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MUST WIN GAME FOR DC 12 SPORTS

Poll battle enters crucial Phase III

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With stakes being high for the BJP which had won an overwhelming majority of these seats...



cash and freebies. Strict surveillance has been kept at sea and air routes. With the BJP bagging Surat unopposed...

Constitution and reservation issue dominating the poll discourse. The stakes are significant for the BJP and its allies...

243 seats in the Lok Sabha. The next four phases will be on May 13, May 20, May 25 and June 1. Counting of votes is on June 4...

LG recommends NIA probe against Kejriwal

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Troubles seem to be mounting for the jailed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal as Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena recommended National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe against the AAP chief...



Ministry read. Bhullar, who is in Amritsar Central Jail, was convicted in connection with the killing of nine people in a bomb blast in 1993 in Delhi...

STARS IN FRAY

Table with columns: CONSTITUENCY, CANDIDATES, PARTY. Lists candidates for various constituencies like Gandhinagar, Baramati, Guna, Rajgarh, Berhampore, Vidisha, Dharwad, South Goa, Mainpuri, Dhubri.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with NDA candidates and leaders at a public meeting ahead of Lok Sabha polls in Berhampur, Odisha, on Monday

BJP's all-weather ally in Odisha faces Modi heat

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI/BERHAMPUR

Less than two months before the announcement of Lok Sabha polls, when the BJP and BJD were discussing an alliance in Odisha and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik received praise from Prime Minister Narendra Modi at public rallies...

party, as well as Patnaik, who left no stone unturned to support the NDA in Parliament. In February this year, he sent Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to the Rajya Sabha under the BJD quota.

Government is June 4, 2024," Modi said at the Berhampur rally. When the talks were ongoing until they proved futile at the end of March, both Modi and Patnaik acknowledged each other's contributions...

Spotlight on Samajwadi Party's first family

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT ■ LUCKNOW

The stage is set for the third phase of elections in 10 Lok Sabha constituencies which will go to polls on Tuesday, with all eyes on the first family of Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav who are in the electoral fray.



Besides, Aditya Yadav, the son of SP national general secretary Shivpal Singh Yadav, is making his electoral debut from the Budaun Lok Sabha seat...

Sambhal, Hathras (SC), Agra (SC), Fatehpur Sikri, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etah, Budaun, Aonla and Bareilly.

Besides the Yadav family members, polling will be held to seal the fate of Union Minister SP Singh Baghel, UP Tourism Minister Jaiveer Singh, Minister of State for Revenue Anoop Pradhan Balmiki, Baghel, Jaiveer Singh, and Balmiki are

contesting from Agra (SC), Mainpuri, and Hathras (SC) Lok Sabha constituencies respectively. Rajveer Singh, son of former Chief Minister of UP and Bharatiya Janata Party stalwart Kalyan Singh, is looking to score a hat-trick from the Etah parliamentary constituency...

Capital sees 67 per cent surge in wrong side driving prosecutions

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

A staggering surge of almost 67 per cent in the number of prosecutions for 'wrong side driving' was witnessed in the national Capital in 2024, during the period from January 1 to April 30, compared to the same period in the previous year.

driving against the designated flow of traffic. This reckless behaviour not only endangers the lives of the offenders but also poses a significant threat to other road users, leading to a rise in accidents and traffic congestion...

Najafgarh area topping the list with 1,3289 violators. Sarita Vihar stands at the second number with 1,333 violators, followed by 1,133 in BhajanPura, 1,093 in Punjabi Bagh, 1,062 in Kalyan Puri, 1,056 in Kotwali, 1,041 in Dwarka, 998 in Sangam Vihar, 968 in Rajouri Garden and 966 in Kamla Market.



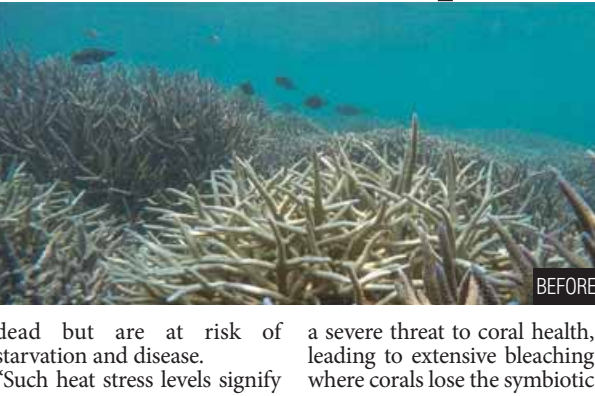
official said. In a bid to raise awareness and make citizens understand the importance of adhering to traffic rules and regulations, the traffic police is collaborating with various stakeholders, including civic authorities and educational institutions.

Marine heatwave scorches pristine coral reefs of Lakshadweep

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The vibrant corals of the picturesque Lakshadweep sea nestled in India's smallest union territory off the coast of Kerala are losing their sheen as it is experiencing prolonged marine heatwaves since late October 2023.

4 °C-weeks, posing a severe threat to coral health, said scientists at the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) as they observed alarming levels of coral bleaching, indicating significant stress on marine ecosystems in the region.



precipitate an unprecedented biodiversity crisis due to multispecies mortality," KR Sreenath, senior scientist at CMFRI, said on Monday. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), this level of DHW poses a substantial risk of coral bleaching, threatening the region's diverse marine ecosystems.

Corals are living organisms that make up the reefs and provide the ecosystem for marine life to thrive, especially fish. Coral reefs are a natural barrier, protecting these islands against the swelling of the seas, and keeping salt water out of the limited freshwater sources in the region.

Shelton Padua, another senior scientist, identified the primary causes of these marine heat waves as excessive heat atmospheric transfer coupled with shifts in ocean currents, leading to unusually high water temperatures.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Holding up the mirror

The roots of Khalistani extremism in Canada run deep; S Jaishankar just made it public

In a recent critique of the Trudeau administration, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar accused Canada of granting visas to individuals linked to organised crime, despite warnings from New Delhi, while also legitimising extremism, separatism, and advocates of violence under the guise of free speech. Regarding the escalation of pro-Khalistani activities in Canada and the recent arrest of three individuals in connection with the killing of India-designated terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, Jaishankar remarked that certain individuals have organized politically, influencing politicians to believe they hold sway over community support, thus carving out a space for themselves in the politics of democratic nations. This has been the Indian answer to Canadian charges of killing a Canadian Sikh on its soil. S Jaishankar has effectively retorted to the Canadian charges by saying that the Canada government gives visas to dubious people from India despite the Indian government's warnings. The roots of Khalistani separatism gained significant traction in the 1980s culminating in violence and the tragic events of Operation Blue Star and the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. The wounds inflicted during this period continue to fester, providing fertile ground for extremist ideologies to thrive, particularly among Sikh diaspora communities. Canada, with its sizable Sikh population, became a hub for Khalistani activists and sympathisers, offering refuge to those fleeing persecution in India while inadvertently providing a platform for the propagation of separatist ideologies.



The liberal immigration policies and multicultural ethos of Canada provided a conducive environment for the Khalistani movement to gain momentum, with several prominent figures finding sanctuary and support within its borders. However, the issue transcends mere ideological sympathies and delves into the realm of organised crime and terrorism. Over the years, there have been numerous instances of Khalistani elements in Canada being implicated in activities ranging from fundraising for militant outfits to carrying out targeted attacks against perceived enemies of the movement. India has repeatedly raised concerns about Canada's perceived leniency towards individuals with ties to Khalistani extremism. Minister for External Affairs, S Jaishankar's criticism reflects India's growing unease over the role of certain segments within the Canadian establishment in enabling and even legitimizing Khalistani activities. He has done the right thing in showing the mirror to the Canadian government which had accused India of a Sikh Canadian on its soil. Canada, on its part, has taken some steps to address these concerns but the fact is Canada's Govt has been largely sympathetic to such elements. Only a couple of days back Khalistani slogans were raised in the presence of Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau. Canada must strike a delicate balance between upholding its commitment to freedom of speech and association while preventing its territory from being used as a staging ground for violence and terrorism.

PICTALK



Polling officials travel via a boat to reach their respective polling booths, a day before the voting, in Kamrup

Dynamic contours of electoral politics

In a nation where election season seems perennial, the traditional distinction between campaign fervour and governance blurs into a continuous political landscape



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The election season is here. The reaction to the statement could well be that election season is now almost there around the year. There are some elections in some parts of the country going on constantly. In short, almost every season has become an election season. It would be tempting to ask oneself if this is a good thing or a bad thing. It's normal to be judgmental in matters which appear to be significant. However, it would not matter which way the judgment goes because the judgment would not affect the actual run of the situation.

That may be another matter. However, the present election fever is unique in its type because it affects every part of the country and is not confined to a small region or another. The concern of the day is national rather than regional, as it often is. This makes the issues of national significance to figure out a choice in the fray. National issues could come up in many areas, such as defence, taxation, education and interstate movements. The special entry provisions that govern certain regions of the country, or indeed the kind of inter-regional transportation structure, including waterways, as it affects human movement, trade, or commerce. The list enumerated itself is loud and can be added to. However, it makes a basic point. The issues in this election are issues that cut across states, have pan-India bearings, or affect the identity of citizens in the country. All this adds to the exclusivity of the election. Conceptually, what has been set in the preceding few lines is correct. But operationally, there are many other shades and colours. A dominant theme affecting these elections seems to be religion, whereas worship is always a private thing. In India, methods of worship have often served as a method of aggregation of identity. This is a particularly unique gift of the way independence was achieved in this country. No country in the world in the post-colonial era was ever partitioned based on religion, as India was, as a prerequisite for independence. How this helped anyone or any



cause is not quite clear. If the basis of partition was religion, there was something strange about one country proclaiming its identity to be one religion and another country emphatically proposing that it would not have any religious identity. That, however, was the choice of August, 14 and 15, 1947, by the two countries that brought into existence freedom, or more technically, the withdrawal of colonial rule. The British were particular in pointing out that they were giving back power from where they had taken it when they started the rule of then-united India. The rest has to say is history. But post August 15, 1947, saw an experience throughout the subcontinent that was unique and has been termed by some historians as the 'unification of India'. There was a British India and a princely India. The British India territories would have elected government, yet the princely India would have their choice of secession to India or Pakistan. The rest, as they say, is history. Barring Multan, North West Frontier territory, Jammu and Kashmir, Junagarh and Hyderabad, the merger issues were largely smooth and without too much contention. Even the territories named above had a choice exercised sooner than what seemed most like-



THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN ELECTORAL PROMISES, THE ISSUES THAT WIN VOTES AND HOW THE ELECTED PARTY ACTUALLY GOVERNS AND IMPLEMENTS THEIR AGENDA ONCE IN POWER LEADS TO MANY UNEXPECTED AND PERPLEXING OUTCOMES

ly possible. The result was the emergence of a unified India and a unified Pakistan. Jammu and Kashmir remained the only state in which a deliberate contention was kept alive. Indeed, there was no contentious issue if the terms of the Freedom Act were followed, but in one way or another, the matter continues to evoke emotions, in a unique way, in several people. It is not just religion at play, there are several factors, including geopolitical ones. It is also possible not to recognize how the matter has been made increasingly complex by an unnecessary play of force, some of whom have no locus standee at all in the case. One would have thought that elections held at a national level, so often, so regularly and so fairly across the length and breadth of the country, would have rendered the whole issue of controversy in Jammu and Kashmir needless. Alas, that is not the case. Elections have a certain pattern in this country: give and take a few arguments here and there. However, choices have to be exercised and the numerical outcome of those choices determines how the country is governed. So the question arises as to what the net findings of the propositions thrown up as electoral issues are. In many states, local

issues seem to be inclined to determine the balloting that would take place for national representation. This appears to be the case, especially in Karnataka, Bihar, Manipur and some other states. The essence of the matter is that choices have to be exercised and the arguments of the choices need only to be communicable in terms of the strength that the community appears to endorse in the legislature. It is worth remembering that, at the end of the day, once the election results are announced, there is no accountability for the correlation between how choices made on issues during elections will be exercised when the party concerned, which wins the election, administers the issue. It may well be said that elections as a process still await better mellowing and maturing to make them an internally consistent one. At the moment, it is satisfying to note that by and large, the process of exercising choices, its panning out in the legislature and its administrative implementation are increasingly becoming worthwhile efforts and, a coherent method of administering, sensibly, a large country, such as India. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SAFFRON: A BLOSSOMING OPPORTUNITY

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Saffron cultivation: Replicate Poonch's success story," published on May 4, this is my response. The story of saffron cultivation in Poonch, Jammu and Kashmir, is not just about agriculture; it's a narrative of resilience and transformation. Ajaz Ahmad's journey exemplifies a shift from traditional farming to embracing the potential of saffron. His vision of Poonch becoming a saffron hub reflects the region's evolving agricultural landscape. However, challenges loom large. Environmental shifts, like erratic rainfall and untimely snowfall, threaten saffron production in Kashmir. Such concerns emphasise the need for sustainable farming practices and governmental support, not just in terms of subsidies but also in ensuring security and mitigating wildlife threats. Yet, amidst these challenges, saffron's allure persists. Its medicinal properties and premium market value make it a lucrative venture for farmers. With initiatives like the National Saffron Mission, there's hope for revitalising saffron cultivation and uplifting Kashmir's socio-economic fabric. As saffron blooms in Poonch, it signifies not just a crop but a promise of prosperity for the region.

Virat Chatterjee | Pune

PROGRESS, CHALLENGES AND HOPE

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Narendra Modi introduces India to its Ashtalakshmis," published on May 4, this is my response. Reading about the political landscape and developmental challenges across India, especially in the neglected North East, evokes a mix of emotions. From the perpetual promises of politicians during election seasons to the persistent issues of floods, droughts and insurgencies, it's a reminder of the complex tapestry of our nation's journey. The failure to address fundamental issues like water scarcity and regional development highlights systemic shortcomings that transcend party lines. However, amidst these challenges, there's

Call for transparency



Apropos the news article, "Covishield's Shield in Question," published on May 5, this is my response. The unfolding saga surrounding the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine underscores a pressing need for transparency and accountability in vaccine distribution and oversight. Alex Mitchell's harrowing experience, alongside numerous others, sheds light on the gravity of poten-

tial side effects and the imperative of informed consent. As legal battles loom against pharmaceutical giants, questions mount regarding regulatory diligence and corporate responsibility. The admission of rare but severe side effects prompts reflection on the balance between vaccine benefits and risks.

The petition, led by advocate Vishal Tiwari, encapsulates the public's demand for rigorous scrutiny and redress mechanisms. Calls for expert medical panels and a vaccine damage payment system underscore a quest for justice and safeguarding public health. Amidst the cacophony of voices, from grieving parents to sceptical netizens, one message resonates: transparency breeds trust. As the global vaccination campaign continues, robust surveillance, thorough investigation and proactive communication remain indispensable in navigating the complexities of vaccine safety.

Arnab Reddy | Hyderabad

glimmer of hope. The efforts made by the current government, particularly in the North East, show a commitment to inclusive growth and infrastructure development. Modi's North East Story sheds light on the transformative changes underway, offering a narrative of progress and resilience. It's heartening to see dynamic leaders and policymakers taking proactive steps to uplift these regions while preserving their unique cultural heritage. The book's portrayal of the North East's beauty and potential serves as an invitation for all Indians to engage with and support the holistic development of these often-overlooked states.

Ishika Verma | Jaipur

BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Leveraging NCERT textbooks for CUET," published on May 4, this is my response. The Common University Entrance Test (CUET) stands as a significant milestone for students aspiring to secure undergraduate admissions in India. Amidst the rigorous preparation for CUET 2024, lever-

aging NCERT textbooks emerges as a strategic move. These textbooks, integral to classrooms nationwide, offer more than just academic aid. They serve as a robust foundation, aligning seamlessly with CUET syllabi and offering structured content presentations. From basic principles to advanced concepts, NCERT textbooks provide a roadmap.

Their clarity, supplemented by visuals and practice exercises, enhances comprehension and problem-solving skills. Moreover, their standardised content ensures equitable access to quality education, levelling the playing field for CUET aspirants. To optimise CUET preparation, students should adopt a subject-wise study approach, leverage visual aids, prioritise practice and revision and supplement with additional resources. By harnessing the potential of NCERT textbooks, students can bolster their confidence and maximise success in the CUET 2024 Exam.

Sanya Khanna | Chandigarh

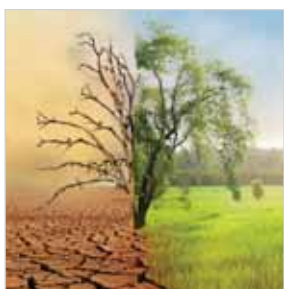
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Climate startups: Innovative climate crisis warriors

Startups, pivotal in the shift to a net-zero future, can revitalise economies and communities while providing innovative solutions

Deus ex machina is a technique often deployed by writers to solve a seemingly hopeless situation by external, magical and often unimaginable intervention. It is debatable if Deus ex machina exists in real life, nonetheless, Startups being creatures with innovation, disruption and problem-solving in their DNA can offer faster, creative and localised solutions, for the increasingly hopeless real-world crisis of Climate Change.

Be it a startup supplying an animal feed supplement that can cut down bovine emissions significantly, another one using Biotech and robotics technologies for developing GMO seeds and seaweeds that act as powerful carbon sinks, a climate tech company developing agro-forestry at a global scale or simpler everyday solutions that aim to greenify consumer finance or track individual efforts to reduce emissions, they can consolidate as a powerful force against climate change. World Economic Forum estimates that startups create value, nearly on par with the GDP of a G7 economy and the



OECD suggests that young firms create almost half of the new jobs, suggesting their burgeoning economic power and potential to create impact at scale.

The race to net zero is propelled by energy and technology transition which on one hand is an opportunity for startups and a threat to local economies and livelihoods on the other. Take the case of coal being phased out; this might result in the currently bustling mining centres turning into silent junkyards. The modern world's triumphs in Silicon Valley or a Shanghai SEZ may guide the establishment of new climate innovation hubs. Brain port Eindhoven in the Netherlands is one such example showcasing the transition from conventional industries to futur-

istic setups. The questions on the proliferation of such a model 'Can' be addressed by a few suggestions of 'How': Blended Finance for Climate Innovation Hubs Practical experience suggests that 'Impact Capital' often expects social impact plus commercial returns. For startups social impact then becomes an additional responsibility and not an opportunity to improve margins or a business avenue to seriously pursue climate-positive opportunities over the long term. Blended finance can incentivise climate startups to agglomerate within the Climate Innovation Hubs. Monetising Sustainability — Startups should have opportunities to monetise their efforts on reducing emissions, either in the form of reduced taxes and lower cost of capital or claim premiums for climate-positive brand value. Reputation Capital — Unless climate-positive efforts are rewarded by markets in the form of valuations or additional capital or brand value, climate-positive behaviour will continue to be talk and no walk. Research &

Development (R&D) Support — While large corporations have reserves that can be deployed for R & D, startups have only access to highly demanding capital that usually funds sales for growth and rarely for investments for innovations (unless the startup is incubated in a technical university).

While the existing carbon economy still grapples with the issues of just transition, the political economy of climate change signals shifts in geo-political equilibrium and technological leapfrogging in climate solutions is yet to emerge, startups as business organisations are only going to achieve greater proportions of power, prosperity and influence in the world. With focused support from policymakers, development finance institutions and international researchers, the global startup ecosystem can be geared up to take on threats of climate change head-on. Who knows we may have a Deus ex machina in the real world of climate change.

The writer is a Chevening Scholar and an International Development expert; views are personal



SAIRAM SUBRAMANIAN



FIRST COLUMN RETHINKING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Excessive consumerism contradicts our spiritual values ingrained in our heritage



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

The US economy is very often seen as the engine of the world economy, and that is why any sign of slowdown in the US raises serious concerns about harmful spillovers to the other economies. Any keen student of current economics would know well that the economic policies of America, especially during the last few years, have not worked well. In fact, the defeat of the most powerful leaders in the presidential elections that were held in the past few decades is attributed mainly to the failure of their economic policies which created many problems for the country. However, most people do not realise that the economic problems faced there, emanate not merely from wrong policies, adopted recently.

Their roots are hidden in some wrong economic, political and cultural concepts and the models built on them over a period of time. For example, the mounting unemployment and the huge foreign debts are not the phenomena that have sprung up overnight and the phenomenon of estimated 11.5% Americans, living in poverty, also has not arisen in the short period of only one or two years. The roots of their sad economic state go at least to as far a period as the end of the World War-II when they adopted a very lavish life-style and an utterly consumeristic attitude and built their economy on militarism, giant industries, transactional and multi-national business corporations, import of raw materials at cheaper rates from the undeveloped countries and export of their goods to such nations and economic capture of foreign markets through their multinational corporations. In short, they thrived on the basis of this economic system as long as other industrial nations did not come up strongly to stand up to them or the weaker nations did not stand up against



their economic exploitation or injustice. Nevertheless, their economic system was not, based on some morally sound and enduring economic principles. As mentioned earlier, it was based on commercialism, competition, consumerism and exploitation of weaker nations and on hot or cold war with an adversary nation, or on considering their nation as the strong military-man of the world, ready for hot or cold war. Now, when some other industrial nations have grown stronger, they cannot compete with them and have, therefore, to close down or to retrench workers as was done recently by many industrial giants. Also, now when there is no war—hot or cold—they are forced by economic reasons to sell their military hardware as they recently sold fighter jets to many Asian countries in order to keep the workers in employment. Their country has had either the ills of recession, or inflation, or heavy taxation, or it had to resort to deficit budgets, foreign debts, protectionist policies, etc. to keep the economy going. It would have, therefore, been appropriate if developing nations like India had learnt some lessons from the failures of the so-called developed models of economy and had, instead, kept in mind their own national ethos and ancient heritage which suggests that a right system of economy is one which is based on social justice, and on economising rather than borrowing and deficit-financing. We should also keep in mind our own national situation which necessitates national and regional self-sufficiency and affords opportunities of full employment to its citizens and promotes balance between rural and urban economy, equitable distribution of income and wealth and prevention of the growth of very wide disparities in income and wealth. We must remember that unbridled consumerism and commercialism and also large-scale borrowing are against the value-system which is embedded in our spiritual heritage and will, sooner or later, lead us to grave economic crisis. So, let us all learn to lead a life of simplicity and frugality and be honest and just to all.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views are personal)

Reimagining Tagore's educational philosophy



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Rabindranath Tagore, the polymathic Nobel Laureate from Bengal, is celebrated not only for his literary brilliance but also for his visionary ideas on education

Rabindranath Tagore (May 7, 1861 to August 7, 1941), the polymathic Nobel Laureate from Bengal, is renowned not only for his literary brilliance but also for his progressive ideas on education. His philosophy of education, rooted in the principles of creativity, freedom, and humanism, continues to resonate with contemporary educational discourse. In today's rapidly changing world, where traditional educational paradigms are being challenged and redefined, Tagore's insights offer valuable perspectives for reimagining education in a manner that fosters holistic development and meaningful engagement with the world.

At the heart of Tagore's educational philosophy is the belief in the innate creativity and potential of every individual. He envisioned education as a process of nurturing this inherent creativity rather than imposing predetermined knowledge. In his seminal work, "Siksha: Herok Ek Jibon" (Education: A Continuum of Life), Tagore emphasized the importance of cultivating curiosity, imagination, and critical thinking skills in learners. He advocated for an education system that encourages students to explore, question, and construct their understanding of the world, rather than passively receiving information.

Further, central to Tagore's philosophy of education is the concept of "Shantiniketan," or the abode of peace - and later Sriniketan - which he established as an experimental educational institution in rural Bengal. Shantiniketan epitomized Tagore's holistic educational philosophy, integrating intellectual, artistic, and spiritual facets of human life. Education transcended traditional confines, embracing nature, arts, and community involvement. Tagore emphasized fostering reverence for nature, aesthetic sensibility, and interconnectedness with all life. He advocated for intellectual development through imagination, free thought, and perpetual curiosity. This personalized approach prioritized holistic growth, including physical development through exercises, yoga, and sports, echoing Tagore's belief: "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence."

According to Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, "A teacher can never truly teach, unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp, unless it continues to burn its own flame". In his essay 'Ashramer Shiksha' (Ashram's Teaching), Tagore extolled the virtues of patience in teaching, advocating that only those imbued with affection for their students deserve the mantle of a teacher. He rejected authoritarian teaching methods, viewing them as indicative of governance inadequacy. K M O'Connell (University of Toronto, Canada) had written that Rabindranath Tagore stands with the pioneering educators, like, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori, and Dewey Malcolm Knowles, who have striven to create non-authoritarian learning systems appropriate to the surroundings.

Furthermore, Tagore's educational philosophy emphasizes fostering a love for humanity and advancing universal brotherhood through recognizing the interconnectedness of all beings and promoting empathy across cultures. Central to his approach is establishing harmony



HIS NOTION OF FREEDOM IN EDUCATION EMPHASISES LINKING NATURE, SOCIETY, AND LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES. HE ADVOCATES FOR LEARNING IN NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS TO NOURISH BODY AND SOUL, PRIORITISE CREATIVITY, AND ENGAGE CRITICALLY WITH TRADITIONAL VALUES AND BELIEFS

between individuals, nature, and the divine. Tagore advocates for freedom in education to unlock individuals' inherent potential and stresses the significance of moral and spiritual development alongside academic learning. His vision aims at cultivating well-rounded individuals capable of selfless service and social integration, ultimately contributing to a conscientious and harmonious society.

In today's context, characterized by rapid technological advancements, globalization, and environmental challenges, Tagore's emphasis on holistic education is more relevant than ever. The prevailing thought on standardized testing and rote memorization (read learning) often stifles creativity and critical thinking, leaving students ill-prepared for the complexities of the modern world. Tagore's philosophy, instead, calls for a shift towards a more student-centered, inquiry-based approach to learning that empowers learners to navigate uncertainty, think critically, and adapt to change. This sentiment resonates in Sunil Banga's (Lancaster University Management School) analysis - in his paper "The global relevance of Tagore's cosmopolitan educational philosophy for social justice in a post-Westphalian world" published in Journal of Philosophy of Education (August 2023, Oxford) - which underscores Tagore's cosmopolitan approach to education as a potent instrument for social justice and equity in today's

world. Banga highlights Tagore's commitment to societal transformation through education, evident in his advocacy for women's empowerment, condemnation of oppression, and advocacy for India's independence (read freedom). Despite emerging from the colonial era, Tagore's philosophy remains pertinent, particularly his emphasis on education as a catalyst for moral and social development, aiming towards societal harmony and integration to address contemporary global challenges.

Moreover, Tagore's emphasis on the integration of arts, music, and literature into the curriculum offers a counterbalance to the narrow focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education prevalent in many educational systems today. Arts play a crucial role in fostering creativity, empathy, and emotional intelligence, which are essential for navigating the complexities of human relationships and societal challenges.

Sunil Banga underscores Tagore's educational paradigm as an early advocate of global interconnectedness. Tagore posited that education's primary objective was the attainment of self-realization, which he termed 'Atma Shakti,' wherein individuals harmonize with nature and society. Drawing from Hindu literature, Tagore envisions a 'universal man' embodying faith in universalism and humanity. He further advocates for personality development through arts and music, leading to a transcendent understanding of human nature. He contends that humans, upon achieving self-realization, unite with 'God' or 'Manav Brahma,' thereby becoming the 'complete man' and 'soul.'

Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy underscores the integral role of education in fos-

tering connections between individuals and humanity while promoting holistic development.

In essence, at the heart of Tagore's vision of cosmopolitan education is the idea of freedom - freedom to engage critically with traditional values and beliefs; and freedom to imagine citizenship in a globalized world, that enables an exploration and negotiation of multiple allegiances in sympathy with others. His notion of freedom in education emphasizes linking nature, society, and learners' experiences. He advocates for learning in natural environments to nourish body and soul, prioritize creativity, and engage critically with traditional values and beliefs.

Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy of education provides a compelling framework for reimagining education in the 21st century. His emphasis on creativity, freedom, holistic development, and social engagement offers valuable insights for addressing the multifaceted challenges of today's world. By embracing Tagore's vision, educators can create learning environments that empower students to become compassionate, critical thinkers capable of shaping a more just, sustainable, and humane society and boosting student's morale.

On the occasion of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's 163rd Birth Anniversary, we may well reflect on his philosophy advocating for an education that transcends mere impartation of knowledge, rather instills a profound harmony with all existence. Revisiting Tagore's principles may serve as a guiding light for Indian educational institutions in this globalised age.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

Vision for India: A State-led roadmap for effective governance

Amid India's socio-economic shift, Karthik Muralidharan's new book shines as a guide for the nation's trajectory

It was during the mid-1960s that I had a first-hand experience with Kochi, popularly known as the Queen of the Arabian Sea. Other than Kochi Port, the small aerodrome and the star hotel of yore years Sea Lord and Malabar, there was nothing attractive about the city. Scavengers carrying night soil collected from homes and hotels on their heads were the first sight that welcomed people during the daybreak. Some discernible changes are there in Kochi and other cities in the State. Scavengers are gone and their places have been taken over by cycle rickshaws with the hoarding "For cleaning septic tanks, please contact us... In the hinterland, farmers wearing loin-cloths plough their farmland with bullocks



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

despite India being one of the largest manufacturers of tractors of all kinds. The mention of the word farmer brings to mind the images of loin-clothed men beating their bullocks to force them to plough the fields. You go to Madurai in Tamil Nadu, which the DMK touts as a role model of Dravidian development. What welcomes you to the small towns and villages are thoroughfares and

ring roads being used as public comfort stations by the residents. Dravidian leaders do not like the idea of Swachh Bharat and insist that their followers use roads, rivers and beaches as public toilets.

It is in these contexts that a book for the economic and social development of India has hit the shelves. Karthik Muralidharan, renowned economist and Tata Chancellor's Professor of Economics at the University of California, San Diego, has authored a book "Accelerating India's Development - A State-led Roadmap for Effective Governance"; a blueprint for the Comprehensive Development of India. Productivity, competitiveness, the number of jobs created and the skill of the labour force are

some of the most important ingredients of the economic growth of a country. It is for the Central and State Governments to generate enabling conditions for speedy economic and social development, according to Muralidharan.

The author says that land, labour, capital, policies on taxation, bankruptcy, environmental regulation and promoting competition are the enabling services that ensure speedy economic and social development. Muralidharan, who has no love lost for the Modi Government at the Centre, says the present Central Government is always ahead in resolving issues that retard economic progress. "India's public discourse on growth

mainly focusses on Central Government actions to promote it, though many of the key issues above are in the domain of State Governments. It is critical to analyze and improve the effectiveness of State level actions for boosting productivity and job quality. State-led initiative and innovations followed by rapid replication of successful ones can play a key role in accelerating both growth and development in India," writes Muralidharan in the chapter "Jobs, Productivity and Economic Growth".

What makes the book interesting is Muralidharan's call for improving job quality rather than job quantity. It is not the number of jobs created but the quality of jobs that determines the welfare of the people, says

Muralidharan. "A job is not just a source of income. It also provides identity, dignity and social engagement. With over 95 per cent of India's population relying primarily on labour income for sustenance, improving job quality will directly improve the welfare of hundreds of millions of Indians," says the economist. This is an open call to finish once-and-for-ever jobs like scavenging, ploughing the land with bullocks and other mean works. The earlier we introduce Artificial Intelligence and robots for such jobs, the better. Instead of using this technology to deceive the public with deep fake videos and political rivals, it would be better if we use this technology to uplift the status of jobs. Millions of Indians are reliant

on casual wage labour for sustenance. An average income earner supports 2.7 dependents. "This is why improving living standards in India depends critically on improving worker productivity and creating more high-quality jobs to generate higher, more reliable incomes," Muralidharan writes. The skill development programme initiated by the present government should be invigorated and made compulsory for students and school dropouts.

The Agniveer scheme is an innovation that inspires the mind. One need not go to engineering colleges or medical colleges to emerge as a skilled professional in high-quality jobs. There is a severe shortage of electricians,

plumbers and mechanics with expertise in household jobs. Even as the central and State governments can increase the number of medical colleges, no stone should be left unturned in increasing the number of ITIs and technical schools. Equal priority should be given to increasing the agricultural productivity in which India lags behind China Vietnam etc. The situation is favourable to India. Skill development, Agniveer and increase in agriculture productivity should be implemented with full vigour. There is hope for India to become the world leader by 2047.

(The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)

Rublev overcomes fever and praises doctors after winning Madrid Open for the 1st time

AP ■ MADRID

Despite sleepless nights struggling with a fever, Andrey Rublev found a way to fight back and win the Madrid Open for the first time. Rublev was feeling sick all week but rallied to beat Felix Auger-Aliassime in three sets on Sunday and clinch his second Masters 1000 title.



Rublev won 4-6, 7-5, 7-5 after Auger-Aliassime double-faulted on the last point of the final at the clay-court tournament in the Spanish capital. "I would say this is the most proud title of my career," Rublev said. "I was almost dead every day. I was not sleeping at night. The last three, four days I didn't sleep."

Rublev gave "full credit to the doctors," who were "doing some tricky things" just to make sure he could play. "I have no words," the eighth-ranked Rublev said. "If you knew what I had been through in the past nine days you would not imagine that I would be able to win a title."

The 26-year-old Russian won his first Masters 1000 title at Monte Carlo last year. Auger-Aliassime was playing in his first final at this level.

Rublev entered Madrid on a four-game losing streak after early exits at Indian Wells, Miami, Monte Carlo and Barcelona. One of his victories in Madrid came in the quarterfinals against home-crowd favorite Carlos Alcaraz.

Auger-Aliassime's path to the final saw second-ranked Jannik Sinner withdraw because of an injury ahead of the quarterfinals, and Jiri Lehecka retired against the Canadian in the first set of the semifinals. Other injuries hit the men's draw in Madrid, starting with Novak Djokovic's withdrawal before

Klopp keeps the drama going to end as Liverpool beats Spurs 4-2

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

The smile is back on Jurgen Klopp's face - even if his Liverpool players seem intent on testing his nerves right to the end. The Premier League title may be all but beyond the Merseyside club, but that doesn't mean the drama is over for Klopp, who will step down at the end of the season.



Last week he was arguing on the sideline with Mohamed Salah as Liverpool effectively dropped out of the title race. And while Salah opened the scoring in a 4-2 win against Tottenham at Anfield on Sunday, it was Harvey Elliott who appeared to bring the broadest smile to Klopp's face with a wonderful long-range goal in what looked like being a cakewalk for Klopp's team. "What a goal," the Liverpool manager said. "In the game you only see it flying in and I thought, That was a good shot." The goal I saw afterwards, there was not a lot of space left or right. It went exactly where it should be. Top goal!

Elliott's strike, after goals from Salah, Andy Robertson and Cody Gakpo, fired Liverpool into a 4-0 lead before the game had even reached the hour mark. What followed was the unlikeliest of fightbacks from Spurs that might have made this another frustrating day in what has ultimately been a disappointing finale for Klopp at the end of nearly nine trophy-filled years.

Goals from Richarlison and Son Heung-min made it a much closer contest than it had ever looked like being. And it needed two outstanding saves from Alisson, a goal-line clearance from Joe Gomez and a VAR call to prevent it from being closer still. "It's a little bit of a mirror of the season. Really, really, really good until we were really rubbish and then, we were okay again," Klopp said. "A nifty finish didn't stop the home fans from beckoning Klopp to produce his trademark post-match triple fist pump to the crowd after his penultimate home game in charge, with Feyenoord coach Arne Slot set to take over next season.

Mathematically, at least, it is not over for third-place Liverpool, which sits five points adrift of leader Arsenal with two games remaining. But, in reality, a late-season slump has killed Klopp's hopes of walking away with a second Premier League crown of his reign. His team had been heavily rebuilt over the past two seasons and was not expected to contend at the top so soon. But this season at one point offered Liverpool the hope of a quadruple of trophies. Now it feels like it is ending on an underwhelming note. Still, Klopp, who delivered the English League Cup in February, will walk away from a team that is on the up and leave his successor with plenty of young talent to work with. The 21-year-old Elliott is a prime example and he showcased his ample potential with an assist and a goal as Liverpool threatened to run riot. His perfectly placed curling cross provided Gakpo with the simple task of heading in Liverpool's third and then he swept an unstoppable shot from around 20 yards (meters) into the top corner and beyond Tottenham goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario. "Harvey is exceptional. Still so young. So exceptional," Klopp said. "In the midfield position, it was probably one of the top three performances from him today. The goal was exceptional. Everyone needs moments to gain more confidence. It was a good moment. That helps definitely."

Mbappé plays his final CL game in Paris with PSG; defence back in spotlight

AP ■ PARIS

Mbappé plays his final CL game in Paris with PSG. But it's the defence that is back in the spotlight. No doubt Kylian Mbappé will be greeted with loud cheers and applause when he takes to the Parc des Princes pitch on Tuesday night.

It will be his final Champions League match in the French capital in a Paris Saint-Germain shirt. Mbappé is leaving the club this summer after a seven-season stint, hoping the journey concludes with a Champions League triumph in Wembley on June 1. But first things first, as Mbappé tries to engineer a fightback in the second leg of their semi-final against Borussia Dortmund, trailing 1-0 from the first leg in Germany last week.



The France striker was a disappointment in the first leg and PSG now expects a strong reaction from the club's all-time leading scorer to overturn the deficit, especially after he failed to score in his last two appearances against Dortmund. "We're confident we'll come back from that score and qualify for the final," Mbappé said on Sunday, as quoted by French media. In support of Mbappé, PSG has plenty of firepower upfront, with Ousmane Dembele, Bradley Barcola, Gonçalo Ramos or Randal Kolo Muani available. Coach Luis Enrique has more worries in defence after former

Bayern Munich defender Lucas Hernandez was ruled out for the remainder of the season with an anterior cruciate ligament rupture that required surgery. The injury was a tough blow for PSG, which has conceded 14 goals in the competition this season but finally stabilized the heart of its defence with the pairing of Marquinhos and Hernandez. After Hernandez came off injured last week against Dortmund and was replaced by Lucas Beraldo, the Brazilian substitute's lack of experience was obvious. Luis Enrique will, however, have to consider giving him a starting role or put his trust in

Arsenal needs a favour from Tottenham in title race

AP ■ LONDON

Four straight losses — the team's worst run of results for 20 years. Two clean sheets since the end of October. Those looking at Tottenham Hotspur to provide a late twist in the Premier League title race are, given the current evidence, going to be disappointed. Manchester City's May 14 trip to the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, for its next-to-last game of the season, appeared to many the last possible stumbling block for the champions in their bid to reel in Arsenal and secure an unprecedented fourth straight title.

After all, not only have Spurs plenty to play for — they're still just about fighting for Champions League qualification — but they haven't lost, or even conceded a goal, against City in their four league meetings at Tottenham's new stadium since it opened in 2019. Arsenal, though, is surely losing hope of a favour from its north London neighbour. Similarly, Tottenham fans might be starting to lose hope that Ange Postecoglou is the man to bring a winning culture to the club without a trophy since 2008. It all started well for the first-ever Australian to coach in the Premier League. Tottenham was top of the league in early November, unbeaten and playing the attacking football its supporters always crave. No manager had ever taken 26 points from his first 10 games in the Premier League before Postecoglou came along with a high defensive line and an aggressive, front-foot style. Postecoglou, it seemed, was the perfect antidote to Jose



Mourinho and Antonio Conte, pragmatic and defence-first coaches whose spells in charge of Tottenham promised so much but ended so sourly. Fast-forward six months and it feels like the season cannot end soon enough for Spurs, who are limping to the finish line, and Postecoglou, who is beginning to understand the size of the task he took on almost a year ago. "We need change. Change has to happen," Postecoglou said ahead of Tottenham's 4-2 loss at Liverpool on Sunday. It was a fourth defeat in a row, something that hasn't happened since those grim final days of Jacques Santini at Spurs in late 2004. Over the past month, there has been a 4-0 loss at Newcastle, a 3-2 home loss to Arsenal when Tottenham was three goals behind at halftime, a 2-0 loss at Chelsea and then a defeat at Anfield that saw a lethargic-looking Spurs fall 4-0 down after 59 minutes. And, this is the team Arsenal hopes can halt the City juggernaut next week? Tottenham should still seal fifth place, and qualification for the Europa League, because either side of the visit of City are matches against Burnley and already-relegated Sheffield United - the bottom two teams in the league. Spurs are seven points behind fourth-place Aston Villa and four ahead of sixth-place Newcastle. It raises the question of whether the first season under Postecoglou has been a success. Spurs fans likely would have taken a fifth-place finish after seeing England captain and record scorer Harry Kane leave for Bayern Munich last August. With Hugo Lloris and Eric Dier also departing during the season, a huge amount of experience was lost and it's in these tough final weeks of the season where that lack of senior leaders in the squad has been exposed.

It also seems that, as a whole, the fan base is still behind Postecoglou and his refreshing outlook, even if his insistence on sticking to his attacking principles can come across as naive as it is bold. "I believe what I believe down to my core. I'll stand on the highest ground, die a noble death, believing in what I believe," he said. "Maybe, the Premier League is a step too far. Who knows? Maybe, maybe - but I will still be on that hill, wounded, my dying breath saying, I believe, I do believe." Whether Postecoglou will bring more balance to his managerial philosophy next year remains to be seen. For the moment, Arsenal will just be praying that Tottenham - the team it wants to see lose any normal week of the season - can pull off an improbable victory over City to change the course of the title race ahead of the final round on May 19.



Frank Nsubuga set to become oldest player at this year T20 World Cup

PTI ■ KAMPALA (UGANDA)

Uganda off-spinner Frank Nsubuga is set to become the oldest cricketer to play in the upcoming T20 World Cup at the age of 43. On Monday, the Uganda Cricket Association announced a 15-member squad for the marquee event set to be held in the Americas from June 2, the nation's first-ever appearance in the main round of the competition. Riazat Ali Shah has been named his deputy. Reserve players: Ronald Lutaaya and Innocent Mwebaze.

India's first ever hybrid pitch unveiled in Dharamsala

PTI ■ DHARAMSALA

India's first-ever 'hybrid pitch' was unveiled at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) stadium in a grand ceremony here on Monday. The event was attended by IPL Chairman Arun Dhumal and cricket dignitaries including Paul Taylor, a former England cricketer and SIS's international cricket director. "The introduction of hybrid pitches is set to revolutionize cricket in India, following their success in iconic venues like Lord's and The Oval in England," said Dhumal, who hails from Himachal Pradesh. The hybrid pitch, which combines natural turf with synthetic fibres, promises enhanced durability and consistent playability, reducing the strain on ground staff and maintaining quality playing conditions. With only 5% synthetic fibres, the pitch ensures that the natural characteristics essential for cricket are preserved. Taylor expressed gratitude towards the HPCA for their collaboration on this pioneering project. "With the ICC's approval, we're excited to see the positive impact these pitches will have on the sport, starting with



installations in Mumbai and Ahmedabad next," he said. The 'Universal Machine', a critical component in installing the hybrid surface, was developed by SISGrass in 2017 and has been instrumental in the rollout of similar pitches across England's county cricket grounds. This innovation aligns with the ICC's recent sanctioning of hybrid pitches for

T20 and one-day international matches, with plans to expand their use in four-day county championships starting this year. The integration of technologies like SISAir, a root aeration system, further underscores the commitment to enhancing cricket infrastructure in India. This system improves the pitch's health and resilience, benefiting players with better and safer playing conditions.

Premier League referee to wear camera to offer insight into demands of being a match official

AP ■ LONDON

The referee for Monday's Premier League match between Crystal Palace and Manchester United will wear a camera on his head for a program that will be broadcast later this year offering an insight into the demands of being a match official. The league said the head-mounted device — or "RefCam" as it is being called — worn by Jarred Gillett at Selhurst Park will be integrated into the referee's usual communications system. The technology is being used on a one-off basis, the league said, as part of filming for a short program promoting match officials. The footage will not be broadcast live. "Fans will be able to view it later in the year as part of a program ... Aimed at offering further insight and education into the demands of officiating in the Premier League," the competition said.

