etc, is planning to raise up to Rs 28.05 crore from its SME public issue. The company has received approval to launch its public issue on the NSE Emerge platform of the National Stock Exchange of India Limited. The public issue will open for subscription on June 24, and close on June 26.

Kaarigar expands fair trade: Kaarigar, the craft and loom paradise of India, announced the opening of their new store at the DLF Mall of India, Noida, dedicated to showcasing the talents of Indian artisans. The new Kaarigar store in Noida promises an unparalleled shopping experience for enthusiasts of unique, one-of-a-kind pieces.

DJ Mediaprint & Logistics: Board of directors of DJ Mediaprint & Logistics Ltd, one of the leading providers of integrated printing, logistics and courier solutions in India and overseas, has approved a 2:1 bonus issue. The company board also approved issuance of increased authorised share capital from Rs 15 crore to Rs 50 crore, subject to approval of shareholders.

Ganesha Ecosphere acquires stake in Race Eco Chain: Ganesha Ecosphere Limited, India's Largest PET Bottle Recycler announced an equity investment in Race Eco Chain Limited. This strategic move underscores the company's commitment to fostering a circular economy and enhancing India's plastic packaging waste supply chain. Race Eco Chain Ltd, a pioneer in plastic waste management and a champion of circular economy principles in India, has unveiled its ambitious Vision 2030 goals and expansion plans to meet escalating demand.

Nikon India aims for 10% growth in FY25, to expand healthcare business: Nikon India expects double-digit growth in India in the current fiscal year and aims to strengthen its imaging business with more launches and market expansion, top company officials said. Currently, India contributes around 6 per cent of Nikon's imaging business globally, Nikon India Managing Director Sajjan Kumar said. Besides, Nikon is expanding its healthcare business in the Indian market, in which it operates in segments such as microscope solutions. The company has plans to expand this vertical, which currently contributes around 5 per cent of its business here, Kumar said.

CARE Ratings: Rating agency CARE Ratings announced the upgrade of various instruments of Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) to AAA (Stable) from AA+ (Positive). This significant upgrade underscores IREDA's unwavering commitment to improving its financial performance and upholding the highest standards of corporate governance.

GST Council waives interest, penalty on notices to taxpayers

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

As part of several taxpayer-friendly decisions, the GST Council on Saturday recommended the waiving of interest and penalty in cases of tax demand notices that have been sent under Section 73, of the GST Act, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said after the meeting.

"In the case of demand notices issued for 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, interest and penalty will be waived off, if tax is paid by March 31, 2025," Nirmala Sitharaman said.

The GST Council has also recommended that the time limit to avail input tax credit in respect of any invoice or debit note under section 16(4) of the CGST Act filed up to the 30-11-2021 for the financial years 17-18, 18-19, 19-20 and 20-21 may be deemed to be 2011 to 2021.

So for the same requisite amendment retrospectively with effect from 1 July 2017, the Finance Minister said.

In order to reduce tax litigation which is expected to



Union minister for finance and corporate affairs Nirmala Sitharaman addresses a press conference after 53 GST council meeting in New Delhi, on Saturday.

benefit both taxpayers and the government, the GST council recommended a minimum limit for filing appeals of Rs 20 lakh for the appellate

tribunal, Rs 1 crore for the High Court and Rs 2 crore for the Supreme Court.

In another taxpayer-friendly measure, the GST Council

has decided to introduce Form GSTR 1A to enable taxpayers to add information they have missed when filing Form GSTR 1.

The new form can also be used to correct mistakes that they have made while filing their particulars in form GSTR 1.

NEWSFEED

INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY CELEBRATED

SCOPE



Standing Conference of Public Enterprises observed the 10th International Day of Yoga (IDY) at SCOPE Social Interaction Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi. Atul Sobti DG, SCOPE along with employees participated in a Yoga session and inspired them to imbibe and practice yoga in their daily lives.

SBI



State Bank of India, local head office in Kolkata and Senior Officials Residential Complex at Alipore, celebrated International Yoga Day with great enthusiasm. The event featured a morning yoga session led by renowned yoga instructor Abhijit Ghosh of VYASA, promoting physical and mental well-being among employees.

BHEL



Under the aegis of the Ministry of Heavy Industries, the 10th International Day of Yoga was celebrated with great enthusiasm today by BHEL at its township in Noida. H.D. Kumaraswamy, Union Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries graced the event with his presence. Kamran Rizvi, Secretary (HI) and Vijay Mittal, Joint Secretary were also present on the occasion. KS Murthy, CMD, BHEL, and Functional Directors on the board of BHEL participated in the event, along with other senior officials of MHI & BHEL. Addressing the gathering, Kumaraswamy said that, "Yoga is India's Gift to the World", and that the International Day of Yoga has positioned India as the 'Spiritual Guru' to the world. He further urged everyone to take up Yoga as a part of their daily life and reap its benefits.

IRCTC

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC) celebrated the 10th International Yoga Day on 21 June. IRCTC organised yoga session at the Railway Club, State Entry road, New Delhi where over 200 IRCTC employees and their family members participated in a rejuvenating morning yoga session. Similar yoga sessions were mirrored in zonal and regional offices including Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Secunderabad and Chandigarh. These yoga sessions were conducted by certified yoga instructors and were designed to cater to individuals of all ages and fitness levels. Sanjay Kumar Jain, Chairman & Managing Director of IRCTC, addressed the participants, emphasizing the importance of incorporating yoga into daily routines. IRCTC's celebration of the 10th International Yoga Day reflects its dedication to the health and well-being of its workforce and the community at large. By promoting yoga, IRCTC aims to enhance the quality of life and contribute to a healthier, more balanced society.

NORTHERN RLY



This year, the 10th International Day of Yoga is being celebrated with the theme "Yoga for Self and Society." The 10th International Yoga Day was organised by Northern Railway at Karnali Singh Stadium, New Delhi. Jaya Varma Sinha, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, Railway Board, Anil Kumar Khadwal, Member Infrastructure, Railway Board, Satish Kumar Member Traction and Rolling Stock.

EASTERN RLY



The 10th International Day of Yoga celebrated on 21 June in a befitting manner with huge gusto & enthusiasm. Milind K. Deouskar, General Manager along with Additional General Manager, Principal heads of Departments and other officers of Eastern Railway took part in the yoga programme at Belvedere Park Officers Club, Kolkata wherein the faculty member of Advanced Meditation Programme and State Council Member/Art of Living administered the common yoga protocol among the officers & staff. International Yoga Day also observed at all the four Divisions & Workshops of Eastern Railway with great ability & zeal.

Rajesh Kr Dwivedi takes charge as BHEL director (finance)

Rajesh Kumar Dwivedi, 56, has assumed charge as Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) director (finance) of the Maharatna Public Sector engineering and manufacturing enterprise. Prior to this, Dwivedi has been General Manager & Head - Corporate Finance in BHEL. Dwivedi joined BHEL as Executive Trainee (Finance) in 1992 and brings with him rich and diverse experience of more than 32 years across various verticals encompassing business strate-



gies, manufacturing and project construction in the power sector along with Board level exposure of holding additional charge of Director (Finance) in Heavy Engineering Corporation Limited, Ranchi since September, 2022. He has been instrumental in promoting the cost management profession in the country through his active association at all levels of his mother institution i.e. The Institute of Cost Accountants of India.

NMDC unveils R&D facility in H'bad

India's largest iron ore producer, NMDC, unveiled its new state-of-the-art Research and Development centre in Patancheru, Hyderabad to advance innovation in mineral processing and sustainable steel technology. The Navratna company has made strategic investments of over Rs 150 crore for research and development in the past 5 years and Rs 50 crore towards building the new R&D Centre. The centre to support industry players to make interventions in maximising mineral recovery and ensuring mineral security for India.

Bank of Baroda ropes in Sumit Nagal as its brand endorser

Bank of Baroda (Bank), one of India's leading public sector banks, announced that the Bank has signed rising Indian tennis player Sumit Nagal as its brand endorser.

The move is in alignment with the Bank's long-standing philosophy to support emerging talented and ambitious Indian sports persons as they endeavour to compete with the best on the world stage. Sumit joins a stellar line-up of Bank

POWERGRID

POWERGRID's Team Corporate Communications has been featured in India's 30 Top Corporate Communications Teams for the fourth time by Reputation Today.

The team led by Anshuman Tandon, CGM Corporate Communications, POWERGRID, along with Ravi Kumar, DGM (Corp. Comm.) and Akshat Chopra, Asst. Manager (Corp. Comm.) received the award at an event held in Bengaluru.

POWERGRID is the only PSU to feature in this prestigious list. POWERGRID has jumped 5 places from its last ranking.

Govt initiatives played vital role in creating jobs for people in private sector: Economist

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Government initiatives such as Startup India, Make in India, New Education Policy, and others have played an important role in creating employment for people in private sector on such a large scale, Vivek Singh, Professor at NMIMS University, Economist and Political Analyst, said on Saturday.

According to HSBC's flash Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) data, output growth across India's private sector regained growth in June with business activity increasing at quicker rates among manufacturing companies and services firms while hiring of workers shot up to an 18-year high.

"It is a matter of great happiness that the record has been broken in the last 18 years and the private sector has done the most job creation in the month of June 2024," Singh said.

The final manufacturing, services and composite PMI figure grew by 0.4 percentage points to 60.9 in June, compared to a downward revised figure of 60.5 in May.



"It is a matter of great happiness that the record has been broken in the last 18 years and the private sector has done the most job creation in the month of June 2024"

"Increased business activities and growth in sales have had an impact that so many jobs have been created in the private sector," said Singh.

Maitreyi Das, Global Economist at HSBC, stated that the composite flash PMI ticked up in June, supported by rises in both the manufacturing and service sectors, with the former recording a faster pace of growth.

INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY CELEBRATION

NCC CADETS PERFORM YOGA



Eight lakh National Cadet Corps cadets celebrated the 10th International Day of Yoga by participating in yoga sessions organised by NCC across the country on 21 June 21. Chief of the Army Staff-designate Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi, who is currently Vice Chief of the Army Staff, led the celebrations at an event organised by the Indian Army HOs, Delhi area at the Cariappa Parade Ground, Delhi Cantt.

THDC INDIA LIMITED



THDC India Limited celebrated 10th International Yoga Day with the theme "Yoga for Self and Society" at its Corporate Office in Rishikesh, as well as across all projects and unit offices, across the nation. RK Vishnoi, Chairman and Managing Director, conveyed his heartfelt best wishes on the occasion of 10th International Yoga Day at Community Centre, Corporate Office, Rishikesh.

NMDC



India's largest iron ore producer, NMDC celebrated the 10th International Day of Yoga with great enthusiasm, in tandem with this year's theme "Yoga for Self and Society". Over 500 employees & their families across projects all over the country participated in yoga sessions, underlining NMDC's commitment to promoting health, well-being, and harmony within and outside the NMDC community.

MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION & AAI



Ministry of Civil Aviation in association with AAI organised an event on 10th International Yoga Day at Rajiv Gandhi Bhavan, New Delhi. The event was started with lighting of lamp by Kinjarapu Rammoohan Naidu, Union Minister of Civil Aviation in the presence of V Vualnam, Secretary, MoCA, Sanjeev Kumar, Chairman, AAI and other senior officials of MoCA, BCAS, DGCA and AAI.

INDIAN COAST GUARD



The Indian Coast Guard celebrated International Yoga Day on 21 June, embracing the AYUSH Mantralaya's theme of "Yoga for Self and Society". Coordinated yoga sessions were held simultaneously at more than 60 Coast Guard locations spread across the nation along the coast and Islands.

PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK



Punjab National Bank celebrated the 10th International Yoga Day with a focus on the theme - Yoga for self and society. The PNB Parivaar united across various zones, circles, and the PNB Head Office, participating in early morning interactive yoga sessions. On the occasion, Atul Kumar Goel, MD & CEO of PNB, said: "Yoga is not merely a set of physical exercises; it is a profound practice that unites the mind, body, and spirit. It promotes inner peace and harmony, which in turn fosters a more connected and compassionate society. A healthy employee is a productive employee, and a productive employee contributes to the growth and success of the organisation."



I have fond memories of the heartwarming hospitality I received from her majesty the queen and the royal family, making me feel like I was part of their family.

JAPAN'S EMPEROR NARUHIOTO
AS HE BEGINS HIS DELAYED UK STATE VISIT

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	32	24
HONG KONG	31	27
TOKYO	21	10
LONDON	20	08
DUBAI	33	22
SAN FRANCISCO	15	06
NEW YORK	14	06
MOSCOW	12	05

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

THUMBNAILED

Nurse, security guards injured after knife assault in Sydney hospital: A male offender armed with a knife has been arrested after three security guards and one nurse got injured at a Sydney hospital. At around 11:30 p.m. local time on Friday night, police were called to a hospital in Westmead following reports of a man having assaulted staff. The health precinct is located approximately 20 km west of Sydney's central business district.

IANS

Heavy rain hits South Korea: Heavy rains pounded southern regions in South Korea on Saturday, including the southernmost resort island of Jeju, with the govt initiating anti-disaster operations to brace for emergencies. A heavy rain advisory is issued when rainfall is expected to exceed 60 mm in three hours or 110 mm in 12 hours. The warning level has been elevated to "caution".

IANS

Israeli strikes on tent camps near Rafah kill at least 25 and wound 50

Israel has previously bombed locations in the vicinity of the 'humanitarian zone' in Muwasi

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DEIR AL-BALAH, 22 JUNE

Israeli forces shelled tent camps for displaced Palestinians outside Gaza's southern city of Rafah on Friday, killing at least 25 people and wounding another 50, according to the territory's health officials and emergency workers.

This was the latest deadly attack in the Gaza Strip, where hundreds of thousands have fled fighting between Israel and Hamas. It comes less than a month after an Israeli bombing triggered a deadly fire that tore through a camp for displaced Palestinians in southern Gaza, drawing widespread international outrage—including from some of Israel's closest allies—over the military's expanding offensive into Rafah.

Witnesses whose relatives died in one of the bombardments near a Red Cross field hospital north of Rafah told The Associated Press that Israeli forces fired a second volley that killed people who came out of their tents.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said the hospital was flooded with casualties, including 22 dead and 45 wounded, and condemned the firing of "high-caliber projectiles" a few meters



(yards) from the facility. Hundreds of people live in tents nearby, including many of the hospital staff, the ICRC said.

According to Ahmed Radwan, a spokesperson for Civil Defense first responders in Rafah, witnesses told rescue workers about Friday's shelling at two locations in a coastal area that has become filled with makeshift tents. The Health Ministry in Gaza reported the number of people killed and wounded in the attacks.

The locations of the attacks provided by the Civil Defense and the Red Cross hospital appear to be just outside an Israeli-designated safe zone on the Mediterranean coast, known as Muwasi. The Israeli

military said the episode was under review but that "there is no indication that a strike was carried out by the IDF" inside the safe zone, using an acronym for Israel's armed forces. It did not offer details on the episode or say what the intended targets might have been.

Israel has previously bombed locations in the vicinity of the "humanitarian zone" in Muwasi, a rural area with no water or sewage systems where displaced Palestinians have built tent camps in recent months.

Israel says it is targeting Hamas fighters and infrastructure and that it tries to minimize civilian deaths. It

blames the large number of civilian casualties on militants and says it's because they operate among the population.

With Israel's war against Hamas now in its ninth month, international criticism is growing over the campaign of systematic destruction in Gaza, at a huge cost in civilian lives. The top United Nations court has concluded there is a "plausible risk of genocide" in Gaza—a charge Israel strongly denies.

The attack near the Red Cross hospital began with a munition that only made a loud bang and bright flash, said Mona Ashour, who lost her husband after he went to

investigate what was happening.

"We were in our tent, and they hit with a 'sound bomb' near the Red Cross tents, and then my husband came out at the first sound," Ashour said, holding back tears while clutching a young girl outside Nasser Hospital in nearby Khan Younis.

"And then they hit with the second one, which was a little closer to the entrance of the Red Cross," she said.

Hasan al-Najjar said his sons were killed helping people who panicked after the first strike.

"My two sons went after they heard the women and children screaming," he said at the hospital. "They went to save the women, and they struck with the second projectile, and my sons were martyred. They struck the place twice."

The hospital's location is known to all parties in the conflict and marked with the Red Cross emblem, the ICRC noted on Friday. The 60-bed field hospital was opened in mid-May to provide emergency surgeries, obstetric, pediatric and outpatient care, according to a news release at the time, which shows white tents covering an area about the size of a soccer field.

US aircraft carrier arrives in South Korea as a show of force against nuclear-armed N Korea

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEOUL, 22 JUNE

A nuclear-powered United States aircraft carrier arrived Saturday in South Korea for a three-way exercise stepping up their military training to cope with North Korean threats that escalated with its alignment with Russia.

The arrival of the USS Theodore Roosevelt strike group in Busan came a day after South Korea summoned the Russian ambassador to protest a pact reached between Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un this week that pledges mutual defense assistance in the event of war. South Korea says the deal poses a threat to its security and warned that it could consider sending arms to Ukraine to help fight off the Russian invasion as a response—an move that would surely ruin its relations with Moscow.

Following a meeting between their defense chiefs in Singapore earlier in June, the United States, South Korea and Japan announced Freedom Edge. The new multidomain exercise is aimed at sharpening the countries' combined response in various areas of operation, including air, sea and cyberspace.

The Theodore Roosevelt strike group will participate in the exercise that is expected to start within June. South Korea's



military didn't immediately confirm specific details of the training.

South Korea's navy said in a statement that the arrival of Theodore Roosevelt demonstrates the strong defense posture of the allies and "stern willingness to respond to advancing North Korean threats." The carrier's visit comes seven months after another U.S. aircraft carrier, the USS Carl Vinson, came to South Korea in a show of strength against the North.

The Theodore Roosevelt strike group also participated in a three-way exercise with South Korea and Japanese naval forces in April in the disputed East China Sea, where worries about China's territorial claims are rising.

In the face of growing North Korean threats, the United States, South Korea and Japan have expanded their combined training and boosted the visibility of strategic U.S. military assets in the region, seeking to intimidate the North.

Russian strikes continue to target Ukrainian energy facilities, say officials

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KYIV, 22 JUNE

Russia launched a new barrage of missiles and drones in an overnight attack on Ukraine, officials in Kyiv said Saturday morning, damaging energy facilities in the country's southeast and west and injuring at least two energy workers.

In its eighth major attack on Ukrainian power plants since Moscow intensified energy infrastructure attacks three months ago, Russia fired 16 missiles and 13 Shahed drones at energy facilities and critical infrastructure, the Ukrainian air force said.

Ukraine's air defenses intercepted 12 of the 16 missiles and all 13 drones launched by Russia, the air force said.

State-owned power grid operator Ukrenergo said the strikes damaged equipment at facilities in Ukraine's southeastern Zaporizhzhia region and western Lviv region.

Two energy workers were injured in the Zaporizhzhia region when a fire broke out at an energy facility, according to regional Gov. Ivan Fedorov.

With no major changes reported along the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line, where a recent push by the Kremlin's forces in eastern and northeastern Ukraine has made only incremental gains, both sides have taken aim at infrastructure targets, seeking to curb each



other's ability to fight in a war that is now in its third year.

Moscow's overnight attack on Zaporizhzhia and Lviv follows Ukrainian military strikes on three oil refineries in southern Russia overnight into Friday, as per reports.

Ukraine is struggling to cope with a new wave of rolling blackouts after relentless Russian attacks took out half the country's power generation capacity, as per reports.

In other developments, the governor of eastern Ukraine's partly occupied Donetsk region said Saturday that Russian attacks had killed five people and wounded a further seven the previous day.

Apolice man was killed in the partly occupied region of Kherson as a result of a Russian drone attack on a checkpoint, the Ukrainian National Police said.

In Russia, air defense systems overnight destroyed five drones over the Sea of Azov and the country's western Bryansk and Smolensk regions, the Russian Ministry of Defense said.

Italy recovers 14 more bodies after migrant shipwreck: The Italian coast guard has recovered 14 more bodies from last week's shipwreck in the Ionian Sea off the southern Italian coastline, bringing to 34 the number of known victims from the sinking. Dozens are still missing and presumed dead. The bodies, recovered on Friday, were transferred to a port in Calabria. Three coast guard ships were active in the air-and-sea search, some 190 kilometres (120 miles) from shore.

AP

e-TENDER NOTICE
Office of the Block Development Officer
Kranti Development Block
Kranti, Jalpaiguri
e-Tender have been invited by the undersigned for different works vide e-NIT No. WB / 004 / BDOKNT / 24-25, WB / 005 / BDOKNT / 24-25 & WB / 006 / BDOKNT / 24-25 Dated: 20-06-2024. Last date of submission of bid through online: 04-07-2024 up to 12-00 hrs. For details please visit: <https://wbtdenders.gov.in> from 20-06-2024 from 17-00 hrs. respectively.

Sd/-


EO & BDO

Kranti Development Block

Kranti, Jalpaiguri

Bird flu outbreak at US dairy farms cause public health concerns: The ongoing bird flu outbreak at US dairy farms has heightened concerns among public health experts as more dairy herds have tested positive for the virus in recent months. The influenza A (H5N1) virus, commonly known as bird flu, is widespread in wild birds worldwide and has been circulating in US poultry since 2022, reports Xinhua news agency. However, the situation escalated in late 2023 when the virus is believed to have jumped from birds to dairy cows at a Texas farm. This was followed by a human infection in April linked to exposure to infected cattle. To date, three human cases of infection have been reported, bringing the total number of US H5N1 cases to four, including one case in 2022 linked to poultry exposure, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The virus had been confirmed in at least 115 dairy herds across 12 states as of Thursday, according to the latest tally posted on the US Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service website. The CDC noted that while the current public health risk is low, it is watching the situation carefully and working with states to monitor people with animal exposures.

IANS

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**
Tender Notice No.- E-Tender No. NCR-S&T-EPC-LTE-NDLS-HWH
Dated : 08.03.2024
Corrigendum No. -5
For the work of :- "Provision of LTE (Long Term Evolution) based MTRC over New Delhi-Howrah route (Including Kanpur-Lucknow Section of Indian Railways" Corrigendum No. 5: for the above mentioned tender has been issued. For details please visit the www.ireps.gov.in site
424/24 (D)
For details visit: www.ireps.gov.in

OFFICE OF THE SAKOAJHORA II GRAM PANCHAYAT
Notice Inviting Tender
eTender is invited by the AOP Upa Samiti, Sakoajhora II GP by e-NIT No.: 001 / SAKO-II / 2024-25, Dated: 18-06-2024. The last date & time of bid submission is 02-07-2024 up to 18-55 hours. For details, visit: www.wbtenders.gov.in
Sd/-
Pradhan & Sanchalak
Artho O Parikalpana Upa Samiti, Sakoajhora II GP

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**
TENDER NOTICE No. 10/2024/RS/JHS Date : 20.06.2024
For and on behalf of President of India, the Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (Rolling Stock) North Central Railway, Jhansi invites open tenders through online (E-Tendering) for the following work:

Description : Repair & overhauling of CLW make reverser fitted in WAG-5, WAG-7 & WAP-4 locomotives.	Tender value Rs. 12827892.00	Completion period from the date of issue of LOA 15 Months
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Tender No. JHS-RS-WC-T26-2023-24-RT1


Description : Overhauling of compressors TRC 1000 MN & TRC 1000 MN UG ELGI Make alongwith compressor motor (3 phase induction Motor).	Tender value Rs. 16465654.00	Completion period from the date of issue of LOA 24 Months
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Tender No. JHS-RS-WC-T6-2024-25

Description : Provision of TMDDS (Traction Motor Dropping, Detection System) in conventional electric locomotive of ELS/JHS.	Tender value Rs. 4780000.00	Completion period from the date of issue of LOA 15 Months
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Closing date of tender : for all Tender No.: 18.07.2024. • Tenderer will submit the tender online upto 18.07.2024 (15:00 Hrs.). Complete details & for submission of tenders can be seen in Indian Railway website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>
1083/24 (D)
For details visit: www.ireps.gov.in


North central railways www.nccr.indianrailways.gov.in [@northcentralrailway](https://twitter.com/northcentralrailway) [CPRONCR](https://www.facebook.com/CPRONCR)


**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**
E-Procurement Tender Notice No.: 24143 Date: 21.06.2024
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
On behalf of the President of India, The Principal Chief Materials Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj, (An ISO 9001:2015 certified unit) invites the following E-procurement Tenders.

S.N.	Tender No.	Short Description	Qty.	Tender Opening Date
1	30242782A	WATER TANK ASSEMBLY	19 NOS.	09.07.2024
2	30242035	SECONDARY LATERAL DAMPER	319 NOS.	09.07.2024
3	38243168	495-4A QUICK DRAW	40 NOS.	18.07.2024
4	38242663	UPGRADED HIGH CAPACITY DRAFT GEAR	232 NOS.	15.07.2024
5	38242621	COUPLER BODY WITH SHANK WEAR PLATE	8995 NOS.	15.07.2024
6	38241618	BOLSTER LAND SURFACE LINER	149080 NOS.	15.07.2024
7	38243205	CONE, ROLLER AND CAGE ASSEMBLY	1986 NOS.	29.07.2024
8	63235402A	Fish Plate 1 Meter long 60 Kg T-5916 Pump part no.	27756 Set	15.07.2024
9	64245156	A17F0045/10NRWK0E81-0 MNR: R902282853 Make: REXROTH or Similar for use in Phoolas make track machines	1 Nos.	22.07.2024
10	64245126	Tungsten Carbide Round Shaft Chisel for BCSM Part No. 64.08.2034HM. (1) Drawing RDSO/TM/03/19 (attached) (2) Specification: TM/HM/6/435 (attached) Make: Own make equivalent to plasser.	4000 NOS.	01.08.2024
11	64235172	Connector 30.0 HPIEC, Loram Part No. 123665, Allen Bradley Part No. 10.C43, DJ00-SER-A. (Acceptable Make LORAM or ALLEN Bradley only)	36 NOS.	24.07.2024
12	30243078	SET OF BRAKE PIPE ARRANGEMENT	150 SET	15.07.2024
13	30242835	HOSE CONNECTION 20 X 550 MM	2423 NOS.	15.07.2024
14	20243760	Axle Damper for P-7 loco	15 Nos.	12.07.2024
15	20243772	Vertical Damper P7 loco	13 Nos.	12.07.2024
16	20243615	Contractor for time delay of MR blower	09 Nos.	16.07.2024

Note: The complete information of above tenders can be seen and downloaded from IREPS website i.e. <https://www.ireps.gov.in>. For any change/corrigendum in tender, please visit this website regularly. No separate corrigendum/change will be published in news paper.
1080/24 (A)
For details visit: www.ireps.gov.in

North central railways www.nccr.indianrailways.gov.in [@northcentralrailway](https://twitter.com/northcentralrailway) [CPRONCR](https://www.facebook.com/CPRONCR)

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**
E-Tender Notice
The Office of undersigned invites E-Tender Notice No. 04 / EO / MNG / JAL of 2024-25 OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER MAYNAGURI PANCHAYAT SAMITY, Dated: 21-06-2024.
Last date of bid submission is 05-07-2024 up to 18-00 hrs. For further details, please visit the website: www.wbtenders.gov.in
Notice is also available in office notice board during office time.
Sd/-
Executive Officer
Maynaguri Panchayat Samity

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**
E-TENDER NOTICE
The Office of undersigned invites E-Tender Notice No. 03 / EO / MNG / JAL of 2024-25 OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER MAYNAGURI PANCHAYAT SAMITY, Dated: 21-06-2024.
Last date of bid submission is 26-06-2024 up to 17-55 hrs. For further details, please visit the website: www.wbtenders.gov.in
Notice is also available in office notice board during office time.
Sd/-
Executive Officer
Maynaguri Panchayat Samity

**SILIGURI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**
e-Tender Notice
02 (two) Nos. E-Tender Notice vide (1) NIT-06 / WBMD / SMC / PW / 24-25, dt. 05-06-2024 and (2) NIT-07 / WBMD / SMC / PW / 24-25, dt. 05-06-2024 is / are hereby invited from reliable, resourceful, bona fide, eligible contractors. For details please visit: <https://wbtenders.gov.in> or the Office Notice Board of SMC. Corrigendum or addendum if issued will be published only on website.
Sd/-
Commissioner, SMC

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**
TENDER NOTICE
Tender No.: CEN-2024-25-04 Date: 18.06.2024
The Dy. Chief Engineer/Const./North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite the following E-Tenders on prescribed form for the following works up to 15.00 hrs. on 15.07.2024. The details of the tenders are as under:-
Name of work: Construction of Limited Height Subway (LHS) by Air Pushing method in lieu of LC No. 451/C, 464/C, 465/C, 466/C, 477/C, 480/C, 481/C, 482/C, 489/C, 491/B, 492/B, 495/C in connection with doubling of Khairar-Manikpur section under Dy. CE/C/PRYJ.
Approx. Cost of work (In Crores) : ₹ 74.41 Cr., **Bid Security (Rs.):** ₹ 3870600/-, **Completion Period :** 15 Months, **Tender Closing Date & Time :** 15.07.2024 15:00 Hrs., **Date of Opening of Tender :** 15.07.2024 15:30 Hrs., **Type of Tendering:** Open Tender (Two Packet System & e-RA).
Note: (1) The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tenders are available on Website www.ireps.gov.in up to 15.00 on the due date of tender opening i.e. 15.07.2024. (2) Bids other than in the form of E-bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certificates issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. (3) The Bid Security shall be deposited either in cash through e-payment gateway or submitted as Bank Guarantee bond from a scheduled commercial bank of India or as mentioned in tender documents. The Bank Guarantee bond shall be as per format in favour of FA & CAO/CNCR/PRYJ as given in Tender Document and shall be valid for a period of 90 days beyond the bid validity period. (4) Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letter head if attached by vendor shall be straight way ignored and shall not be considered. (5) Joint Venture (JV)/Consortiums/MOUs shall be considered for the tender having cost more than 10 Cr. (6) Documents being attached should be signed by the tenderer on its body. (7) The tenderers shall submit a certificate as given in tender document in standard format for all items without which their tender may not be considered and shall be summarily rejected. (8) Each page of the copy of documents/certificates in support of credentials, submitted by the tenderer, shall be self-attested/digitally signed by the tenderer or authorized representative of the tendering firm. Self-attestation shall include signature, stamp and date (on each page). Only those documents which are declared explicitly by the tenderer as "documents supporting the claim qualifying the laid down eligibility criteria", will be considered for evaluation his/her tender. In case of any wrong information submitted by the tenderer, the contract will be terminated, Bid Security (BS), Performance Guarantee (PG and Security Deposit (SD) of contract will be forfeited and agency will be banned for doing business on entire Indian Railways for five (5) years. (9) GST Act & rules issued from time to time by the Government authorities shall be applicable. (10) In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. (11) Tender online can be submitted up to 15.00 hrs. on 15.07.2024 and will be opened at 15.30 hrs. on same day.
1072/24 (A)
For details visit: www.ireps.gov.in

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**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**
E-Tendering Notice DYCE/GS/AGC/2024-06 Dated: 19.06.2024
E-Tender Notice
Deputy Chief Engineer (Gati Shakti), North Central Railway Agra for and on behalf of the President of India invites "Open Tender" through online mode only (E-Tendering) for the following work. The details of the tender are as under:

SN	Tender No.	Approx. Cost Rs.	Bid security
1	DYCE-GS-AGC-2024-08	Rs. 80.33 lacs	Rs. 160700.00

Description of work: Civil Work i.e. earthwork in formation, building works & other ancillary works in connection with Provision of Additional Loop line at Shamshabad town station at BHA-ETW Section in Agra Division of North Central Railway.

SN	Tender No.	Approx. Cost Rs.	Bid security
2	DYCE-GS-AGC-2024-10	Rs. 2.58 cr.	Rs. 279000.00

Description of work: Construction of Platform and Apron for Master Valve Repair Gantry at BAAD Station in connection with Provision of steamcleaning & Master Valve repair gantry at AGC end of existing ROH shed at TWD Baad in Agra Division of North Central Railway.
Completion Period: 06 months for each tender. For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website "www.ireps.gov.in". Tender can be submitted through web portal "www.ireps.gov.in" up to 16:00 hrs. on 18.07.2024. 1074/24(K)
For details visit: www.ireps.gov.in

North central railways www.nccr.indianrailways.gov.in [@northcentralrailway](https://twitter.com/northcentralrailway) [CPRONCR](https://www.facebook.com/CPRONCR)

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**
Tender Notice No.: 4020242025 Date : 19.06.2024
E-Tender Notice
Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering)/North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites the following E-Tenders on prescribed form for the following works up to 13:30 hrs. on 12.07.2024. The details of the tenders are as under:

SN.	Tender No.:	Approx. Cost of Work :	Bid Security	Completion period
1	99	Rs. 9812674.78	Rs. 196300.00	30.06.2025

Name of Work : Annual Civil Repairs and Maintenance and small new work in zone work from SKB (Incl.) to FBD (Excl.) for the P.E. 30.06.2025 under ADEN/FZD.
Similar work for Eligibility Criteria : Any Civil Engineering Work.

SN.	Tender No.:	Approx. Cost of Work :	Bid Security	Completion period
2	100	Rs. 65165724.38	Rs. 475800.00	12 Months

Name of Work : Ambiapur-Tundia : Replacement of existing girders of bridge nos. 48 and 65 (UP and DN Lines) by providing PSC slab under Sr. DEN/III/PRYJ.
Similar work for Eligibility Criteria : Construction of any type of bridge

SN.	Tender No.:	Approx. Cost of Work :	Bid Security	Completion period
3	101	Rs. 37617103.95	Rs. 338100.00	15 Months

Name of Work : Combined Tender. (A) Provision of overrun at Pata, Balrai, Sarai Bhopat, Firozabad and Jalesar Road stations. (B) Deep screening of yard lines of various stations in the section of ADEN/ETW. (C) Extension of track machine sidings under Sr. DEN/III/PRYJ.
Similar work for Eligibility Criteria : P. Way work

SN.	Tender No.:	Approx. Cost of Work :	Bid Security	Completion period
4	102	Rs. 29999995.15	Rs. 300000.00	12 Months

Name of Work : RRRH-TDL : Replacement of old steel overhead tank by RCC overhead tank of capacity 50000 gallons at ETW, SKB & PHD and 25000 gallons at JJK and tubewell, pump house, pipe line under Sr. DEN/III/PRYJ.
Similar work for Eligibility Criteria : Any Civil Engineering work including construction of RCC OHT.
Date of opening of tender : for SN. : 1, 2, 3 & 4 : 12.07.2024. **Note - 1.** The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tenders is available on website www.ireps.gov.in up to 13:30 hrs. on the due date of tender opening i.e. 12.07.2024. The tender shall be opened at or after 15:00 hrs on due date of opening. 2. Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certificates issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. 3. Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letter head if attached by vendors shall be straightaway ignored and shall not be considered. 4. **Tender Nos. 99 to 102** are having advertised value more than 50 Lakhs, therefore, Annexure-V & V(A) (Document Verification Certificate) is required. The supplier/contractor of goods and/or services would be subject to GST Act and Rules as applicable from time to time. 5. Document being attached should be signed by the tenderer on its body. 6. This tender notice has also been uploaded on www.nccr.indianrailways.gov.in. 7. Bid Security can be deposited Online through Internet Banking or Payment Gateway or Bank Guarantee Bond as detailed in para 12.0 of tender document. 8. In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. 9. Tender online can be submitted up to 13:30 hrs. on 12.07.2024. 10. Along with other instructions given to Tenderers, Tenderers are required to Pay special attention on Para 12.0 of Tender Document for Bid Security Deposit. 11. E-Tender Forms shall be issued free of cost to all tenderers. 12. For tender nos. 99 to 102 : The tenderer has to submit necessary documents in compliance of clause 10 to 18 (Part-I) of IRGCC-2022 (Works matter) mandatorily, otherwise their offer will be considered as incomplete Offer and accordingly shall not be considered.
1067/24 (D)
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Very misunderstood person, says Ashwin on Gambhir

Ashwin hailed Gautam Gambhir, one of the frontrunners for the next India head coach's role

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

India's off-spin stalwart Ravichandran Ashwin hailed Gautam Gambhir, one of the frontrunners for the next India head coach's role as a "very misunderstood person", while opening up about his relationship with the two-time World Cup-winning former India opener on the sidelines of the launch of his book

- A Kutti Cricket Story.

Recalling his interaction with Gambhir during his first full Test series for India in 2012, Ashwin revealed that the opening batter was one of the very few from outside his home state of Tamil Nadu to give him a lot of confidence as a newcomer. "I was playing my first full series. I only carried drinks during the first two years before the World Cup in 2011. Gautam gave me a lot of confidence at the beginning of my career. I was not used to someone beyond my state (Tamil Nadu) giving me that sort of confidence," he said.



"Gautam Gambhir is a very misunderstood person. It's all about perception. He is a fighter. The biggest issue with many of us is that we give hero status to someone in our mind and forget about everyone else. This is a sport, not a movie narrative. There are no heroes and villains. Gambhir is a competitor. His desire and hunger to win is unbelievable. I have massive respect for him," he added. Ashwin, who has 744 wickets in international cricket, and two ICC trophies in his cabinet, also shared an interesting incident that helped him get noticed by the legendary

Mahendra Singh Dhoni until he finally got the IPL breakthrough in the 2010 edition with Chennai Super Kings under the charismatic former India skipper. Recollecting the incident that took place during the 2008 Challenger Trophy in Nagpur, Ashwin felt he had done his bit to finally grab the attention of Dhoni.

"It's an evolving relationship. MS didn't even know someone like me existed in 2008. And because of that, I made it my life's goal — from 2009, it was to get the wicket of MS Dhoni. When a person has a goal like this, he will go crazy when an

opportunity to achieve it pops up," he said.

"We were playing the Challenger Trophy, and I bowled an unbelievable spell. MS would struggle through that spell in Nagpur. Once, when he tried to play, the ball went through his gates. I got him out in the final. From then on, I think he saw somebody with skill, and the relationship matured," he said. Ashwin said once a player earned the trust of Dhoni, then he would get ample chances to prove himself.

"One of MS's usual qualities is that, if he decides this horse (a player) is not ready to race, he will not use you. He needs to know you're a horse. But, once he knows you're a horse, only when you feel like giving up, he will look past you. That is MS Dhoni; he believes in you," he added. Ashwin had a limited role to play in India's epochal 2011 World Cup victory, under the leadership of Dhoni but mentioned how then head coach Gary Kirsten and the whole team did not make him feel unwanted.

"After winning (the WC), Gary called me over and said we have not done justice to your talent. You have waited two years, but make no mistake, take it from me — you will achieve far greater things, and I am upset that I will not be a part of it," he reflected. "So, Gary actually resigned (as head coach) with me first before announcing it outside (laughs). It was surprising for me because in all these two years, Gary actually spoke, maybe, 100 lines to me. Gary was a man of few words and an outstanding human being," he added. In fact, Ashwin was used sparingly even in the run-up to that World Cup. He offered a reason for that.

"One of the reasons why MS did not play me leading up to the World Cup (2011) was the novelty factor. But eventually, I figured out that they would play me. 'I was about to play the match against Pakistan (2nd semifinal in Mohali). But, they decided to opt for an extra fast bowler because there was heavy dew the previous day there,'" he concluded.

Sumit Nagal confirms Paris Olympics qualification



AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

India's top-ranked Tennis player Sumit Nagal has officially confirmed his participation in the 2024 Paris Olympics.

"Extremely glad to share that I have officially qualified for the 2024 Paris Olympics. This is a monumental moment for me as the Olympics holds a special place in my heart! One of my career highlights so far was participating in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. And a big thanks to TOPS and SAI for extending help in the last

few months," read the statement by Sumit Nagal on X (formerly known as Twitter)

This will be Sumit's second appearance at the Olympics after he previously became the first Indian man since Leander Paes to win a singles match at the Tokyo Olympics. Nagal defeated Uzbekistan's Denis Istomin in the first round, but went on to lose against Russia's Daniil Medvedev in the second round. Nagal's meteoric rise over the past year has seen the 26-year-old's ATP ranking jump up to 71, which is the joint-fourth highest ranking achieved by an Indian

men's player since the introduction of the computerized system of rankings in 1973.

His recent impressive performances were the reason behind the massive jump in rankings.

After making his French Open debut at the Roland Garros in which he was eliminated in the first round at the hands of Karen Khachnov, Nagal went on to win the Heilbronn Challenger in Germany before just missing out on a consecutive title win at Perugia challenger in Italy as he lost to Luciano Darderi (- 6-1, 6-2) in the finals of the tournament.

It is important to note all three tournaments were played on clay courts in Sumit's attempt to prepare for the upcoming Olympics which will also be played at Roland-Garros, the mecca of clay courts.

Before the Olympics, India's highest-ranked star will be fully focussing on the Wimbledon that is scheduled to begin on July 1 where he will be entering the tournament as a part of the main draw for the very first time.

WTT: Sreeja, Sutirtha, Ayhika script history in Nigeria, storm into semis



AGENCIES

LAGOS, 22 JUNE

The No.1 ranked women's national player Sreeja Akula continued her dominant run in the WTT Contender Lagos as she beat young national compatriot Yashaswini Ghorpade 3-0 in the quarterfinals of the tournament. Alongside Sreeja, Sutirtha Mukherjee caused a

huge upset as she beat defending Champion and world ranking number 8 Shin Yubin 3-2 to reach the semifinals.

Despite winning the first game 11-9, Sutirtha went on to lose the second and third games to fall 2-1 down (3-11, 9-11). Sutirtha, who is world-ranked 125, showed tremendous character to win the final two games with a score of 11-

9 & 11-6 to complete the comeback.

Sreeja Akula and Sutirtha Mukherjee will be facing each other in the semifinals of the tournament. Irrespective of who progresses to the final, history will be made as it will be the first time that an Indian Singles player will play in the summit clash of a WTT Contender Event.

Alongside Sreeja and Sutirtha, Ayhika Mukherjee also booked her place in the semifinals of the tournament with a 3-0 victory over Egypt's Farida Badawy to become the third Indian in the semifinals in what was a great day for the Indian contingent.

On the other hand, Manav Thakkar bowed out of the tournament against WR 34 and former World Championship medallist Lim Jong-hoon (2-3) in the quarterfinals of the tournament.

Golf: All 5 Indians including defending champion Diksha shoot under-par in Czech Ladies Open

AGENCIES

BEROUM, 22 JUNE

All five Indians in the field at the 2024 Czech Ladies Open shot under-par scores in the first round which saw a weather interruption. The best Indian was Vani Kapoor with 4-under 68 and T-12 at the end of the round while amateur Avani Prashanth was the next best at T-27 with 3-under 69.

Ridhima Dilawari (70) was T-39 and the top three Indian stars Diksha Dagar, the defending champion, Pranavi Urs, and Tvesa Malik, carded 1-under 71 each to be T-55.

Diksha, who was the winner here last year, has been in good form since last season. She had nine Top-10s including a win in the Czech Republic and third place at Indian Open and this season



her four Top-10s include a third in Joburg. Diksha, who is headed to the Olympics had four birdies and three bogeys.

Vani Kapoor, the top Indian, had six birdies and two bogeys, while Avani, who plans to turn pro at the end

of the year, had five birdies, including four in the stretch between the fourth and ninth holes at Royal Beroun Golf Club.

Chloe Williams fired a flawless opening round of 63 (-9) to hold a two-shot lead

at the 2024 Czech Ladies Open. It was an interrupted day for the afternoon wave as play was suspended at 4.12 pm (local time) due to the threat of thunder and lightning but restarted at 6.10 pm (local time) with all

groups completing their first round. But the Welshwoman, who began her round on the 10th tee in the morning wave, was bogey-free on the first day at Royal Beroun Golf Club. Williams also had two chip-ins. It hasn't been the best of starts to 2024 for Williams, who sits 120th in the LET Order of Merit, with one top-30 finish to her name. Finland's Sanna Nuutinen and Sweden's Caroline Hedwall both sit in a share of second place on seven-under-par 65 each. Alexandra Swayne of the U.S. Virgin Islands sits in outright fourth place on six-under-par after her bogey-free 66 on the first day. There are seven players in a share of fifth place with Elena Moosmann, Marianne Skarpnord, Maria Hernandez, Eleanor Givens, Virginia Elena Carta, Emma Spitz, and Hannah Screen all on five-under-par.

Hope my win will help people know what MMA, UFC is: Puja Tomar after becoming first Indian to win UFC fight

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Puja Tomar became the first Indian fighter to win a fight in the Ultimate Fighting Championship on June 9 when she went on to beat Rayanne Dos Santos of Brazil in the Women's 52 Kg weight category also known as Women's Strawweight.

"After this victory, many people got to know what MMA fighting because in the place where I come from there being a girl is a very difficult thing. After this win I think people will now know be it girl or boy what UFC is," said Puja Tomar while speaking to ANI.

Her dedication and relentless training led her to excel in Wushu, a martial art known for its complex techniques, earning her several national

championships and international recognition. And finally, she made it to Ultimate Fighting Championship.

"I was aware that I am the first Indian fighter to win a match in UFC. I was also aware that winning this fight is also very important for me and hope this win changes a lot of things," added Puja Tomar.

Puja Tomar became the first Indian female MMA fighter to sign a contract with UFC and she was aware that her fight would open doors for many fighters in the country.

"The moment I was getting ready for the fight and walking inside with India's national flag then only one thing was running in my mind that I have to win this fight and the only thing was in my mind was that I have to win because in India no one



knows what MMA is. So, it was very important for me," said the UFC fighter.

The moment Puja won her bout she was very emotional as she has come from a very humble background and had to fight all the odds to get to where she is. Born in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, in a family of a farmer and two sisters. The fact that Puja was a third child - it had a quite big impact on her parents, whose

responsibilities multiplied.

"That thing I can never forget. It was an amazing thing for me. I was very emotional and it was a huge moment for me," she said.

Puja's childhood was not so fascinating. She said that she likened herself to boys by using their style of haircuts or clothing. Street fights were also a usual thing for her.

"The journey is very long and I hated boys since my childhood. Sorry to say this but it is like this (laughs) but in my family, everyone wanted a boy even my grandmother but not my mother. She was the only one who supported me and loved me. My father too wanted a boy. So, whenever I used to see boys I used to feel that they should not come anywhere close to me. So, since then it was all about watching Jackie Chan's

movie and whenever there used to be a fight anywhere I used to feel like I have to beat them up. It is then I got to know about Ronda Rousey, MMA fight. There were a lot of financial problems but I still went to martial arts. After that it was my dream to compete in UFC and win it," explained Puja Tomar.

Known by her nickname, "The Cyclone," for her swift and powerful moves, Puja transitioned to mixed martial arts (MMA) driven by a desire for new challenges and broader exposure. Her striking skills, agility and resilience quickly made her a prominent figure in the MMA circuit.

Puja Tomar's inspiration was none other than UFC legend from the United States of America Ronda Rousey. It was her fights that inspired her to get into martial arts.

'England have to adapt to playing on slower pitches'

AGENCIES

GROS ISLET, 22 JUNE

Former captain Nasser Hussain believes defending champions England need to address issues in adapting to playing on slower pitches after losing to South Africa by seven runs in their second Super Eight stage game of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

At the Daren Sammy National Cricket Stadium on Friday, England did well in restricting South Africa to 163/6. But in their chase, England struggled to get going against South Africa's slower balls and were reduced to 61/4.

Harry Brook played a calculated 53 and shared a sensational 78-run partnership off 42 balls for the fifth wicket with Liam Livingstone, who smashed a 17-ball 33, as the

duo capitalised on South Africa's bowlers' bowling pace-on deliveries.

England needed 25 runs from 18 balls to win the match, but South Africa corrected their mistakes and gave away only 17 runs in the last three overs to seal a thrilling win and be now on top of Group 2.

"No batter likes it when the ball stops in the pitch a bit, but my one concern about England is that their players really like facing balls with pace on as we saw against West Indies earlier in the week."

"This was not a minefield, just a slower pitch and if you look at where England have played their best cricket in this tournament, it has been Antigua when there was pace and bounce and here in St Lucia when there was pace and bounce against the West Indies." "If Jos Buttler's team defeats

the United States on Sunday to get into the semifinals, they could end up facing India in Guyana, for example, and they will need to address how to play on the kind of surface they were dealt here."

"Harry Brook and Liam Livingstone showed they can cope with coming in during the middle overs and put the foot down straightaway, but despite England playing good cricket, they failed to get over the line," wrote Hussain in his column for Daily Mail.

Hussain also applauded South Africa's wicketkeeper-opener Quinton de Kock for smashing 49 runs off 20 balls in the power-play, which included him hitting relentless boundaries off Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, and Sam Curran. His blitz ensured South Africa's power-play score was 63/0, which bettered England's 41/2.

Indian compound women's team secures hat-trick of gold medals at Archery WC

AGENCIES

ANTALYA, 22 JUNE

Top-ranked Indian compound women's team clinched the gold medal at the Archery World Cup Stage-3 on Saturday. The formidable trio of Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Aditi Swami, and Parneet Kaur emerged victorious against sixth-ranked Estonia in a tightly contested final, triumphing 232-229.

Indian Compound Women's Team secures historic hat-trick gold at Archery World Cup.

This victory marks a historic hat-trick of gold medals for the Indian team in the 2024

Archery World Cup series, having previously secured top honours in the stages held in Shanghai and Yecheon earlier this year.

At Stage 3 in Antalya, the Indian women's team began their campaign with a first-round bye in a field of just 10 countries. They then showcased their skill and determination by defeating El Salvador 235-227 and the host nation, Turkey, 234-227, to secure their place in the final. Against Estonia, the Indian archers maintained their composure and accuracy, sealing their third consecutive gold medal.

In contrast, the top-ranked

Indian men's compound team, comprising Priyansh, Abhishek Verma, and Prathamesh Fuge, faced a more challenging journey. They narrowly missed out on a place in the final after a dramatic semifinal shoot-off against Turkey. Both teams were tied at 236, but Turkey edged out India by shooting closer to the center in the shoot-off (30"-30").

Despite the setback, the Indian men's team put up a valiant fight in the bronze medal match against France. In a closely fought contest, India fell short by a single point, losing 236-235, and finishing fourth in the tournament.

Babar Azam likely to take legal action against former players, YouTubers for 'targetting' him during T20 WC

AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD, 22 JUNE

Pakistan captain Babar Azam is likely to take legal action against YouTubers and former cricketers who accused him of 'misconduct' during their campaign in the ongoing T20 World Cup, Geo News reported, citing sources.

Babar and the Pakistan team were on the receiving end of criticism from former players and fans because of their World Cup campaign.

Sources informed Geo News that during Pakistan's campaign, a social media campaign



was used to "target" Babar, which made him feel "disheartened."

It was also reported that evidence related to statements made by YouTubers and former cricketers is being collected by the Pakistan Cricket Board's legal department.

Wahab Riaz. But, some of the players from the 15-member squad decided to extend their stay in the United States after their shocking early exit from the tournament.

Babar, along with Imad Wasim, Haris Rauf, Shadab Khan, and Azam Khan, are expected to depart on Saturday. After featuring in the finals against England in the last edition of the competition, Pakistan crashed out of the ongoing World Cup in the group stage.

Pakistan ended their campaign with a three-wicket win over Ireland in Florida on Sun-

day, a dead rubber after India and the USA, from Group A, advanced to the Super 8 stage.

Placed in Group A, Pakistan endured back-to-back defeats against the co-hosts, the USA, and then their bitter rival, India.

They bounced back with two wins on the trot, but it wasn't enough to turn their woe-l campaign around and secure a spot in the Super 8.

Pakistan's next white-ball series will be against Australia in November. The Men in Green will engage in a three-match ODI series, which will kick off on November 4.





‘NICE TO INSPIRE PEOPLE’
Ahead of his side's ICC T20 World Cup Super Eight clash against Afghanistan, Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell opened up on his stunning double century against the Asian side during the 50-over World Cup last year, saying that even though it is good how his knock has inspired people, he does not think about it too much because of the physical pain it caused to him.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Mark Zothanpuia joins EBFC on three-year deal: East Bengal FC has signed promising India U-23 player Mark Zothanpuia on a three-year contract that will run until the end of the 2026-27 season. "It's a dream for any young Indian player to play for a big club like East Bengal. Kolkata is the Mecca of Indian football and I can't wait to experience the amazing support from the East Bengal fans. I am grateful to Coach Carles and the East Bengal management for showing faith in me," said Zothanpuia. Born in Mizoram, Zothanpuia was part of FC Pune City's youth team and Hyderabad FC's reserve team before being promoted to Hyderabad FC's first team in the 2020-21 season. The 22-year-old rose to prominence in the previous season, starting regularly for Hyderabad FC and emerging as one of their key players. Zothanpuia was part of HFC's 2021-22 ISL winning Squad. Zothanpuia played a total of 1,971 minutes across 24 matches (18 in the ISL, 3 in the Kalinga Super Cup and 3 in the Durand Cup) last season. Primarily a midfielder, Zothanpuia seamlessly adapted to the left-back position where his consistency earned him a spot in the India U-23 squad for the Friendlies against Malaysia in March this year.

Gautam Gambhir tight-lipped on prospects of being coach

The BCCI is likely to make an official announcement of the appointment by the end of the month

TRIDIB BAPARNASH
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Former India opener Gautam Gambhir, who is widely speculated to take over from Rahul Dravid as the next Indian men's cricket team's head coach after the latter's role ends post the ongoing T20 World Cup, preferred to remain tight-lipped on his prospects even though he revealed that his mantra has always been based on a team-first philosophy.

Earlier on Tuesday, Gambhir, who recently inspired Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) to their third IPL title haul as a mentor, was interviewed by Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) members Ashok Mahotra, Jatin Paranjape and Sulakshana Naik. Gambhir, however, faces stiff competition from veteran cricketer WV Raman, who was reportedly more impressive in the virtual interview with the CAC members.

At an Indian Chamber of Commerce event in Kolkata on Saturday, Gambhir, when asked about his chances of succeeding Dravid for the top post, chose to remain noncommittal, adding to the mystery surrounding the potential coaching change.



"I don't see that far ahead. You are grilling me, asking me all tough questions. It is difficult to answer right now. All I can say is that I'm happy being here, just finished a brilliant journey (and) let's enjoy that. I'm in a very happy space right now," Gambhir said at a 'Rise To Leadership' seminar.

The two-time World Cup winner, however, stated that coaching philosophy is pure-

ly based on the "team first ideology".

"If you have the intent of keeping your team ahead of any individual, things will fall in place. If not today, tomorrow, if not tomorrow, someday it will fall in place. But if you start thinking on that, or if you know that you need to help one or two individuals perform, then your team will only suffer," he said.

"For me, the guru mantra

is team first philosophy. I think team-first ideology, team-first philosophy is the most important ideology in any team sport," he added.

The KKR job was Gambhir's second stint in a coaching role after spending a couple of seasons (2022 and 2023) as mentor at Lucknow Super Giants, helping the team qualify for the playoffs both times.

Gambhir had sought time

to take a final call during the IPL, but speaking at an event in Abu Dhabi on June 1, he had expressed his desire to coach India. "Look, I would love to coach the Indian team. There is no bigger honour. There is no bigger honour than coaching your national team. You are representing 140 crore Indians. And more across the globe as well. And when you represent India, how can it get bigger than that?," he had said.

The BCCI is likely to make an official announcement of the appointment by the end of the month, largely depending on India's campaign at the ongoing T20 World Cup in the Americas.

It has been reliably learnt that even if Gambhir is picked for the role, he will take over the role from the tour of Sri Lanka after the conclusion of the Zimbabwe tour that begins July 5. National Cricket Academy chief VVS Laxman is most likely to accompany the team for the Zimbabwe tour that comprises five T20 Internationals.

The new head coach will be assigned for the next three years, which will include three major ICC tournaments across different formats, starting with the ICC Champions Trophy early 2025.



FC Goa complete signing of Muhammad Hammad for an undisclosed fee: Indian Super League (ISL) club FC Goa have announced the signing of Jammu & Kashmir footballer Muhammad Hammad on a permanent transfer from FC 1 for an undisclosed fee. Signing a multi-year contract, Hammad will join the Gaurs for the upcoming 2024-25 season and beyond, marking an exciting new chapter in his career. "Joining FC Goa is a dream come true for me. The club's vision and commitment to excellence resonate with my personal goals, and I am eager to bring my best to the pitch. I look forward to representing the Gaurs and making my mark in the ISL. This opportunity means a lot to me and to be the first from my region to play for FC Goa is a proud moment," said Hammad. Born and raised in Jammu & Kashmir, Hammad's football journey began with Lonestar Kashmir FC in the I-League 2nd Division. His impressive performances earned him a spot on the J&K state team for the Santosh Trophy in the 2015-2016 season. The defender then joined Real Kashmir FC, where his defensive prowess helped the Snow Leopards clinch the I-League 2nd Division title in the 2017-18 season and secure promotion to the I-League.

Eyeing successive Olympic podium-finish, lifter Mirabai hopes to remain injury-free

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Mirabai Chanu is a medal away from becoming the first Indian weightlifter to win two Olympic medals. The Tokyo 2020 silver medallist says success at Paris Olympics will depend on how well she manages to keep herself injury free and improve technical nitty-gritties because "competition in the 49 kg division is going to be very tough this time."

The Manipuri lifter, who is the lone Indian in fray at Paris 2024, said the period between now and August 7, the day when the weightlifting competition will start at the Olympics, will be dedicated to "managing all the muscles in my body" and "improving technique to lift at least 90 kg in snatch."

Mirabai's personal best in snatch is 88 kgs, an effort that helped her win the 2022 Commonwealth Games gold in Birmingham with a combined lift of 201 kg that included a 113 kg in clean and jerk.

Paris 2024 will be Mirabai Chanu's third Olympics.

After a horror debut at Rio 2016, Mirabai, pushing 30, made impressive comebacks with sterling shows at global competitions. She became the first lifter in 22 years to become a world champion in 2017. The gold at Commonwealth Games in 2018 in Gold Coast followed and after narrowly missing a medal at the 2019 world championship, Mirabai created history at the 2020 Asian championships in China by hoisting a world record of 119 kgs at Ningbo,



China.

Injuries have often derailed Mirabai's career. Post the historic silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics, she has been afflicted by multiple injuries. The hip injury at the Hangzhou Asian Games sidelined Mirabai for five months.

Managing injuries with her trusted American physio Dr Aaron Horschig and coach Vijay Sharma, has been her biggest challenge. With Paris 2024 on the anvil, Mirabai has been very choosy about her competitions this year.

In 2024, she took part in only one mandatory competition—the World Cup—and with a combined lift of 184 kilos, finished 12th. However, it was enough to secure a spot at Paris.

"After the Asian Games injury, the World Cup was my first competition. I was certainly apprehensive about picking up another injury. I didn't want to spoil my Paris chances. So, yes, that injury fear was there. For me, injury management and staying stress free will be important. I have to do the things that helped me recover," she said.

"Injuries and pain are

companions for us. You never know when they will strike. We have to conquer them and Paris Olympics will tell me how well I have managed these aspects of the sport," tells Mirabai.

Mirabai and her team will be off to Le Ferte-Milon in France in the first week of July and will have almost a month to "acclimatize" ahead of the Summer Games. She says there is a direct relation between fitness and technique and every muscle plays a part in lifting weights.

"Weightlifting is a sum of many parts. Lot of gym exercises are required as every body part plays its role. Certain muscles like the back, knee and shoulder have to be in perfect condition. Muscle strength matters a lot to lift weights over 200 kgs (that's four times Mirabai's body weight). And more importantly, I can't skip training. If I leave training for a day, it will take a week for me to recover and bring my muscles to perfect state."

"If there is no strength or endurance, one can't lift weights. It's a tough process and one can't afford to relax.

Let's say to lift 85 kg in snatch, one has to lift 50 kgs at least 100 times and then gradually scale up," said Mirabai, while explaining her training schedule at the world-class facility in Patiala.

Injuries have made Mirabai more determined. The star weightlifter, for whom the sports ministry, through the Target Olympic Podium Scheme and other athlete funding programmes, has spent over Rs 2.7 crores for her training in the Paris cycle, laments for not having an Asian Games medal in her cabinet. Five months away from weightlifting has actually made her more combative. Winning another Olympic medal remains her only target.

"An Asian Games medal seems to be jinxed, I definitely want to win one and I was just one lift away from getting one in Hangzhou when the injury came. Even after so much preparation, I got injured. That hurts for sure but at the same time, injuries make me determined to come back stronger for India. So never had negative thoughts to quit."

"For any weightlifter to take part in two Olympics is a big thing. To compete at the world level is tough. Like Tokyo, I will again count on the prayers of all Indians and of course, it's going to be God's wish on that day in Paris. It will be a dream for me and my family to win a second Olympic medal but I also know that even the best of preparation can fail. So, let's hope for the best," she said before signing off.

'It is very easy to coach Cristiano Ronaldo'

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Cristiano Ronaldo has always been perceived as one of the best in the world but many believe that the striker is not an easy person to work with. Former assistant manager of Real Madrid Paul Clement has debunked all rumors and stated that "it is very easy to coach Cristiano Ronaldo."

"It was a privilege to share a dressing room with him, it



is very easy to coach Cristiano Ronaldo. I cannot remember anybody who was a better professional; the demands he puts on himself,

the aim for perfection, to improve every day," said Paul Clement to The Athletic.

Clement was a valuable part of Jose Mourinho's staff during his time at Real Madrid and went on to reveal how important a player of his capability is for any side.

"A player like Cristiano is always different but, with Jose, the team was always above everybody. There were moments when Cristiano scored goals, as he always did,

but there were also moments when Jose and the team knew they needed to defend. And Cristiano was the first who defended, too. You have to make him see that, apart from all the goals he scores, there are other moments when you need to do certain tactical things," added Clement.

Cristiano Ronaldo joined Los Galacticos in 2009 and went on to produce perhaps the greatest stint by any player at the best club in the world.

Everton sign Tim Iroegbunam: Everton have signed midfielder Tim Iroegbunam from Aston Villa on a three-year deal for an undisclosed fee on Saturday. The England youth international becomes the Blues' first summer signing and will link up with his new teammates when Sean Dyche's side report back to Finch Farm for the start of pre-season next month.

THE STATESMAN AWARDS FOR RURAL REPORTING

In 1973; The Statesman instituted three prizes for excellence in rural reporting to encourage a better awareness of the social, political and economic challenges taking place in our villages

Three prizes are now **₹ 15,000 ; ₹ 10,000 and ₹ 7,500**

We invite journalists to send in their investigative articles and reports concerning rural India, in English or any regional language (with or without translations into English), and published during 2023 in any newspaper or periodical in the country. Entries will be evaluated on the criteria of social relevance, factual accuracy, professional dedication and stylistic merit.

The competition is open to Indian journalists. All entries should be marked "Rural Reporting" and sent in the form of original clippings (photocopies will not be accepted) clearly showing the date and name of the publication to the address given below.

THE CUSHROW IRANI PRIZE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

The C R Irani Foundation, a not-for-profit body involved in improvement of journalistic standards, in 2011 set up an annual prize of **₹ 25,000** for environmental reporting. We invite journalists to send in their investigative articles and reports concerning the environment in English or any regional language (with or without translations in English), and published during 2023 in any newspaper or periodical in the country. Entries will be on the basis of content, accuracy, professional standards and quality of research. The competition is open to Indian journalists. All entries should be marked "Environmental Reporting" and sent in the form of original clippings (photocopies will not be accepted) clearly showing the date and name of the publication to the address given below.

THE AWARDS COMMITTEE

THE STATESMAN LIMITED
STATESMAN HOUSE,
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IMPORTANT

Journalists wishing to submit the same report(s) for both prizes are requested to send separate entries. Last Date for the 2023 awards is 30 July 2024

For any query please write to prasantob57@gmail.com





Mangrove forests: Guard of biodiversity & coastal stability

VIDHI CHURIWALA

Mangrove forests, a unique and vital ecosystem, line India's 7,500-kilometre coastline, offering immense ecological, economic and environmental benefits. These forests, found in the intertidal regions where freshwater and saltwater mix, are characterised by salt-tolerant plants capable of thriving in harsh conditions. India's mangroves, particularly the Sundarbans, play a critical role in stabilising coastlines, supporting diverse species and mitigating climate change effects.

Mangroves are crucial for coastal protection. Their dense root systems stabilise shorelines, preventing erosion caused by waves and tides. These roots also act as natural barriers, reducing the impact of storm surges and tsunamis. This protective function is especially vital for densely populated coastal regions, safeguarding lives and property during extreme weather events.

Beyond physical protection, mangroves enhance water quality. Their intricate root systems filter pollutants, including nitrates and phosphates, from the water, thus maintaining healthier coastal and marine ecosystems. Additionally, mangroves are significant carbon sinks, capturing and storing large amounts of carbon dioxide, termed "blue carbon", which is essential in the fight against climate change.

Mangroves are biodiversity hotspots, providing essential habitats for various species, including fish, crustaceans, birds, and mammals. The Sundarbans, for instance, host the iconic Bengal tiger, estuarine crocodiles, and Gangetic dolphins. These forests are also critical breeding grounds for many marine species. Juvenile fish, shrimp, and crabs find refuge among mangrove roots, which support the livelihoods of coastal fishing communities by sustaining fish stocks.

Bird species such as egrets, herons, and kingfishers rely on mangroves for nesting and roosting. Endangered species, including the smalltooth sawfish and hawksbill sea turtle, also depend on these habitats.

Different types of mangroves exist, including red, black, and white varieties. Red mangroves are typically found along coastlines, while black mangroves are identified by their dark bark and better access to oxygen. White mangroves, on the other hand, tend to grow at higher elevations compared to red and black mangroves. In India, major mangrove areas include the Sundarban Mangroves, Mahanadi Mangroves, Mangroves of Gujarat, Ratnagiri Mangroves, Goa Mangroves, Cauvery Deltaic Mangroves, Krishna-Godavari Mangroves and Andaman Nicobar Mangroves.

Despite their significance, mangrove forests face numerous threats. Human activities such as

coastal development, aquaculture and deforestation have led to significant habitat loss. In India, urbanisation and industrial activities encroach on mangrove areas, disrupting these ecosystems. The conversion of mangroves into shrimp farms is a major issue, contributing to approximately 35 per cent of global mangrove loss.

Pollution, such as oil spills and plastic waste, worsens mangrove habitats. Climate change, with rising sea levels and stronger storms, adds to their challenges. Mangroves struggle to adapt fast, urging urgent conservation.

Essential measures include reforestation, community-based programmes engaging locals, and awareness campaigns. Legal protections are vital, designating mangroves as protected zones and fostering international co-operation for shared areas like the Sundarbans.

Mangrove forests are indispensable to India's coastal ecology, offering protection, supporting biodiversity, and combating climate change. Effective conservation is crucial for coastal well-being, emphasising mangroves' significance as more than just trees but vital coastal lifelines deserving the utmost care.

The writer is an environment enthusiast and an animal welfare activist, and is the Founder of Kaloms Ideas Welfare Foundation. She is also a chartered accountant.



‘Women are capable of excelling in engineering’ Day for women engineers



On 23 June, International Women in Engineering Day celebrates the ongoing contributions of women in a profession that spans multiple sectors and continues to shape the future.

Sivapriya Mothilal Bhagavathy, lead R&D engineer at the power networks demonstration centre at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom, talks to The Statesman about her journey throughout the years.

Following are the excerpts:

Q. Please tell us a bit about your background and what inspired you to pursue a career in engineering.

Growing up, I was always fascinated by mathematics and its applications. This interest naturally led me to pursue a degree in engineering. I completed my bachelor's in electrical and electronics engineering at the College of Engineering, Trivandrum. In my third year, I took the Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering and scored an all-India rank of 250, which opened doors to pursue my master's in energy systems at IIT Bombay. After IIT, I joined Reliance Industries Limited as a system design manager for their solar PV group. My goal was to understand the industry and then pursue a doctoral degree based on industry challenges. After four years at Reliance, I started applying for PhD scholarships and landed a fully funded position at Northumbria University, where I researched barriers to solar PV systems in the UK.

Q. What led you to specialise in power networks, and what do you find most exciting about this field?

During my undergrad days, I stumbled upon the harsh realities of climate change and its devastating impacts. That's when I knew I had to do my part in mitigating its effects. I became obsessed with renewable power generation and how it could transform our electricity networks.

The crazy-fast evolution of low-carbon technology has created a whole new world of challenges and opportunities for innovation. What really gets me excited is figuring out how all these new technologies interact and can be integrated seamlessly without disrupting the whole system. That's what drove me to specialise in this sector, and honestly, it still blows my mind.

Q. Please describe your current role as the lead R&D engineer at the power network demonstration centre at the University of Strathclyde.

As the lead R&D engineer at the power networks demonstration centre at the University of Strathclyde, I lead technology research in the whole energy system, including technology scouting, identifying, and prioritising ground-breaking innovation and business model concepts in the low-carbon energy sector. I'm also the project lead for the Whole Energy System Accelerator (WESA), a £5 million investment from the Scottish Government and the University of Strathclyde. As part of WESA, I'm designing and developing an infrastructure facility to demonstrate low-carbon heating technologies and hydrogen systems in 'real-world' conditions.

Q. Can you share a professional accomplishment that you are particularly proud of and explain why it holds special significance for you?

I'm particularly proud of achieving chartered engineer status from the IET. This recognition demonstrates my high level of competence in technical, people management, and project management skills, as well as my commitment to continuous professional development (CPD). It's a testament to my hard work and dedication to staying at the forefront of my field, and it's a great feeling to know that my expertise is recognised by industry leaders.

Q. Were there any challenges you faced in your career, and how did you overcome them?

One of the biggest challenges I faced was time management during my PhD days. As a mother, I had to balance research with raising my daughter, who was only four at the time. I had to be extremely strict about how I spent my time and regularly monitor my progress to ensure I completed my research within the funded duration of three years. I successfully defended my thesis within 3.5 years of starting the research.

Q. What are a few emerging areas in engineering that you believe hold great potential for innovation and development?

I'm excited about the potential in several areas. The three top ones that come to mind are as follows: First is power electron-

ics, crucial as we move towards a low-carbon economy, helping with renewable energy integration, energy storage, and electric transportation. Second is the application of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), as they can help optimise energy distribution, predict demand, and identify improvement areas, making the system more efficient. Last, but not least, is cyber-security, which is essential as our energy systems become more connected and the risk of cyber threats grows. Developing robust cyber-security measures is crucial to maintaining the reliability of our energy supply.

Q. What are a few common misconceptions about the engineering profession, particularly for women, that you would like to address?

One common misconception is that engineering is only about technical skills. While technical skills are essential, so are soft skills like communication, collaboration, and problem-solving. Another misconception is that women aren't interested in or capable of excelling in engineering fields. This outdated stereotype can discourage young women from pursuing engineering careers and undermine their confidence. Lastly, some think the engineering field is inhospitable to work-life balance, especially for women with family responsibilities. While engineering can be demanding, many organisations now offer flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and supportive programmes to accommodate employees' diverse needs. By addressing these misconceptions, we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Q. What advice would you give to young women and girls who are considering a career in engineering?

My advice to young women and girls considering a career in engineering is to believe in themselves and not let anyone, including themselves, doubt their abilities. Don't be afraid to ask for help, and seek out mentors, teachers, or online resources when needed.

Q. How can educational institutions and workplaces better support women pursuing careers in engineering and technology?

Educational institutions and workplaces can better support women by providing bias training, mentorship programmes, flexible work arrangements, and fostering a work culture where asking for help is encouraged. Creating an inclusive environment where women's contributions are valued and recognised is key to encouraging more women to pursue and thrive in engineering and technology careers.

The sound of sleep

Desktop
doodles

DOLA MITRA



It is a rain-lashed night in a village in the deep jungles. Through flashes of lightning, one can see a tiny wooden cottage, its windows lit up by the glow of golden light emanating from inside. It could be a lamp or a candle. Or it could be the flames from a burner or stove. Someone seems to be cooking. What is he or she making or baking? Hot soup or stew, perhaps? Or fresh bread to be had with delectable butter, maybe? A chimney above the tiled terrace emits a steady stream of smoke. This storybook image, set somewhere in an imaginary countryside somewhere in the world, is generated through artificial intelligence (AI) and is accompanied by the sound of incessant rain pounding the rooftops, the narrow hamlet roads, and the grassy green grounds.

It was on an insomniac moonlit midnight that I discovered this virtual village on a YouTube channel while doing a search on "fall sleep," not really expecting to find anything of value. I serendipitously stumbled upon this video, followed by dozens of other such videos, which proposed to help induce "peaceful sleep" in those suffering from sleeplessness. The videos were enchanting, usually with a fixed image depicting a cosy, comforting scene ranging from a warm bed strewn with blankets and pillows by a fire on a clear cold night to a scene of domestic bliss like a couple sipping steaming tea in the kitchen of a cottage nestled beside a stream of a hill. The sounds ranged from simulated rain like the above to flowing water as though a gushing rivulet or a gurgling brook. Yet others evoked the sound of wind whispering through the leaves of trees in a forest. Some simulated steady sounds of birds chirping or leaves rustling. The idea was to create an ambience where the viewer-listener would be transported to a peaceful place—read: a lap of nature—so that he or she could fall asleep.

The audio part of the technology used to create these AI-generated audio-visuals is called "white noise" or "white sound" in laypersons' terms, and it is essentially the technique of infusing a wide spectrum of sound frequencies in order to produce the effect of a steady sound simulating the

drone of falling rain, say, or flowing water or the buzz of a bee or other insects or even a whirring fan or a running vacuum cleaner.

While white noise is widely believed to help in inducing sleep by blocking out other background noises and has even been used by physicians and psychiatrists in the treatment of insomnia, they also point to the dangers of addiction and the risk of harmful exposure to blue light radiation as emitted through computer screens or cell phones. Indeed, it is an irony that the supposed sleep-inducing sounds need to be emitted through a technology that emits radiation and radio frequency energy, even if at low levels, which have the potential to stimulate the same brain that one is trying to calm down. "It is never advisable to depend for prolonged periods of time on artificial ways of inducing sleep," says a doctor who says he does not prescribe sleeping pills to his patients for long durations.

It occurred to me that in today's world, we prefer to depend on the artificial in order to get what we already have access to in nature. After a few days and nights of listening to the AI-generated rain in the vain hope of sleep, it was only when real rain fell on the window sill and I threw open the glass panes to let it in that I fell deeply asleep. It was the sound of sleep.

Sure, nature is no longer as generous with her gifts as she once used to be. We humans, it has been long established, have caused the earth to heat up so horribly that we have changed the way weather works. No, it does not rain as much as it once used to, but when it does, it totally drowns out the sound of any AI-generated rain.

It is a rain-lashed hamlet in a jungle in Bengal, and a humble hut is lit up by flashes of lightning. Through the rumble of thunder and the sound of rain, one can hear voices from within. A soft glow is emanating from within. It could be a clay lamp (*pradip* or *diya*) or flames from the open fire of an earthen stove. Through the tiny window, one can see cooking going on. Hot rice and fried potatoes perhaps? Or hand-made roti to be had with *ghee*?

This is a real hut in a real hamlet, and the sound of rain I hear is real.



Photo by DOLA MITRA



Bangaliyana is a light-hearted journey to grasp a culture forever infused with nostalgia and nestled close to the heart.

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Jangipur College in Murshidabad: The only general degree college in Jangipur city



46 years of love and trust.

Jagged daggers of history warriors

KOLI MITRA



Browsing the news and social media this week, I noticed a recurring theme of ethnic and cultural rifts. (1) A school district tries to increase racial integration, which often spurs affluent white parents to take their kids out of the public school system and opt for more exclusive private education. (2) The harrowing assault of a young girl turns into fodder for the immigration debate because the suspected perpetrator is an Ecuadorian, feeding the narrative that “these people” are inherently vicious and a grave threat to Americans, even though violent crimes by immigrants are statistically very rare, except for gang and cartel-related incidents having little impact on anyone outside the illegal drug trade. (3) An exposé about hiring or promotion practices at Disney alleges that the company blatantly discriminates against white applicants. (4) An Indian man is charged with attempting to murder an Indian American man, allegedly because of the latter’s advocacy of an ethno-religious separatist movement in India, which, by definition, is undergirded by cultural hostilities, real or perceived. (5) A clash between two top stars in women’s professional basketball is immediately interpreted by thousands of social media users as being motivated by anti-white racial sentiment on the part of a black athlete, which is ironic given that a quick

scan of their timelines shows these same commentators routinely dismiss such suggestions as “woke” and oversensitive (“snowflake”) when the races of the purported aggressor and aggrieved are reversed.

To those of us who came of age at the end of the 20th century, the current era’s fever pitch of racial and ethnic tension feels false and anachronistic, and frankly, shocking. We were raised to value tolerance, colour blindness, unity and multiculturalism.

But now, tribalism is ascendant. And it’s not limited to the rough and tumble of current affairs. The trend is to recast ALL human history through factious and unapologetically biased lenses.

On one side, there is a new mythology whose chief antagonist is “whiteness”; which condemns anything perceived to be “western” as inherently “colonial” and oppressive; which makes exaggerated—and sometimes utterly unfounded—claims about the achievements of non-western civilisations, and overlooks any imperialism, violence, or cruelty by those perceived to be “people of colour.” The preachers of this mythology demand collective retribution for and against entire races for offences committed by and against long-dead people. Some of it is downright petty. For example, there is a dinner-discussion series called “Race to Dinner” conducted by a duo of activists, an Indian American woman (from a highly privileged background) and an African American woman. This entails groups of white women paying these two ladies (and one white woman hosting the event in her home) to yell at them for being white and therefore inherently, inescapably, unconsciously (yet still culpably) “racist”.

On the flip side, the reaction to this upsurge of anti-whiteness has been the resurrection of the most pernicious western colonial propaganda—downplaying the achievements of eastern civilisations, exaggerating any cruel cultural practices, falsely claiming credit for “civilising” the world, etc.

These myths had been largely debunked in the mid-late 20th century by scholars working with integrity towards objective discovery, something that’s dismissed as naïve and misguided by today’s “activist” academics. It’s especially astonishing that the proponents of western exceptionalism would uncritically accept centuries-old, unverifiable imperial claims, given that many of them tend to be highly suspicious of any government or otherwise “official” narrative encountered in their own era. I don’t fault them for their scepticism, but I do fault them for failing to apply the same standards to the one-sided “historical” accounts, almost certainly motivated by glaring imperial political interests.

Perhaps the most striking feature of this kind of revisionism is how much cherry-picking goes into these tortured readings of history. For example, if you’re a proponent of Western exceptionalism, what cultural roots do you claim? Can you square your ethnic chauvinism with the rationalist and universal values of the Enlightenment age? Would your scientific accomplishments exist without the mathematics that originated in India and Arabia? Can you divorce European art and culture of the High Middle Ages and Renaissance (or ANY time in the last 1,500 years) from Christianity, imported from the Middle East? If you want to bypass all that and harken back to classical Greece and Rome, do you realise that Greeks and Romans were part of a cross-pollinating regional civilisation that included North Africa, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Anatolia and Persia? And that ancient Greeks and Romans would have seen most other Europeans as savages? Also, did you know that written language, astronomical observations, public water and sanitation systems existed in parts of India some millennia before they did in Europe? Have you heard of the bard Kalidas, who lived a thousand years before Shakespeare? Can you tell us exactly what period of history it was that you’re invoking—that glorious golden age when Europeans were minding their own business

and creating their miraculous civilisation (not living as nomadic hordes or rough villagers) but NOT yet influenced by non-Europeans and NOT dealing with non-Europeans (by trade or conquest)? You can’t, because no such era ever existed. Yes, western civilisation rose to spectacular heights. No, it didn’t do so in isolation. Indeed, insular societies NEVER create “civilization”; only outgoing ones do. A society can engage with others in battle and conquest, or it can engage in peaceful trade and cultural exchange. But it must engage. Otherwise, it doesn’t grow beyond a point.

But this reality is not acceptable to western exceptionalists. They need to parse the history and geography of Europe and “white people” in different ways for different purposes, as needed for their entire worldview to hold.

I call this “historical gerrymandering” (after the practice of redrawing an electoral district in such a way that it strengthens a favoured party’s voter block and dilutes that of an opposing party. The term “gerrymander” is a portmanteau of “Gerry” and “Salamander”, referring to the jagged, highly irregular, salamander-like shapes of the maps of these manipulated districts and the 19th-century politician Elbridge Gerry, the earliest official to be associated with this practice).

On the other side of the rift, if you’re among those still trying to avenge European colonialism over the last half-millennium, can you show me any mature civilisation that does NOT have any history of imperialism? Are your ancestral lines completely free of any imperial taint? In fact, can you say confidently that you don’t share substantial ancestry with the people you are charging as the descendants of your ancestors’ oppressors? It should be noted, despite my framing of these questions the way I have, that this “side” is currently dominant in academia and the media (and is espoused by most white liberals, not just people of colour). In academia, it is reportedly common to be pressured to publicly

avow “anti-racist” sentiments and policies and even sign specific declarations. I’ve read strangely forced statements in nonfiction books and scientific papers that sound like ritual affirmations.

Much of what passes for historical literature now is an incessant battle of competing tribal mythologies and revisionism. For those who are still committed to truth and good-faith communication, there are now some additional hurdles. To confront either side of the problem, one must now devote considerable time and energy to dispelling the perception that one is shilling for the other camp.

The author is a lawyer, writer and editor based in Manhattan, New York

(Photographs by the author)



Pro-Israel poster



United Nations building



Both sides of the cultural divide

The coffee-cartoonist of Kolkata

PURBASHA KARMAKAR

Amidst the March, in the novel *Little Women*, sketched a cartoon of her teacher, Mr Davis, while she battled boredom in the classroom. Enola Holmes drew cartoons of Mycroft Holmes and Miss Harrison to mock them and their conventional beliefs when she was sent to boarding school. Even the film maestro, Satyajit Ray, often entertained

himself with doodling. Cartoons, as an art form, offer a unique blend of humour, calm and composure, which may effortlessly wipe away the pressures and frustrations of societal responsibilities, corporate work demands, politics and even mere school homework. A laugh is a necessity, and those who ease the burden of such minds weighed down by stress must be considered society’s saviours, as they

dig ways to load off those burdened minds and recycle them to think fresh.

This week we came across one such saviour, providing solace to the people of Kolkata from the fast-paced and hectic metropolitan lifestyle by offering them the magical combination of coffee and cartoons.

Nestled beside the Tollygunge Metro station, Kolkata Coffee, which covers no more than 3 ft by 5 ft of pavement space, is the brainchild and single-handed creation of Shyama Prasad Dey. This little shop is no less than a museum itself. Along with 4 to 5 seating arrangements, every corner of this blue-coloured shop is plastered with black and white whimsical cartoons and intricate sketches, including calligraphic quotes.

Initially, Dey assisted and finally took over his father’s book-selling business in 1993, and then shifted it near the Tollygunge metro station. The previous shop unfortunately reached its expiration date during the onset of the Covid pandemic, with reading mostly becoming digital.

Therefore, as someone from the working class of the nation, hope and idleness were never options. As soon as the global pandemic hit its last days, he established his coffee shop, just outside the Tollygunge metro station.

Dey speaks of his origin of interest: “I used to doodle during my early days in the book shop. Gradually, I came up with the idea of drawing some of those on greeting cards and initially showcasing some for sale. To my astonishment, those items were swiftly purchased, prompting me to create more in response to the escalating demand. Hence, I dived deep into the world of art. After discovering my area of interest, it was up until the year 2016 that I eventually took part in different exhibitions and fairs, as after that I became severely sick from taking long bus journeys from my home to attend such events.”

Even though he visits his coffee shop every day at 6 p.m., his entire day remains packed. His day starts at 4 a.m., when he sets off

for the Baghajatin fish market to sell tea, and he only returns around 10 a.m. after securing the day’s earnings. He says, “I sell tea to the fish sellers who cannot move around to buy tea now and then. Fishermen, as they engage in strenuous physical labour since the break of dawn, mostly rely on sips of tea to stir them up for work.”

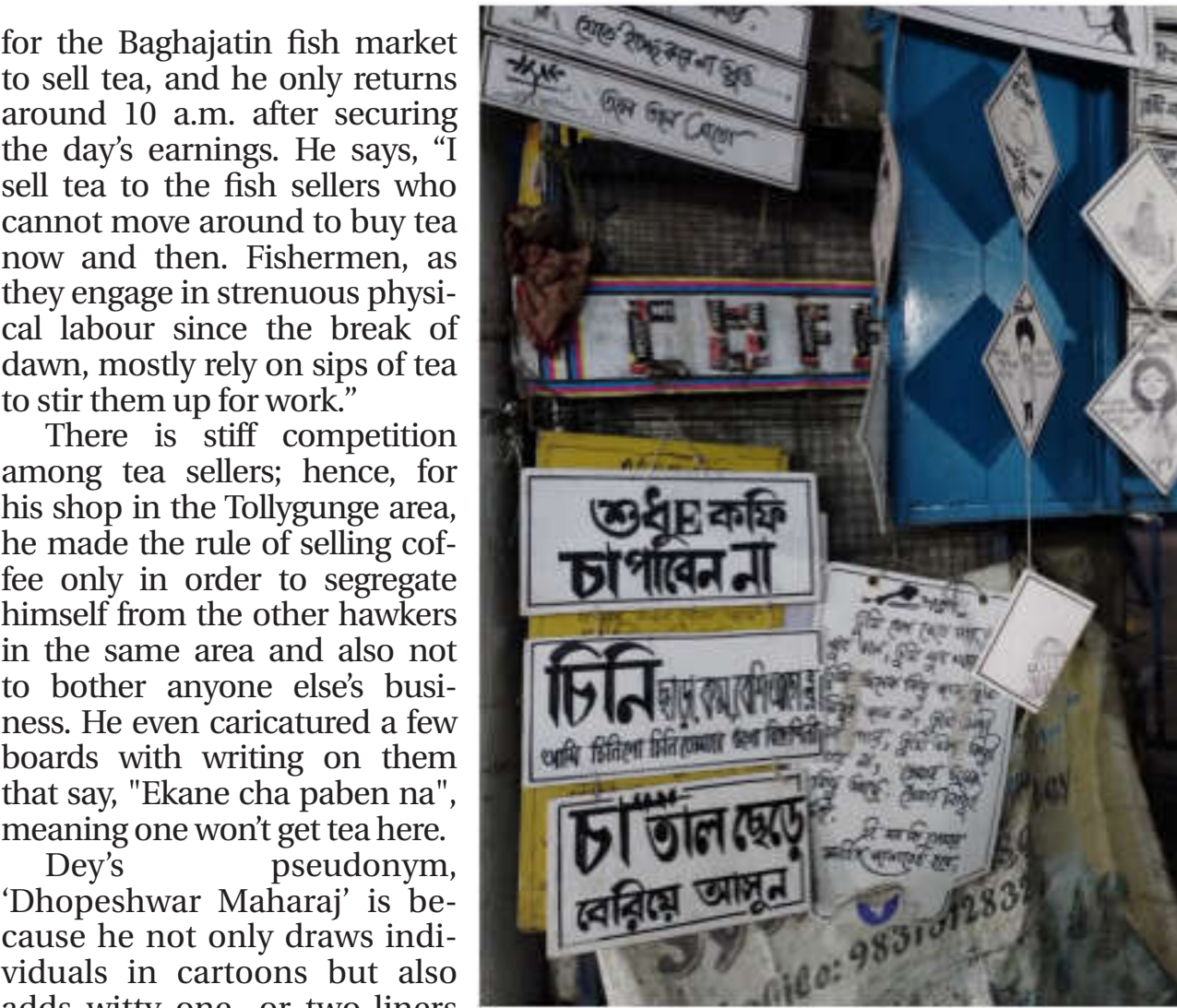
There is stiff competition among tea sellers; hence, for his shop in the Tollygunge area, he made the rule of selling coffee only in order to segregate himself from the other hawkers in the same area and also not to bother anyone else’s business. He even caricatured a few boards with writing on them that say, “Ekane cha paben na”, meaning one won’t get tea here.

Dey’s pseudonym, ‘Dhopeswar Maharaj’ is because he not only draws individuals in cartoons but also adds witty one- or two-liners as captions. Often, people get surprised by reading these captions that match their current mood, thoughts or personalities.

“The idea to draw on coffee cups was from my daughter’s, who told me of coffee shops that write customers’ names on their coffee cups. Therefore, along with serving coffee, I can draw cartoonish profiles

of people who visit my shop, instantly, for a very nominal price,” he adds.

Dey handles his clients quite decently. While offering his customers their cups of coffee, he himself sips one too, to set a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere, hence allowing the former to gulp and digest their mundane work pressure along with his coffee.



Jangipur College in Murshidabad: The only general degree college in Jangipur city

NISITH SINHA ROY



The Bhagirathi River bisects the town of Jangipur, a subdivision of the historic Murshidabad district. Although Jangipur municipality was established in 1869, until 2001, ferries were the main means of communication between the two sides. A bridge was built over the Bhagirathi River in 2001, fulfilling the long-standing expectations of the people of the area. The history and cultural heritage of Jangipur are ancient. People of Bengal and India know this subdivision as the city of Dadathakur Sarachchandra Pandit. The first weekly newspaper, “Jangipur Sangbad” was published in Jangipur in 1939 under the editorship of Dadathakur. His “Vidushak” and “Botol Purana” are brilliant additions to Bengali satirical literature. The famous kabiyaal Gumanī Dewan (1302-1380 Bengali era) lived in Jindighi village in Jangipur. In memory of the kabiyaal, the state Kabiyaal Mela has been held in Jindighi village for the past ten years. The legendary Alkap artist Dhananjay Mandal was born in Dhanpat Nagar village, on the outskirts of Jangipur College. Jhanku took the folk drama Alkap industry to the pinnacle of excellence.

It was from Jangipur that India’s famous politician Bharat Ratna, the late Pranab Mukherjee, was elected to the Lok Sabha for the first time in his life, held important ministries in the Government of India, and was the only Bengali to become the President of India. Today we are focusing on Jangipur College, the only general degree college in Jangipur city.

Jangipur College is located in a beautiful natural environment on the eastern bank of the Bhagirathi River, which runs through the middle of Jangipur city. Jangipur College was established as a government-sponsored college in 1950 due to the efforts of some educated people in the area. At that time, this college was under Calcutta University. In 1999, along with other colleges in Nadia and Murshidabad, Jan-

gipur College also came under the affiliation of Kalyani University. The college is QMS and EMS, ISO-certified by an IAF-accredited body with a B++ in NAAC assessment 2nd cycle.

There is a boys’ hostel with 60 beds. The hostel, which is under construction with a special grant from the central government, is not yet completed. The principal of the college, Prarthita Biswas, said, “A utilisation certificate has been sent after completing the first installment of the girls’ hostel. Once the money for the second installment arrives, it will be completed very soon.”

Jangipur College is one of the addresses for getting higher education for the students of about 14 higher secondary schools around Jangipur College. Even though Jangipur is quite an old city, the main livelihood of the common people of the area is farming, bead tying, and masonry work. At one time, the silk industry was flourishing in the area. There was fur and bronze work. All that is in the past now.

Now, Jangipur is known throughout the country for its skilled bidi workers and masons. Naturally, the students at this college come mainly from these families. The current number of students in this college is around 9,000, including those in the science, arts and commerce streams. About 55 per cent of the students are from minority families; 30 per cent belong to Scheduled Castes; and about five per cent belong to Scheduled Tribes. About 30 per cent of students are first-generation learners. The number of female students is significantly higher among the total students at the college. Overall, this college has been playing an important role in the development of education in the area for a long period of 74 years.

At present, the number of professors at this college (including the principal and the librarian) is 69. The total number of permanent and casual non teaching staff is 32. There are six science subjects taught in the college, including physics, chemistry, mathematics, botany, biology and environmental science. Honours, or major and minor subjects, are taught in these six subjects of science as per NEP 2020. In Bengali, English, history, political science, philosophy, economics, geography and Sanskrit are eight subjects in the arts stream taught as honours, majors, and minors as per NEP 2020, and education and Arabic are two general and minor subjects. In the department of commerce, only accounting is

taught as an honours or major/minor subject.

For those who cannot take entry into university for various reasons after completing their undergraduate studies, there is an opportunity to study MA in Bengali, English, history and education at this college through the distance education department of Kalyani University. There are several subjects of science and arts taught as undergraduate and postgraduate subjects under the aegis of Ne-taji Subhas Open University.

Jangipur College has separate modern laboratories for lab-based subjects. There are two computer labs with a total of eighty computers. Many classrooms in the college have audio-visual facilities and two smart classrooms. This college has an herb garden under the supervision of the Department of Botany. The Central Library has a collection of around fifty thousand books and e-books, which is rare compared to other colleges in West Bengal. The library has newspapers, journals and e-magazines on various subjects. There is a reading room for students and professors. Every floor of Jangipur College has clean toilets for male and female students. There is a sanitary napkin vending machine and a disposal machine in the girls’ common room. There is a daycare centre too.

The college has a modern canteen. The college has a large, environment-friendly playground protected by boundary walls. Students regularly play sports here. Also, the training classes of the NCC unit of the college are held in the playground. A number of students from the NCC unit of this college have participated in the Republic Day Parade in Delhi. Their success in various competitions held among colleges affiliated with Kalyani University is notable.

The NSS unit of the college is very old. Their service programmes run throughout the year, in close proximity to the college and beyond. Every year, they adopt two to three nearby villages and help in the overall development of the villages. Their regular programmes include student health check-ups, blood donation camps, thalassemia awareness camps, health awareness camps, breast cancer awareness camps, napkin distribution, Ganga and environmental pollution awareness, plantation programmes, etc. NSS programme officer Prof. Biplob Das said, “This year before the monsoons, a programme has been undertaken to plant thousands of trees at various

places in the area, including college premises, playgrounds and Bhagirathi banks.”

With the unstinted support and cooperation of the Management Committee of this college, the encouragement of the principal, and the leadership of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), various sub-committees of the college undertake programmes in their respective fields outside of the syllabus-oriented curriculum unrelentingly. For example, various committees like the cultural sub-committee, seminar sub-committee, women’s cell, equal opportunity centre, publication sub-committee, icc (internal complaints committee), career guidance cell, etc. organise regular cultural programmes, workshops, seminars, awareness camps, and publish magazines.

The auspicious days are celebrated with great fervour and aplomb. Professor Krishnendu Palchoudhuri of the department of economics is an accomplished musician himself. As he is the convenor of the cultural subcommittee, the cultural programmes of the college are of very high quality. The career guidance cell of the college helps the students in their careers in its limited capacity. Basudeb Chakrabarti, coordinator, IQAC, and head, department of English, said, “Though the college is in a remote area of West Bengal, our main strength is the resources. The college has highly qualified professors in every department, including the principal and the librarian. This might be the scenario in most colleges, but our additional strength is that during working days, 90 per cent of professors working here stay back. As a result, beyond the specified time, a great talent pool can work for the improvement of the college.”

The students of the departments of zoology, botany and geography at the college have excursions on a regular basis. Other departments also organise educational trips and picnics at regular intervals. Through these programmes, sincere relationships are developed between students and professors. The Jangipur College Alumni Association is a very strong organisation of alumni of Jangipur College. Reunions are held every two years under its initiative.

The president of this association is Rezaul Karim, a successful businessman in the area who said, “The joy of being associated with Jangipur College is one of the greatest joys of our lives. Therefore, if we have any role in the development of the college, we eagerly look forward to it. We have grand celebratory plans for the 75th anniversary of the college next year.”

Nurul Mortoza, senior professor of the department of Bengali, said, “Sri Bhajan Kumar Sarkar is the architect of the transformation of the college in the recent past. Shri Sarkar was the president of the management committee from 2012 to 2017. Bhajan Babu’s administrative experience and indomitable desire to do good, combined with the efforts of the members of the governing body, literally transformed the college’s get-up into a modern one. The honourable members of the current management association, including the principal, are trying hard to continue that trend.”

At the end of this year, the visit of the NAAC peer team for assessment of the 3rd cycle at this college is on the horizon. This year, the college will be 75 years old. Overall, the atmosphere at the college is beautiful. Based on that, professor Tarak Mondal, secretary in the teachers’ council, said that, “Despite the scorching heat of summer this year, we did not take a vacation. On the advice of the principal, I have been cooperating in facilitating administrative and academic work, and in this regard, I have received the full support of the teaching staff, including the professors of the college.”



The story of a young artist

SWETA DAS

This year, a young illustrator and artist, Kuhoo Mitra’s one-day solo exhibition was exhibited at Calcutta Rowing Club on Sunday, 16th June. Mitra is a student of the bachelor of fine arts in illustration at the School of Visual Arts, New York City, and will begin her final year in the coming fall.

“I used to read a lot of children’s books and would love to draw my own characters and scenes passionately since childhood, and my parents have supported and encouraged me a lot in this field,” she said.

Mitra decided to pursue her career as a freelance illustrator at an early age, and immensely admired iconic painters and illustrators like Satyajit Ray, Nandalal Bose and Bikash Bhattacharya.

In this exhibition, she displayed 21 paintings and five illustrated, hand-bound books done by herself.

She has been illustrating and publishing books since her school days. Her first illustrated book of Bengali poems, Somoyer Chokhe, was written by Subhanu Mitra and published by Bani Sansad Publishing House in Kolkata in 2018. One of her best illustrated books covers Bengali short stories titled Oder Golpo, written by Shreya Ghosh and published by Parampara Prakashan in Kolkata in 2020. A fifteen-page illustrated book written in Bengali and depicting through pictures the various rituals and events that take place is titled Durga Puja. The writing, typography, design, screen-printing and binding were all done by Kuhoo herself. She used the Japanese stab-binding method for this book, which was made in New York in 2023. She has illustrated

a few accordion books, Creature of the Deep Sea and Cracking India in 2023.

Kuhoo has been experimenting in different mediums, sizes, styles and subject matter, though in this exhibition she focused on water colour, gouache and coloured pencils. Kuhoo has expertise in mediums like water colours, acrylics, pen and ink, graphite and charcoal.

“I was highly enchanted by the Western illustrators and writers at the age of 3–4 years. I got the primary idea of illustration and storyboard drawings from them and their illustrated picture books and magazines,” she says.

This was Kuhoo Mitra’s first solo exhibition, where she expressed a strong commitment to creating illustrated books in Bengali. She observed that despite the growing diversity in the picture book industry, Bengali culture remains underrepresented in English-language picture books. Consequently, Kuhoo aims to produce more illustrated books featuring Bengali protagonists, exploring unique aspects of Bengali culture. Her upcoming works will address themes like breaking stereotypes

about Bengalis, celebrating Bengali customs, food and culture, and delving into the history of Bengal and the Indian subcontinent.

The writer is a freelance contributor



‘After marriage, it’s not just ‘I’ anymore; it’s us’

PRIYANJALI DAS

Oh, we didn’t even start talking until all the marriage rituals were over.” This is what Nandini Das had to say when asked how she met her husband. When in today’s world, lasting love is a lost notion, and with marriages ending up in divorces with numbers increasing every day, how did a marriage where two individuals did not even get a chance to interact work out for almost 46 years? This is the story of Nandini Das and Ashish Das, who met in 1978 when her father saw a matrimonial ad related to Ashish Das.

“It was my mother-in-law and brother-in-law who came to see me first, followed by my husband during the second meeting,” says Nandini Das, trying to recollect what exactly happened on that day. Upon asking how her impression was upon seeing her husband, “Oh!” said Nandini Das, laughing, “I got a sense he was caring. I did not get the chance to interact with him, really. The marriage dates were decided, and upon those days, you did not really ask the girl whether she wanted to get married or not; it was the elders doing the most of it.” Ashish Das added, “When I first saw her, I just knew she was ideal for



me as a life partner; no buts and no ifs.”

Getting married on 1 March 1978, and being new to the whole notion of living in a joint family, for Nandini Das, it wasn’t easy getting used to one. “It was a bit difficult, and while my husband was extremely supportive, he also knew that I could hold my ground. But I did not get that much time to stay and get well-attuned with each and every member of the family. I got married in March, and by the end of June, I was on a ship with my husband. He was a chief engineer in the merchant navy, and that meant spending months on the sea.” Elucidating how difficult it was to adjust to sea life at first, her only solace was her books, and her biggest supporter and friend was her husband.

Even after giving birth to her daughters while living for several years in Andaman with her husband out there on the sea, one

thing she cherished was her birthday. “If he was in town during that time, a bouquet of flowers from him was a constant, but if he was away, he used to make sure that when he returned, we went out for dinners, or he would just randomly come home with a bouquet of flowers.”

According to her, marriage is a relationship that evolves slowly; one cannot master it in a few days, but rather, one gets used to it, and it becomes free-flowing. “In a marriage, it is extremely important that you feel at peace with the person, as one would say compatibility. After marriage, it is not just ‘I’ anymore; it becomes ‘Us’. Never give up on your individuality or who you are, but make sure you adjust to accommodate the other person in your life.” For her, trust is another thing that you cannot compromise on when it comes to marriage, to which Ashish Das adds, “True, without trust and respect for each other, no marriage can survive.”

Ending the conversation with the question, “Do you still fight?” to which Nandini Das said stealthily, “Believe us, every day. But now, it is a hard-bound rule that whoever starts the fight first says sorry first.”



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



It is interesting to read the ‘Letter from New York’ by Koli Mitra. The article on former US President, Donald Trump, provided insights into the way people either worship him or make him a villain. We need to understand that everything is not black and white, but has shades of grey.

Yours etc.,
Dipak Dhar
Kolkata, 9 June

An element of grandiose provides multiple streaks of celebration for ever; hence, accept my warm regards for the article “Story of Statesman House” by Dola Mitra, published in the pages of the 8th day (The Sunday Statesman, dated 16 June 2024). Conservation of heritage and legacy are indeed primary duties, but a raging rumour disturbed many of us, especially after the sight of large lime-green scaffolding sheets, perhaps symbolising the advancement of crass commercialisation and demanding a pound of flesh as the price of modernity. Another heritage going to be lost forever? Now, as the rumours are categorically quashed out, we may again relax on our memories of early childhood concerning the newspaper along with the majestic heritage sight. As a regular passer-by, the smell of newsprints in the odd hours, enhanced by the sound of papers of tomorrow being printed like the advent of rain at a distance, is energising, symbolising the future, after all!

Yours etc.,
Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay
Kolkata, 16 June