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11 June | 5:30 PM

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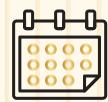
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POST-POLL VIOLENCE
BJP worker killed in West Bengal

STATES » PAGE 4



CHAMPIONS OF EUROPE
Real Madrid wins record 15th title

SPORT » PAGE 16

With big wins, ruling parties back in power in Arunachal, Sikkim

BJP wins 46 of the 60 seats in Arunachal Pradesh; NPP bags five, Cong. reduced to one; Sikkim Krantikari Morcha sweeps Sikkim in a one-sided contest with an unprecedented 31 of the 32 seats; Sikkim Democratic Front gets the lone seat

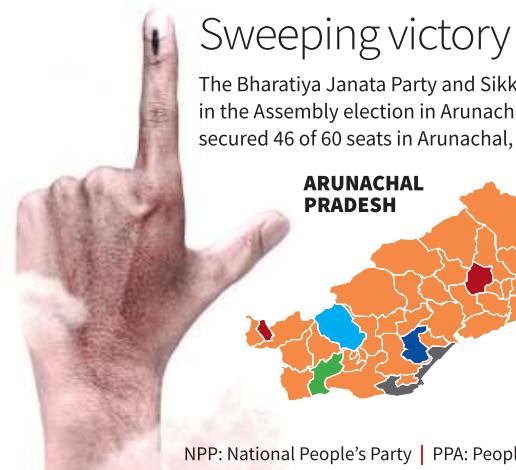
Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

The Bharatiya Janata Party retained power for the third successive term in Arunachal Pradesh by winning 46 of the 60 seats in the Assembly as votes cast on April 19 were counted on Sunday, while Sikkim too saw a landslide victory, with the ruling Sikkim Krantikari Morcha winning 31 of the 32 seats.

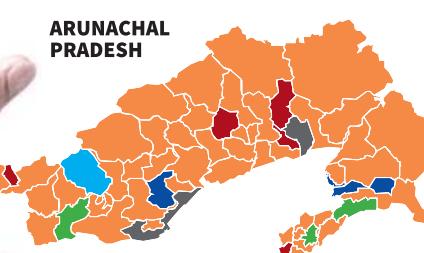
In Arunachal, the BJP has won 10 of the seats uncontested ahead of polling.

The Congress, which had ruled the State for more than 30 years, managed to field candidates only for 19 seats. The National People's Party (NPP), otherwise an NDA constituent, contested 20 seats.

While the NPP won five



Sweeping victory
The Bharatiya Janata Party and Sikkim Krantikari Morcha recorded landslide victories in the Assembly election in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, respectively. The BJP secured 46 of 60 seats in Arunachal, while the SKM won 31 of 32 seats in Sikkim



Party	Seats won	Vote share %
BJP	46	54.6
NPP	5	16.1
NCP	3	10.4
PPA	2	7.2
Cong.	1	5.6
IND	3	-

Party	Seats won	Vote share %
SKM	31	58.4
SDF	1	27.4

NPP: National People's Party | PPA: People's Party of Arunachal | SKM: Sikkim Krantikari Morcha | SDF: Sikkim Democratic Front

seats as in 2019, former Minister Kumar Waikui saved the Congress from a complete rout by winning the Bameng seat. The Congress had won four seats five years ago.

The remaining seats were divided among the Nationalist Congress Party (three), the regional People's Party of Arunachal (two) and three Independents.

In Sikkim, of the 32 seats won by the SKM, Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang bagged two – Rhenock and

Soren-Chakung. The lone winner for the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), Tenzing Norbu Lamtha, had switched over from the SKM ahead of the Assembly election.

The SKM was a constituent of the BJP-led Nation-

al Democratic Alliance, but the two parties had ended their partnership ahead of the April 19 election.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10
MORE REPORTS
» PAGE 11

IN BRIEF

Modi reviews 100-day agenda for new govt.

NEW DELHI Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday held a review meeting on a 100-day programme that his team will seek to implement once government formation is completed. » Page 10

Assam floods: over six lakh people affected

GUWAHATI The flood situation in Assam remained unchanged with more than six lakh people in 10 districts of the State reeling under waters, officials said on Sunday. » Page 12



EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 3

Survey predicts BJP win, rise in vote share for Cong. too

Kejriwal returns to jail as 21-day interim bail ends

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

hearing of Mr. Kejriwal's regular bail plea is scheduled for June 7. Earlier in the day, Mr. Kejriwal was accompanied by party leaders and his wife, Sunita Kejriwal, as they made visit to Rajghat to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi. The Chief Minister then went to Hanuman Mandir at Connaught Place before addressing workers at the AAP office on his last stop before returning to jail.

SEE ALSO
» PAGE 2
‘DIDN’T WASTE A MINUTE’
» PAGE 10

respectively) to poll 40% and 23%, respectively. However, while the gains for both parties are in the range of 3% to 4%, the margin of error for this calculation of vote shares is ±3.08.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

electronic voting machines (EVMs) were moved through CCTV-monitored corridors and the current date-and-time display of each machine was verified.

Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Piyush Goyal, representing the BJP, submitted a petition and asked the EC to ensure the safety of the counting process and that every official engaged in it was fully conversant with the details of the prescribed process.

In the letter handed over to the EC, the BJP noted the

verdict of the Supreme Court in April on the challenges raised by civil society organisations on the use of EVMs. The top court had dismissed any apprehensions about the misuse of EVMs.

“These manufactured controversies are intended to create mistrust in the electoral process and instigate unrest among citizens,” the letter further stated.

SAFE MOVEMENT OF UNITS
» PAGE 10

Ensure all counting norms are followed: BJP, INDIA bloc to EC

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The leaders of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Opposition INDIA bloc met members of the Election Commission (EC) on Sunday and demanded strict adherence to the established processes of counting of votes of the Lok Sabha election on Tuesday.

While the BJP warned the EC against “attempts to undermine the integrity of the electoral process” by



In place: Signboards at the entrance of strong rooms, in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

V. RAJU

the INDIA bloc and “certain organisations, in the guise of civil society”, the INDIA bloc urged the EC to ensure that the control units of the

Supreme Court on the challenges raised by civil society organisations on the use of EVMs. The top court had dismissed any apprehensions about the misuse of EVMs.

“These manufactured controversies are intended to create mistrust in the electoral process and instigate unrest among citizens,” the letter further stated.

SAFE MOVEMENT OF UNITS
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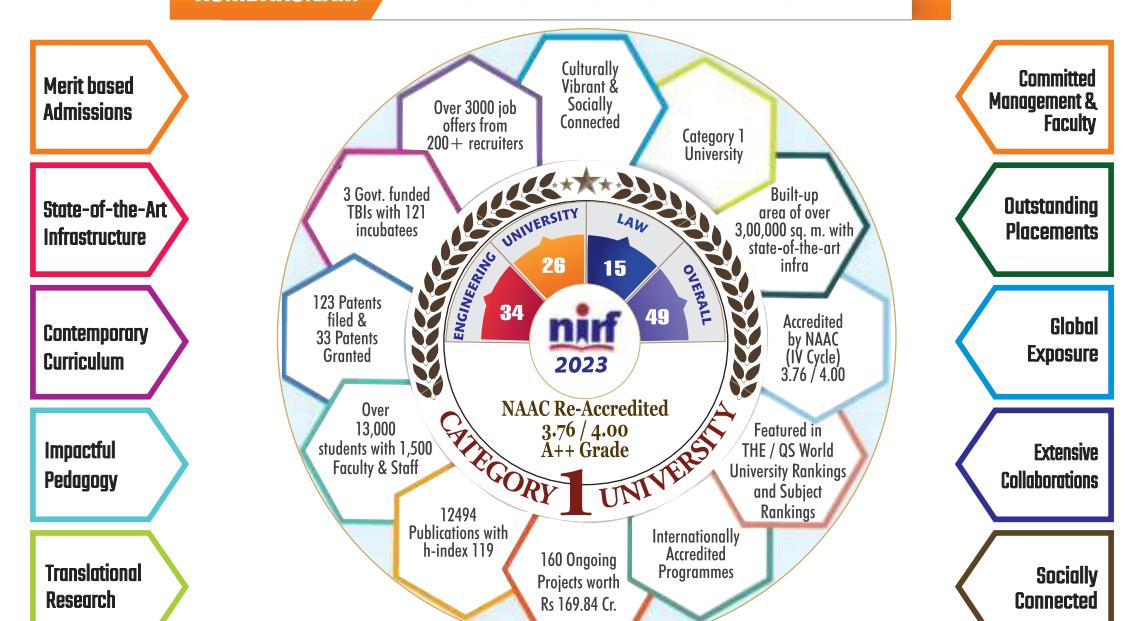
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Delhi may turn into desert if deforestation is not checked: HC

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

The High Court observed that the national capital could become "a barren desert" if steps are not taken to check deforestation.

"Judicial notice is taken of the fact that as recently as on May 30, the official temperature recorded in Delhi was 52.3 degrees Celsius. It is not far to see the day when this city may be only a barren desert, in case the present generation continues an apathetic view on deforestation," Justice Tushar Rao Gedela

said.

A weather station in Delhi's Mungeshpur had recorded a maximum temperature of 52.9 degrees Celsius on May 29, creating the record for the hottest ever day in the city. But, the weather department on Saturday said the unusually high temperature was recorded due to a "malfunctioning sensor".

However, Delhi's base weather station at Safdarjung saw temperatures climbing over the 45-degrees Celsius mark over the past week.

The High Court made

the observation when it was informed that former judge Najmi Waziri, whom the court had appointed the chairperson of an internal departmental committee of city officials dealing with the protection of forests in Delhi, was unable to perform his duties due to a lack of infrastructure.

"This court cannot countenance a situation where the chairperson is unable to discharge the responsibilities on account of lack of office space and support staff or even transportation," the High Court said.

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Tanishk Vijaywargiya	277	134	143
Khushhali Solanki	274	130	144
Danish Ali	273	134	139
Dhruv Sapra	273	131	142
Piyush Gautam	269	128	141
Molighton K	265	136	129

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Before returning to Tihar Jail, CM says exit poll surveys fake, counting agents must stay alert

AAP chief asks Oppn. workers to remain at counting centres till final round to prevent manipulation in results, match VVPATs with EVMs; fake exit polls intended to pressure poll officers ahead of results, quell RSS's ire against Modi, Shah

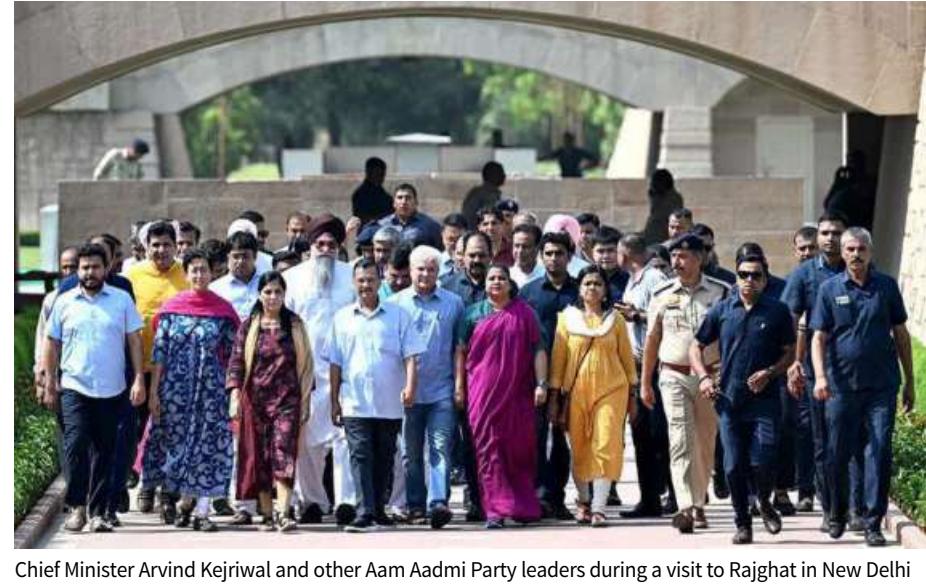
The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Am Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said the exit polls that predicted a thumping victory for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the Lok Sabha poll were fake and that the surveys had been released to demoralise workers of Opposition parties ahead of the counting of votes.

Before returning to Tihar Jail after the expiration of his 21-day interim bail, the Chief Minister urged counting agents of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) candidates to stay alert, alleging that the pollsters had released the fake numbers on the "instructions from the top".

"These exit polls are nothing but mind games to drive you into depression,"



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and other Aam Aadmi Party leaders during a visit to Rajghat in New Delhi on Sunday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Mr. Kejriwal said, addressing AAP workers at the party headquarters.

of the VVPATs are matched with EVMs. If there is any discrepancy, we can expose their EVM scam," he added.

The exit polls, released on Saturday evening after the conclusion of the polling for the seventh and the last phase of the general election, predicted a third

Attacking the BJP over the predictions, the AAP chief said several "theories" about why the surveys indicated such a landslide victory for the NDA are doing rounds.

"One of the theories is that their friends have invested money in the share market and if the market goes up as soon as it opens [on Monday], they can withdraw funds and earn a huge amount of money," Mr. Kejriwal said.

"According to the second theory, the exit poll numbers could have been manipulated to influence the poll outcome by putting pressure on election officers [on the day of counting]."

"The third theory says the predictions aim at preventing a rebellion against Prime Minister Modi and [Home Minister] Amit Shah in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) before the declaration of the results," the Chief Minister added.

BJP protests CM visit to Rajghat, says Mahatma stood for liquor prohibition

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Several BJP workers, including party's Delhi unit chief Virendra Sachdeva, were detained while holding a flash protest against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's visit to Rajghat ahead of his surrender at Tihar Jail on Sunday.

The BJP workers were trying to block the Chief Minister's cavalcade as it reached Mahatma Gandhi's memorial from the CM House in Civil Lines.

Mr. Sachdeva said, "We organised the flash protest as it is shocking that Kejriwal, who has been arrested in the Delhi liquor scam, is being allowed to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi, who worked all his life for prohibition."

The protesters were let off with a warning after an hour, Mr. Sachdeva said.

Around 100 workers



BJP leaders and workers staging a protest against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's visit to Rajghat in Delhi on Sunday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

were detained by the police, party spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said.

old victim card, but people of Delhi know well that Gandhi's ideology has no place in Arvind Kejriwal's lifestyle," the BJP leader said.

He added that the Chief Minister has also removed Mahatma Gandhi's photos from his office and

residence.

"People of Delhi won't forgive Kejriwal who, by writing a letter from jail, pretended to be worried about the water crisis in the Capital, but once out on bail, paid no attention to it," the Delhi BJP president added.

573% rise in instances of underage driving in city

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The national capital has witnessed a 573% rise in the issuance of challans to minors for driving on the city roads till May 15 this year, when compared with the corresponding period last year.

According to data published by the Delhi traffic police, only 15 challans were issued for underage driving between January 1 and May 15 last year, whereas 101 challans were issued for the offence this year during the same period.

The department has attributed the rise in the penalties to the implementation of measures such as heightened surveillance and the deployment of additional personnel at key checkpoints.

Cottage emporium's workers protest over late dues, no raises

Alisha Dutta

NEW DELHI

Employees of the decades-old Central Cottage Industries Corporation (CCIC) emporium at Janpath said despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's praise for India's "booming" indigenous crafts industry, they are battling issues like delayed wages, lack of appraisals, and no allowances.

"Employees who have been working there for over 20 years have not seen an appraisal in over a decade despite inflation. The last appraisal they got was in 2007, which was implemented in 2010. After that, despite skyrocketing inflation, there has been no increment in salaries," Rakesh Kumar, a union leader and employee of the emporium, told *The Hindu*.

However, managing director Manoj Lal said the company has been in loss since the pandemic, and cannot give employees a raise until the store resumes making profit.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH



JAYA KRISHNASWAMY

11-12-1933 02-06-2024

Smt. Jaya Krishnaswamy passed away peacefully in the early hours of 2nd June 2024 after a brief hospitalisation. She is an alumna of Church Park school and Queen Mary's college in Chennai. She was a teacher and later headmistress at Mount St. Mary's in Delhi Cantonment, and at St. Mirin's in Pune. Her students and colleagues fondly remember her, as she did them. In her retired life, together with her late husband, Air Vice Marshal V. Krishnaswamy, she founded the Madhuram Narayan Centre for exceptional children, with the support of the Sammar family. She was a deeply committed educator, mentor, and friend to all who met her. She contributed much of her life to social causes, scholarships for deserving students, and to the renovation of village ponds and temples, including the family's ancestral village temple at Perumbakkam. Her instant smile and attention brought companionship and confidence to all. Her circle of family and friends, across India and over the world, was ever-growing, but she never compromised on personal closeness. Active and energetic till the end, she inspired all by the ease with which she made friends of all ages, and by her socially dedicated life. She is much missed and will be forever remembered.

Vijay Raghavan, Usha, Venkatesh Prasad, Malini, Srivinasa Madhavan, Julie, Varun, Ananya, Erin Jaya and Edward Krishna.

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Plot to kill Salman: fifth accused held from Haryana

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The fifth arrest was made by the Navi Mumbai police in connection with the plot to kill Bollywood actor Salman Khan, said officials, adding that the accused, Deepak Hawasingh Goglia alias Johnny Walmiki, 30, was arrested from Haryana on Saturday.

Timings	
MONDAY, JUN. 03	
● RISE 05:24 SET 19:16	
● RISE 02:42 SET 16:02	
TUESDAY, JUN. 04	
● RISE 05:24 SET 19:17	
● RISE 03:19 SET 17:10	
WEDNESDAY, JUN. 05	
● RISE 05:24 SET 19:17	
● RISE 03:59 SET 18:18	

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44°C Heat wave to prevail. The weather will be very hot and uneasy during the day. Chances of duststorm and thundershower.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
45°C Severe heat wave to continue. The day will be very hot and uneasy. Spell of dust storm and thundershower is likely. Morning will be uneasy.

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SIT continues to grill Prajwal; 4 teams to track his mother

The probe agency is trying to get information about the missing phone used by the accused to allegedly record videos, and also on the movements of the Hassan MP during his time abroad

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU



NSUI members hold a protest against Prajwal Revanna's alleged role in the sexual abuse case, in Bengaluru on April 30. FILE PHOTO

Officials of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) continued to grill Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, who is facing allegations of sexually abusing several women and also videotaping them. He has been suspended by the Janata Dal(S).

The SIT officials were also trying to get information about the phone used by Mr. Prajwal to record the videos as the device has been missing, according to sources. The officials are

trying to ascertain the purpose of recording the videos and the possible involvement of other people in it. Mr. Prajwal, who was us-

ing another phone which is in the custody of the SIT, told the police that he had lost his phone long ago.

The police are also ques-

tioning him about his movements during his time abroad and the people with whom he was in touch with. Mr. Prajwal has apparently not responded to most of the questions.

Meanwhile, four special teams have been formed to track down Mr. Prajwal's mother Bhavani. She was supposed to appear before the SIT for questioning but has not responded despite officials visiting her house on Saturday. The teams have been dispatched to Mysuru, Bengaluru, and Hassan, sources said.

Six minors, being 'trafficked' from Jharkhand to Delhi, rescued

Alisha Dutta

NEW DELHI

Six minor girls from Jharkhand who were being brought to the Capital on a train by alleged traffickers were rescued on May 29 after an alert co-passenger, who works as a counsellor at Jharkhand Bhawan in Delhi, notified the authorities.

Nirmala Khalko, who has worked closely with children trafficked from Jharkhand, said she called the authorities, who rescued the minors after the train reached Delhi, after noticing that the children sounded distressed while talking to their parents and spoke in an accent that was distinct from that of the al-

leged traffickers, who claimed to be the victim's relatives.

The minors, aged 12 to 17, are presently with a Child Welfare Committee (CWC), and their statements are being recorded for further investigation, a senior police officer said. The girls belong to Gumla and Simdega districts of Jharkhand.

Chance encounter
Ms. Khalko said she, along with the minors and their

alleged traffickers, had boarded the Jharkhand Swarna Jayanti Express from Ranchi on May 28. Soon after they took their seats – three minors with a woman in the seat opposite Ms. Khalko's – in the sleeper coach, the Jharkhand Bhawan official struck up a conversation with her fellow passengers, and subsequently alerted officials.

Over the next couple of hours, the Jharkhand Bhawan official gathered information about the three minors and learnt that there were three more minors in the compartment. They were rescued when the train reached Anand Vihar railway station, said Ms. Khalko.

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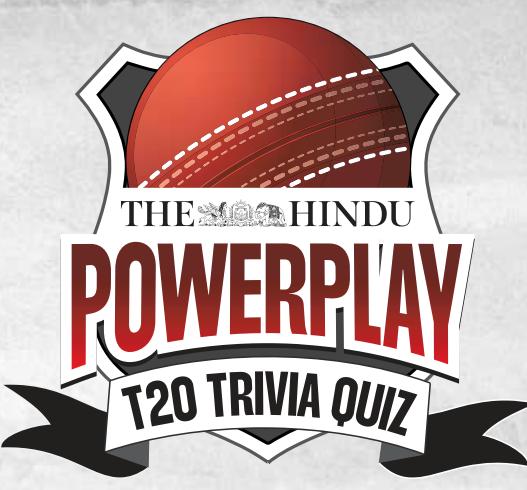
For all the above works the last date for submission of completed tender documents is on 12.06.2024 before 15:00 Hrs. Technical Tender will be opened on 13.06.2024 at 16:00 Hrs.

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/171/KA/ITA/24-25

THE HINDU
India's National Newspaper

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Turn to the sports pages
to participate in today's quiz

Yesterday's winners:

1. A. Moin Basha, Mumbai | 2. M. Farhan, Chennai | 3. P. Niranjan, Chennai

THE HINDU

EDUCATIONPLUS

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Albert P' Rayan

Over the past decade, numerous climate change disasters, including heatwaves, excessive rainfall leading to floods, and droughts have disrupted daily life globally. With political parties, especially in India, being largely indifferent to the issue, it is crucial to raise awareness among educators and students.

In this interview, ELT professional and climate change education advocate Alan Maley speaks about how climate change education can bring about a change:

You mentioned that the Humanizing Language Teaching magazine has introduced a new section called Eco Issues. What is the rationale behind such a section in a magazine for English teachers?

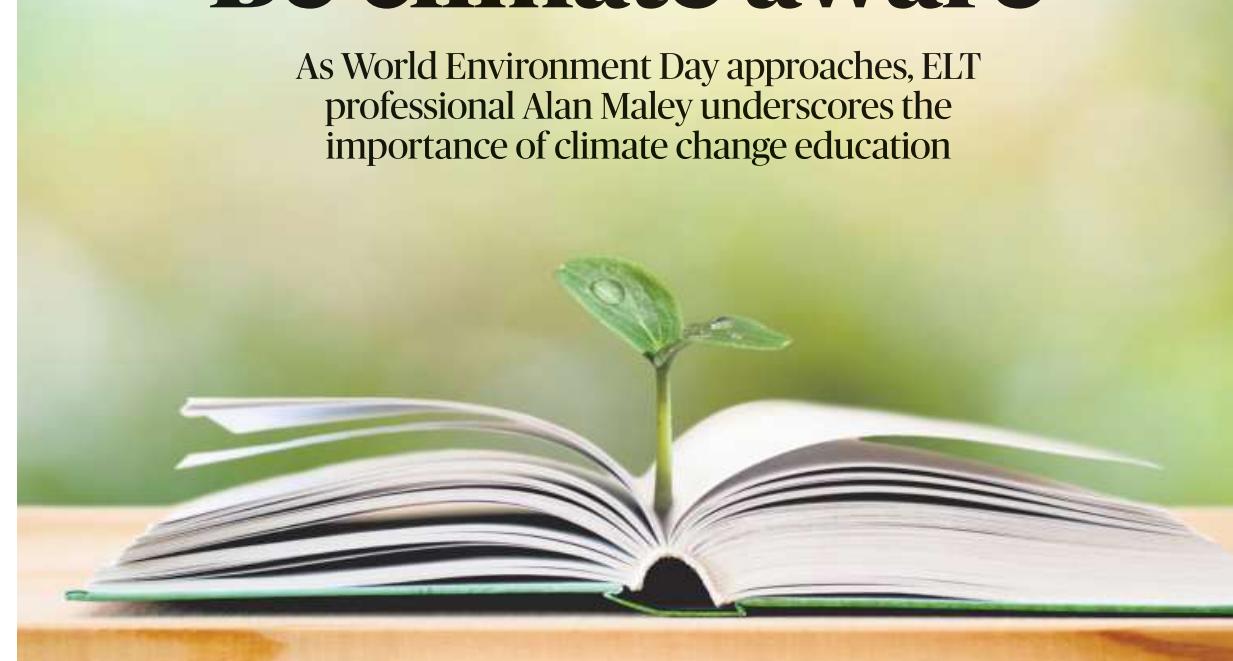
The reason for bringing it to the attention of teachers (in this case language teachers) is that they have immense influence on their students and there is a strong possibility that they can change students' mindsets – and eventually their behaviours and lifestyles – towards more eco-friendly action.

Many, including teachers perceive climate change as a complex issue to be primarily addressed by policymakers. How can ordinary individuals contribute?

Of course, climate change is

Be climate aware

As World Environment Day approaches, ELT professional Alan Maley underscores the importance of climate change education



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

far too complex and urgent to leave it to politicians. And it is pointless to say that ordinary individuals – still less teachers – can do nothing. "No one is too small to make a difference," as Greta Thunberg reminds us.

Climate change education (CCE) entails teaching people about the science, causes, impacts, and solutions related to the issue. Can language teachers effectively engage in CCE?

My argument is that, in order to engage in effective action, all teachers need to become inspired by, and well-informed, about the issue. There is abundant and highly accessible material:

songs, video games, films, TED talks, cartoons, plays, novels, biographies of eco-warriors and so on. On a more serious note, a plethora of organisations offer access to information. Increasingly, there are teaching materials focussing on precisely these issues such as the British Council's Climate Resources for School Teachers.

How can English language teachers incorporate climate change education creatively?

It can be done in many ways. For example, by setting up simple projects that students can carry out in their own environment such as surveys of consumption of energy and water, waste disposal and so



on. Or, as in my own case, by incorporating it into creative writing works, leading to graphic displays, small publications and even performances of student work.

How can English language

perspective?

Countries and cultures differ greatly in the degree of respect accorded to 'authority'. So, in some places, there is a degree of risk attached to being perceived as an 'activist'. Teachers clearly have to be judicious and sensitive to local sensibilities in the degree to which they engage with these issues. There are quieter ways to make a difference. Increasingly, I predict, even the most resistant institutional forces will realise that action has to be taken if we are not to suffer the most unthinkable disasters – and possible annihilation.

As a creative writer and poet, what steps have you taken to raise awareness among English language teachers about climate issues?

I was the founder of the IATEFL Global Issues Special Interest Group and also successfully lobbied the IATEFL leadership to make public its support for greater eco-related teacher activities. I have also engaged with and persuaded HLT Magazine to set up the new Eco-Issues section. I take every opportunity to extend awareness of the urgency of our predicament through webinars, conference presentations and articles. In terms of creative writing, I oversaw the publication of *What Have We Done*, a collection of poems on eco-issues. I help coordinate an international writing group, *Worlds into Words*, with members from 26 countries that has a commitment to

social and environmental justice.

Do you believe that teachers can play a constructive role in humanity's fight against climate change?

It would be both a tragedy and a source of enduring shame if teachers failed to use their enormous power of influence to change the mindsets and lifestyles of those most vulnerable to the impending implosion of the eco-sphere. But I am an optimist. As the historian A.J.P. Taylor says, "Nothing is inevitable until it happens."

The writer is an ELT resource person and education columnist. rayanal@yahoo.co.uk

SCHOLARSHIPS

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The Last date of receipt of applications is:- 30th June 2024 Director General

IN BRIEF



Religious activities by 'saffron forces' at Visva-Bharati: SFI

Left-wing Students Federation of India (SFI) has alleged that "saffron forces" are holding "certain religious activities" on Visva-Bharati campus with over 12 rooms allotted to one such organisation in the university guest house. Responding to the charges, Visva-Bharati authorities, however, said, "No religious meet has been allowed within the campus" but any room of the guest house can be booked by any "bona-fide organisation as per applicable rates". The SFI levelled the charge, citing reports that Shankaracharya of Puri will be attending a religious event at Bolpur and will be staying at the guest house. PTI

'Will win at least 12 LS seats, 110 Assembly constituencies'

The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Sunday asserted that the party would form the government in Odisha with a two-thirds majority by winning at least 110 of the 147 Assembly constituencies in the State. The party said it would also bag at least 12 of the 21 Lok Sabha seats. Rejecting exit polls that predicted that the BJD would win 15 Lok Sabha seats in Odisha, the BJD said that exit polls for the State have proved to be wrong in 2014 and 2019 elections and the trend would continue this time as well. "We are well poised to retain power in the State," BJD spokesperson Sasmit Patra said. PTI

Amul milk price hiked by ₹2 per litre from today

The Hindu Bureau

AHMEDABAD
The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which markets milk and milk products under the brand name of Amul, has increased the price of fresh milk by ₹2 a litre effective from June 3, 2024, in all markets across the country.

'Higher input cost'

The federation has attributed the hike to the rise in input costs. With the revision, Amul buffalo milk will cost ₹73 a litre and cow milk ₹58 a litre.

Banned Jamaat-e-Islami's peace overtures during Lok Sabha poll await formal government response

Peerzada Ashiq

SRINAGAR

Voting by cadres of the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) in all three Lok Sabha constituencies of the Kashmir valley has brought to the fore the back channel dialogue between Delhi and the socio-religious organisation, which has publicly expressed its willingness to participate in the election if the ban is lifted.

There are indicators pointing at official engagement with the JeI. Several leaders of the banned group were allowed to address the media in all three Lok Sabha seats in



Kashmir.

The engagement, according to official sources, has been ongoing for more than a year at a non-political level.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) banned the JeI in 2019 for being an "illegal association" under

the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) for a period of five years. The ban was extended this year in February, till 2029.

The banning of the JeI in 2019 also saw the organisation's top members, including its 'Amir' (chief), Abdul Hamid Fayaz, spo-

kesperson Zahid Ali, and former secretary general Ghulam Qadir Lone, being arrested. All the three were released on the direction of the court on separate orders. However, two senior leaders, Mr. Fayaz and Mr. Ali, were arrested again. Mr. Ali's arrest came immediately after a section of the JeI voted in the Srinagar constituency on May 13, reflecting an apparent division within the ranks of the group.

However, Ghulam Qadir Wani, a JeI leader from Pulwama's Gussu, claimed there was no division. Mr. Wani heads a special panel constituted by the Jamaat, and he claimed to have the

backing of the 'Shura' (the organisation's top elected decision-making body), too, for the dialogue with the government.

'We will contest polls'

Ghulam Qadir Lone, former general secretary, has also backed the initiative. He blamed the 1987 "rigging" for the JeI's decision to distance itself from electoral politics in the 1990s. "If the ban on the JeI is lifted and rigging not allowed, we will contest [the elections]," Mr. Lone said. In spite of a number of voices emerging from the JeI, the government and the BJP's leaders have not reacted formally.

'Exit, not exact polls'

Mr. Gandhi, who has been spending hours in the heat at the Kasganj强室, said that the "exit polls are not exact polls" and added that the party workers' motivation to protect the EVMs from foul play has only doubled.

The administration has issued two passes each per Assembly segment.

"As Etah has five Assembly segments, we are ten people working in three shifts. There is a cooler to beat the heat and ludo to kill time. With no BJP and BSP workers around, we only have officials and policemen to discuss the trends and possible outcomes," he said.

Mr. Gandhi said the administration had provided them with the form 17C for all the booths and this was being shared with the

counting agents. "We are sharing a docket that contains all the relevant information with counting agents and are training them to spot any attempt to sabotage the process on the day of counting," he said.

The strong rooms covered by the CCTV cameras are under the protection of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). The party workers form the second layer. The outer layer of security is provided by the Uttar Pradesh Police.

In Budhaun, Shafi Ahmad, vice president of Seva Dal Youth Brigade of Uttar Pradesh, said the Congress workers are working with the SP to safeguard the EVMs. Budhaun, where SP leader Shivpal Yadav's son Aditya Yadav is in the fray, is one of those seats that the alliance expects to win by a margin of more than 50,000 votes, he said.

It appears the Opposition is guarding EVMs at some seats more rigorously than others. In Ghaziabad, one found only one agent of an independent candidate keeping watch. He said the Congress workers visit once or twice a day but otherwise, it was just him.

'Faith in the system'
Interestingly, the BJP workers do not seem too keen on the security of the EVMs. Sanjay Narula, who is in charge of BJP's election office in Rampur, said members visit the strong room occasionally but are not burning the midnight oil to safeguard the EVMs.

Deceived, sexually abused: the violation and vulnerability of tribal women in M.P.

SPOTLIGHT

Mehul Malpani

Trigger warning: The following article contains disturbing details of sexual violence; please avoid reading if you feel triggered.

It was almost midnight on May 13. Kamla Devi (name changed to protect identity), 60, was lying on her cot in the courtyard of her home when she heard a voice from near the wooden fencing. Walking over to the fence, she found a young girl whimpering for help. There were fresh wounds on her face and lips. "The girl said she had walked a long way through a hilly forest and across a stream," Devi says, still alarmed. "All she wanted was a glass of water to drink and a bucket of water for a bath."

Hema (name changed to protect identity), 21, had walked over 10 km off the road from Madwas village, where she said she had been raped five times and assaulted by a man. She had gone to Madwas after the man, using a voice-changing mobile applica-

tion, had posed as a woman professor and promised her a government scholarship.

She is one of four women and girls who have filed police complaints stating they have been deceived in a similar way, and then raped.

Madhya Pradesh Police has arrested the prime accused, Brajesh Prajapati, 30, a labourer, and three of his accomplices for allegedly raping several women. While Brajesh has admitted to raping seven, only five have come forward so far.

The other three accused have been identified as Sandeep Prajapati, 24; Rahul Prajapati, 23 (both brothers); and Luvkush Prajapati, 21, all related to Brajesh through marriage.

Probe under way
Based on the accounts of the four survivors, including one minor, the police have registered three separate cases under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections 376(2)(n), (repeated rape on same person), 342 (punishment for wrongful confinement), 394 (voluntarily causing hurt while com-



The mud structure in Sidhi's Majhuli where the accused raped seven tribal women. A.M. FARQUI

mitting robbery), 366 (kidnapping), 294 (using obscene language), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 120 b (criminal conspiracy) at the Majhuli police station in Sidhi district.

One case has also been filed under IPC Section 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) as one survivor had managed to escape from Brajesh's grip. In one case, Section 3 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 has also been invoked.

Of all the victims, Hema was the first to go to the police on May 16. She was encouraged by her uncle, who is in the police. "If we cannot help our own staff and their families come out about such incidents, we cannot expect the general public to do so," Majhuli police station in-charge Deepak Baghel says.

In the next four days, the cops tracked down four more survivors, and on May 20, they nabbed the prime accused, and eventually his accomplices.

who had attended a local college about two years ago and was still a member of some student WhatsApp groups.

The prime accused would pose as a woman professor and ask the victims if they had turned 18. If the girl said yes, he would ask if they had received the government scholarship they had been selected for. When the girls said no, he would ask them to come and sign some documents for the money to be released, in a specific location near Majhuli town.

He would pick up the girl at dusk, saying he was the professor's son, take them to a secluded half-broken farm hut - a mud structure locally called 'paahi' - owned by his in-laws in Madwas. This was allegedly the spot where all the crimes were committed. Police say only Brajesh raped the women; the others would help him with getting rid of the mobile phones and other activities.

Cries and ordeals
In the first incident known so far that took place on

April 15, he had lured Rekha (name changed), 19, a woman from the Baiga tribe, one of the most underprivileged groups even among tribal communities. The Baigas have been declared a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Rekha travelled about 35 km from her home in the hope of the scholarship money and had taken her 17-year-old cousin with her. The minor girl says that he first tied her up and raped her four times before moving on her.

Around 1 in the night, he dropped off the two girls at another secluded location and threatened to murder them if they told anyone about the incident.

A personal history
Another police officer involved with the investigation says Brajesh had a tumultuous personal life.

This was his second marriage as his first wife, whom he had married when he was about 20, left him for another man, the officer says, adding that he believes that even his current wife had begun an af-

fair after his hands were burnt in a steel factory blast at Jabalpur.

Another possible trigger, say the police, was an affair he had with a tribal girl eight to nine months ago. Her family members found out and they allegedly beat him up. "He says he wanted to take revenge on the community," the officer says.

Survivors in the current cases hail from extremely poor backgrounds, living in villages that lack basic amenities like a water pipeline, electricity, and roadways.

Rekha's mother, in her village, says, "Whether it's money or something else, it's very easy to use our needs to trap and lure us."

She quickly changes the topic of conversation when her neighbours come and sit outside her house.

Rekha's minor cousin's father says that they simply want to forget the incident. "We will get our daughter married when she comes of age," he adds.

LINK TO FULL STORY
» <http://bit.ly/3xkXN8u>

Bengal BJP worker killed post-poll violence in Nadia, Sandeshkhali on the boil

400 companies of Central forces to be stationed in the State till June 6; Chief Minister Mamata claims exit polls not in sync with ground realities and were 'manufactured at home' 2 months ago

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

A day after polling for the Lok Sabha election concluded, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) worker was killed in West Bengal's Nadia district in an alleged incident of post-poll violence.

Family members of the victim said that he was targeted by the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) for his allegiance to the BJP.

The incident occurred at Kaliganj in Nadia district which falls under Krishnanagar Lok Sabha seat. Hafizur Sheikh was attacked by a group of unidentified men on Saturday night and was killed on the spot. TMC's Mahua Moitra and BJP's Amrita Roy are contesting the Lok Sabha elections.

The murder triggered protests and locals did not allow the police to retrieve the body for a few hours.

While the family members of the deceased BJP supporter blamed TMC cadres, the ruling party leaders said



Security personnel stand guard outside a strong room where EVMs are kept after the conclusion of polls, in Kolkata on Sunday. ANI

that the killing was due to family rivalry.

Security deployed

Meanwhile, Sandeshkhali remained on the boil with large deployment of police and security forces. The region had witnessed violence during polling on Saturday. On Sunday, villagers prevented the police from arresting a local BJP worker who was involved in the violence on Saturday.

The Election Commission of India has ordered repolling on two polling booths – one in Barasat and the other in the Mathurapur Lok Sabha seat on Monday. The BJP had sought repoll on about 200 polling booths, mostly in the Diamond Harbour seat. The

last phase of elections in the State had witnessed several incidents of violence. In another development, it has been decided by the office of the Chief Electoral Officer and the State government that about 400 companies of Central forces will be stationed in the State at least till June 6. This is to contain any incidents of post-poll violence in the State. Ninety two companies of Central forces will be deployed at the counting centres on June 4.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to intervene and restore peace there. Speaking to PTI, Mr. Bose said that he had written to Ms. Banerjee asking her to inform him about the action taken against those involved in the incidents of violence in Sandeshkhali.

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strong rooms covered by the CCTV cameras are under the protection of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). The party workers form the second layer. The outer layer of security is provided by the Uttar Pradesh Police.

Anuj Kumar

GHAZIABAD

The results of exit polls have not doused the enthusiasm of the Samajwadi Party workers as they continue to keep round-the-clock vigil at the strong rooms where the electronic voting machines (EVM) are stored, even as workers of the BJP are taking it easy.

Exit polls have predicted 62-72 seats for the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and 6 to 17 seats for the INDIA bloc.

SP spokesperson Abdul Hafiz Gandhi echoed the views of party president Akhilesh Yadav that the exit poll is based on the District Magistrate and not the EVM.

'Exit, not exact polls'

Mr. Gandhi, who has been spending hours in the heat at the Kasganj strongroom of Etah Lok Sabha for almost a month, said that the "exit polls are not exact polls" and added that the party workers' motivation to protect the EVMs from foul play has only doubled.

The administration has issued two passes each per Assembly segment.

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LINK TO FULL STORY
» <http://bit.ly/3xkXN8u>

UDF, LDF reject exit poll results; BJP says it will win 5 or 6 seats

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



The UDF is winning in Thrissur. Suresh Gopi, the BJP candidate, will end up third

K. MURALEEDHARAN
Congress leader

jected the projections for Thrissur and Attingal, which some pollsters expected the BJP to win.

"The UDF is sure of winning in Thrissur. Suresh Gopi, the BJP candidate, will end up third. In case he ends up in second place, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan would be responsible for it. The BJP can secure second place only with cross-voting from the LDF. In all the seven Assembly constituencies in Thrissur, the fight was between the UDF and the LDF," he said.

CPI(M) leader A.K. Balan expressed confidence that the INDIA bloc would win all the seats in Kerala. However, if the BJP manages to win a seat, the UDF would be responsible for it. "Exit polls are untrustworthy. In 2004, most polls projected the NDA to come to power. However, it was the UPA which came to power. The pro-Modi wave of 2019 does not exist now. An anti-Modi verdict will be reflected in the election," he said.

BJP leader V. Muralidharan said the party is poised to open its account in Kerala. BJP State chief K. Surendran said the party would win five or six seats.

'Onus on Pinarayi'

Despite the largely favourable projections for the UDF, Congress leader K. Muralidharan, who contested from Thrissur, said that the exit polls have got it wrong regarding the BJP, which will yet again get zero Lok Sabha seats from the State. He especially re-

YSRCP moves SC over relaxation of postal ballot norms by EC

Party alleges new circular was issued 17 days after polling took place in A.P. and it was made applicable only to the State; court may hear it today

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) moved the Supreme Court urgently on Sunday against the Election Commission (EC), questioning the validity of around five lakh postal ballots cast in Andhra Pradesh.

A Vacation Bench of Justices Sandeep Mehta and Aravind Kumar is likely to hear the case on Monday.

The party has challenged the Andhra Pradesh High Court's refusal to consider on merits its plea against the relaxation of postal ballot norms by the poll body. The High Court had dismissed the plea on the sole basis that there was an alternative remedy available, that is, to file a petition.

The petition, filed by advocate Mahfooz A. Nazki, said the postal ballots cast form 1.5% of the total votes. The results of the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the State will be declared on June 4. "It is important to note that the results of Assembly and Parliamentary constituencies will be declared on June 4. In the event invalid votes are taken into account, the same is bound to cause grave prejudice to the petitioner (YSRCP)," it said.



Police personnel casting their vote through postal ballot in Visakhapatnam. V. RAJU

The petition directs the court's attention to the procedure governing the casting, verification and counting of postal ballots envisaged under the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, and the instructions issued in July 19 last year by the EC read with Form 13A of the 1961 Rules. Rules 23 and 24 prescribe the form in which postal ballot votes are to be processed.

New circular issued

Form 13A is to be signed in the presence of an authorised officer, who also has to attest the signature. The declaration that is duly attested is to be kept in a cover marked as Form 13A. Thereafter, the said officer is necessarily required to put his designation, signature, and seal in the form. Rule 54A(4) mandates that an unsigned or unattested Form 13A should be rejected. "From the above, it is clear that this procedure is

sine qua non for a postal ballot to be treated as valid," the petition said.

However, the YSRCP said an EC circular issued on May 30 had relaxed the postal ballot norms. The party said the circular was made applicable only to Andhra Pradesh. "Strangely, the EC issued the impugned circular dated 30.05.2024 only in respect of the State of Andhra Pradesh providing that even if Form 13A only contains the signature of the attesting officer, the same is to be accepted...The action of the Election Commission is *ex facie unsustainable*," the party contended.

It was issued 17 days from the date of election in Andhra Pradesh on May 13.

"It, therefore, raises suspicions regarding the motives behind the circular," the appeal said. The YSRCP said it was not trying to impede the election process through this petition.

Delhi: pet dog undergoes non-invasive heart surgery

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A dog with a complex heart condition successfully underwent a minimally invasive heart surgery at a hospital here with veterinarians claiming it to be the first such procedure to be carried out by private practitioners in the Indian subcontinent.

Seven-year-old beagle, Juliet, was suffering from Mitral valve disease for the last two years, Dr. Bhanu Dev Sharma, an interventional cardiologist for small animals at Max PetZ Hospital in East of Kailash said on Sunday. The condition is caused by degenerative changes in mitral valve leaflets which result in back flow of blood within the left upper chamber of the heart and subsequent congestive heart failure.

The surgeons performed a Transcatheter Edge-to-Edge Repair (TEER) procedure using a valve clamp on May 30. "It is a hybrid surgery as it is a combination of a micro-surgery and interventional procedure. The best part about this procedure is that it is minimally invasive as it is a beating heart procedure, and not like an open heart surgery, which needs a heart lung bypass machine," Dr. Sharma explained.

Juliet's owners heard about the procedure from their visit to the U.S. where it was introduced two years ago, he added. The pet was discharged in a stable medical condition two days after surgery.

Raveena's car did not hit anybody, police say after viral video

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

A day after a viral video on social media showed an angry crowd confronting Bollywood actor Raveena Tandon and her driver for allegedly ramming her car into pedestrians, the Mumbai Police, in the course of its investigation into the road rage incident, has found that her car did not collide with anyone, an official said on Sunday.

In the purported video of the incident, a man had claimed that Ms. Tandon's driver hit his mother, and when questioned, she started assaulting her. He had claimed the incident happened when he was walking with his mother, sister, and niece near the actor's house.

According to the Khar police official, CCTV footage from the vicinity of the building showed that women were in close proximity to the actor's car but were not struck by it.

The video shows a group of locals accusing Ms. Tandon and her driver of assaulting three women.

Actor Raveena Tandon was accused of ramming her car into pedestrians. FILE PHOTO

After the actor got out of her vehicle to speak to the crowd, she was allegedly pushed and hit, the official said.

The incident took place on Carter Road in Bandra on Saturday night, police said. While no FIR has been registered, a station diary entry has been made at the Khar police station, the official added.

There was no word yet on the incident from the actor.

1993 Mumbai blast convict killed by prison inmates

Ateeq Shaikh
MUMBAI

so known as Manoj Kumar Bhawarlal Gupta, had an argument with fellow inmates over taking a bath on Sunday morning. The argument turned violent, following which the inmates smashed his head with an iron piece covering the drain. He was serving a life sentence.

BRS leader went to U.S. to meet former intelligence chief: Minister

The Hindu Bureau

HYDERABAD

Telangana Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Sunday alleged that Siddipet MLA T. Harish Rao met former State Intelligence chief T. Prabhakar Rao, who is under the scanner in the phone-tapping case, to plead with him not to return to India.

"If Mr. Prabhakar Rao returns to India, he will have to share all the details about 'phone-tapping' and finally, it will end up at former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao," he said, and demanded that Mr. Harish Rao reveal the details about his U.S. trip.

He said Mr. Harish travelled to U.S. on an Emirates flight on May 26 at the instance of KCR.

"Mr. Prabhakar Rao is avoiding KCR's calls, saying he is in hospital and that is why, perhaps, Mr. Harish was told to go to the U.S. for discussions and to ask him not to come back to India," he said.

The Minister suggested that KCR ask Mr. Prabhakar to come back to India and face the probe.

Mr. Reddy also took a dig at the Bharat Rashtra Samithi celebrations on 10 years of State formation on June 1. He mocked BRS saying that even Mohammad Ali Jinnah used to gain vicarious pleasure celebrating Pakistan Independence Day on August 14, a day before India celebrates its Independence Day. He said KCR never had any love for Telangana and started the 'TRS' only as he was denied a Cabinet berth in the TDP government.

Sparkling celebration



Eye-catching sight: Firecrackers being burst by the State government near the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Secretariat in Hyderabad on Sunday to mark Telangana Formation Day. NAGARA GOPAL

MLC polls to be held for six seats in Karnataka today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The crucial biennial elections to six seats in the Legislative Council from the Teachers and Graduates' constituencies – the results of which is keenly watched – will get underway on Monday.

As many as 78 contestants, including a woman, are in the fray across six constituencies. The elections are being held in the Karnataka East Graduates', Bangalore Graduates', Karnataka South East Teachers', Karnataka South West Teachers', Karnataka South West Graduates', and Karnataka South Teachers' constituencies 70,260.



This will be the second major elections after the Lok Sabha polls that the BJP-Janata Dal(S) combine will be fighting against the ruling Congress. While the three graduates' constituencies are 3,63,573 and in three teachers' constituencies 70,260.

Hope for Congress

In the 75-member Upper House, the Congress does not have a majority and is looking to improve on the number in this election,

which would help it to wrest the majority from the NDA.

The shift in number will not only help the Congress in the easy passage of Bills, but will also have an impact on the future of Chairman of the House Basavaraj Horatti and Deputy Chairman M.K. Pranesh, both of whom belong to the BJP. The Congress, which has 29 members in the Upper House, hopes to wrest majority with a good performance here and with the seven assured seats in the subsequent polls that it is likely to get from the Assembly.

The BJP is facing trouble in the South West Graduates' seat where its former legislator from Udupi K.

Raghupathi Bhat, now expelled from the party, is contesting as an Independent. The Congress has fielded Ayanur Manjunath, a senior politician and a former lawmaker, who was with the BJP and JD(S), from the seat.

In Bangalore Graduates' constituency, A. Deve Gowda of the BJP is seeking re-election, while in South Teachers' constituency, four-time JD(S) MLC Maruthibbe Gowda, now in Congress, is seeking another term. S.L. Bhoje Gowda of the JD(S) is seeking re-election from South West Teachers' constituency and Y.A. Narayanswamy of the BJP is seeking another term from the South East Teachers' constituency.

Rain subsides in Kerala; yellow alert issued in 2 districts

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The heavy rain that has been lashing parts of Kerala for the past few days abated on Sunday with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) revising the alert issued for various districts on the day.

However, Athirappilly in Thrissur witnessed some intense spells. The monsoon flow was weak on Sunday. The IMD issued a yellow alert warning of isolated heavy rains for Kannur on Monday and Thrissur on Tuesday.

However, the State is likely to receive fairly widespread light to moderate spells with thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds for the next five days triggered by a cyclonic circulation that lies over the southeast Arabian Sea adjoining the south Kerala coast and another cyclonic circulation over the west-central Bay of Bengal.

Thrissur and Alappuzha recorded the highest rainfall of 12 cm each in the 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Sunday, followed by Ernakulam with 9 cm and Kozhikode with 7 cm.



For a consensus

Elections should not prompt politicians to break consensus on foreign policy

With the curtains coming down on the general election 2024, every party will take stock of its campaign on issues of domestic political importance. However, it is also necessary for all concerned, particularly those forming the next government, to review the disturbing trend of revisiting questions of foreign policy. Both sides have ratcheted up the rhetoric over India's international ties and in some cases, even the re-opening of settled bilateral agreements. At the start of the campaign, the ruling party focused on the issue of the half-century-old Katchatheevu agreement, that accepted the island as Sri Lankan territory, to target the Opposition Congress and the DMK that were in power in 1974. In response, Congress leaders asked whether the 2015 Land Boundary Agreement with Bangladesh could also be reviewed for its land concessions. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has led the charge on other foreign policy fronts, especially on Pakistan, calling the Congress party a "disciple of Pakistan" and comparing its manifesto pejoratively to that of the Muslim League that founded Pakistan. U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath even proclaimed that were Mr. Modi to be re-elected, he would reclaim Pakistan Occupied Kashmir "within six months". Other brash comments over India's use of its nuclear arsenal, or that the government will transgress international boundaries to kill "terrorists threatening India", have raised eyebrows in many capitals. The clashes between the Indian Army and Chinese PLA at Galwan in 2020 that led to the deaths of 20 soldiers have often been raised by Opposition leaders in campaign rallies, as in the past as well. Meanwhile, throughout the campaign, Mr. Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar accused "western powers" of attempting to interfere in Indian polls.

Such heated campaign rhetoric is meant for domestic audiences, but it would be unwise for political leaders to assume that India's international partners are not watching and listening carefully. India's ties with its smaller neighbours carry the highest levels of sensitivity, and raking up these issues and exposing India's vulnerable faultlines, just to make political capital, seems short-sighted. While domestic policy has always been deeply divisive, India's polity had for long achieved a bipartisanship when it came to foreign policy positions, and often took pride in the deployment of Opposition leaders to defend India's case worldwide, including at the UN. The proper platform for the government to assert foreign policy, or for the Opposition to air its differences with it, is not the hustings, but Parliament. It is hoped that as the dust settles, leaders will reflect on the potential damage to India's credibility from campaign propaganda, and restore a more enduring consensus on international relations.

Nipped in the bud

Both supply and demand sides of baby trafficking need to be stopped

Criminal activity is mostly driven by a combination of socio-economic factors – poverty on one end, wealth on the other, and unmet needs or desires. The recent inter-State baby smuggling racket that was busted by the Telangana police should be seen under this lens. While news of baby smuggling rackets dominate headlines from time to time, blowing the lid off of this network has revealed chilling subterranean levels of operation, spanning several States. An inter-State gang smuggled children from Delhi and Pune and sold them to prospective parents in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. As many as 11 people were arrested for the smuggling of as many as 50 babies in the past year. As per initial reports, the gang had been 'purchasing' babies from two persons in Delhi and one person in Pune, traffick them to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and sell to the highest bidder among childless couples in these southern States. It is learnt that the rate for a baby could be between ₹1.80 lakh and ₹5.50 lakh, netting the brokers between ₹50,000 and ₹1 lakh as commission. Three women in the gang had apparently been booked for the same offence earlier.

Further investigation will reveal how the babies were procured, but this is not the first time such rackets have been busted. There is no reason to believe that the reasons were any different: poverty of the biological parents in many cases, urging them to sell their newborns for a paltry sum, and smuggling of newborns from government hospitals where security is lax. On the other end of the spectrum are couples eager to have children, and impatient with the long waiting time to adopt a baby legally. The current waiting time to adopt a child under two years can be anywhere between two to four years. While the lengthy process is put in place to ensure that the best interests of the child are served, the non-availability of babies for adoption has queered the pitch, allowing the demand to seek supply avenues by hook or by crook. Rounding up a gang might at best be a short-term measure in this particular situation. Children are not commodities to purchase at a premium from the free market when supply is low. The government needs to do many things at once to ensure such incidents do not occur again: provide effective poverty alleviation schemes; employment opportunities for youth; generate awareness about adoption schemes for both biological and adoptive parents; remove unnecessary bureaucratic processes in adoption, and ensure effective policing to nip such plots in the bud.

It is 10 years since Andhra Pradesh was divided into two States. A decade is a long enough time to examine the political, economic and historical implications of the division of the political geography of the Telugu people, for them as well as for the Indian Republic.

Scant nostalgia
The vitriol that dominated the bifurcation discourse for almost half a decade prior to the actual bifurcation has now vanished without trace. The two successor states, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, are moving on. Telugu society today on both sides of the political division carries on with very little nostalgia for the nearly five and a half decades of living together in one political entity. For people from the shrunken Andhra Pradesh part, only Hyderabad from the new state of Telangana remains in their imagination. The rest of the geography of Telangana hardly figures in their consciousness. And, for the people of Telangana, no area or aspect of life from across the Andhra Pradesh side of the divide animates their political, social, cultural, or economic imagination.

This is puzzling for two reasons. These two regions were under different political authorities for only about 150 years. Before the Nizam gave away the coastal districts and the 'ceded' districts that came to be called Rayalaseema to the European powers, historically, they were ruled from Golconda and Hyderabad for a long time. And, they were together again since 1956.

However, these long years of living under one political authority could not foster enough of a sense of togetherness to prevent the resumption of their separate journeys. That parting of ways has not yet happened with the Kannada-speaking area of the Nizam's Hyderabad State, nor did it happen as yet with its Marathi-speaking area. They both joined Karnataka and Maharashtra States, respectively, after the linguistic reorganisation of States.

The question arises, therefore, whether the shared vision of the Telugu elites from both the regions – Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State – for unity on the basis of language is frailer compared to those of the shared visions of Kannada and Marathi elites. Or, does a similar fate await them too in the not too distant future? For, regional economic disparities, linguistic divergences, lifestyle differences, and variations in political culture are more or less the same in all the three linguistic groups across the geographies of the Presidencies and Hyderabad State.

As of now, it is only the unity of the Telugus based on language that has come unstuck. Are the other linguistic States likely to meet the same fate in the years or decades to come? Does the fate of Andhra Pradesh which has pioneered the reconfiguration of the Indian Republic's political architecture along linguistic lines also foreshadow its eventual unravelling? Does the Indian Republic eventually have to look for an organising principle other than language? That is the larger



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question that the division of Andhra Pradesh poses at the Republic of India.

It is often not fully appreciated that except a few States in the geographical centre of our Republic, all other States (from Assam in the east, going along the east coast to the southeast and continuing towards the west coast and up to the Punjab and Haryana in the northwest) of our Republic are organised on a linguistic basis. If the underlying organising principle of language is unlikely to hold them together as units, giving greater force to economic, political, historical and other fault lines, an alternative principle will have to be formulated sooner rather than later. Could that be the size of territory or population? Or, should it be something else? If the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh suggested anything at all, it is that the Indian Republic cannot avoid this question for long.

Size, when translated into the number of seats in the central legislature, might eventually be a point of friction among the units of our Republic, because representation in the form of numbers determines the distribution of political power. And, the distribution of political power has the potential to exert decisive influence on the distribution of economic resources within the federal structure. There are already faint noises of unease among the political elites in some States, especially in the south, regarding speculation about future delimitation in which some northern States could gain abnormal numbers in the central legislature.



Where States stand

The bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh can give us some idea as to how reconfiguration can radically alter the pecking order of States. In the united State for example, Andhra Pradesh had 42 Lok Sabha seats and was the largest State in the south India. It was as big as today's West Bengal and slightly smaller than Maharashtra. It could carry significant clout in the national political equation. But now, with a mere 25 seats, it is smaller than Tamil Nadu which has 39 seats and Karnataka that has 28 seats, effectively making it third in the pecking order. Telangana, with 17 seats, is smaller than Kerala, thus becoming fifth in the pecking order in the south. A part of the biggest State in the south is now rendered as the third and another part became fifth in the regional pecking order in terms of political clout. In our federal structure, numbers do matter in more ways than one can imagine.

If some States become smaller while others remain big, political equations among them will become unequal and may result in undesirable strains in the federal structure of our Republic. Grossly unequal sizes among the units can render some regions irrelevant and others more relevant in deciding who holds power at the Centre. Any perception that an incumbent regime is serving the political and economic interests of some States because its political base is beholden to the

unequal power distribution could lead to disenchantment, dissent and alienation of those States from the mainstream of our Republic.

The cracks will surface

The questions that the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh threw up and the lesson the process of division offers cannot be parried or ignored. It is unwise to take comfort from the fact that neither side has as yet sharply articulated and followed up on their grievances regarding the messy way the process of bifurcation was handled. Political expression of those grievances from both sides of the division may be delayed but is eventually inevitable. Telangana elites are still in a euphoric mood that they won their fight for a separate State and are eager to showcase the brighter side of the consequence of their victory. A glittering Hyderabad and the revenue boom it generated conceal chinks in its development path. Elites, therefore, are under no pressure yet to focus on issues arising out of division. Once the euphoria wears off, their perception of the omissions and commissions of the badly handled division and their political and economic implications will begin to surface.

The Andhra Pradesh side, in the first five years after the division, got bogged down in its attempt to build for itself a world-class capital to prove to the world with a vengeance that it would overcome the loss of Hyderabad. And the next five years were consumed by profligate direct benefit transfer (DBT) welfareism.

Alternating between these two foci will eventually bring more serious issues to the surface that could be traced to the ham-handed division of the State. The fact that both the obsessions have made the State financially anaemic is glossed over for now. But it cannot remain under wraps for long. Unfulfilled promises made by the Centre on special category status and financial help for building the capital city, inability to effect proper division of joint assets as well as other such core issues will not escape the attention of the political elites for long.

The idea of the linguistic reorganisation of India had a long incubation period. It was thought through, elaborately debated, agreed upon and then implemented. That idea was seen in the national context. But a departure from it was neither thought through nor debated. It was done as a political expediency to pacify an ongoing agitation. Therefore, from the clumsy drafting of the act, its messy passing, the placatory assurances and their half-hearted implementation characterised the departure of a six-and-a-half decade-old mature Republic from a core organising principle of its political geography. The Republic cannot afford such clumsy and thoughtless handling of major departures from its core organising principles. The Andhra Pradesh bifurcation and its fallout merit a deeper and mature examination to ensure a firm footing for our Republic.

Forsaken, marginalised and forgotten



Ziya Us Salam

Majoritarian nationalism is reshaping Indian politics. Declining minority participation, particularly Muslim representation, in the corridors of power is an inevitable consequence. The general election, that has just concluded, is a veritable testimony to India's, at times enthusiastic, at others grudging, acceptance of hues of Hindu nationalism. Even as the wounds of a complete abnegation of Muslim representation in the outgoing government had not healed, a fresh stab was made at the idea of India. Muslim exclusion from electoral politics is beginning to sound real, central, and almost all pervasive. As we await the results to the 18th Lok Sabha, there is a cause for concern over the diminishing space for a section of society in the electoral fray. In the 2019 election, 115 Muslims had contested as the representatives of various political parties. This time, the number was 78, with many parties too timid to give a ticket to a Muslim candidate from anywhere except in the so-called Muslim dominated seats. It could be a reflection of our politics where a Muslim candidate is not preferred by some merely because of his or her faith.

Ground reality

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, despite the noises made last year by Prime Minister Narendra Modi about Pasmanda Muslims, entered a sole Muslim, Abdul Salam, from Malappuram in Kerala. Otherwise, from Punjab to Tamil Nadu, Gujarat to Nagaland, the party deemed Muslims surplus to its electoral arithmetic. The Indian National Congress did not cover itself with glory either – the number of Muslim candidates fighting on the party symbol came down from 34 in 2019 to 19 this time. What was disconcerting was the party's reluctance to put up even a single Muslim candidate from either Delhi or Mumbai,

leading to noises of protest from the party leader Muhammad Arif Naseem Khan who said, "The party wants Muslim votes, not Muslim candidates." Mr. Khan could as well have been speaking for most non-Bharatiya Janata Party parties. The Samajwadi Party, often criticised for being MY (Muslims and Yadavs) representative, fought on 62 seats in Uttar Pradesh but put up only four Muslims in the State where Muslims comprise 19% of population. Likewise, the Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar fielded only two Muslim candidates; however, its ally, the Congress, did give tickets to Muslim candidates from Kathar and Kishanganj.

In Gujarat, neither the Congress nor the BJP put up a Muslim candidate. The story of Muslim denial was repeated by both parties in Rajasthan. In Bengal, the Trinamool Congress, despite Mamata Banerjee's robust defence of minority rights, gave tickets to only six Muslim candidates out of the 42 seats it contested in the State. Significantly, Muslims account for a little over 27% of the State's population. Bengal presents a microcosm of the country. This under-nomination is bound to result in under-representation in Parliament. The community looks at the bleak prospect of sending possibly its lowest number of Members of Parliament to the Lok Sabha when the results are announced on June 4. Forsaken, marginalised, and, probably forgotten.

A fading

All this is a far cry from the heydays of the 1980s when Muslims enjoyed a sizeable slice of the electoral cake. In 1980, there were 49 Muslim MPs in the Lok Sabha. In 1984, there were 46 Muslim MPs.

Pertinently, the BJP was just born in 1980 and had only two Lok Sabha MPs in 1984. As the party's fortunes rose in ensuing elections, the

fortunes of the largest minority went into a parallel decline, finishing with only 23 MPs in 2014. There was a token increase of three in 2019 – a number that seems difficult to attain this time in the light of a drastic fall in the number of Muslim candidates. The Muslim MP is faced with the prospect of gradual elimination. Muslims bring up a little over 14% of India's population, but since the first election in 1951-52 to the last round in 2019, the community's share in Lok Sabha has been under 6%.

An attack on the idea of India

Incidentally, while Muslims have not been as visible as candidates this time, this, however, has not translated into their absence from headlines during the elections. Mr. Modi led the pack in stoking fears in the larger society, referring to the community members as "infiltrators" or "the Congress seeking to give a buffalo to a Muslim if a Hindu owned two buffaloes" to give an example or two. He was both coarse and divisive. If the data shared by the Congress president, Mallikarjun Kharge, are to be believed, Mr. Modi used the term 'Mandir-Masjid-Muslim' 421 times in his speeches. For all his bluff and bluster, he did not conceal his irreverence for the idea of India – a value system that regards all citizens as equal stakeholders in the progress of the nation. Mr. Modi's aggressive Hindutva set the benchmark for other parties. Forget the so-called Muslim vote-bank politics of yesteryears. Today, even the Centrist and Left parties remain disinclined to end Muslim political isolation.

The demographic profiles of the contestants to the 18th Lok Sabha could be a nod to Mr. Modi's concept of Bharat. Indian democracy, however, will be better served without taints of such exclusion.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The exit polls

It is astounding that political parties fail to understand the futility of any discussion, debate, and argument and counter-argument over the exit poll results in the media. No doubt these 'results' arouse interest, but the fate of all the political

parties was sealed soon after the last phase of the general election. Politicians and the public have no other go but to wait for the designated day. There is no point in exchanging heated words over the 'outcome' of the exit polls.

K.V. Seetharamaiah,
Bengaluru

Polling is over and the results are locked in the electronic voting machines. What purpose does it serve then to have exit poll results when the people have been waiting patiently for long for the results? Many such exit polls have gone wrong in the past. The only purpose seems to be to

increase TRP ratings of channels and also promote betting! It is amusing that newspapers give front page coverage to exit polls.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao,
Hyderabad

It should be noted that most of these media houses have for some time been

affiliated to the National Democratic Alliance and its associated organisations. To project the electoral 'exit poll results' any other way would be surprising. Also, the demeanour of the anchors and the way in which they taunt the Opposition parties does not befit the status of a

democracy such as India.
Ratheesh Chandran,
Thiruvalla, Kerala

It is scary to have the exit poll results. If true, what happens to the idea of India? Will every institution fade away?

S. Francis,
New Delhi

Anger, separation, and the aftermath

In June 2, 2014, when the composite State of Andhra Pradesh was divided into two States, the people were angry. They alleged that the United Progressive Alliance government at the Centre had passed the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act without consulting key stakeholders and after consulting a few regional parties and the Bharatiya Janata Party in secret. To make matters worse for them, Hyderabad was to cease being the capital of Andhra Pradesh from June 2, 2024.

A brief history

To know what has changed in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana today, it is crucial to look back. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru consented to carving out the State of Andhra from Madras State in 1953, but only after the freedom fighter, Potti Sriramulu, began a fast-unto-death for a separate State in 1952 and died in the process. At that time, the new State of Andhra, which included Rayalseema and Coastal Andhra, did not include Hyderabad State. It was only after several deliberations that Andhra Pradesh, including Hyderabad State, came into being on November 1, 1956.

But discontent simmered between the people of Andhra and Telangana. This culminated in the violent Telangana agitation of 1969. In 1972, as a response to it, a counter movement called Jai Andhra began. It gained momentum after the Andhra Pradesh High Court and the Supreme Court upheld the Mulki rules. The rules were safeguards to ensure that Mulkis, or native residents, did not face difficulty in procuring government jobs in Telangana. The people of Coastal Andhra and Rayalseema felt that the Mulki rules treated them as foreigners in their own land.

Though this agitation died down, the people of Telangana remained angry. This led to the agitation of 2013-14, led by K. Chandrasekhar Rao of the



**Sumit
Bhattacharjee**

Telangana Rashtra Samithi. The Union government accepted the agitators demand for separate Statehood. Mr. Rao became the first Chief Minister of Telangana and Chandrababu Naidu of the Telugu Desam Party became the first Chief Minister of residual Andhra Pradesh.

Ever since Hyderabad State was merged with Andhra, the people of Telangana felt marginalised. Rich farmers from coastal Andhra Pradesh reportedly moved into Hyderabad and procured huge chunks of land. Ministers in successive Cabinets all hailed from Rayalseema and Coastal Andhra. The people of Andhra held a grip over industrialisation. All the key areas of the economy such as industry, agriculture, health care, and education were either under the control of the Reddys from Rayalseema or the Kammas from Coastal Andhra. When Mr. Naidu started developing Hyderabad as an IT destination, contracts were given to people from these regions. This did not go down well with the people of Telangana, says former bureaucrat E.A.S. Sarma.

Political observers believe that such disillusionment would not have happened if the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1956 had been followed. The Agreement was signed to provide safeguards to the people of Telangana. The safeguards included distribution of revenue and industries, representation in the Cabinet, domicile status, and importance to the local language and culture. But they were never implemented in letter and spirit. Under the agreement, Regional Standing Committees were formed independent of the Chief Minister to ensure that development is decentralised and every region in Telangana gets its share of development. But these failed too.

The failure of the Gentlemen's Agreement is evident from the fact that of the 17 Chief Ministers who

If the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1956 had been followed, the bifurcation of composite Andhra Pradesh may not have happened

ruled composite Andhra Pradesh, 14 were from the Andhra region and a majority of them were either from the Reddy or Kamma community. Despite the share of these communities being relatively low in the State, they have ruled the political landscape.

After bifurcation

This brings us to the question, what is the scenario post-bifurcation? The main benefit is that the people of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh now have the space to articulate their concerns independently. The people of Telangana are now part of a separate State, which means that they are not dominated by politicians from Andhra Pradesh. Their local issues are highlighted. Issues such as riparian rights are addressed or at least being heard.

Meanwhile, the people of Andhra Pradesh who insisted that key resources from the region were being pumped into Hyderabad can no longer say that. It is the Chief Minister's job to harness the resources of a region. How well the Chief Ministers of the State have been able to do this in the last 10 years is debatable.

The greatest benefit is that though there are two separate States today, there is little animosity among the people.

There are issues too. Some of the promises made in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, have been implemented, but others await implementation. An Indian Institute of Technology in Tirupati, an Indian Institute of Management in Visakhapatnam, and an All-India Institute of Medical Sciences in Mangalagiri have been set up, but projects such as the South Coast Railway Zone in Visakhapatnam remain in limbo in Andhra Pradesh. And significantly, the State now does not have a capital.

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**10 YEARS OF
BIFURCATION**

Counting the failures of the past decade

Progress in Andhra Pradesh has been tardy on various fronts

STATE OF PLAY

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Andhra Pradesh is a State without a capital. The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, had said that Hyderabad would be the common capital of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana until June 2, 2024, following the bifurcation of composite Andhra Pradesh in 2014. While a few office spaces, an interim Secretariat, and a High Court have been established, successive governments have not been able to make Amaravati the capital.

Andhra Pradesh has also not made rapid strides from a development and economic perspective. Major projects such as the Polavaram project, the Kadapa Steel Plant, and the South Coast Railway Zone in Visakhapatnam remain unrealised dreams. The Polavaram project is delayed because of technical issues and lack of funds. Expert committees have said that establishing an integrated steel plant in YSR Kadapa district is not technically and economically feasible. Though the Centre cleared the decks for operationalising the South Coast Railway Zone, the project has not taken off. The Union government has claimed that the State has not handed over land, while the Andhra Pradesh government has asserted that 52 acres were identified at Mudasarlova in Visakhapatnam and an agreement was made in this regard.

In Parliament, both the BJP and the Congress promised Special Category Status (SCS) to Andhra Pradesh, but the

Union government turned down the proposal. The TDP walked out of the NDA in 2018 over the SCS issue and faced a drubbing in the 2019 elections. Apart from reminding the Union government every now and then about the SCS, the YSRCP has been unable to mount pressure on it.

The economy of the State has also not improved compared to States such as Maharashtra and Gujarat. Apart from Kia Motors in Anantapur, reportedly no other major players have ventured into Andhra Pradesh. Instead, Amara Raja Batteries relocated operations to neighbouring States.

The Reorganisation Act mandated the Union government to lend support to Andhra Pradesh for its resource gap for 2014-15. The TDP government pegged the revenue deficit at ₹16,078 crore, but the Union government pruned it to ₹3,979.50 crore. The revenue deficit touched ₹31,479.88 crore by March 2024 (preliminary estimates).

Andhra Pradesh and Telangana still face unresolved issues post-bifurcation, including division of assets and pending power bill dues. The division of various institutions and corporations, listed in Schedule IX and Schedule X of the Reorganisation Act, has not been completed due to a lack of consensus. According to the Act, as many as 89 go-

vernment companies and corporations are listed in Schedule IX. Assets belonging to nearly 245 institutions mentioned in Schedules IX and X, worth about ₹1.42 lakh crore, are yet to be divided between the two States.

The people of Andhra continue to rely on Hyderabad for health and educational facilities. Policymakers and bureaucrats are not in Hyderabad, but they are still connected to the city emotionally. This could be one of the reasons for the tardy progress in Andhra Pradesh.

In this scenario, it is important that the party which forms the next government focuses on establishing a capital in the State. The YSRCP put forth the idea of three capitals, but this may not be easy and may run into legal issues. Similarly, a grandiose capital, as planned by the TDP, will have fiscal problems if the various welfare schemes promised in the manifestos are implemented. To win investors' confidence, the government has to develop a capital with the resources it has now.

The development of infrastructural facilities gives a big boost to the industry and service sector. As the Union government is prioritising port-led development, Andhra Pradesh can look for a bigger share in the pie given its coastal advantage. Its pending issues with Telangana have to be solved soon. It is also time for Telangana to pay ₹6,756 crore to Andhra Pradesh for the supply of power post-bifurcation (from June 2, 2014, to June 10, 2017). The river management boards which were supposed to be set up in Andhra Pradesh should be shifted to the State from Hyderabad. It is time for the government to make up for the failures of the last decade.

Fewer women are being hired for leadership positions

LinkedIn's Economic Graph data show that representation of women across the workforce has declined

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

While representation of women across the workforce has increased over the years, LinkedIn's Economic Graph data show that progress has stalled since 2022 and declined in 2024. Also, the progress that was being made in promoting women to senior and leadership roles has stagnated in recent years.

Most women in senior positions are employed in sectors such as healthcare, education, administrative, and support services. The number of women employed across all positions is poor in the manufacturing, construction, oil and gas industries. LinkedIn found these trends from self-reported data by more than 1 billion members across 41,000 skills in 68 million companies and 1,35,000 schools globally.

Chart 1 shows representation of women in the overall workforce and in senior positions over the years. Women's representation in the overall workforce increased from 23.9% in 2016 to 27.3% in 2022. It stayed the same in 2023 before decreasing to 26.8% in 2024. The 2024 data are based on the position of women in the month of January.

A similar trend was also seen in the representation of women in senior leadership positions. The promotion of women to higher roles has been slow-paced. It took four years (2016 to 2019) for the share of women in senior positions to go up by one percentage point and another four years (2019 to 2022) for it to go up by another point. If the downturn seen in January 2024 persists throughout the year, even this slow-paced increase will cease.

The stagnation in the share of women in senior positions and the dip in January this year can be attributed to the slowdown in fresh

hires of women for leadership roles, data show. The share increased from 18.8% in 2016 to 25.2% in 2021 and declined after that. "LinkedIn Economic Graph data shows that despite progress, women still face obstacles in reaching leadership roles due to bias, societal norms, and structural barriers. However, recent focus on 'women-led development' has led to concerted efforts by both policymakers and business leaders to tackle these challenges," said Aditi Jha, LinkedIn India Board Member and Country Head, Legal and Government Affairs.

An industry-wide look at the share of women in senior leadership positions shows that even the gradual rise was limited to certain sectors. The entry and career progression of women were lowest in the oil, gas and mining, construction, utilities, wholesale, manufacturing, transportation and real estate sectors (Chart 2). In these sectors, there were just 11%-14% women in leadership roles. The oil industry had the lowest share of women in top positions – just around 11%.

In accommodation and food services, financial services, retail, technology, and media, the representation of women in senior roles was between 15% and 20% (Chart 3).

In administrative and support services, healthcare and hospitals, consumer services, government administration, and education, the share of women was between 22% and 30% (Chart 4). The share of women in senior positions was highest in the education sector (30%).

Data in the report also show that laws such as the Companies Act, 2013, which mandates women directors on company boards, are not being followed strictly. Between April 2018 and December 2023, 507 companies were fined for flouting this norm. Of them, 90% were listed companies.

With inputs from PTI

Tough to break the glass ceiling

Graphs were sourced from LinkedIn's report titled 'Women in leadership in corporate India'

Chart 1: Representation of women in the overall workforce and in senior leadership positions across the years

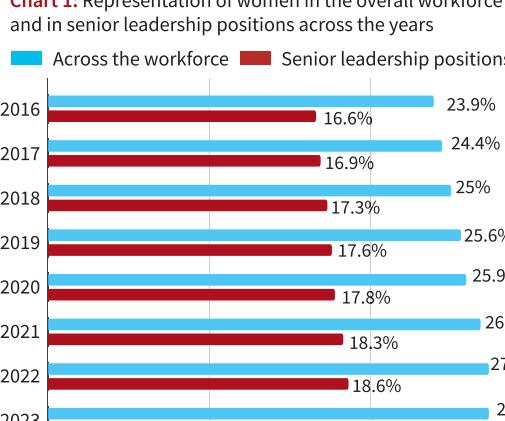


Chart 3: The chart shows that the representation of women in senior roles was moderate in the following sectors

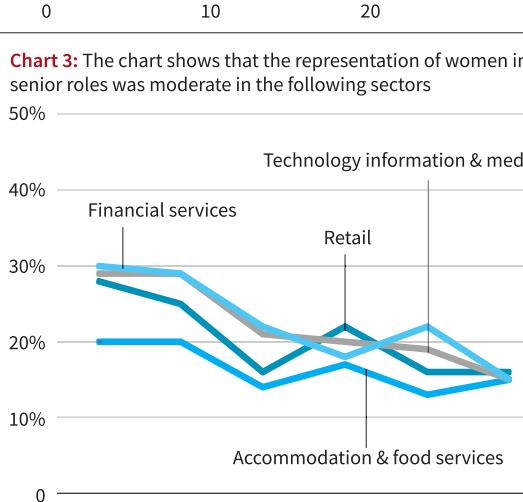


Chart 2: The chart shows that women's entry and career progression were the lowest in the following sectors

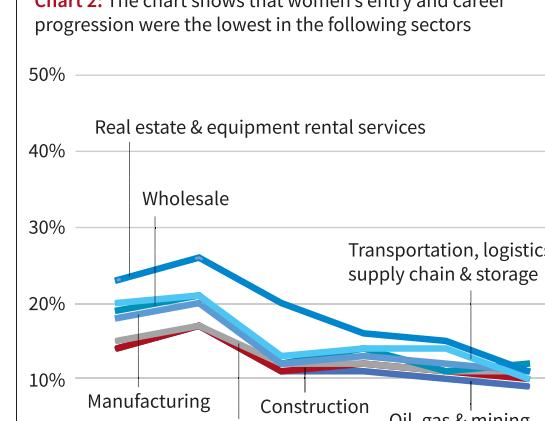
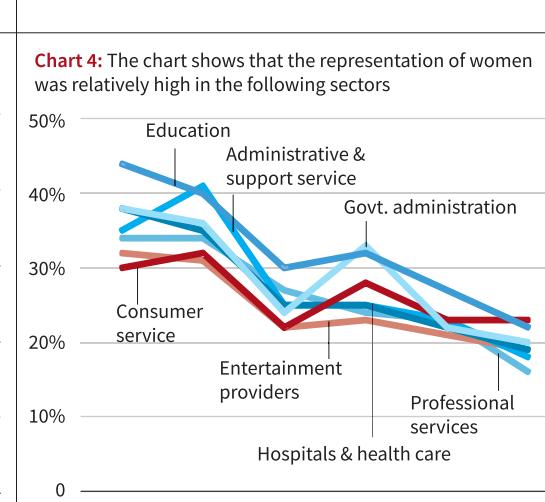


Chart 4: The chart shows that the representation of women was relatively high in the following sectors



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 3, 1974

Bhutan King enthroned: Colourful function at Thimpu

Thimpu, June 2: King Jigme Singye Wangchuk was enthroned this morning the monarch of all Bhutan, at the ceremony at the Royal Fort Palace here to the accompaniment of elaborate and colourful religious and social rituals whose origins are lost in legend and history. The 18-year-old King received the multi-coloured traditional scarf of Royal office from the Je Khempo, the chief and incarnation Lama of Bhutan at an auspicious hour chosen by astrologers shortly after 9 a.m. The President, Mr. V.V. Giri, and the President of Bangladesh, Mr. Mohammedullah and the Chogyal of Bhutan, who is also related to the Bhutanese Royal family were the three Heads of State to honour the occasion by their presence while Nepal sent as its representative Prince Gyandendra. All the permanent members of the Security Council, including China sent their Ambassadors or Charge d'Affaires marking international recognition of the young King's ascension to the throne. The presentation of the scarf by the high priest to the King was private and secret witnessed and unphotographed. In the small confines of the throne room the King sat without a crown but wearing a highly decorative silken woven dress and ceremonial scarf. Before entering the private chambers for the ceremony, there were some interesting rituals in the courtyard of Tashichhodzong the Royal Fort Palace which also includes part of the Secretariat and a huge wing for Buddhist monks.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 3, 1924

International emigration conference

Rome, June 2: The Emigration Conference concluded after adopting practically unanimous resolutions drafted by the committee dealing especially with general principles of treaties respecting emigration and colonisation. An important matter determined was the declaration of principle with regard to the legal status of emigrants and conditions governing the residence of workers in foreign countries. The conference passed a resolution urging states to institute compulsory medical examination of emigrants before embarkation and decided to hold a second conference in 1927, in one of the immigration countries.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Sweltering heat triggers rise in India's power consumption

156.31 in billion units. The country's power consumption rose nearly 15% in May as compared to the year-ago period, mainly due to scorching heat. PTI

Terrorists stationed on launch pads across the Line of Control (LoC)

70 Director General of Police Rashmi Swain underscored the importance of collective efforts in guarding the border. Sustained efforts are required to reduce the enemy's ability to destabilise the area. PTI

Height of ash column produced by Mount Ibu eruption

16,000 In feet. Mount Ibu in Indonesia has erupted again and spewed thick, grey ash and dark clouds 7,000 meters (16,000 feet) into the air. AP

The proposals which led to amendments to the IHR

300 The 77th World Health Assembly agreed to the package of amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR), 2005 based on proposals made by member countries. PTI

Number of civilians wounded by Ukrainian strikes in Russia

9 Six civilians were wounded as a result of the bombardment of Shebekino town. Meanwhile, a Ukrainian drone attack in the Kursk region injured three people. AFP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Does inequality lead to growth?

Several argue that inequality harms democratic processes. Some inequality, others argue, is actually beneficial, since it acts as an incentive to entrepreneurs to start businesses. This view is mistaken, for inequality can have deleterious economic effects

ECONOMIC NOTES

Rahul Menon

Rahul Gandhi's statements regarding redistribution – and the polarising rebuttal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi – have brought the topic of inequality to the forefront. Researchers from the Paris School of Economics have shown inequality in modern India to be greater than colonial times.

Several argue that inequality harms democratic processes. Some inequality, others argue, is actually beneficial, since it acts as an incentive to entrepreneurs to start businesses, thereby increasing employment and welfare for others.

This view is mistaken, for inequality can have deleterious economic effects as well. Consider one form of inequality, that of concentration of monopoly power amongst capital relative to labour. This can have negative effects on consumption, welfare, and growth. If done properly, wealth taxes and distribution can have positive effects.

Monopoly power and consumption
Billionaires draw their wealth from monopoly. Their business groups are dominant players in their specific market. This allows them to set prices instead of being determined by the market. The extent of mark-ups above the cost of production is determined by their monopoly power. Thus, for any given level of money wages, real wages – which determine purchasing power – are lower in economies with strong monopolies.

These monopoly effects are currently being experienced as the cost-of-living crises affecting the developed economies. The phenomenon of "greedflation", or companies raising prices to increase profit margins in the wake of multiple demand-and-supply shocks due to the pandemic, has been pointed to as contributing to high rates of inflation in the West. Textbook economics shows us



ISTOCKPHOTO

that the profit-maximising level of output under a monopoly is less than under a competitive economy, implying a welfare loss. Thus, the presence of monopolies can lead to lower real wages and lower levels of output and investment.

Inequality and growth
Assume that a company decides to set up a new factory. Before the new capital stock is created, wages are paid out to workers to build it. The income of the workers is spent on purchasing goods, which increases the income of goods-sellers, whose increased income results in purchases of other goods, and so on. The total increase in the income of workers and goods-sellers is greater than the initial investment. This process is called the 'multiplier' effect, wherein investment raises incomes by a greater proportion than the initial investment.

When companies exercise market power, mark-ups and prices will be higher. Real wages of workers are lower, and they can only purchase lesser items. However companies, because of higher margins, will enjoy the same amount of profits from the sale of a lesser amount of goods. The increase in income from a given amount of investment will be lesser under monopoly because of reduced consumption power. Thus, investment will have a weaker effect on growth under monopoly while not affecting profits.

One can argue that consumption of the rich can help boost growth. While the absolute amount of consumption of the rich is more, they consume a smaller proportion of their incomes. The multiplier process depends on the proportion of consumption from incomes. An unequal economy will put lesser incomes in the hands of those with

a greater propensity to consume, leading to weaker expansion in the economy.

Redistribution and growth

Some argue that the 'cure' of redistribution can prove more harmful than the disease of inequality by affecting job creation. Entrepreneurs would see reduced incentives for amassing wealth under a high-tax regime, resulting in a scale-back of investment and jobs.

One must make a distinction between wealth and profits. Investment occurs under the influence of future profit expectations, while wealth is accumulated past profits. As the Polish economist Michal Kalecki argued, taxes on wealth would not affect investment since it leaves expectations of future profits unchanged. For example, taxing Gautam Adani's wealth will not affect investment since expected profits from airports depends on the demand for air-travel which is independent of the value of his wealth.

No doubt, the difficulty in converting profits into wealth may deter some business-owners from undertaking investment. But an economy with high expectations of profit would ensure businesses invest even if wealth is taxed. Redistribution can generate forces to spur growth even if some billionaires pull back on investment. For one, if wealth is redistributed and increases income, the multiplier process would become stronger. Businesses would be more willing to invest where purchasing power is strong. If monopolies are curtailed, then prices would be lower and real wages higher, leading to greater demand.

Consider Thomas Piketty's proposal of taxing billionaire wealth and providing basic income. This might cause some to exit the economy, but can create a new class of entrepreneurs who can create start-ups, freed from the necessity of working for wages. Redistribution is not a silver bullet, and too high a rate of taxation can become a net drain on an economy. Used in conjunction with other policy measures, curtailing inequality can lead to a healthier economy.

THE GIST

Rahul Gandhi's statements regarding redistribution – and the polarising rebuttal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi – have brought the topic of inequality to the forefront.

Billionaires draw their wealth from monopoly. Their business groups are dominant players in their specific market. This allows them to set prices instead of being determined by the market.

These monopoly effects are currently being experienced as the cost-of-living crises affecting the developed economies.

Can domestic MFs invest in their overseas counterparts?

What does a proposed framework by SEBI put forward? What are some of the concerns?

Saptaparno Ghosh

The story so far:

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on May 17 floated a consultation paper proposing a framework for facilitating investments by domestic Mutual Funds (MFs) in their overseas counterparts, or Unit Trusts (UTs) that invest a certain portion of their assets in Indian securities. Comments about the framework are solicited until June 7.

What is the framework's purpose?

Noting India's strong economic growth prospects, SEBI observes that Indian securities offer an attractive investment opportunity for foreign funds. SEBI says this has led to several international indices, exchange traded funds (ETFs), MFs, and UTs allocating a part of their assets towards Indian securities. In the consultation paper, MSCI Emerging Markets Index was noted to hold 18.08% exposure to Indian securities.

Indian mutual funds, somewhat conversely, diversify their portfolios by launching 'feeder funds' which invest in overseas instruments such as (units of) MF, UTs, ETFs and/or index funds. Other than diversification, it eases the path to make global investments. However, ambiguity remains about investments which have Indian exposures, which deters domestic MFs from investing in these instruments. SEBI's cumulative assessment sees merit in potentially allowing investments of this kind with "limited exposure to Indian securities." Within the proposed framework, the markets regulator also intends to place essential safeguards which would keep the Indian instruments "true to their label" and enable investors to take desired exposure in overseas securities. If the fund has significant exposure to Indian securities, the purpose of making an overseas investment is defeated.

What proposals has SEBI tabled?

Significantly, the upper limit for

investments made by overseas instruments (in India) has been capped at 20% of their net assets. That is, overseas instruments being considered must not have an exposure of more than 20% in Indian securities. Deeming the cap "appropriate," SEBI explains that this would help "strike a balance between facilitating investments in overseas funds with exposure to India and preventing excessive exposure." The markets regulator has also sought that Indian mutual funds ensure contributions of all investors of the overseas MF/UT is pooled into a single investment vehicle. Other than this, Indian mutual funds must also ensure that all investors of the overseas instrument are receiving gains proportionate to their contribution – and in no order of preference. SEBI stresses that these investments are to be made autonomously by the manager (of the overseas instrument) without any influence from the investors or undisclosed parties. SEBI is also seeking public disclosures of the portfolios of

such overseas MF/UTs periodically for the sake of transparency. Finally, it warns against the existence of any advisory agreement between the Indian mutual fund and the overseas MF/UT. This is to prevent conflict of interest and avoid any undue advantage.

What happens when overseas instruments breach the limit?

If the overseas instrument breaches the 20% limit, the Indian mutual fund scheme which is investing in the overseas fund would slip into a six-month observance period. This period is to be utilised by the overseas instrument/fund to rebalance its portfolio adhering to the cap. Further investment in the overseas instrument would be allowed only when the exposure drops below the limit. If the portfolio is not rebalanced within this period, the MF must liquidate its investment in the overseas instrument within six months.

Are there other considerations?

The first consideration is RBI's upper limit for overseas investment by mutual funds. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das stated that there was no proposal to increase the investment limit. In light of this, Suresh Soni, CEO at Baroda BNP Paribas Mutual Fund told *The Hindu*, "The changes to regulations would not have any practical impact immediately, as the overall industry limit for overseas investments is effectively exhausted." Mr. Soni says such investments provide diversification opportunities to Indian investors.

THE GIST

SEBI on May 17 floated a consultation paper proposing a framework for facilitating investments by domestic Mutual Funds (MFs) in their overseas counterparts.

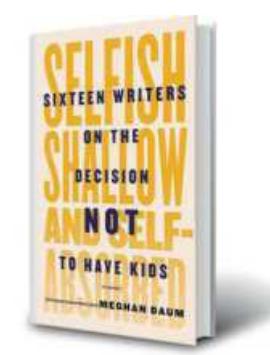
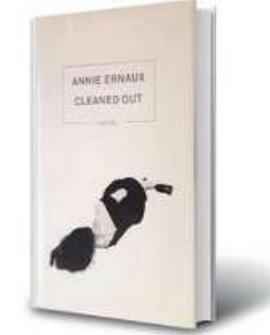
Noting India's strong economic growth prospects, SEBI observes that Indian securities offer an attractive investment opportunity for foreign funds.

The upper limit for investments made by overseas instruments (in India) has been capped at 20% of their net assets.

BIBLIOGRAPHY



Access to all: A supporter holds up a sign during Missourians for Constitutional Freedom kick-off petition drive on February 6, 2024, in Kansas City, AP



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

What is that busybody doing here?

I thought this was a private event but the entire stadium is rife with photographers

S. Upendran

You're late again!"

"Had to go to the bank, and then see that busybody, Ramesh."

"That's the first time I've ever heard anyone call Ramesh a busybody. I thought he minded his own business."

"He certainly does! Never interferes in anyone's business. But he keeps himself busy all the time. Never has time for...."

"Then, he's not a busybody. A busybody is someone who keeps poking his nose in other people's business."

"In other words, someone who is very interested in other people's affairs. Wants to know what is happening."

"Not just interested, but makes it a point to meddle or interfere in them. This individual goes around giving advice even when no one is asking for it."

"I guess the word is used to show disapproval, then?"

"That's right!"

"No one took advice from Nirmala. Everyone was convinced she was nothing more than an interfering busybody."

"That's an excellent example! The plural of this word is 'busybodies'. Bharath is seldom invited to parties. He is seen as a busybody."

"I don't think he is a busybody."

"You're in the minority. Tell me, why did you have to meet Ramesh? The poor chap has had a pretty hectic week so far."

"That's exactly what he said when I asked him about which shares to buy."

"As the CEO, Ramesh has to make many decisions every day! I'm sure at the end of the day, he has decision fatigue."

"Decision fatigue? Fatigue means tired. What does decision fatigue mean?"

"It means being mentally exhausted because you've been making one decision after another."

"When you make many big decisions, you experience decision fatigue."

"They needn't always be big decisions. They could be a series of small decisions as well. But they all add up, and leave you mentally drained."

"And therefore, your potential to make decisions temporarily deteriorates."

"Exactly! At the end of a very busy day, my friend took me to the new coffee place. They had over twenty varieties. When the waiter asked what I wanted, I experienced decision fatigue, and just couldn't answer."

"How is the word 'r...i...f...e' pronounced?"

"It rhymes with 'life', 'wife' and 'knife'. Do you know what 'rife' means?"

"When you say that something is rife, what you're suggesting is that it is widespread. It is something common."

"That's right! It is a very common occurrence. The important thing to remember is that the thing that is rife is usually unpleasant. Good things are seldom rife. For example, *rumours were rife there would be riots in the streets.*"

upendranky@gmail.com

The politics of womanhood: from abstinence to abortion

A closer look at literature suggests that women's experiences of unsafe, backstreet abortions are tied more intricately than they seem. Writers like Annie Ernaux have translated their pain into writing, for their own relief and of those like them, isolated by the laws

Nandini Bhatia

Awoman's body is a political playground; it always has been. Like all politics, womanhood, with its morality and many mandates, manifests into literature and unveils the inconspicuous prejudice that grows underneath the grace and tenderness of femininity. Across the world, the issue of women's rights – or rather, women's access to basic human rights – has emerged and evolved constantly; first and foremost, the right to bodily agency and by extension, the right to (safe and legal) abortion. Between France becoming the first country to grant constitutional freedom to women to have an abortion and the U.S taking a step backwards by overturning *Roe vs Wade* two years ago, the carousel keeps turning. A closer look at literature suggests that women's experiences of unsafe, backstreet abortions are tied more intricately than they seem.

'Angel-makers'

French writer Annie Ernaux, in her first book, *Cleaned Out* (1974/1990), chose the comfort of fiction to confront her own horrid experience of an illicit abortion in the 1960s – she wrote about it after it had been decriminalised in France. It was only after almost 40 years that she chose to write on the topic upfront, in her memoir *Happening* (2000/2001) and later again, in *The Years* (2008/2017). Denise, the 20-year-old protagonist of *Cleaned Out*, finds herself pregnant and loses faith in religion and literature, much like Ernaux who briefly lost interest in academics and the socio-political

momentum of the time, occupied by the humiliation and desperation of finding a backstreet abortionist – "angel-makers" as they were popularly called. Unsupervised medication, expensive and dodgy tools, and precarious set-ups eventually lead her to a hospital, nearly dead, where the hard-hitting reality of her working-class background awaited her. "The law was everywhere," she writes. Even when seen through the distance of time, Ernaux's reflections hold true. In hindsight, one wonders along with her: "whether abortion was banned because it was wrong or wrong because it was banned." Nonetheless, she felt it her duty to translate her pain into writing, for her own relief and of those like her, isolated by the laws. The question stands, much to the plight of American women today (or German women being harassed by pro-life protestors, or Irish women a few years ago).

The social gaze

Simone de Beauvoir, the literary beacon of women rights, especially in France, went a step further by arguing that how women are treated depends on how they are seen by society, in *The Second Sex* (1949/1953). She observes the role of social, religious and political agents in determining a woman's worth as a potential carrier of future life – a vessel – as opposed to an independent entity, seen in the light of "the sexual and the reproductive" function of the body. All understanding boils down to one simple truth: anything a woman chooses to do with her body – from procreation to recreation – is a threat to society and its pecking order, which is why women are

primarily placed in a position of subordination, where eliminating woman's right to choose for herself is the safest way to minimise the very threat.

Literature has more to offer on the subject but more often than not, writings on abortion go unnoticed; they remain hidden from mainstream reading, perhaps owing to the stigma it evokes, irrespective of what the law says. The word abortion itself was often left unsaid in the rooms it was performed in; "[t]his thing had no place in language," as Ernaux noted. Like Ernaux, other literary figures also underwent painful, silent and secret abortions, including Susan Sontag, Alice Walker (who elaborated on racial discrimination as a component of medical treatment) and Audre Lorde. They too, as writers, used the currency of their gender and their art, to materialise their experiences. All four writers went on to have children later in life, which speaks all the more for the need to have progressive laws on abortion. Their abortion was an exercise in reason, an exercise of choice, an act of desperation, and not, by any means, a protest against social order. Making such a choice inaccessible, by denying safe medical procedures, only worsens the condition; raising the risk of avoidable maternal deaths or perhaps even an increased number of abandoned, unwanted, infants.

Humanising a debate

A pro-choice attitude is often seen as a form of radical feminism by those who are pro-life. Two recent anthologies – *Choice Words: Writers on Abortion* (2020) edited by Annie Finch and *Selfish*,

Shallow, and Self-Absorbed: Sixteen Writers on The Decision Not to Have Kids edited by Meghan Daum (2015) – debunk this assumption by humanising the debate of a 'childless' woman (by design) from a 'childfree' woman (by choice). "People who want kids will always outnumber people who don't," notes Finch. However, such writings not only help others who undergo similar experiences feel seen, but also establish reproductive freedom as a matter of social justice.

As for where India stands, legally and historically, it can be claimed that both, the ideals of motherhood and the choice of remaining childfree, have been viable in the country, as Amrita Nandy notes, in *Motherhood and Choice* (2017). In her academic pursuit, she cites mythology and history. Her work complements de Beauvoir's philosophy that in society, marriage certifies a woman's sexuality, thereby "completing" her; and that in the absence of marriage, the threat magnifies. Both writers acknowledge and deconstruct the "woman-as-womb" argument which seems to favour only the female sex and not the gender, in its fluid form; a distinction that needs more discussion.

Ernaux was influenced by de Beauvoir as much as the women (and writers) of today are by Ernaux's commitment to memory-keeping, in both personal and political ways.

Literature has been and will always be a tool to process, reveal and protest the conditions of the world, especially those that contribute to the becoming and unbecoming of a woman.

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THE DAILY QUIZ

Today is the 100th death anniversary of Franz Kafka, whose surreal fiction brought to life worlds in which humans contemplated themselves in the face of the impossible

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

The name of the protagonist of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, Gregor Samsa, gives away two sources of inspiration for the story. One is a novel by Jakob Wassermann. Another is a book by X called *Venus in Furs*, where a character is named Gregor. Kafka also references the book's title through a picture in the story. Name X.

QUESTION 2

On August 13, 1912, Kafka met _____. A week later, he wrote in his diary: "As I was taking my seat I looked at her closely for the first time, by the time I was seated I already had an unshakeable opinion." He dedicated his short story 'The Judgment' to her. Fill in the blanks.

QUESTION 3

Kafka's stories are famed for their use of the X literary technique. It gets its name from the fact

that Kafka's stories don't reveal to readers the moral position of some character or circumstance in a story. Instead, the reader is left to decide for themselves. Name X.

QUESTION 4

Kafka's novel ___, featuring a protagonist named 'K', was unfinished when he died. A friend of his heavily edited and published it posthumously. Later, the friend decided to restore the parts he'd cut, but couldn't publish the new version right away because the Nazis had banned the book. Name it.

QUESTION 5

The term '_____', rooted in the sensation of alienation that suffuses Kafka's stories, is used to describe similar situations in the real-world. But some critics have said the term doesn't just describe such a circumstance: it also presumes that a person faced with such hopelessness fights it with all their hope. Fill in the blank.



Visual question:

Name this man, a confidant of Kafka's, who introduced him to the woman in Q2 and is the friend in Q4.

Questions and Answers to the May 31 edition of the daily quiz: 1. John von Neumann said that the ideal length of this should be one-millionth of a century, which is roughly 52.5 minutes. **Ans:** Lecture

2. If 1 HP is equal to roughly 750 watt, name the term for 250 watt. **Ans:** Donkey power

3. This is a humorous unit of measurement used to denote a distance of around 3.08 cm. **Ans:** Attoparsec

4. Name the influential American programmer who likely founded the community known as 'hackers' and helped design the first Lisp machines. **Ans:** Richard Greenblatt

5. This English physicist was so laconic that Cambridge University invented a unit to measure the rate at which taciturn people spoke. **Ans:** Paul A.M. Dirac

Visual: Name this political commentator.

Ans: Thomas Friedman

Early Birds: Rajmohan. V| Prashant Nain| Fathima Niloofar

Word of the day

Ennable:

confer dignity or honour; give a title to someone; make someone a member of the nobility

Synonyms: dignify, entitle

Usage: Her skill and talent ennable her profession.

Pronunciation: bit.ly/ennoblepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ɪ'nəubəl/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to letters@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Text & Context'

From Page One

Ruling parties win in Arunachal, Sikkim

Political observers said that Sunday's outcome followed a pattern: the party that rules the State and at the Centre usually wins elections in Arunachal Pradesh. While the BJP did not face any anti-incumbency sentiment, it was also better organised at the grassroots level, and faced hardly any opposition.

Among the major losers in the polls was Gengong Apang, 77, who had been the Chief Minister for more than 22 years. He had floated the Arunachal Democratic Front ahead of the election in a bid to revive his political career.

One-sided result

The Sikkim election was expected to be a close contest between the SKM and the SDF. Instead, it turned out to be an almost complete sweep in favour of the SKM.

Voters in the Himalayan State have been giving a second chance to regional parties since the 287-day President's Rule in 1985. The trend began with Nar Bahadur Bhandari's Sikkim Sangram Parishad, continued with the SDF, and now the SKM.

Apart from indicating that voters had little or no complaints against the SKM, the outcome underlined the individual-driven politics in Sikkim. "Mr. Tamang has been a popular leader, particularly because of several pro-poor schemes and government jobs given to some 25,000 youth – a big thing for a State with 4.6 lakh voters – ahead of the polls," Amit Patro, the editor of *Sikkim Express*, told *The Hindu*.

The SDF had accused the SKM of large-scale corruption, but the ruling party turned the tables after the glacial lake outburst disaster in October 2023, pointing out how the SDF's Chamling government had put the people's lives at risk with sub-standard hydroelectric power projects.

Sixth loss for Bhaichung

Sikkim's 2024 mandate could be the end of the road for the 73-year-old former Chief Minister and SDF's founder-president Pawan Kumar Chamling, who lost comprehensively from two seats – Namcheybung and Poklok-Kamrang. Former ace footballer Bhaichung Bhutia, who merged his Hamro Sikkim Party with the SDF in 2023, lost the Barlung seat, his sixth electoral defeat since contesting on Trinamool Congress ticket in 2014.

The BJP, which had 10 MLAs even without contesting the 2019 election, and the newly floated and crowdfunded Citizen Action Party, both came a cropper too. The BJP was believed to have been done in by the fears that its victory would lead to the dilution of Article 371F that guarantees special status for Sikkim. The fear was triggered by the expansion of the definition of 'Sikkimese' beyond the indigenous Bhutia, Lepcha, and Nepali people, in the Finance Act, 2023.

BJP win, rise in Cong's vote share too: survey

Even as the BJP holds an edge in terms of vote share and is likely to add to its vote share by around three percentage points over the previous election, the Congress, too, will refuse to recede. An equal increase of about 3% votes will ensure that the Congress as a party will remain in the reckoning, though as a distant second. Thus, though the Congress may gain votes compared with its debacle in 2014, that gain might not be sufficient to shake the BJP. This fact, and the spatial spread of votes, will determine the seat shares of these parties. A limited but significant accretion to the vote shares of both parties hints at the attrition of some of the smaller parties.

The BJP made every effort this time to make an impact in the States of the east and south. These efforts are likely to pay off with the party's vote in these regions increasing compared with last time. On the other hand, for the Congress, its gains are likely to be rather chaotically spread across a few States, perhaps not enough for the party to make an impressive gain in terms of seats. This asymmetry of performance is likely to help the BJP and disappoint the Congress.

Ever since the BJP re-emerged as a dominant player, the fate of State parties has been hanging in the balance. But the compulsions of the Congress to enter into alliances in most States, and the corresponding caution taken by the BJP to fortify the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), has ensured that for the State parties, the outcome tomorrow will be a temporary breather. Many State parties will be poised to play an important part, either in the ruling coalition or in the Opposition coalition.

These, of course, are the trends from the survey. On Tuesday, we shall get to know the picture emerging from actual count of millions of votes cast over the past seven weeks. That will be followed by Lokniti's analysis of how that outcome was shaped.

How the Lokniti study was conducted

The Lokniti programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi, conducted the survey in 23 States after each phase of voting. The fieldwork began from April 20, 2024 and will go on till June 3, 2024. So far, 18,014 voters have been interviewed (the data for the last phase will be added after the completion of the fieldwork on June 3) in 191 parliamentary constituencies spread across 772 polling stations in 23 States. The respondents randomly selected from the electoral rolls were approached by trained field investigators for an interview at their place of residence after votes had been cast in their respective constituencies.

Modi reviews 100-day agenda for new govt.

The plans will kick into action by July 1 if the NDA govt. returns to power, say officials; PM also chairs review meetings on aftermath of cyclone and the heatwave situation prevailing in country

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A day after exit polls predicted a third straight term in power at the Centre for the National Democratic Front (NDA), Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday held a review meeting on a 100-day programme that his team will seek to implement once government formation is completed.

Senior bureaucrats attended the review meeting. According to sources, at least 10 groups, each headed by a Secretary-level official as coordinator, have been created to implement this agenda over the first 100 days of the new government.

The plans, some details of which have been reported in *The Hindu* earlier, will kick into action by at least July 1, sources said.

"Each Sectoral Group of Secretaries (SGOS) has a Secretary of the Government of India heading it, along with four or five senior officers. This was done in February itself and Ministries put to work to



Grand scheme: Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairs a review meeting with senior officials in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

fine-tune plans. As the election season is on, Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba has been holding reviews," an official said. These groups deal with various subjects such as governance, infrastructure, security, and economy.

For example, under the theme of governance, the SGOS remit extends to reviewing the foundation courses of the Union Public Services Commission (UPSC), and to the launch of a "Karmayogi Talent Bank", which will rate civil servants before they are recommended for promotions.

The BJP manifesto has committed to holding simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies, and sources say that coming up with a common electoral roll, which is key to that exercise, is part of the 100-day plan.

Cyclone impact

Mr. Modi also chaired review meetings on the aftermath of Cyclone Remal, and the challenges arising out of the heatwave prevailing in northern and western India.

He stressed the need for regular fire and electrical safety audits in hospitals.

The meetings come after several children were killed in fires at a gaming arcade in Rajkot and a hospital in New Delhi.

Reviewing the impact of heatwave conditions in parts of the country, Mr. Modi instructed officials to undertake proper drills for preventing and handling fire incidents on a regular basis, according to an official statement.

He also said that regular drills for the maintenance of fire lines in forests and the productive utilisation of biomass must be planned.

At the meeting to review the post-Cyclone Remal situation, another official statement said that Mr. Modi was briefed about its impact in the affected States, including the loss of lives and damage to houses and other properties due to landslides and floods in Mizoram, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Tripura.

Mr. Modi said the Union government would continue to extend its full support to the States affected by the cyclone, according to the statement.

met at Kanniyakumari. Referring to the statue of Tamil poet-saint Thiruvalluvar at the spot, he said that his work, the *Thirukkural*, was "one of the crown jewels of the beautiful Tamil language".

Many lessons

He said India's development model had many lessons for others. Lifting 25 crore people out of poverty, delivering welfare to the masses without leakage, universalisation of digital public goods were just some measures. Since the conclusion of the G-20 meet in New Delhi, India's role had acquired a bigger dimension globally, he added.

"We will need to make several changes to move forward in the global scenario. We also need to change our traditional thinking regarding reform. Bharat cannot limit reform to just economic reforms. We must move forward in every aspect of life towards the direction of reform. Our reforms should also align with the aspirations of a 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India) by 2047," he wrote.

He said Kanniyakumari symbolised the country's unity as various rivers met with the sea and the seas

Let us dedicate next 25 years for 'Viksit Bharat', says Modi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a note penned on Saturday while on his flight back to Delhi from Kanniyakumari after a 45-hour meditation retreat, said that "Bharat's development had a global context", and that the time had arrived when, for the next 25 years, the country must dedicate itself to creating strong foundation for coming generations.

Mr. Modi in his note titled *New Sankalp from Sadhana* (new resolutions from reflections) referred to Swami Vivekananda.

"Swami Vivekananda had said in 1897 that we must dedicate the next 50 years solely for the nation. Exactly 50 years after this call, Bharat gained independence in 1947. Today, we have the same golden opportunity. Let's dedicate the next 25 years solely for the nation. Our efforts will create a strong foundation for the coming generations and the coming centuries, taking Bharat to new heights," he wrote.

He said Kanniyakumari symbolised the country's unity as various rivers met with the sea and the seas

ED uses Kejriwal's case to push for stringent checks on grant of interim medical bail

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has used Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's plea for liberty to pitch hard for stringent checks and balances on the grant of interim medical bail to accused facing money laundering charges, saying only a case of intolerable grief and suffering should justify temporary release.

Mr. Kejriwal surrendered before Tihar Jail authorities on Sunday, 22 days after the Supreme Court, in an unprecedented order, granted him interim bail to campaign for the Lok Sabha election till June 1.

He was remanded in custody till June 5, when a Delhi court is scheduled to pronounce its judgment on his plea for interim bail on medical grounds.

The Supreme Court Registry had recently declined to even list for judicial hearing Mr. Kejriwal's application for a seven-day extension of his interim bail to take a PET-CT scan.

In its response to Mr.

The top court had earlier said interim bail 'cannot be... made a substitute for regular bail'

Kejriwal's interim bail plea before the special court, the ED, represented by Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, had argued that his claim of "unexplained weight loss is false and appears to be a concocted theory".

The Central agency went to the extent of drawing out a 'Body Mass Index Calculator' in its 56-page affidavit to show that "as per the National Institute of Health, the weight of 64 kg is normal for a person with a height of 5 feet 5 inches".

"Every sickness does not *ipso facto* entitle an accused to medical bail," the ED submitted, referring to judicial precedents from the Supreme Court. The court's power to grant interim bail should be sparingly used. Interim bail was an "indulgence", extended only in exceptional and extraordinary circumstances.

The ED contended in its affidavit that the twin-conditions of Section 45 would apply to interim bail too.

These conditions include the court finding the accused *prima facie* innocent and unlikely to commit a crime if given bail.

The ED reminded how

the top court had said interim bail "cannot be... made a substitute for regular bail".

es, the ED said. What is that level of sickness or infirmity that brings an accused within the parameters of "sick or infirm" as envisaged in the proviso to Section 45(l) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the Central agency reproduced the question posed by the Supreme Court in its 2023 judgment in *Kewal Krishna Kumar versus Enforcement Directorate*.

"The sickness or infirmity should be life-threatening, requiring medical assistance unavailable in penitentiary hospitals. If so, an accused could be granted bail under the proviso to Section 45(l)," the top court answers the question of law.

The ED contended in its affidavit that the twin-conditions of Section 45 would apply to interim bail too.

These conditions include the court finding the accused *prima facie* innocent and unlikely to commit a crime if given bail.

The ED reminded how the top court had said interim bail "cannot be... made a substitute for regular bail".

In its response to Mr.

Didnt waste a minute, campaigned to save my country: Delhi CM

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday surrendered at the Tihar jail here after his 21-day interim bail granted by the Supreme Court ended on Saturday.

"I do not know what they will do to me in jail. But we are disciples of Bhagat Singh, who went to jail to free the country, I am going to jail to save the country. Bhagat Singh was also hanged, I am also ready to be hanged," Mr. Kejriwal told Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) workers before heading back to jail.

He added that he did not know when he would return but promised that he would not bow down. "Every moment of my life is for this country," Mr. Kejriwal said.

Mr. Kejriwal came out of prison on May 11 after spending 50 days in jail, and drove straight into the election campaign not only in Delhi, but also in Punjab, Maharashtra, Haryana, and Jharkhand. He was seen campaigning not just for AAP candidates but also for Congress candidates in the city. "I was given a

21-day [relief] by the Supreme Court. These 21 days were unforgettable. I did not waste even a minute. I campaigned for saving the country. The AAP is secondary. The country comes first," Mr. Kejriwal said. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had admitted that there was no recovery yet in the money laundering charges against him, and hit out at the PM for calling him an "experienced thief".

"This is what dictatorship does, it takes the Chief Minister of a State that has come to power with a huge mandate and sends him to jail to send a message that this can happen to anyone. Without any proof, without any recovery, anyone can be jailed," Mr. Kejriwal said.

Tamil actor detained over bullets found in luggage

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Actor Karunas was detained briefly at the airport for allegedly carrying bullets in his bag. He was stopped by the security personnel while on his way to board a flight to Tiruchi. When the actor's hand luggage was scanned, an explosive substance was detected. When the personnel checked the bag, they found 40 live bullets. On being inquired, Mr. Karunas said he had a licence for a firearm and produced the necessary documents. He said since he left home in a hurry, he did not check the bag properly and accidentally brought the bullets. After an interrogation, Mr. Karunas was let go but did not proceed to take the flight.

2 loco pilots injured as trains collide in Punjab

Press Trust of India
FATEHGARH

Two loco pilots were injured on Sunday morning when a stationary goods train was hit from behind by another at the Sirhind railway station here, a Government Railway Police (GRP) official said.

He said the collision caused the engine of one of them to flip over to another track and hit a passenger train. There was no loss of life in the incident, but two loco pilots were injured, the GRP official said.

'Ensure safe movement of EVM control units'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A team of INDIA bloc leaders met members of the Election Commission (EC) on Sunday to share their apprehensions over the counting of votes.

Senior Opposition leaders Sitaram Yechury, D. Raja, Salman Khurshid, T.R. Baalu, Abhishek Singhvi, and others were part of the delegation. Soon after the meeting, a BJP delegation too met the EC officials.

The BJP leaders alleged that the Opposition, with civil society organisations fronting them, had a "toolkit" aimed at discrediting the electoral process.

In a memorandum to

the EC, the Opposition leaders said that it was essential to acknowledge that counting officials requisitioned from local authorities, schools, universities, banks, and so on often failed to fully understand all the aspects of the counting process, despite training by the EC. "This mismatch can be challenging for the counting agents, particularly when counting officials ask for written EC orders/guidelines for every request being made," the representation said, adding that there was a lack of clarity on the precise details involved in the counting process.

They demanded safe movement of control units of electronic voting machines through a CCTV-monitored corridor, verification of the current date and time displayed on the control units, and confirmation of the start and end time and date of the voting process to the counting agents. "This verification is important because unless it is done, there is no authenticity that it is the same control unit that came from the polling booth," Mr. Yechury said.

"The previous experience of the counting pro-

cess also reveals that in many cases the counting officials rush into declaring the results of one machine to the other, leaving scope for manipulation. The EC must issue necessary instructions that the counting officials must wait and allow all counting agents to record the results before moving from one machine to another," the memorandum said.

It also sought strict adherence to the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961. Citing reports that postal ballots would be counted towards the end in some districts, the memorandum asked for this process to be completed in the beginning, as per the rules.



INDIA bloc leaders talk to the media after the meeting with EC officials, at Nirvachan Sadan in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI



Victory dance: Artists performing the Bihu dance on Sunday to celebrate the BJP's victory in the Arunachal Pradesh polls. ANI



Warm wishes: Assam Minister Ashok Singhal with BJP leaders after the victory in the Arunachal Pradesh elections. ANI



High point: Sikkim Krantikari Morcha members waving flags outside a counting centre in Gangtok on Sunday. PTI



Mission success: Sikkim Krantikari Morcha supporters celebrating after the party's victory in Gangtok on Sunday. PTI

A leader who changed the BJP's fortunes in Arunachal

Pema Khandu has won the Mukto seat uncontested thrice and has established himself as the power centre in State; he says BJP's victory march has begun from India's Land of the Rising Sun

Rahul Karmakar GUWAHATI

A tragedy – the death of his father and former Chief Minister Dorjee Khandu in a helicopter crash – saw Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu winning his first Assembly election uncontested from the Mukto constituency in 2011.

Barring the 2019 election, Mr. Khandu has won the “family constituency” uncontested thrice. With the BJP, it was his first uncontested win in 2024. In doing so, the 44-year-old established himself as the power centre in the State.

“The BJP’s victory march in the country has begun from India’s Land of the Rising Sun,” he said after the party won 46 of the 60 seats, five more than in 2019. He credited the victor-



Big win: Arunachal Chief Minister Pema Khandu handing over his resignation to Governor K.T. Parnaik on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ry to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership and the pro-development pitch of his party.

Mr. Khandu held various positions in the Congress after joining it in 2000, but his political graph kept rising after he filled the void left behind by his father in Mukto. He became a Minister in the Nabam Tuki government of the Congress and the

BJP-supported government of Kalikho Pul after a constitutional crisis led to the imposition of President’s Rule in January 2016.

The late Pul’s government was short-lived after the Supreme Court restored Mr. Tuki’s status as the Chief Minister. But the latter resigned and Mr. Khandu succeeded him.

Mr. Khandu’s political acumen became apparent

three months into his term when he masterminded the defection of 43 Congress MLAs to the People’s Party of Arunachal (PPA), then an ally of the BJP. In December 2016, he joined the BJP along with most of the PPA legislators to hand the saffron party its second government in the State.

He led the BJP to a big win in 2019 to continue in power, allegedly clipping the wings of many who tried to form coteries within the party. A history graduate from Delhi’s Hindu College, he is a member of the Buddhist Monpa community that dominates Tawang and parts of West Kameng districts.

Mr. Khandu met Governor K.T. Parnaik and tendered his resignation along with his Council of Ministers. The Governor ordered the dissolution of the Assembly.

The Hindu Bureau GUWAHATI

Local people refer to Prem Singh Tamang as the “common man’s Chief Minister”, but chances are that they are more familiar with his nickname, Golay, than his official name. Golay is derived from Goley, a sub-clan of the Tamang community.

Since 1985, a decade after the Buddhist kingdom of Sikkim was merged with India, politics in the State has been individual-driven. Nar Bahadur Bhandari’s Sikkim Sangram Parishad gave way to Pawan Kumar Chamling’s Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), which yielded to Prem Singh Tamang’s Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) in 2019.

The spotlight fell on Mr. Tamang when the SKM ended Mr. Chamling’s reign as the Chief Minister for almost 25 years from 1994 to 2019. Mr. Tamang became a Minister in the Chamling-headed SDF government after winning his first election from the Soreng-Chakung



Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) chief Prem Singh Tamang during the celebrations after party's victory in Gangtok on Sunday. PTI

constituency in West Sikkim in 1994. He continued as a Minister in the next two governments but fell out with Mr. Chamling after winning the 2009 Assembly election from the Burtuk constituency.

He came to be known as a rebel after going public against Mr. Chamling and was sidelined before he and other SDF dissidents formed the SKM in 2013.

The SKM bagged 10 of the State’s 32 seats in the 2014 election, finishing second behind the SDF. In Ja-

nuary 2017, Mr. Tamang was disqualified after being convicted in December 2016 for misappropriating government funds in a cow distribution scheme while serving as the Animal Husbandry Minister from 1994 to 1999.

He served a jail term from August 2017 till 2018 after the High Court of Sikkim and the Supreme Court upheld his conviction. The “rebel” found a reason to devote his energy to forming an alternative government, eventual-

ly dislodging the SDF from power after the 2019 State election.

Mr. Tamang, who did not contest the election that year, was sworn in as the Chief Minister on May 27. Later, he won the byelection from the Poklok-Kamrang constituency by securing 84% of the votes.

Apart from a slew of development and pro-poor measures such as a monthly pension of ₹2,000 for unmarried women, Mr. Tamang rode his charisma and oratory skill to be regarded as the “common man’s Chief Minister”, while his SKM government came to be known as ‘Gari ka sarkar’ (government of the poor).

■ Visit *The Hindu* online for full coverage and analysis of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim Assembly election results <https://newsth.live/c76c4e>



Opposition leaders reject exit poll projections, Rahul Gandhi terms it ‘Modi media fantasy poll’

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Sunday sought an explanation from Congress leader Jairam Ramesh regarding his recent claim that Union Home Minister Amit Shah has been calling up District Magistrates and Collectors and has, so far, spoken to 150 of them.

Asking Mr. Ramesh to reply by Sunday evening, the EC said in its notice that when the poll code is in force, officers report to the EC for any directions. It requested him to share the details of the DMs and Collectors to whom Mr. Shah has allegedly spoken.

Congress sources said that Mr. Ramesh’s lawyers are in touch with the EC and will soon submit a reply to the notice.



Congress leaders Jairam Ramesh, Pawan Khera and Supriya Shringi during a press conference in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

telling you that they have no value... They are fake,” Ms. Banerjee told a Television channel, which her party shared on its official X handle.

She, however, neither endorsed the 295 figure put out by INDIA bloc leaders nor did she give a number for her party in Bengal.

In an unusual pushback to the exit polls, the Congress invited the media to an online interaction that

the party’s communications chief, Jairam Ramesh, had with Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) chiefs.

The PCC chiefs shared their assessment for their respective States.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said his party would win at least two-thirds of the 28 seats in the State. Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly Partap Singh Bajwa said all the surveys

had given seven to nine seats to the Congress in the State. Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said the Congress had an edge in two seats and was in a tight contest for the two other seats in the hill State.

Himachal bypolls

Mr. Sukhu also exuded confidence that the Congress was also winning the six Assembly seats where bypolls have taken place.

Assam Congress chief Bhupen Borah claimed that the party would win at least half of the 14 Lok Sabha seats in the State.

Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole, Haryana chief Uday Bhan, Rajasthan chief Govind Singh Datasra and Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajai Rai also were confident of performing better than the exit poll projections.

Mr. Ramesh alleged that mind games were being played by Mr. Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. “These are bogus polls and psychological games are being played. Pressure is being applied by the outgoing Prime Minister and Home Minister on the Opposition parties, Election Commission, counting agents to create an atmosphere that they are coming back. The reality is just the opposite,” the Union Minister said.

His colleague Pawan Khera noted, “If you want to make some extra earning in the Satta market or influence the stock markets on Monday for the sake of your friends, it’s okay. But if you have a larger conspiracy and you are trying to legitimise that conspiracy through these figures, then the country is watching you”.

IN BRIEF



SDF chief Pawan Chamling loses both seats in Sikkim poll

Five-time former Chief Minister of Sikkim and Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) supremo Pawan Kumar Chamling lost from both the Poklok-Kamrang and Namcheybung Assembly constituencies he had contested, officials said.

Mr. Chamling lost to Sikkim Krantikari Morcha’s (SKM) Bhoj Raj Rai by 3,063 votes in the Poklok-Kamrang seat and lost to the SKM’s Raju Basnet by 2,256 votes from the Namcheybung seat. Mr. Chamling had been the Chief Minister of Sikkim for 25 years from 1994 to 2019. This will be the first time in 39 years that Mr. Chamling will not step inside the Sikkim Assembly as an MLA. PTI

Sikkim CM’s wife Krishna Rai wins Namchi-Singhithang seat

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang’s wife Krishna Kumari Rai won from the Namchi-Singhithang Assembly constituency on Sunday, officials said. Krishna Rai, the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) candidate, defeated her nearest Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) rival Bimal Rai by 5,302 votes. The SKM nominee secured 7,605 votes while her SDF opponent bagged 2,605. Mahesh Rai (Citizen Action Party-Sikkim) and Aruna Manger (Bharatiya Janata Party) polled 136 and 233 votes, respectively. PTI



Uphill task: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma during a public meeting in April. PTI

The Rajputs, who contribute about 9% of the vote share, were on the warpath after a controversial remark made by the BJP candidate from Gujarat’s Rajkot, former Union Minister Parshottam Rupala, that the erstwhile Rajput kings shook hands and broke bread with the Brit-

ish, and also married their daughters off to them.

On the boil

“Mr. Rupala’s statement, given at an event of a Dalit community, had not just sent Gujarat on the boil but the anger also travelled to neighbouring Rajasthan where the BJP, very recent-

ly, sidelined its biggest Rajput leader, Vasundhara Raje, for a Brahmin,” a disenchanted BJP worker said. The worker felt that Ms. Raje’s absence from the polls had dented the BJP’s prospects across the State. “Such was her hold on the Jat and Rajput communities that she used to call herself as the daughter of a Rajput and the daughter-in-law of a Jat,” he said.

Apart from disappointed Rajputs and Jats, the fear felt by the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), who contribute 18% and 13% of the vote share, respectively, that the BJP would change the Constitution if voted to power again, has cost the party heavily in the State.

“While the BJP was facing the anger of all the ma-

BJP will keep working for Arunachal’s growth: Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday thanked the people of Arunachal Pradesh for reposing their faith in the BJP yet again. He said that the party will keep working with even greater vigour for the State’s growth. “Thank you Arunachal Pradesh! The people of this wonderful State have given an unequivocal mandate to politics of development. My gratitude to them for reposing their faith in BJP4Arunachal yet again,” Mr. Modi said in a post on X. Mr. Modi also appreciated the hard work of the “exceptional” BJP workers in Arunachal Pradesh throughout the election campaign. PTI

Ishita Mishra NEW DELHI

Rajasthan has faced one of the toughest Lok Sabha election contests in 2024.

The simmering anger of the Jat and Rajput communities, the two dominant castes in the State, could determine the poll outcome. Multiple power centres resulting from recent political changes and the absence of a “wave” has added to the challenges faced by the BJP, which had secured a perfect score in 2014 and 2019.

The Jat community, which contributes around 12% of the total vote share, is considered one of the most influential castes in Rajasthan. The community has been demanding a Jat Chief Minister, a wish that

has remained unfulfilled. Satish Punia, one of the tallest leaders from the community in the BJP, was the party’s State unit president, but he was removed from the post months before the Assembly election.

The community had hoped that the BJP would fill the void by making a Jat either the CM or the Deputy CM but the party selected Chief Minister Bhajan Lal, a Brahmin, along with two Deputy CMs, Diya Kumari, a Rajput, and Prem Chand Bairwa, from a Scheduled Caste (SC) community. This, sources said, had again enraged the community, which feels betrayed by the BJP.

The Congress, on the other hand, has a Jat State chief in Govind Singh Datasra.

Rajputs, who contribute about 9% of the vote share, were on the warpath after a controversial remark made by the BJP candidate from Gujarat’s Rajkot, former Union Minister Parshottam Rupala, that the erstwhile Rajput kings shook hands and broke bread with the Brit-

ish, and also married their daughters off to them.

On the boil

“Mr. Rupala’s statement, given at an event of a Dalit community, had not just sent Gujarat on the boil but the anger also travelled to neighbouring Rajasthan where the BJP, very recent-

IN BRIEF



Pune car crash: parents of minor sent to police custody

A court on Sunday remanded in police custody till June 5 the parents of the 17-year-old boy allegedly involved in the luxury car crash in Pune that left two people dead. The parents are accused of destroying evidence. The mother is accused of swapping the blood samples of the boy with hers at the Sarsen general hospital in the city. The public prosecutor argued that their custody was required to find out who managed to destroy the evidence in an attempt to secure a clean chit for the underaged driver.

SC to hear govt's plea against premature release of Gawli

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea of the Maharashtra government challenging a Bombay High Court order which paved the way for the premature release of gangster-turned-politician Arun Gawli, who is serving life imprisonment in a murder case. On April 5, the Nagpur Bench of the High Court had allowed the plea of Gawli in which he had sought direction to the government for his premature release on account of the remission policy dated January 10, 2006 which was prevailing on the date of his conviction on August 31, 2012. PTI

70 terrorists waiting to infiltrate Kashmir: DGP

Press Trust of India

Sixty to 70 terrorists are "active" on launchpads across the Line of Control (LoC) and its "degraded capability" has not stopped Pakistan from sending men and material to Jammu and Kashmir, according to Director-General of Police Rashmi Ranjan Swain.

"In our meetings with our security partners, we generally have come to the conclusion that it is a fact that the adversary or the enemy has not stopped from sending men and material," Mr. Swain told PTI.

"At any given point of time, perhaps you would have about 60-70 persons in groups of five or six at different places waiting to be pushed into our side," Mr. Swain said, asserting that together with the Army, paramilitary forces and the JK Police, "we are determined that we will make it absolutely hard for the adversary to succeed".

In fight against Nipah, scientists find new way to generate virus-like particles in lab

C. Maya

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



This method by the scientists at the Institute of Advanced Virology offers an effective platform for developing neutralising antibodies.

development and evaluation of vaccines and immunotherapeutics, and for conducting basic research into the immune response and pathogenesis of NiV. These tests, which traditionally require to be done in high-security labs with the infectious organism, can now be done safely in BSL-2 labs in the country using the NiV-VLPs, Director of IAV E. Sreekumar says.

The laboratory studies by the team of researchers led by Mohanan Valiyaveetil have been detailed in the manuscript which appeared on May 24 in the international journal *Heliyon* by Cell Press.

More sophisticated

The VLPs are molecules that closely resemble viruses, but are non-infectious. They have long been recognised as effective quantitative platforms for studying viral binding and entry kinetics of the virus. But the advent of NanoBiT technology and "HiBiT-tagged" VLP (HiBiT is a 11 amino acid peptide) makes it far more sophisticated.

The inclusion of a highly sensitive HiBiT tag on these VLPs accelerates their potential in antiviral drug screening and vaccine development.

This study is the first of its kind using HiBiT tagged NiV-VLPs, demonstrating their application in neutralisation assays.

However, extensive studies using multiple neutralising antibodies and anti-virals that block entry of the virus are needed to conclusively show the efficacy of these VLPs, they added.

sid (N), long polymerase (L) and phosphoprotein (P). IAV scientists generated "HiBiT-tagged" Nipah virus-like particles (NiV-VLPs) using plasmid-based expression systems, encoding the NiV structural proteins G, F, and M.

The VLPs thus produced were functionally identical to the native virus. The inclusion of a highly sensitive HiBiT tag on these VLPs accelerates their potential in antiviral drug screening and vaccine development.

The scientists say that the potential risks of using native viruses in virus-based assays could be alleviated with these HiBiT-tagged VLPs.

This study is the first of its kind using HiBiT tagged NiV-VLPs, demonstrating their application in neutralisation assays.

However, extensive studies using multiple neutralising antibodies and anti-virals that block entry of the virus are needed to conclusively show the efficacy of these VLPs, they added.

T.N.: heavy rain lashes Tiruchi, Ooty and parts of Sivaganga

The Hindu Bureau

TIRUCHI/SIVAGANGA/
UDHAGAMANDALAM

On alert: The Nilgiris district administration has formed 42 teams across six zones for rescue and rehabilitation efforts amid the rain spell. FILE PHOTO

cert had a torrid time. Confusion and chaos prevailed due to the strong winds and rain, eventually forcing the organisers to cancel the concert.

Heavy rain lashed Kanyakumari union and Vittani panchayat in Sivaganga. Residents breathed a sigh of relief as the sudden downpour on Saturday night helped reduce the mercury level considerably. After the pre-monsoon rainfall, which hit many southern districts, many pockets in the Sivaganga district witnessed rain. Many trees were uprooted, and electric poles were

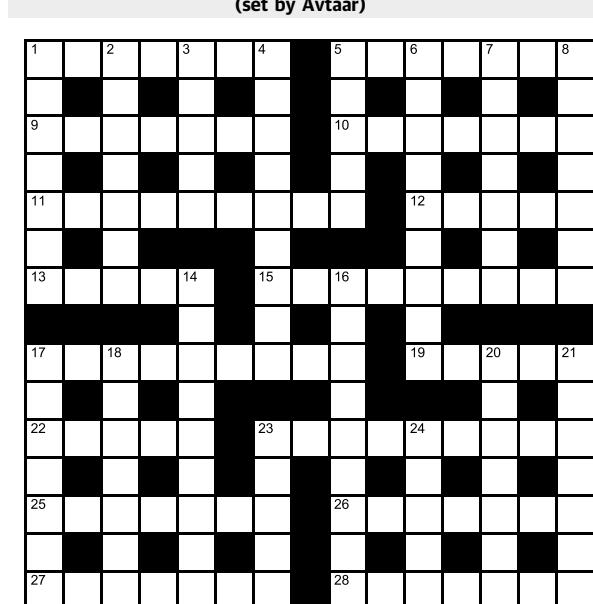
damaged, resulting in Tanjedco officials disconnecting power supply.

Ooty gears up

Meanwhile, the Nilgiris district administration has formed 42 teams across six zones for rescue and rehabilitation efforts amid the rain spell, triggered by the onset of the Southwest Monsoon, a press release said.

A total of 456 relief shelters have been identified. As many as 3,500 first responders, as well as Aapamitra volunteers, have been kept on standby to assist people in need, it said.

TH CROSSWORD 14191



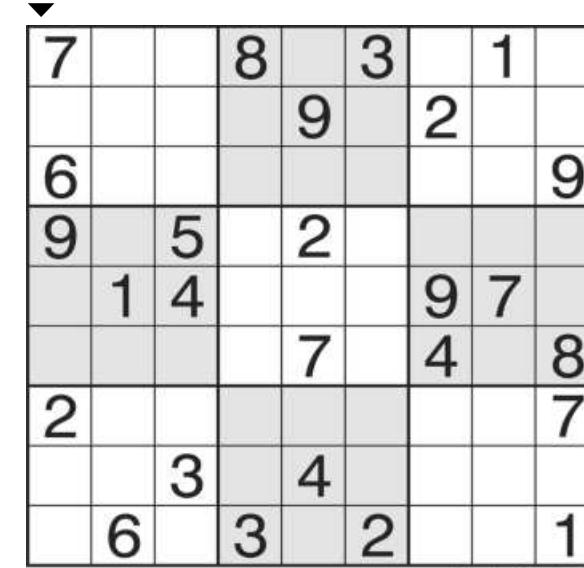
Across

- Harbour provides refuge to drunk character (7)
- Detectives beating the retreat in Drones' bar (7)
- Doctor starts to treat head nurse for Delhi belly (3,4)
- Smooth release after introducing current and dropping acceleration (7)
- Groups of black leaves put up with head of young popping out from nests (9)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ <https://qrgo.page.link/ijpTn>



SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to previous puzzle

W	I	C	K	E	L	T	I	D
S	C	H	N	A	P	S	C	E
O	D	I	O	C	R	E	Z	A
M	G	N	F	E	T	Z	A	N
E	T	A	H	R	E	A	N	N
O	R	E	S	T	E	R	E	E
P	S	C	O	M	O	O	O	O
R	N	I	O	N	I	N	I	N
I	O	N	E	N	E	E	E	E

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Separation, a reality

With Dasaratha dead, Bharata has to ascend the throne, but he refuses to do so. He goes to the forest to ask Rama to come back and rule Ayodhya. The Rama-Bharata conversation shows us many dharmas we have to adhere to, said Navalpakkam Vasudevachariar in a discourse.

Bharata tells Rama that Kaikeyi had asked Dasaratha to pass on the kingdom to Bharata. But now Bharata is giving it to Rama. So, no one can object to this arrangement. Bharata wonders how he can rule in place of Rama. Can a donkey move at the speed of a horse? Can an ordinary bird be a match for Garuda? But Rama says that a man cannot do as he pleases. He is not the master of his life. Every relationship ends in separation. No one is together forever.

Rama gives an example. Two sticks are brought together by a wave, but the next wave may separate them. In the same way, two people come together in life, but have to separate when it is time to do so. Samsara is like the ocean. The waves are like karma. The two sticks are like human beings, who face the consequences of karma.

A house that was once grand gets dilapidated in course of time. Likewise, a human being too ages and dies. We celebrate seasonal changes. But we tend to forget that with each new season we are moving one step closer to the end of our lives.

Over 6 lakh affected as Assam continues to reel under floods

Press Trust of India

GUWAHATI



The flood situation in Assam remained unchanged with more than six lakh people in 10 districts reeling under waters, officials said on Sunday.

Heavy rain in different parts of the State led to the swelling of rivers, forcing the affected people in many areas to evacuate, they said.

The Kopili, Barak and Koshiyari rivers were flowing over the danger level.

Altogether 6,01,642 people in Hailakandi, Hojai, Morigaon, Karimganj, Naogaon, Cachar, Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Karbi Anglong West and Dima Hasao districts have been affected by the floods.

The death toll in floods and storms since May 28 is 15, the officials said.

In view of damage to the tracks between New Haflong's Chandranathpur section and waterlogging at Silchar station of Lumding division, at least 10 trains scheduled for commencing journey from Saturday to Monday were cancelled, a Northeast Frontier Railway spokesperson said.

Nagaon remained the worst-hit district followed by Hojai and Cachar. More than 40,000 displaced people are taking shelter in relief camps across various districts. Rescue and relief operations are being carried out by multiple agencies, including the National

Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, local administration and people.

Trains cancelled

Road and rail communication in several parts of the State remained disrupted, the officials said.

In view of damage to the tracks between New Haflong's Chandranathpur section and waterlogging at Silchar station of Lumding division, at least 10 trains scheduled for commencing journey from Saturday to Monday were cancelled, a Northeast Frontier Railway spokesperson said.

Nagaon remained the worst-hit district followed by Hojai and Cachar. More than 40,000 displaced people are taking shelter in relief camps across various districts. Rescue and relief operations are being carried out by multiple agencies, including the National

MONEYWISE



Gold gains a tad, silver on upward journey

PRECIOUS METALS

After a strong performance in April, gold and silver were largely range-bound in May; the long-term outlook for these metals remains positive; prices of these metals may consolidate or edge lower in the near term

B. Krishnakumar

After a strong performance in April, precious metals remained largely range-bound in May.

The mixed flow of economic data in the U.S. and the expectations regarding the possibility of an interest rate cut by the U.S. Federal Reserve played a role in influencing precious metals prices in May. While the Comex gold price did not move much last month, the silver price showed a lot more traction to the upside.

Comex gold gained 2.19% in May to settle at \$2,347.7 an ounce. Comex silver posted a much better show in May with the white metal scaling a fresh 11-year high last month. Comex silver gained 15% to end the month at \$30.55 an ounce.

Mirroring the trend in the global markets, MCX gold closed 1.89% higher in May and closed at ₹71,850 per 10-gram. MCX silver closed 13.2% higher at ₹91,650 per kilogram.

'Trend absent'

As anticipated last month, the price movement in Comex gold was devoid of any trend. The price was confined to the \$2,280-\$2,450 range in May. This price action is likely to persist until the price breaks out of the extremes of the range. A move above \$2,450 would signal the start of the next leg up in Comex gold.

Until the breakout happens, expect volatile price action to continue, within this broad range.

From a medium-term perspective, Comex gold could head to \$2,500-\$2,515 zone. This view would be invalidated on a fall below \$2,150.

On a strong wicket

Comex silver ruled extremely strong in May, and the price also managed to move well past the target zone of \$27.8-\$28.5 mentioned last month. The recent rally has pushed the silver price to an overbought zone.

A cool off can therefore be expected in the short term to the \$29.5-\$30 range. The overall trend is still positive and Comex silver would resume its uptrend once the anticipated cool off is over.

Likely to ease

Mirroring the global trend, MCX gold too ruled firm and reached the target zone of ₹72,200-72,500 mentioned last month. MCX gold could rule soft in the near term and could ease to the immediate support at ₹70,500-71,000. Long term uptrend would resume once the expected cool off is completed. MCX silver remained buoyant in May and the price also went past the then-mentioned target zone of ₹83,200-83,500.

Expect silver price to remain range bound and ease a wee bit in the near future. A fall to ₹89,500-₹90,500 appears likely. The long-term uptrend is likely to resume on the completion of the expected pull-back. To summarise, the long-term outlook for both gold and silver remains positive. The price could however consolidate or edge lower in the near term.

(The author is a Chennai-based analyst / trader. The views and opinion featured in this column is based on the analysis of short-term price movement in gold and silver futures at COMEX & Multi Commodity Exchange of India. This is not meant to be a trading or investment advice.)



ILLUSTRATION: SOUMYADIP SINHA

An unhealthy credit score can impact financial future

Improving your credit score now would make it easier for you to access credit in the future and help in case of financial emergencies and fulfilling crucial life-goals

LOAN WORTHY

Radhika Binani

Maintaining a healthy credit score is a crucial financial habit, but is often ignored. This lack of awareness coupled with poor credit behaviour leads to a poor credit score, which can have serious repercussions on your financial future.

As lenders consider credit score as one of the key deciding factors while processing your application for a loan, an unhealthy credit score will make it very difficult for you to access credit. What is an unhealthy credit score? Credit score is a three-digit number ranging between 300 and 900, representing creditworthiness on the basis of credit history.

It is measured by credit-information companies or credit bureaus. When you apply for any kind of loan or credit card, lenders check your credit score, to assess repayment behaviour. A credit score of more than 750 is generally considered to be a high score and is a reflection of a responsible borrower with excellent credit history. It is preferred by most lenders and credit card issuers. Consumers with a healthy credit score benefit from ease of access, wide choice of offers to compare and choose, best interest rates and other favourable terms and conditions.

A score in the range of 700 to 750 is considered a



Lenders may outrightly reject credit applications of applicants with poor credit scores and such applicants might not get any unsecured loan

good score too, but may not be eligible for the best offers from lenders. Credit score between 600 and 700 is considered to be an average score and reflects credit behaviour in the past has not been good. Very few lenders are likely to approve a loan application for consumers in the average zone.

Any score below 600 is considered a poor credit score and it's unlikely any lender will offer you a loan.

Fraud impacts score

Do note a low score can also be a result of fraudulent activities or erroneous errors in your credit report. To avoid situations where score has plummeted because of frauds or errors, check your credit report regularly, at least once a quarter, and take immediate action if you notice any discrepancy, by raising a dispute with the credit bureau. It's critical that those who are below the healthy credit score benefit from ease of access, wide choice of offers to compare and choose, best interest rates and other favourable terms and conditions.

What is the impact of an unhealthy credit score on your finances in future? Lenders may outrightly re-



If you have a poor score and in need of funds, opt for secured loan such as gold loan or loan against property instead of unsecured personal loan

ject credit applications of applicants with poor credit scores and such applicants might not get any unsecured loan.

Lender rejections are also reported in the credit report, and can in fact further lower your score. If you have a poor score and in need of immediate funds, try to opt for a secured loan such as gold loan or loan against property instead of unsecured personal loans. Some lenders might still approve credit applications of applicants with average to good credit scores.

Financial crisis

But these loans would come at unfavourable terms for borrowers and a high cost, as the lender is likely to charge a significantly higher interest rate and in some cases, also approve a lower loan amount. A low score often leads to a financial crisis when one is short of funds in case of emergencies like a medical exigency. The inability to take a loan can also adversely impact your financial goals like buying a home. On the other hand, consumers with a strong credit score are the most preferred applicants for

lenders. They are likely to get loans at the best interest rates, and sometimes with low or no processing charges.

Improving the score

Improving your poor credit score is not an overnight process, it requires consistently responsible credit usage over a period to boost your credit score. Hence, it is better to take timely necessary measures to improve the credit score. The most important aspect is to pay your EMIs and credit card bills in full on time. You should also avoid behaviour that's a reflection of overdependence on credit, like making too many applications for loans or credit cards in a short span of time or maxing out your credit cards regularly.

Pending dues

You should check if the poor score is a result of an old credit account that may not have been closed, and has had pending dues for long.

This can bring down your score drastically. Get in touch with the concerned lender immediately and take necessary steps to close the account. So, if your credit score is not in the healthy range, it is important for you to take proactive steps to build your score. Improving your credit score now would make it easier for you to access credit in the future and help in case of financial emergencies and fulfilling crucial life-goals.

(The writer is Chief Product Officer, Paisabazaar)

Investing in PPF: benefits

THINKINVESTOR

There are two advantages with PPF – one: interest earned on the investment is exempt from tax and second: interest is compounded, but the investment does not eliminate reinvestment risk

Venkatesh Bangarawamy

For most individuals, Section 80C of the Income-Tax Act is the primary means for saving taxes. Individuals typically avail benefits under Section 80C by investing in provident fund (PPF), public provident fund (PPF) and equity-linked savings scheme (ELSS). Previously in this column, we discussed why investing in PPF and PF is more optimal than investing in ELSS. In this article, we discuss how to structure your investment in PPF.

Compounding returns

There are two advantages associated with PPF investment. One, interest earned on the investment is exempt from tax. Second, interest is compounded, but the investment does not eliminate reinvestment risk. This is the risk you will be forced to reinvest annual interest at a lower rate if interest rate declines.

Bank deposits

Take bank recurring deposit and cumulative fixed deposit. The interest prevailing at the time of initiating the deposit is locked-in through the life of the deposit. So, these two kinds of deposit eliminate reinvestment risk. Interest rate on PPF is reset quarterly.

So, PPF investment will earn lower return if interest rate declines, exposing you to reinvestment risk. The comforting factor is you do not have to look for avenues to reinvest. The accrued interest is automatically reinvested into your PPF account.

Overarching argument

That interest income is tax-exempt is the overarching argument to consider PPF investment. Note, your interest income is otherwise taxable at your marginal tax rate (30%). So, you save ₹45,000 if you invest ₹1.5 lakh every year. Also, note you can renew PPF account each time for a block of five years after its initial maturity period of 15 years. So, it may be optimal to renew the account till you retire, as PPF can be an important part of your retirement portfolio.

Conclusion

You should consider investing ₹1.5 lakh annually, regardless of the headroom you have under Section 80C. That is, exhaust the PPF limit of ₹1.5 lakh without considering other eligible investments you make under the section. Your tax deduction will be limited to ₹1.5 lakh.

The argument is simple. You can avail the tax benefit if you invest in ELSS. But, you will be unable to shield income on your bond (read interest earning) investments from taxes unless you invest under Section 80C in PPF and PF. To avail the benefit of compounding, it is preferable to invest lump sum or large sums in PPF earlier in a financial year than later.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
HDFC Bank	10.50 onwards	10,747 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to Rs 4,999
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 5.5%
State Bank of India	11.15-15.30	10,909-11,974	2,182-2,395	1.50% (Min Rs 1,000 to Max Rs 15,000)
ICICI Bank	10.80 onwards	10,821 onwards	2,164 onwards	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda	11.10-18.75	10,896-12,902	2,179-2,580	Up to 2% (Min Rs 1,000 Max Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3%
Bank of India	10.85-14.85	10,834-11,856	2,167-2,371	0.50%-1% (Min Rs 250 Max Rs 10,000)
Canara Bank	10.95-16.40	10,859-12,266	2,172-2,453	0.50% (Max Rs 2,500)
Punjab National Bank	10.40-17.95	10,772-12,683	2,144-2,537	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	9.99-15.00	10,621-11,895	2,124-2,379	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.49 onwards	10,994 onwards	2,199 onwards	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	11.35-15.45	10,959-12,013	2,192-2,403	Up to 1% (Max Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	11.00 onwards	10,871 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	10.75-13.50	10,809-11,505	2,162-2,301	0.50%-1%
South Indian Bank	12.85-20.60	11,338-13,414	2,268-2,683	Up to 2%
UCO Bank	12.45-12.85	11,236-11,338	2,247-2,268	Up to 1% (Min Rs 750)
IDFC First Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 2%
Karnataka Bank	13.43	11,487	2,297	Up to 2% of loan amount (Min Rs 2,500, Max. Rs 8,500)

Car Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
Union Bank of India	8.70 - 10.45	10,307 - 10,735	Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	8.75 - 10.60	10,319 - 10,772	0.25% (Rs 1,000 - Rs 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	8.90 - 12.70	10,355 - 11,300	Up to Rs 2,000
Canara Bank	8.70 - 12.70	10,307 - 11,300	0.25% (Maximum Rs 2,500)
UCO Bank	8.45 - 10.55	10,246 - 10,759	Nil
State Bank of India	8.75 - 9.80	10,319 - 10,554	Up to Rs 1,500
IDBI Bank	8.80 - 9.60	10,331 - 10,525	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.70 - 13.00	10,307 - 11,377	0.25% (Rs 1,000 - Rs 15,000)
Indian Overseas Bank**	8.85 - 12.00	10,343 - 11,122	0.50% (Rs 500 - Rs 5,000)
ICICI Bank	9.10 onwards	10,403 onwards	Up to 2%
HDFC Bank	9.20 onwards	10,428 onwards	0

TEHRAN

Former President Ahmadinejad to contest for Iran President's post



Iran's hardline former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Sunday registered his candidacy for a presidential election this month. Ahmadinejad, 67, held the post for two straight terms from 2005 to 2013, a period marked by a stand-off with the West especially over Iran's nuclear programme and his incendiary remarks on Israel. AFP

JERUSALEM

Two Palestinian teenagers killed by Israeli gunfire in West Bank



Two Palestinian teenagers were killed by Israeli gunfire in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian Health Ministry said on Sunday. Palestinian media said medical teams were prevented from reaching one of the wounded and the other succumbed to his wounds on Sunday in a hospital in Jerusalem. REUTERS

MEXICO CITY

Mexico votes in elections that will throw up its first woman President



Mexicans voted on Sunday in a presidential election dominated by two women in a country with a history of gender-based violence and discrimination. Ruling party's Claudia Sheinbaum, a former Mexico City Mayor and a scientist, had a 17 percentage point lead over her opposition rival Xochitl Galvez on the eve of the vote. AFP

BEIJING

China probe successfully lands on far side of moon to collect samples



China's Chang'e-6 lunar probe successfully landed on Sunday on the far side of the moon to collect samples, state media reported — the latest leap for Beijing's decades-old space programme. The Chang'e-6 set down in the immense South Pole-Aitken Basin, one of the largest known impact craters in the solar system. AFP

South Africa's ANC to start coalition talks with other parties to form govt.

After its dismal show in the polls, party says results were a clear message and that it has heard the concerns, frustrations and dissatisfaction of the people; other parties such as Jacob Zuma's uMkhonto weSizwe allege discrepancies in vote count

Agence France-Presse

JOHANNESBURG

South Africa's ruling ANC said on Sunday that it would enter talks with other parties to form a new government, after losing its three-decade-old absolute majority in a watershed election.

With 99.91% of the votes from Wednesday's election counted, President Cyril Ramaphosa's African National Congress had only 40.2%, a catastrophic slump from the 57.5% it won in 2019.

"The ANC is committed to the formation of a government that reflects the will of the people, that is stable and that is able to



Elated moment: Jacob Zuma arrives at the Independent Electoral Commission National Results Centre in Midrand on Saturday. AFP

govern effectively," ANC secretary-general Fikile Mbalula told a press conference.

"The voters of South Africa have shown that they expect the leaders of this country to work together in the interests of all," he said.

Mr. Mbalula said the ANC would hold discussions internally and with other groups "over the next few days".

It marks a historic turning point for South Africa as the party has enjoyed an absolute majority since 1994, when liberation hero Nelson Mandela led the nation out of white-minority rule and into democracy.

"The results send a clear message to the ANC," Mr. Mbalula said.

"We wish to assure the people of South Africa that we have heard them. We have heard their concerns, their frustrations and their dissatisfaction."

The final results are to be formally announced on

Sunday, with Mr. Ramaphosa due to deliver an address during an official ceremony near Johannesburg.

But some parties have alleged discrepancies in the vote count.

'Serious' issues

The largest and most vocal was former President Jacob Zuma's uMkhonto weSizwe (MK), which warned electoral authorities against going ahead with the final announcements.

"If that happens you are going to be provoking us," Mr. Zuma, 82, said on Saturday, alleging unspecified "serious" issues but providing no supporting evidence.

'China ready to forcefully stop Taiwan independence'

Agence France-Presse

SINGAPORE

Chinese Defence Minister Dong Jun warned on Sunday his military is ready to "forcefully" stop Taiwan independence but called for greater exchanges with the United States.

The remarks at an annual security forum in Singapore followed the first substantive face-to-face talks in 18 months between the two countries' defence chiefs.

"We have always been open to exchanges and cooperation, but this requires both sides to meet each other halfway," Mr. Dong told the Shangri-La Dialogue where he met with U.S. Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin on Friday.

"We believe that we need more exchanges pre-



Dong Jun

cisely because there are differences between our two militaries."

"The Chinese People's Liberation Army has always been an indestructible and powerful force in defence of the unification of the motherland, and it will act resolutely and forcefully at all times to curb the independence of Taiwan and to ensure that it never succeeds in its attempts," Mr. Dong told the

forum on Sunday.

"Whoever dares to split Taiwan from China will be crushed to pieces and suffer his own destruction."

Taiwan's response

Taipei hit back, describing Chinese officials' comments at the forum as "irrational" and insisted it would "work tirelessly for peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait", according to a statement from Taiwan's presidential office.

On the South China Sea, which China claims almost entirely and where it has been involved in confrontations with Philippine vessels, Mr. Dong warned of "limits" to Beijing's restraint. "China has maintained sufficient restraint in the face of rights infringements and provocation, but there are limits to this," Mr. Dong said.

Monsoon floods, landslip kill 14 in Sri Lanka; schools shut

Agence France-Presse

COLOMBO

Flash floods, mudslides and falling trees have killed at least 14 persons in Sri Lanka as the island nation is battered by monsoon storms, the country's disaster centre said on Sunday.

Some drowned, including three members of the same family swept away near the capital Colombo.

Others were buried alive in mudslides, including an 11-year-old girl and a 20-year-old man, the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) said.

Nine other persons were crushed and killed when trees fell on them in seven districts since the monsoon intensified on May 21, the DMC said.

While Sri Lanka depends on the seasonal monsoon rain for irrigation as well as hydroelectricity, experts have



Sorry state: Villagers walk through a flooded road in Biyagama in Sri Lanka on Sunday. REUTERS

warned that it faces more frequent floods as the world heats due to climate change.

The DMC said 20 out of the country's 25 districts were affected by heavy rain and issued warnings to people living on the banks of main rivers to move to higher ground.

"There could be more heavy rains accompanied by strong winds and thunder," the DMC said.

Last week, wildlife authorities found seven carcasses of young elephants who drowned in the biggest single loss of the animals in five years.

Jail sentence will be a 'breaking point': Trump

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Donald Trump has suggested that sending him to prison could prove a "breaking point" for his supporters — a warning that will fuel concerns of political violence around the U.S. presidential election on November 5.

In an interview aired Sunday on Fox News, the former President and current Republican White House hopeful acknowledged the possibility of jail time or house arrest following his historic criminal conviction in a hush money trial.

"I'm ok with it," Mr. Trump said, but added he was "not sure the public would stand for it." "I think it would be tough for the public to take. You know at a certain point there's a breaking point," he said.

Prepare yourself for the carnival of chaos with Sportstar's 110-page, thrill-seeking bumper issue. We've got SWOT analysis for every group, a candid chat with the USA coach, and a roster of stars destined to dazzle. And wait for it — a double-sized, double poster. Yes, you read that right. It's not just a treat; it's a cricket fan's dream dessert platter, with extra sprinkles. Grab a copy now!

GET READY FOR THE T20 WORLD CUP WITH SPORTSTAR'S BUMPER ISSUE

Cricket is finally making its grand entrance stateside with the T20 extravaganza.



N. Korea vows to stop trash balloons after sending hundreds over border to South

Agence France-Presse

SEOUL

North Korea said on Sunday it would stop sending trash-filled balloons across the border into the South, saying the "disgusting" missiles had been an effective countermeasure against propaganda sent by anti-regime activists.

Since Tuesday, the North has sent nearly a thousand balloons carrying bags of rubbish containing everything from cigarette butts to bits of cardboard and plastic, Se-



New method: South Korean soldiers examine the remains from a balloon sent by North Korea in Incheon on Sunday. REUTERS

class" but, unlike the spate of recent ballistic missile launches, the trash campaign does not violate UN sanctions on Kim Jong-un's isolated regime.

Countermeasures
Seoul on Sunday warned it would take strong countermeasures unless the North called off the balloon bombardment. Late on Sunday, the North said it would stop its campaign, after scattering what it claimed was "15 tonnes of waste paper" using thousands of "devices" to deliver them.

oul's military said, warning the public to stay away.

South Korea has called

the latest provocation from its nuclear-armed neighbour "irrational" and "low-



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CM YK

Panghal, Jaismine punch Paris ticket



Panghal (51kg) and Jaismine (57kg). X@BFI_OFICIAL

BOXING QUALIFIERS

Sports Bureau

Amit Panghal (51kg) and Jaismine Lamboria (women's 57kg) recorded fine victories in their respective quarterfinal bouts to earn two more quota places on the concluding day of the second World Olympic boxing qualifier in Bangkok on Sunday.

With three quota places, including that of Nishant Dev (71kg), from the last qualifier, the country sealed six boxing berths in

Paris 2024. Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) had claimed three in the Asian Games.

The lanky Jaismine gave a clinical performance to outsmart Mali's Marine Camara 5-0 to reclaim the quota in style.

Panghal spectacularly rallied to beat Chinese Liu Chuang 5-0 to make it to his second consecutive Olympics. Sachin Siwach (57kg) put up a strong challenge before losing 5-0 to Kyrgyzstan's Munarbek Seitibek Uulu in a box-off for a quota.

Ramita make the women's air rifle final

Sports Bureau

Ramita Jindal made the women's air rifle final with a score of 633.0 in the shooting World Cup in Munich on Sunday.

Arjun Babuta shooting an impressive score of 635.1 in the men's event was in the Ranking Points Only (RPO) section and thus was not eligible to

make the final. Mehuli was also shooting in the RPO section, and had a score of 631.3. Tilotama Sen (629.3) and Elavenil Valarivan (628.3) placed 34th and 53rd. In men's air rifle, Sandeep Singh (631.4), Divyansh Singh Panwar (631.2) and World Champion Rudranksh Patil (630.7) placed 10th, 13th and 18th.

Praggnanandhaa stuns Caruana; Vaishali maintains sole lead

NORWAY CHESS

Sports Bureau

R. Praggnanandhaa shocked World No. 2 Fabiano Caruana of the United States in the fifth round of the Norway Chess tournament at Stavanger on Saturday. The 18-year-old from Chennai had earlier in the event stunned World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen.

Praggnanandhaa did well to eke out a 77-move win in a knight-and-pawn ending over the American in the classical game. He got three points for the victory and took his tally to 8.5.

Hikaru Nakamura of the United States was leading the tournament with 10 points, after defeating China's Ding Liren in the classical format. The day's other match was also decided in classical chess, as Carl-



Giant killer: Praggnanandhaa emerged victorious after a 77-move game against the World No. 2 Caruana. NORWAY CHESS

sen defeated France's Alireza Firouzja.

Carlsen was in second place with nine points, followed by Praggnanandhaa, Firouzja (6.5), Caruana (5), and Ding (2.5).

In the women's section, Praggnanandhaa's elder sister R. Vaishali maintained her sole lead after beating China's Lei Tingjie in Armageddon with white pieces, following the draw in their classical game. She was on 10 points, one

ahead of Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk, who beat Pia Cramling of Sweden in the classical format.

The results (fifth round):
Open: Ding Liren (Chn) 2.5 lost to Hikaru Nakamura (USA) 10; Magnus Carlsen (Nor) 9 bt Alireza Firouzja (Fra) 6.5; R. Praggnanandhaa 8.5 bt Fabiano Caruana (USA) 5.

Women: R. Vaishali 10 bt Lei Tingjie (Chn) 6; Anna Muzychuk (Ukr) 9 bt Pia Cramling (Swe) 3; Ju Wenjun (Chn) 7.5 bt Koneru Humpy 4.

Under-16 tournament.

The scores: TSM 247/7 in 35 overs (Parth Vishnoi 61, Eklaya Singh 41, Sidhant Bhardwaj 3/21) bt Khalsa Coaching Center 81 in 26 overs (Ansh Kaushik 4/13).

Modern Warriors triumphs

Vinayak Choudhary picked up three wickets for 12 runs as Modern Warriors beat Turf Sultans by seven wickets in the final to win the Turf Junior Cricket League Under-14 competition.

The scores: Turf Sultans 87 in 18.5 overs (Utsav Anand 46, Vinayak Choudhary 3/12) lost to Modern Warriors 90/3 in 15.1 overs.

Dinesh Rai Institute in summit clash

Vinod Shiyani scored an unbeaten 80 and took three wickets for 14 as Dinesh Rai Institute of Excellence beat Turf Sports Management by five wickets to enter the final of the 13th RP Dhondiyal memorial.

The scores: Dinesh Rai Institute 267/8 in 38 overs (Ayush Badoni 56, Priyam Garg 48, Shivam Sharma 44 no., Jasmeen Nain 3/39).

Ansh and Parth shine

Ayush Badoni top-scored with 56 runs and picked up two wickets as Carpediem India beat Players Academy by two wickets to enter the final of the All India Lala Raghbir Singh Hot Weather tournament.

The scores: Players Academy 266 in 38 overs (Swastik Chikara 75, Jayant 48, Prashant Choudhary 3/31) lost to Carpediem India 267/8 in 38 overs (Ayush Badoni 56, Priyam Garg 48, Shivam Sharma 44 no., Jasmeen Nain 3/39).

Ansh Kaushik picked up four wickets and Parth

CWY

Real does what it always does, win

Two late second-half goals gives it a record 15th Champions League title but only after Dortmund misses a host of gilt-edged chances



On top: Real capped off a very successful season by winning the continent's biggest club trophy. AFP

FOOTBALL

Agence France-Presse LONDON

Real Madrid withstood a Borussia Dortmund barrage to win the Champions League for the 15th time as Dani Carvajal and Vinicius Junior struck late in a 2-0 win at Wembley on Saturday. Right-back Carvajal headed in from Toni Kroos' corner on 74 minutes before Vinicius fired into the far corner to extend the Spanish giants' record as the most successful club in Champions League history.

Madrid has now won its last nine European Cup finals and won the competition six times in the last 11 seasons.

However, not for the first time in that run, it had to rely on some good fortune as underdogs Dortmund was left to bitterly regret not making the most of its first-half chances.

Niclas Fuellkrug hit the post and Karim Adeyemi failed to convert a one-on-one with Thibaut Courtois.

Madrid, though, always seems to find a way in Europe's elite competition and made more history in the English capital.

Carvajal, Kroos, Nacho and Luka Modric joined Real legend Paco Gento as the only players to win the European Cup six times.

Carlo Ancelotti also extended his record as the most successful coach in the competition's history with his fifth title.

Ancelotti said pre-match he felt "like a lion" after an afternoon siesta, but his side was caught napping for the first 45 minutes as, roared on by the travelling thousands from Germany, Dortmund dominated.

Ancelotti's decision to recall Courtois for his first Champions League appearance of the season after a serious knee injury paid dividends as the Belgian kept his side in the game.

Madrid landed the decisive blow 16 minutes from time when Carvajal rose highest to head in Kroos' corner.

Bellingham then teed up Vinicius to kill off Dortmund.

The result: Dortmund 0 lost to Real Madrid 2 (Carvajal 74, Vinicius Jr. 83).

Former Asian bronze medallist Nayana James came up with a 6.43m effort to shock Japan's Asian champion Sumire Hata (6.37m) and win the long jump gold at the Taiwan Athletics Open, a World Athletics Continental Tour bronze event, in Taipei on Sunday.

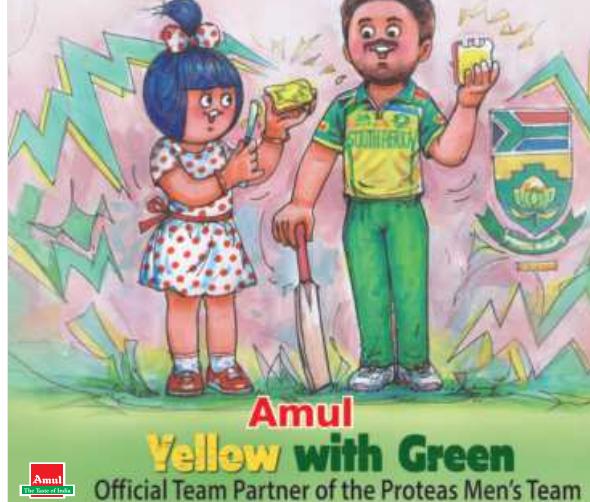
Ankesh Choudhary (1:50.63s) and Somnath Chouhan (1:50.88) won the gold and silver in the men's 800m while Dev Meena Kumar (5.10m) took the men's pole vault title.

In France, Commonwealth Games champion Eldhose Paul won the triple jump gold with 16.24m despite being far away from his best while Jesse Sandesh took the men's high jump title with 2.18m at the Meeting de Limoges.

In Spain, Animesh Kujur won the men's 200m title with a wind-assisted 20.59s (+4.9) in the City of Salamanca Athletics Trophy meet at Salamanca on Saturday. He also clocked the fastest 100m time by an Indian outside the country while finishing fourth in the event in 10.27s.

Tejas Shirse, who bettered the 110m hurdles National record with his 13.41s recently, finished second in Salamanca in 13.57s.

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IN BRIEF



Arjun Erigaisi becomes World No. 4 in live rating list

Arjun Erigaisi continued to rise in the World live rating as he went above Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi to become the new World No. 4 after beating France's Loïc Travadon in the French Team Chess Championship 2024 on Sunday. With a career-high rating of 2771.2, the Indian wunderkind is just behind Norway's Magnus Carlsen, USA's Hikaru Nakamura and Fabiano Caruana in the list. Playing for the Metz Fischer chess club in the French Team Chess Championship, Arjun grabbed his fourth successive win in as many rounds.

LIVE TELECAST

Shooting: World Cup, Sports 18-1 & JioCinema, 1.30 p.m.
Roland Garros: Sony Sports Ten 2, 5 & LIV, 2.30 p.m.
T20 World Cup: Star Sports 1 & Hotstar, 8 p.m. & 6 a.m. (Tuesday)

AVON CYCLES

RIDE FOR A BLOOMING TOMORROW

Niki and Rithvik lose doubles finals

Sports Bureau

Rithvik Boppana and Hans Verdugo of Mexico lost 6-4, 3-6, [10-7] to Liam Draxl and Benjamin Sigouin of Canada in the \$82,000 Challenger tennis doubles final in Little Rock, USA.

In the \$15,000 ITF men's event in Kingston, Jamaica, Aryan Shah made the singles final.

Other results: \$82,000 Challenger, Little Rock, USA:

Doubles: Semifinals: Liam & Benjamin bt Joshua Parris & Ramkumar Ramanathan 1-6, 6-4, [16-14]; Rithvik & Hans bt Thai-Son Kwiatkowski & Alex Lawson 6-1, 6-1.

€74,825 Challenger, Vicenza, Italy: Doubles: Final: Vladislav Manafov & Patrik Nikls-Salmi bt Andre Begemann & Niki Poonacha 6-3, 6-4.

Semifinals: Andre & Niki bt Luca Giacomini & Giovanni Oradini (Ita) 6-4, 3-6, [10-6].

\$15,000 ITF men, Kingston, Jamaica: Singles (semifinals): Aryan Shah bt Kosuke Ogura (Jpn) 6-4, 6-2.

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SCAN NOW FOR MORE DETAILS

I want India to match China, Japan, Korea; stubborn to make results'

Massimo Costantini opens up about his return to Indian table tennis, his immediate to-do list for the Summer Olympics in Paris and his aspirations for the future



MANOB CHOWDHARY

INTERVIEW

Massimo Costantini

Amol Karhadkar

Massimo Costantini's return for a third stint as the India head coach augurs well for the national table tennis team. It was without a permanent head coach for five years but got the veteran Italian on board just in time for its maiden stint in team events at the Olympic Games.

The Italian speaks to *The Hindu* about his return to Indian table tennis, his immediate to-do list and his plans for the future.

Max, how do you see this stint as compared to where you stopped in 2018? You actually had the option to stay on. You chose not to. Cut to now. Almost all the same individuals, when it comes to the core of players, but too much seems to have changed, right?

Dramatically. From 2018, there were some unexpected circumstances at that time but on the other hand, I've been working with ITTF for more than five years and I was always involved somehow with the training camp, mentorship programs, advising players, coaches including India, of course. I never lost contact with the top Indian players. The relationships went beyond 2018, from that great performance, the chemistry that we had at that time.

That was something that continued during my absence. But yes, in the meantime, it changed a lot of things. The system of playing, the circuit, the professionalism that WTT has brought into the ITTF.

I needed to learn many things from rules and regulations but I also needed to note that players also have changed. They have changed their feeling, perspective, the way they work and plan their own activities. There is a lot of work to do. I'm not saying to go back to the old system but my goal is

to be next to China, Japan, Korea. My model is [to emulate] China, Japan, Korea and their system to manage the team in a very successful way and we have seen in the past years.

You spoke about getting India closer to the stature of the other three Asian powerhouses. How do you actually make it happen considering you know how Indian table tennis has been coping with too many external factors in the recent past?

I don't know. I'm not completely involved but probably, the reason is missing the head coach, the one who can supervise, guide, plan, organise, stay behind, protect and help the players, coaches and their academies. It's something that creates some sort of actual situation. So, nobody's fault. It's just a fact. I'm trying to see what kind of work we can do together because we have an important commitment from now on.

Individual commitment, team's commitment. But I'm confident that I can restore that strong and good collaboration with the structure, with ITTFI, with SAI, of course and TOPS - that's also another part of the important support for the players - and the coaches themselves. So a lot of work to do, but I'm very motivated to take on this big task.

When it comes to the Olympics, what is the importance of qualifying for the Olympics as a team for both the genders and the expectations that the fans should have in Paris?

India already got very good results by qualifying both teams. And this is something that India should be proud of. Making the top 16 for the Olympics, it's not easy. They made through a very particular mechanism - a mix of individual results and team results that made both teams in the 16th position. So, this is already a big result.

We should not take anything for granted. And without these results, maybe today we don't have two

QQ In the first tenure, there were good results at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi, in the second Commonwealth Games, and the Asian Games while in the third, you have the answer

MASSIMO COSTANTINI
on his 'unfinished business' with Indian TT

players guaranteed for the singles and we don't have the third player also competing for the team. So, let's start from the good things that we already have which is the qualification. As I used to say, you need to get used to winning at a certain level. India is appearing in the team event for the first time. Now, whatever will come, we have to welcome it positively.

That's why I have asked for three competitions back-to-back - Nigeria, Tunisia and Thailand. It is a test for me, first of all, to see them and to coach them directly after six years. We need to restore some communication. I would take this step by step because you cannot predict anything in advance. You could not predict that Sharath did super well in the Singapore Smash and similarly, when Manika also did super well in the Saudi Smash.

Table tennis is so unpredictable that the only thing predictable is the good preparation we can have. A good mindset for the players, for the entire team, and whoever is involved in this process for the next two months.

In the last five-and-a-half years in Indian table tennis, who has actually surprised you the most in a positive way among the players that you were watching so closely?

I see good improvement from Manav (Thakkar). Also, good performance up and down with Harmeet (Desai). Sathiyan also did well in the very last Feeder, winning the title. Ayhika (Mukherjee) also beat the number one. Okay, there is the point of playing style that is an asset for India and everyone is afraid of playing against India. I take what we have positively but I think big

surprises will come in future.

How do you ensure that someone like Mamta (Prabhu) and Subhajit (Saha) who were actually taking care of the team for more than the last few months, will be involved? How do you keep them involved—not just them, but the whole coaching setup?

The secret is simple: knowledge, personality, and communication skills. I want to see them in action, performing these three simple things, and see where they lack and try to provide them with proper guidance. One of my jobs this time in India is also to improve coaches at any level. This is very interesting work.

For the players, (we) need to analyse their strengths and weaknesses; where can I use their strengths to make them better, and where can I see their weaknesses and discard them? I will ask them to have an open mind and think about table tennis as per the latest methodologies, the system of training, and tactics. A lot of things changed in the last six years, and I studied a lot. This is the thing that I want to see from them.

Do you think it is time that India starts taking the doubles (table tennis category) more seriously?

Doubles are now part of professional circles. They have prize money. You can qualify for the finals of WTT. This is a part that can definitely be increased and improved. Now, we have to see the kinds of possibilities (we have). We have many players with different playing styles and already established combinations.

We have to work with the doubles and have particular attention on mixed doubles which can also give the Olympics medals, without forgetting the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games. As a national team, whatever doubles (we) are involved in, I think I have to put attention on those and prepare well.

You said that you had unfinished

business. Can you just give us a summary of your wish list or your targets?

Well, that's very simple. In the first tenure, there were good results at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi, in the second Commonwealth Games, and the Asian Games while in the third, you have the answer.

In the first stint, Indian table tennis was in a sort of nascent stage. In your second stint, Indian table tennis actually arrived on the big stage. Now, do you think, for the first time, you will have to deal with inflated egos? How do you plan to ensure that the priority remains the same for everyone?

The plan is simple: to strengthen the team first of all, the structure of the team, while also keeping in mind the individual needs. I don't want to cut this because it's not possible to cut it but I want to help them get better guidance.

If you see other countries, players all have personal coaches and sometimes, personal staff too, but they are a part of the national team. When you see China's Wang Manyu, Sun Yingsha and Wang Yidi, there is the head coach sitting because the head coach has the responsibility. He is accountable for results, not the personal coach who is at the back. But the head coach, maybe, should take the lead. It's a slow process.

We need a common goal. Now we have players at, I would say, almost the same level. On a Chinese or Japanese team, you don't see random players going alone in one competition with their own coaches. (Players) should be a part of the program to strengthen the teams, maybe to increase the number of probables in the national team, or maybe to create different tiers of a team—the main team and the second team. But then, when we go to the competition, the group is united, where each and everyone helps the other team members. We have to strengthen the team, and I think it's possible to achieve that.

SCIENCE

Tonga volcano could cause unusual weather for rest of decade: study

Usually, the sulphur dioxide in the smoke of a volcano cools the earth's surface for a short period. Hunga Tonga was an underwater volcano, so it produced little smoke and a lot of water vapour, which shot into the stratosphere. And in the stratosphere, water vapour is a potent greenhouse gas.

Martin Jucker

Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai (Hunga Tonga for short) erupted on January 15, 2022, in the Pacific Kingdom of Tonga. It created a tsunami, which triggered warnings across the entire Pacific basin, and sent sound waves around the globe multiple times.

A new study published in the *Journal of Climate* explores the climate impacts of this eruption.

Our findings show the volcano can explain last year's extraordinarily large ozone hole as well as the much wetter than expected summer of 2024.

The eruption could have lingering effects on our winter weather for years to come.

A cooling smoke cloud

Usually, the smoke of a volcano – and in particular the sulphur dioxide contained inside the smoke cloud – ultimately leads to a cooling of the earth's surface for a short period. This is because the sulphur dioxide transforms into sulphate aerosols, which send sunlight back into space before it reaches the surface. This shading effect means the surface cools down for a while, until the sulphate falls back down to the surface or gets rained out.

This is not what happened to Hunga Tonga.

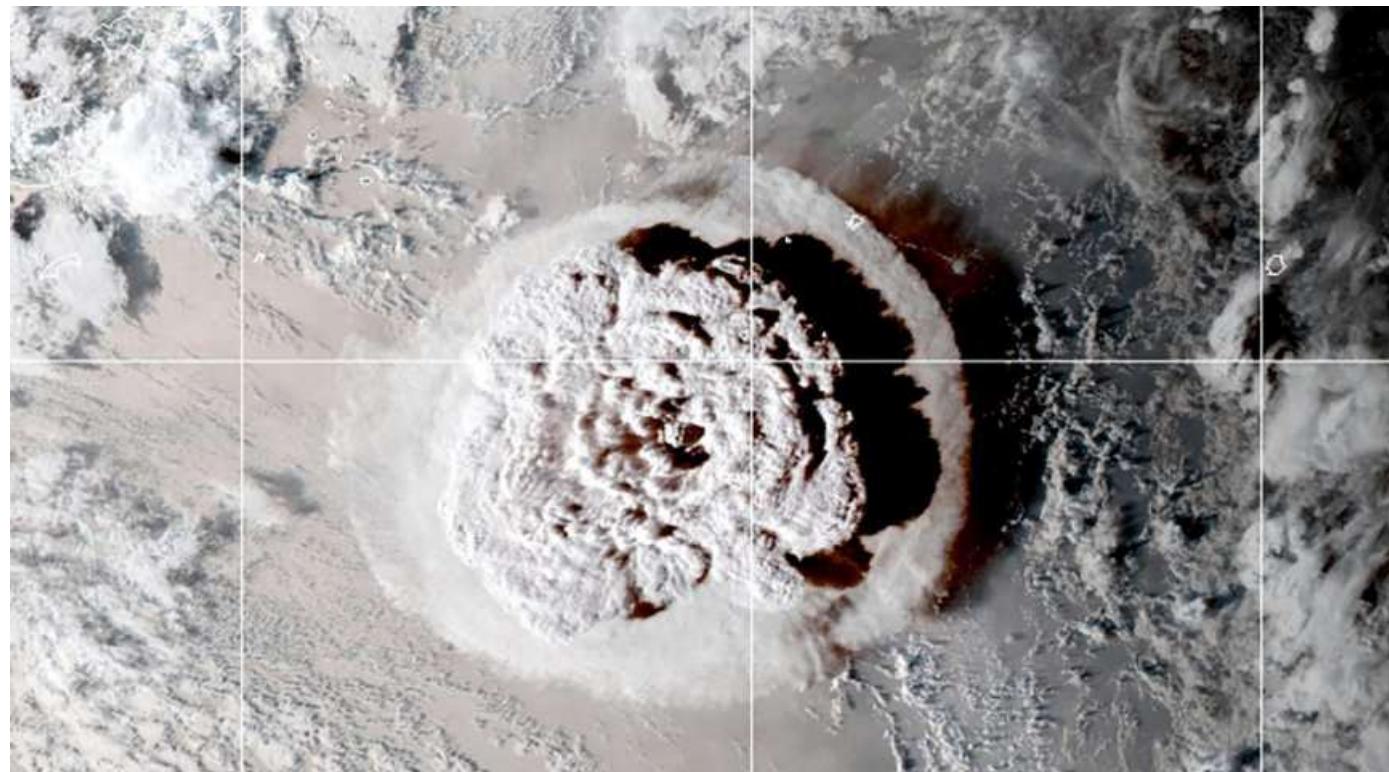
Because it was an underwater volcano, Hunga Tonga produced little smoke, but a lot of water vapour: 100–150 million tonnes, or the equivalent of 60,000 Olympic swimming pools. The enormous heat of the eruption transformed huge amounts of sea water into steam, which then shot high into the atmosphere with the force of the eruption. All that water ended up in the stratosphere: a layer of the atmosphere between about 15 and 40 kilometres above the surface, which produces neither clouds nor rain because it is too dry.

Water vapour in the stratosphere has two main effects. One, it helps in the chemical reactions that destroy the ozone layer, and two, it is a very potent greenhouse gas.

There is no precedent in our observations of volcanic eruptions to know what all that water would do to our climate, and for how long. This is because the only way to measure water vapour in the entire stratosphere is via satellites. These have only existed since 1979, and there hasn't been an eruption similar to Hunga Tonga in that time.

Follow the vapour

Experts in stratospheric science around



The eruption of the underwater volcano Hunga Ha'apai off Tonga in 2022. The volcano has had weather altering impact across the globe. REUTERS

the world started examining satellite observations on the first day of the eruption. Some studies focused on the more traditional effects of volcanic eruptions, such as the amount of sulphate aerosols and their evolution after the eruption, some concentrated on the possible effects of the water vapour, and some included both.

But nobody really knew how the water vapour in the stratosphere would behave. How long will it remain in the stratosphere? Where will it go? And, most importantly, what does this mean for the climate while the water vapour is still there?

Those were exactly the questions we set out to answer.

We wanted to find out about the future, and unfortunately, it is impossible to measure that. This is why we turned to climate models, which are specifically made to look into the future.

We did two simulations with the same climate model. In one, we assumed no volcano erupted, while in the other one we manually added the 60,000 Olympic swimming pools worth of water vapour to the stratosphere. Then, we compared the two simulations, knowing that any differences must be due to the added water vapour.

What did we find out?

The large ozone hole from August to December 2023 was at least in part due to Hunga Tonga. Our simulations predicted



The eruption created a tsunami which triggered warnings across the entire Pacific basin, and sent sound waves around the globe multiple times

that ozone hole almost two years in advance.

Notably, this was the only year we would expect any influence from the volcanic eruption on the ozone hole. By then, the water vapour had just enough time to reach the polar stratosphere over Antarctica, and during any later years, there would not be enough water vapour left to enlarge the ozone hole.

In terms of global mean temperatures, which are a measure of how much climate change we are experiencing, the impact of Hunga Tonga is very small, only about 0.015 degrees Celsius. (This was independently confirmed by another study.) This means that the incredibly

high temperatures we have measured for about a year now cannot be attributed to the Hunga Tonga eruption.

Disruption for the rest of the decade

But there are some surprising, lasting impacts in some regions of the planet.

For the northern half of Australia, our model predicts colder and wetter than usual winters up to about 2029. For North America, it predicts warmer than usual winters, while for Scandinavia, it again predicts colder than usual winters.

The volcano seems to change the way some waves travel through the atmosphere. And atmospheric waves are responsible for highs and lows, which directly influence our weather.

It is important here to clarify that this is only one study, and one particular way of investigating what impact the Hunga Tonga eruption might have on our weather and climate. Like any other climate model, ours is not perfect.

We also didn't include any other effects, such as the El Niño-La Niña cycle. But we hope that our study will stir scientific interest to try and understand what such a large amount of water vapour in the stratosphere might mean for our climate.

Whether it is to confirm or contradict our findings, that remains to be seen – we welcome either outcome.

(Martin Jucker is lecturer in atmospheric dynamics, UNSW Sydney. This article is republished from The Conversation.)

THE GIST

▼ A large ozone hole that developed from August to December 2023 was caused by Hunga Tonga. Simulations by researchers predicted that ozone hole almost two years in advance

▼ Hunga Tonga's impact on climate change was very small. It was calculated at only about 0.015 degrees Celsius. Consequently the high temperatures that have been measured for about a year now cannot be attributed to the eruption

▼ Researchers' climate simulation predicts that the northern half of Australia will be colder and wetter than usual winters up to 2029. For North America, it predicts warmer than usual winters, while for Scandinavia, it again predicts colder than usual winters

+

+

BIG SHOT



This picture from the Institut Botanic de Barcelona shows a fern in New Caledonia. A small, seemingly unremarkable fern that only grows on a remote Pacific island was on May 31 crowned the record-holder for having the largest genome of any organism on the earth. The New Caledonian fern (*Tmesipteris oblongolata*) has more than 50-times more DNA packed into the nucleus of its cells than humans. AFP

WHAT IS IT?

Carnian pluvial episode: bounty in rain

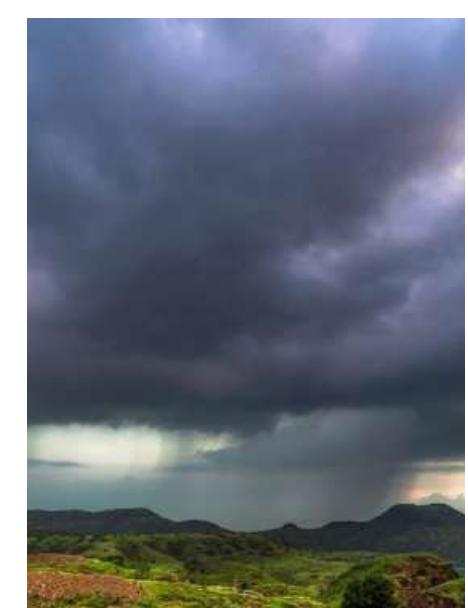
Arkatapa Basu

The earth's climate has always been in flux. There have been ice ages, periods of scorching deserts, even seemingly endless rain.

Some 230 million years ago, during the late Triassic Period, it rained for more than a million years straight. Researchers call this slice of time the carnian pluvial episode. And right after this episode, the age of the dinosaurs began. While it wasn't as major an event as, say, any one of the planet's five mass extinctions, the carnian pluvial episode certainly altered the path of evolution of both terrestrial and marine flora and fauna.

The world's landmasses in the late Triassic consisted of the supercontinent Pangaea. Scientists have suggested that the heavy downpour was the result of volcanic activity in the Wrangellia Province, which is in the present day on the western coast of North America. This volcanic activity is expected to have wiped out approximately a third of marine life and a substantial amount of terrestrial life – but which, according to evidence scientists have found, the carnian pluvial episode may have turned around for the better.

During and after the episode, the



At one point during the late Triassic Period, it rained for more than a million years straight. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

number and diversity of species increased. Many of them played and continue to play an important role in the way the earth looks today.

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