

Tides turn in Telangana; BRS poised for major comeback

Hyderabad: As Telangana heads to the polling booth on Monday, political undercurrents in the State are said to be churning fast with the winds now blowing in favour of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). Political analysts and party sources, citing the final leg of the high octane campaign and ground reports from the 17 Lok Sabha constituencies, say the BRS is in all probability on a major comeback, with the surge to see the party win at least 13 seats, while the ruling Congress might have to settle with two seats. The BJP might win just one, while the Hyderabad seat appears to be a foregone conclusion for AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi. Analysis of the final couple of weeks of the campaign indicate this turn in the tide, with BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao coming out all guns blazing, further buoyed by an overwhelming response to his bus yatra and road shows.

Massive crowds were witnessed at all the roadshows where the 'vintage KCR', firing on all cylinders at his political opponents, was on display. The strategy of the BRS, to target the Congress for its failure to implement its promises, including the crucial ones for the farm sector, and the BJP, for its communal, divisive agenda, appears to have worked. There was negativity working against the Congress, with the people suddenly being made to think how there was a sudden shortage of water, both for drinking and irrigation purposes, and how there were sudden power cuts. This was one point that Chandrashekhar Rao repeatedly pointed

out in his speeches, how things stopped working like someone turned a switch off, and how the State was falling into shambles within barely five months of the Congress in power. Industries preferring other States, Statewide protests by farmers for water, for compensation and even against delays in procurement of crops, all drove the point home further.

This, along with the repeated abusive criticism of the previous government, with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's intemperate language becoming a topic of discussion, triggered questions on why the Congress was not doing anything to solve critical issues like water shortage and was instead blaming the previous government for the same. The BRS think tank too used these issues to the hilt. Internal differences too are dogging the Congress, with several senior leaders campaigning against party candidates in crucial seats like Karimnagar, while the opposition being severe against those who joined the party days before the poll was announced and given seats. Disgruntled elements are expected to deal death blows to the Congress in several constituencies. On the other hand, the BJP, which saw from its recent experiences that the Modi factor wasn't too much of a factor in the South, also saw the hard push for Hindutva sidelining the positivity that the Ayodhya Temple brought. Backward classes, minorities and similar sections – all crucial voters in Telangana – are said to have completely turned against the saffron party, which like the Congress, is also facing the demon of internal



bickering. The campaign of Chandrashekhar Rao, with working president KT Rama Rao and T Harish Rao chipping in, coupled with the response of the people to these, are said to be the reasons, along with his own surveys and

analysis from various quarters, that made the former Chief Minister confidently peg the BRS seat count at 12 to 14. Political analysts say his calculations might not be too far from the actual results, which will come out on June 4.

Rains bring cheer to electors, inconvenience to polling staff in Adilabad

Adilabad: Barring sporadic incidents of electronic voting machines (EVM) developing technical glitches causing delay in polling for a while, general elections in Adilabad Parliament Constituency went off peacefully on Monday. Electors from all walks of life formed serpentine queues from early morning and actively exercised their franchise till evening. Thanks to a dip in maximum temperatures caused by light to moderate rains that cooled down sweltering heat wave conditions, the segment saw 69.81 percent of voting by 5 pm when compared to 75.34 percent registered in 2019.

An EVM at polling station numbered 77 developed snags resulting in stalling of polling in Luxettipet town for 15 minutes, causing inconvenience to electors. EVMs did not function at polling station 35 in Rebbena mandal centre for 30 minutes. However, polling staff replaced the dys-

functional EVMs with functional ones, resuming the polling. Rains bring relief from scorching heat wave. Light to moderate rains occurred in several parts of erstwhile Adilabad district bringing a relief to the voters from scorching heat wave conditions that prevailed for the past few weeks.

Average rainfall of Kumram Bheem Asifabad district was gauged to be 16.7 mm. Sirpur (U) received the highest rainfall of 57 mm. Kerameri, Jainoor, Lingapur and Asifabad mandals witnessed somewhere between 22 and 41 mm of rainfall. Problems greet polling staff Pembri, Khanapur and Laxmanachanda of Nirmal district and Bheemini, Vemanapalli and Kotapalli from Mancherial district registered moderate rains. Consequently, transportation of polling staff and material were hit by the rains. Vehicles shifting the staff were stuck in muddy roads.



In Bihar, a silent battle is being waged between the Raj Bhavan and the education department

In the case of Bihar's education department and the Raj Bhavan, the same issue has now cropped up for the third time in the past five days, proving that political bullheadedness at the cost of the proper functioning of varsities is worse than farce. The matter, at least as of Monday morning, stood resolved. The state education department called a meeting of vice-chancellors and other top officials of the state-run universities on March 28 and 29. Their letter, which was sent out to the registrars of all state-run universities stated that the meeting would be chaired by education minister Sunil Kumar.

By evening, another letter went out. It read the same but left out one crucial phrase about Kumar chairing the meeting. This happened after the VCs — who directly report to the Chancellor, a position held by the Governor of the state — raised a question over whether they should attend the meeting. They sought the opinion of their boss on whether they should attend a meeting chaired by anyone lower than a minister.

What's at stake? According to the letter, "the meeting-cum-orientation workshop, with facilities of stay at Patna-based Hotel Maurya, will focus on quality education, timely academic sessions and conduct of exams, time-bound resolution of court cases, accounts management and other administrative and academic issues. The Vc, Pro-VC, financial advisor, registrar, exam controller and finance officer will participate in the meeting." Kumar took charge after Nitish Kumar's cabinet expansion on March 15. He met Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar to discuss issues that persist in higher education and devised a revision to a letter that was issued on Saturday (March 23) by director of higher education Rekha Kumari, a senior Raj Bhawan official confirmed. When they received Saturday's letter, the vice-chancellors of two universities — BN Mandal University (Madhepura) and TM Bhagalpur University — sought the guidelines to attend a meeting to be chaired by the education minister, and the Governor granted permission for them to attend. "After due consideration, the Governor has granted permission for the meeting and also directed that all the aspects be discussed in detail," said a letter from the Raj Bhawan on March 25 to all VCs, a copy of which was sent to all the university officials. However, late Monday evening, the education department revised the letter for the third time in as many days and addressed it directly to the VCs. The department had earlier sent a letter to registrars. While the sum of the letter remained the same, the reference to the education minister chairing the meeting was removed. As a result, the VCs said that they would seek fresh guidelines from the Governor in view of the fresh letter. A department official said on the condition of anonymity that the name of the minister was omitted due to the model code in place but did not elaborate why it was included in the previous letter when the election was

announced on March 16 only. The stand-off between the Raj Bhavan and the department of education has been continuing for quite some time in an apparent bid to wield control over state universities, which are grappling with severe issues, including shortage of teachers, late sessions, poor infrastructure, delayed salary payment and pension to retired teachers and employees. The Governor, as the Chancellor, is the academic and administrative head of the universities, while the government provides the grants.

The higher education director had first sent a letter to the registrars of all varsities on March 21, calling for a meeting on March 28-29 with the same agenda. That letter did not have any reference to the education minister. It just mentioned the agenda, and the letter was from the higher education action director, who reports to the Additional CS. In the past also, the VCs and registrars had refused to attend the meetings called by the director or secretary at the direction of the Governor. This is the third time such a meeting has been called after VCs and other top officials failed to attend the previous two (February 28 and March 15) on the direction of the Governor. In those two instances, the department threatened them with action for skipping the meeting and seeking guidelines from the Chancellor instead. The department also served show-cause notices to the VCs, registrars and exam controllers of all the state universities and ordered that their salary and university budget be stopped and FIRs be lodged against them. However, the Governor, who is the Chancellor of state universities, intervened strongly. The Raj Bhawan wrote to the treasury officials as well the banks that the department letter was quashed by the Governor's order. The Raj Bhawan also wrote to the Chief Secretary, seeking action against education department officials for their "wanton interference in the academic and administrative matters of universities and use of indecent language." "The wanton interference of some officials is only to be deprecated and it is expected that an explanation is sought and this office is apprised of the result of enquiries made and follow up action taken," said the letter from Robert L Chongthru, principal secretary to the Governor, to the chief secretary, ordering withdrawal of the letter from the department secretary Baidyanath Yadav. Raj Bhawan versus education department Earlier this month, the Raj Bhawan wrote to the additional chief secretary (education) KK Pathak, seeking to know what action had been taken towards withdrawal of the letter issued by Yadav on February 28, through which the department had served show-cause notice to the VCs, registrars and exam controllers of all the state universities for skipping the meeting on Chancellor's direction and threatened action, including freeze on bank accounts, lodging of FIRs, stopping of their salary and budget of universities.



"I am directed to invite a reference to the discussion held on March 8 in the presence of the Deputy Chief Minister and Education Minister, Bihar and your goodself before the Governor-cum-Chancellor, in which it was decided that the education department will withdraw its letter forthwith. However, no communication has yet been received in this Secretariat about withdrawal of the said letter," said the letter from Chongthru to the ACS (education). Taking exception to the department's freeze order and threatening tone in letters, the Chancellor had also issued a direction to the VCs and other officials not to leave headquarters without permission of the Raj Bhavan, which was a clear message that they need not attend the meeting called by the department official. While the stand off continued, Raj Bhawan continued to hold meetings with VCs and attended meetings in universities, which also required the presence of education department representatives. At the JP University senate meeting, the Governor presided and a seat was also allotted for ACS (education) KK Pathak, but he did not attend. The Governor, on his part, directed the department to clear retirement dues of teachers and employees without delay, ensure timely salary payment and work to create a better atmosphere for the benefit of education. Retired teachers and employees of the university await their pension for

three months, while the working ones are yet to get their March salary in many universities. Some universities have made the payment through internal resources in anticipation that their grants would come. The guest faculties in the universities have not been paid their salary for up to 10 months and are also up in arms. A power tussle "The Governor has made it clear that an officer cannot call the vice chancellors for the meeting. There is a laid down protocol. And more importantly, the kind of threatening language used by the officers of the education department is not acceptable. The department should do its job and not cross the line, as it also has a lot of answering to do for the problems afflicting the universities. Without addressing the root cause of the problems, results cannot be achieved. It is wrong to assume that just one man is working and the rest are not," said a Raj Bhawan official. Earlier also, when the department had issued parallel advertisements for the appointment of VCs, the Raj Bhawan had written to the chief secretary about the need to set the education department right and made it clear to the VCs that "the Chancellor's authority is supreme in the matter of running the academic and administrative affairs of the Universities and no outside influence should be entertained". Later, the department had to withdraw its advertisements after the CM's intervention.

7 in 10 Indian B2B sellers utilize AI to exceed targets: Report

New Delhi: More than seven in 10 (73 per cent) of business-to-business (B2B) sellers in India who exceed their targets are using artificial intelligence (AI), a new report said on Wednesday. The B2B sellers in the country are increasingly relying on AI in their selling journeys — to research prospects, identify targets, and find warm leads with buyers, according to the report by professional networking platform LinkedIn.

Top three habits of "deep sellers" are

prioritising high potential accounts, investing in relationships and finding hidden allies. About 78 per cent of sellers and 82 per cent of buyers expect consumer budgets to increase in the next 12 months, pointing to an optimistic B2B sales landscape this year. The findings showed that 32 per cent of B2B sellers in India are "deep sellers" and are 1.8 times more likely to exceed their quotas, and those who use social networks to find key buyers are 2.3 times more likely to do so. "Deep sellers are expert guides in the sales world:

BJP will not be able to form the next govt: Sukhbir S Badal



Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), May 13: Former union minister and Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal Monday filed her nomination papers from Bathinda constituency in the presence of Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal and the senior party leadership. The SAD president filed his nomination from the constituency as the covering candidate of Mrs Harsimrat Badal.

Talking to newsmen on the occasion, Mr Sukhbir Badal said repeated rounds of voting had made it clear that the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) would not form the next government. He said the BJP was crashing in North India and had been completely wiped out in Maharashtra and Bihar. "The Prime Minister's speeches are also indicating that the party is in panic mode. He is now attacking a particular community openly and even stating the 'Mangalsutras' will be taken away and given to others. This

never happened in the last 70 years and will never happen", he asserted adding in the new scenario regional parties would emerge stronger. When queried about the mood of the people in Punjab, Mr Badal said "Punjabis feel betrayed by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and its leadership. They have lost all hope from chief minister Bhagwant Mann and regard him as a drunkard who can do nothing for them". He said people had also realized that AAP and Congress were one side of the same coin and that both parties were playing a friendly match because they were aligned with each other at the national level.

The SAD president alleged that the chief minister had also fallen at union home minister Amit Shah's feet to escape being arrested in the Punjab liquor scam case. He said the collusion between the two could be seen from the AAP government's about turn on BJP candidate Parampal

Kaur's resignation and its immediate acceptance within one day of opposition from the chief minister

Mr Badal said in such a situation the SAD had emerged as the strongest party in the Lok Sabha elections. "People feel that the SAD alone can take all communities with it and ensure all round development as well as peace and communal harmony".

He also disclosed how the party's Punjab Bachao Yatra was receiving a phenomenal response in the field with thousands of people coming on the roads to welcome it in every constituency. "People are showing an emotional connection with the SAD which will be reflected in the polls. Be ready for a historic result in Punjab", the SAD president added. The SAD president said the people of Bathinda were also looking at development. He said development had become a major issue in

Bathinda as both the erstwhile Congress and present AAP government had discriminated against the constituency. "People have witnessed how the face of the constituency was changed with AIIMS, central university, refinery, cancer hospital and airport among other things established in this constituency during SAD tenure.

They want a return to the days of development and will ensure Mrs Harsimrat Badal's victory by 1.50 to 2 lakh votes". Speaking on the occasion, Mrs Badal thanked 'Parmatma', the party and people of this constituency for giving her an opportunity to serve them.

"I have done my utmost to pilot development works both in the villages and towns of this constituency. I am also proud that I raised the voice of Punjab in parliament in the face of dictatorial trends. I will continue to serve this constituency to the best of my ability".

5 baby essential gifts for new and expecting moms

Mothers are often worried about their baby's holistic growth and development. Especially for expecting or new mothers, ensuring their baby's healthy growth and meeting all the necessary milestones can be daunting. So go ahead and give a new mom a gift she can blindly trust for all her baby's needs and help her in cherishing this beautiful journey. Here is an ultimate guide for the perfect baby essentials gifts for a new mom or mom-to-be:

Parachute Advanced Baby Massage Oil: Parachute Advanced Baby Massage Oil is a 100% natural Virgin Coconut Oil with Vitamins E&F that contains some growth nutrients also present in mother's milk. Not only is it doctor certified new-born safe, it is also clinically proven to help with better growth of babies in 3 ways - by promoting weight gain, height gain, and stronger bones while also deeply nourishing your baby's skin from within. Free from chemicals like parabens, sulphates, silicones, dyes, mineral oil, and phthalates, the oil offers a soft and comforting embrace to your new-born's skin. The product is available for Rs. 62/50ml, Rs. 130/100ml and Rs. 230/200ml.

Parachute Advanced Baby Nourishing Soap: Keep your baby's skin soft, bouncy and moisturized throughout the day for more smiles and freedom from dryness with Parachute Advanced Baby Nourishing Soap. Enriched with 100% Virgin Co-

conut Oil and the goodness of Coconut Milk, it nourishes your baby's skin from within. It is hypoallergenic, completely new-born safe and causes no irritation to your baby's delicate skin, making it your favourite bath time companion. The soap is available for Rs. 62/75gms and Rs. 185/225gms.

Parachute Advanced Baby Nourishing Shampoo: Parachute Advanced Baby Nourishing Shampoo, enriched with the goodness of Virgin Coconut Oil and Tender Coconut Water is a refreshing splash of goodness for your little one's precious locks! Experience gentle cleansing, conditioning, and soft, shiny hair that makes your baby star shine even brighter. Doctor-certified new-born safe, it is mild on your baby's eyes – for a tear-free splash time, full of giggles. You can buy the shampoo for Rs. 100/100ml and Rs. 185/200ml. **Parachute Advanced Baby Nourishing Lotion:** Parachute Advanced Baby Nourishing Lotion is a bottle of magic for your little bundle of joy! Enriched with the goodness of Virgin Coconut Oil and the moisturizing touch of Coconut Milk, this lotion is like a nurturing hug for your little one's delicate skin. It is doctor-certified new-born safe and clinically proven to moisturize your baby's skin for 24 hours, keeping it soft and supple all day long, ensuring utmost comfort and protection against dry skin. The lotion is priced at for Rs. 100/100ml and Rs. 175/200ml.



MG celebrates its centenary year; launches '100-Year Limited Edition' in India

Introduces special 'Evergreen' Colour to honour MG's legacy inspired by the British Racing Green.

MG (Morris Garages), a British automobile brand with a 100-year-old legacy, today, launched the '100-Year Limited Edition' featuring the iconic 'Evergreen' colour synonymous with British racing history spanning over 110 years. Celebrating over a century of racing history, these Limited-Edition models capture the essence of performance and craftsmanship that define MG and will be available in:

Model	
Variant	
Price	
Comet EV	
Exclusive FC	
INR 9.40 Lakh	
Astor	
Sharp Pro*	
INR 14.81 Lakh	
Hector	
Sharp Pro**	
INR 21.20 Lakh	
ZS EV	
Exclusive Plus	
INR 24.18 Lakh	
*Available in MT and CVT.	

**available in 5 or 7 seater capacity in petrol and diesel. These Editions will come in an 'Evergreen' exterior with a starry black finished roof and dark finished elements along with the '100-Year Edition' badge on the tailgate. Additionally, the interior has an all-black theme with '100-Year Edition' embroidered in the front headrests imparting sporty character to honour the history of the world of racing. The Limited Edition will also come with an 'Evergreen' themed head unit along with the customisable widget colour. Commenting on the launch, Satinder Singh Bajwa, Chief Commercial Officer, MG Motor India, said, "The launch of our 100-Year Limited Edition is a testament to our enduring legacy and passion for automotive excellence. The 'Evergreen' colour holds a special place in our hearts, embodying the spirit of performance and heritage that define the brand. MG aims to establish itself as a brand renowned for its rich legacy, one that continues to resonate with customers for years to come." Over the past few years, the automotive landscape has undergone significant evolution, reflecting a dynamic shift in motoring legacy. This special edition reverberates MG's legacy and domination in the world of motor racing, showcasing commitment to be-



come an international car brand at the forefront of delivering a range of vehicles that lead future of advanced mobility. This is an attempt to showcase MG's dedication to honour its rich heritage. This limited-edition series is designed to captivate enthusiasts, offering a unique opportunity to own a piece of MG's storied history. MG's Racing Legacy In 1924, MG was established as Morris Garages under the leadership of

British motoring pioneer, William Morris. It was General Manager Cecil Kimber who envisioned the development of faster automobiles with sportier aesthetics. By 1930, MG introduced its inaugural model, the 14/28 Super Sports, based on the Morris Oxford platform but featuring a sleek two-seater body capable of reaching speeds up to 65mph. In 1931, MG made history with the MG EX120, also called '

Supervision of Lok Sabha election arrangements

Rachakonda CP Tarun Joshi

Rachakonda Commissioner Tarun Joshi supervised the preparations for the Lok Sabha elections on Monday. He visited many polling centers in LB Nagar, Malkajigiri and Bhuvanagiri mandals of Maheshwaram mandal and examined the election pattern. He said that the polling process is going on peacefully without any problems. 6000 police and 2500 additional central forces are jointly maintaining security in relation to Rachakonda. He said that arrangements have been made to avoid any untoward incident due to taking security measures in advance. Rachakonda IT Cell maintains social media accounts and any untoward incidents should be brought to their attention immediately. Everyone who has the right to vote is called upon to come forward voluntarily and exercise their right to vote. He said that they are working with the election officials to conduct the election process in a fair manner without any hassles.

Dcps of respective zones along with Commissioner... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri DCP Rajesh Chandra, LB Nagar DCP Praveen Kumar, Malkajigiri DCP Padmaja, Maheshwaram DCP Sunitha, ACPs and other officers participated.



We need to hire and retain more women, build a pipeline of future women leaders: Saraswathi Kasturirangan

Half the respondents across the globe describe their stress levels as higher than a year ago. About 40% of women who experience high levels of pain due to menstruation or menopause work through it without taking time off. In India too, the numbers are similar. Only 10% of women in India believe their organisation is taking concrete steps to fulfil its commitment to gender diversity. 46% are concerned about their safety when at work or while travelling to/from or for work. Saraswathi Kasturirangan, Chief Happiness Officer at Deloitte India, speaks to The Hindu about the pressure women experience to balance work and family, the importance that should be given to women's mental health and the need to build a pipeline of future women leaders.

Despite more conversations happening around inclusion and women at work, the report shows that the stress levels women experience are higher than the previous year. How do you see this?

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced a significant shift in work dynamics by enabling remote work for many. This flexibility offered numerous benefits, allowing employees to reconnect with their families and manage personal responsibilities more effectively. However, as organizations transition back to office-based work, this shift has presented unique challenges,

leading to increased stress.

While many companies have implemented flexible working policies, women often experience a sense of "fear of missing out" (FOMO). If they work from home, they worry about missing important projects or networking opportunities. On the other hand, if they choose to work from the office, they may feel guilty about neglecting family obligations. This constant tug-of-war between professional and personal commitments contributes to heightened stress levels. Additionally, even though leadership teams may publicly advocate for gender diversity, there are questions about whether these values have fully permeated the organization's culture. At the grassroots level, women might still encounter microaggressions or other subtle forms of discrimination, which further exacerbate stress. Moreover, many women face societal pressures that make it challenging to embrace a career-oriented mindset without feeling guilty. The traditional expectations placed on women as primary caregivers can lead to increased stress, as they juggle career aspirations with family responsibilities. Mental health is another critical concern. The pandemic highlighted mental health challenges for everyone, but women might feel more vulnerable due to their unique pressures and roles. Unfortunately, Deloitte's survey revealed, there's still a stigma associated with discussing

mental health, particularly for women, who may be hesitant to speak up about their struggles, fearing it could negatively impact their careers. In conclusion, while organizations have made strides in supporting women and promoting inclusion, addressing these underlying issues requires a concerted effort at all levels. Companies must foster a culture that encourages open dialogue about mental health, values diversity, and supports flexible work arrangements without creating additional stress for women.

In India as well as globally 14% women have reported that their rights deteriorated over the last year. Is this number concerning?

This statistic is definitely concerning, suggesting that many women feel they're losing ground in terms of workplace equality. When we talk about rights, what does it mean from a work perspective? Is it that I have a voice at the table? Do I have a career path shown to me? Am I presumed to be less ambitious?

A common issue is that some women are reluctant to raise their hands and ask for promotions or new opportunities. This could be due to a lack of encouragement, societal expectations, or the fear of being perceived negatively.

There is still a lack of willingness among women to put up their hands and

say, "I am ready for the next level." That's something which I feel women consciously need to overcome. Organizations need to actively ensure that women's voices are heard and valued, not just by creating opportunities, but by encouraging participation and fostering a genuinely inclusive environment. While organisations should start consciously being inclusive, women also need to understand that they do not have to keep fearing about being right all ways, and it's your voice that matters.

Many women seem concerned about personal safety at work and while travelling to/from work. How do you view this?

It's crucial to create a workplace where all employees, particularly women, feel secure. At Deloitte, we've implemented initiatives like the "Men as Allies" campaign, which emphasizes the role men play in supporting women's safety and fostering a more inclusive workplace. However, overall the workplace should be a supportive environment for everyone, regardless of gender.

Organizations must take concrete steps to ensure safety. This includes fostering a culture where unacceptable behavior is not tolerated, regardless of whether it comes from employees, vendors, clients, or other stakeholders. Strong messaging and consistent enforcement of policies are essential in creating a safe environment.

What's in a name? For Tangail weavers, a history of a brutally divided land, its people and identity

Gourango Basak is among the last of his kind. Sitting in his one-room workshop with a loom spinning a pure Tangail saree, the 71-year-old weaver has stuck to the traditional methods of making this textile in West Bengal's Phulia town for over three decades. He minds his own business, he says, and at his age, does not care to know too much about controversies that periodically brew regarding issues tangential to his craft and trade. For instance, the uproar on social media following the GI recognition awarded to the Tangail. In January, a Facebook post by the Ministry of Culture said, "The Tangail saree, originating from West Bengal, is a traditional handwoven masterpiece. Renowned for its fine texture, vibrant colours, and intricate Jamdani motifs, it epitomises the region's rich cultural heritage." The post, which was deleted later, ruffled feathers in neighbouring Bangladesh, where social media users took offence at the use of the phrase "Tangail saree, originating from West Bengal". A report in the Dhaka Tribune said, "The Ministry of Culture of India has asserted that the famous Tangail saree, a symbol of Bangladesh's rich cultural heritage, actually originates from West Bengal, India."

Bengal weavers Screenshot of Ministry of Culture's Facebook post, since deleted, with the caption "The Tangail saree, originating from West Bengal...". Sources say the cause behind the backlash was a result of the phrasing of the social media post and a lack of effective communication to assuage hurt sentiments following the uproar. "Nobody can dispute the origins of Tangail in Bangladesh," says Nilay Kumar Basak, an educator and researcher based in Phulia, who is among the few people to have conducted extensive research on this specific textile. "The GI application that was submitted to the government is very detailed and nowhere does it dismiss Tangail's origins." While the GI tag is the cause of fury, the story of the Tangail textile and its ownership is slightly more complex. It is one about the impact of colonialism, religious conflict and forced migration. The origins of the Tangail saree can be traced to the second half of the 19th century when the community of Basak weavers — who had been experts in creating muslin — migrated from Dhamrai and Chowhat villages near Dhaka to Tangail subdivision in the greater Mymensingh district, in what is now modern-day Bangladesh, at the invitation of the zamindars. By the 20th century, approximately 22 villages were involved in weaving fine handloom sarees with designed borders, which soon became popular as the Tangail saree and were sold in local markets or haat. However, between 1947-1971, almost 95 per cent of weavers who were the main inhabitants of these villages, with the exception of some families in two of these villages — Pathrail and Chandī — fled to India following violence against Hindus in Bangladesh. Undivided Bengal had faced severe polarisation on religious grounds and its impact was witnessed in

the Basak community as well. "They were persecuted and discriminated against in many ways on the basis of religion post-1947, even if widespread open violence did not occur," says Nilay. Weaving new lives in India "When my father came to West Bengal, I was nine years old. We came from Tangail and everyone knew us there. Those were terrible times," says 71-year-old Gourango Basak. The memories are painful for him to recall. "People were selling their homes overnight and leaving and nobody would find out till they left. If any Hindu or Muslim family would have found out we were leaving, they would take everything from us. So we had to leave in secret. There were many empty houses but no people living in them. There were many evil people back then," he says of the communal tension. Sometime in 1962, when it became impossible for Gourango's father to continue living in Tangail, he secretly sold his home one day and took his family to a relative's home nearby. "He arranged a horse-drawn carriage, it was called a tomtom in our village, because it was the only means of transport. The next night he came at 3 am and took us away. My younger sister was only six-month-old. We got onto a launch boat and came to this side (India) by crossing the Hili border," says Gourango about their journey that ended in Phulia. "We had no money but somehow managed a meal." Most Hindus from the weavers community who fled Bangladesh ended up in refugee camps that the Indian government had set up in Phulia in Nadia district in the 1950s, says Nilay. Refugees also settled in Dhatrigram and Samudragarh villages in Purba Bardhaman district. These two districts became a settlement for refugees because they had well-established saree markets, along with having an ecosystem of handloom weavers. Bengal weavers The neighbourhood of Chatkatala in Nadia's Phulia town in West Bengal, where Tangail saris are mostly manufactured in the state. When the refugees from Bangladesh settled in the new land, they got down to doing what they knew best — weaving. Back in Tangail, the demand for the kind of sarees that they were making was so great that the weavers rarely had to worry about clearing their stock or selling enough. But it was a different game here. "The weavers who migrated here really struggled to establish themselves. To do that, they had to modify the sarees in terms of designs," explains Nilay. It was in the 1950s when weavers in West Bengal began experimenting with the traditional Tangail, setting off on a path that completely changed the textile and created the form that is now sold in India. The pioneers who brought about this change were Biren Basak and Suren Basak, the master weavers in Phulia. "When weavers moved to this side of the border, they wanted to carry that legacy but also create their own identity," says Pritha Dasmahapatra, a doctor and an independent researcher on South Asian textiles. "The original Tangail is different. In any tex-



tile, there are two kinds of yarns. One yarn lengthwise and one widthwise. For the original Tangail, the designs were made at the border and ran lengthwise. For the Tangail made in West Bengal, the threads run widthwise like a Jamdani," she says. A traditional Tangail will comprise colourful plain or designed borders on both sides with a white main body and few butis or motifs on the aanchal. Some common motifs found on Tangail can include what are locally called machi buti (fish motif), chatai buti (woven mat motif), chimta buti (tongs motif), tinkathi buti (a trident motif), and trishul buti (a variation of the trident motif), but it underwent several transformations when it began to be produced in India.

The change in the design of Tangail saree in West Bengal started with the change in the style of these butis, says Nilay. "The difference in designs come from religions of the weaver communities. Islam does not permit human figure designs which is not the case for Hindu weavers. The innovation that Phulia weavers brought to the sarees was the introduction of human figures in designs which they call 'figure jamdani' which is not found in Bangladesh at all. They also made designs more curvilinear. They don't follow the original. I think the Phulia weavers have created a distinct identity for themselves. Even though the weave is essentially the same, it's different," says Dasmahapatra. Bengal weavers An example of the Bangladeshi Tangail. Today in Phulia's Chatkatala neighbourhood, where many Tangail weavers still live, 73-year-old Biren has seen great upheavals and astonishing success. At the age of 13, when he fled from what was formerly East Pakistan, he was forced to help out his family in the looms to eke out a living as refugees. That was in 1965. Today, he operates one of the largest textile enterprises in Phulia, employing over 5,000 weavers. In 2021, Biren was conferred with the Padma Shri, India's

fourth-highest civilian honour, for his contribution to Indian textiles. "While traditional Tangail is still made here in Phulia, I changed the Tangail and introduced designs like buti, and made it into something that resembles a Jamdani," says Biren. Bengal weavers Biren Basak with a redeveloped Tangail sari from West Bengal in his retail store in Phulia. (Express Photo: Neha Banka) The famed Jamdani is another textile that originated in undivided Bengal, but it is difficult to ascertain where the etymology of the term 'jamdani', says Nilay. He points to an entry on Banglapedia where researcher Tofail Ahmad says 'Jamdani' has its roots in a Persian word, where 'Jama' means 'cloth' and 'Dana' means 'buti', or 'butidar cloth'. In West Bengal, the aesthetic aspects of Jamdani and the technical aspects of Tangail were merged to create a unique textile which is produced only by the Tangail weavers in India. Biren's experiments with the traditional Tangail have won him not only awards, but also a long list of prominent customers. At his office in Phulia, the walls are covered with photographs of several leaders, from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who have received and purchased sarees from his retail shop. In addition to master weavers, Biren says, the key to his success has been in part due to his focus on creating fresh designs. "Many have started copying and incorporating designs into the sarees because the plain Tangail is harder to sell. The tantis or weavers are facing a difficult situation these days because they need good designers which they don't have. They need a variety of designs and larger numbers of looms. Many are creating saree but not everyone can create a marketable product. Not everyone can master the jamdani technique." Bengal weavers Gourango Basak sits at the looms in his small workshop in Phulia, hand weaving Tangail saris.

BJP respects minorities and welcomes Muslim leaders, says party candidate from Kerala

Malappuram (Kerala) Despite catching nationwide attention following the denial of permission to accompany Prime Minister Narendra Modi in an open jeep during the election campaign roadshow in Kerala's Palakkad two days ago, the BJP's lone Muslim face so far in the fray said he continues to be a hardcore believer in the teachings of Prophet Muhammad but places patriotism and national interests above all religious preferences. In an exclusive interaction with Hindustan Times at his constituency Malappuram, which is otherwise a traditional citadel of Congress alliance partner Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), academic turned politician M Abdul Salam said Muslim politicians in the country must end their existing practice of finding the BJP and Narendra Modi as their enemies and acting as a 'walkout opposition' in the parliament.

The 71-year-old agronomist, who has over 70 international research papers to his credit and is one of the most controversial vice-chancellors of Kerala's prestigious Calicut University, Salam, claimed he was not disheartened by the SPG's refusal to accommodate Modi in the open jeep, as reported by a section of the media. "Before the beginning of the roadshow, I met the prime minister, and he offered me good luck. I took a selfie with him as well. I reached Palakkad only to invite him to campaign in my Malappuram constituency, and the prime minister has yet to accept or reject that invitation," he said.

When asked why a former vice chancellor chosen by the IUML to lead one of the universities with high Muslim stakes chose to prefer a Hindutva party later, Salam claimed the BJP was never a Hindutva or communal party, and he wishes to call it a collective of nationalists who place all of their other priorities below the patriotic goals. "I have no personal animosity with Congress, IUML, or CPI (M). My question is why they are not placing national interests first. Religion and faith are important but should not be placed above the country. To me, the country is the top priority. So I found Modi's dedication to the country and its overall growth to be matchless," he said.

"What are the Congress and CPI (M) pursuing in Kerala other than simply appeasing fanatic Muslim leaders? All 20 Lok Sabha constituencies in Kerala will go to the polls on April 26, a Friday. Kerala's ruling and opposition parties are now requesting the Election Commission of India (ECI) to reschedule the polling date in the state as it coincides with a Friday, a significant day for the Muslim faith. If the country is the priority, any Muslim can vote on that day before or after prayers at the mosque. If this is the mentality, how would the community achieve progress and its youngsters occupy top slots?" he asked. He said the adamant attitude of Muslim Orthodoxy towards trivial matters makes things complex for the community in the country. "I feel honoured as the lone Muslim face so far

among the BJP candidates at the national level. But it is also a limitation. The BJP respects minorities and welcomes Muslim leaders. But why are they not ready to join the party and help Modi achieve his vision for the country? As an educated Muslim, I found it my duty to join Modi in this mission to make India a world power. Muslim leaders must not be puppets at the hands of those elements that are jealous of India's growth," he said.

"It's true that IUML, which handled the education portfolio of the Oommen Chandy-led Congress government, made me the vice-chancellor. But it was not a concession to an unqualified person on religious grounds. If they had chosen me, I would have performed better than their expectations. But they must not anticipate that I would be a prisoner of them for my whole life. I started watching Modi and his unique abilities even while being the vice chancellor. As a researcher with a clinical perspective, I used my methodology to follow Modi, and I found him the answer to the larger questions India faced," he said. He said the BJP is not communal, and it would be happy to accommodate even IUML, the largest minority party in India, in the NDA if it approves Modi's leadership and shares his national vision. "Goa governor and former BJP Kerala unit president P. S. Sreedharan Pillai brought me to the BJP in 2019 and chose me as the party candidate in the state assembly election in 2019 at Tirur in Malappuram. Though I lost to IUML's Kurukkoli Moideen and managed hardly 5.33 percent of the votes, the party has now deputed me to contest the Lok Sabha election. I never canvassed for the seat and learned only about my candidature through television news. That is the kind of preference and quality prevailing in the BJP. Even if I lose this election, I will not demand anything from the party. Instead, I will work as a disciplined functionary at the grassroots level," he said. When asked about Ayodhya and Babri Masjid, he said Muslims are not attaching so much importance to any geographical locality other than Mecca, and they can worship at any place by shifting mosques to convenient localities.

He said the Gyanvapi and other contentious issues can be easily solved if Muslim clergy shift the disputed mosques to more spacious and convenient locations identified by fellow Hindus. He claimed that the protests against CAA in Kerala are false and that the law would not affect any Indian Muslims. "We, the Muslims, must evolve as a constructive force, taking a bold position against terrorism and obscurantism. Those who chopped off the hands and heads must be singled out and handed over to the investigating agencies. The priority must be overall growth," he said. Salam said he has high faith in the Muslim women voters of Malappuram who are clad in 'black burqa' and are continuously victimised by triple talaq. "They may be silent and unorganised. But they would vote for me en masse as a mark of solidar-



He said the Gyanvapi and other contentious issues can be easily solved if Muslim clergy shift the disputed mosques to more spacious and convenient locations identified by fellow Hindus

ity to Modi, who improved their positions," he said.

When reminded about the controversial days at Calicut University, including the infamous board outside his chamber preventing women's entry to meet him, Salam said he had never been against women. "That time, the CPI (M) student wing of SFI was creating enormous hurdles for me. There were police and intelligence reports of the possible implicating of me in sexual harassment cases. So I installed a board just saying that women who wish to meet me must not come alone to the chamber; if they are alone, they must seek accompaniment from a senior lady staff in my office. I had even created a special facility outside my office to address requests from women who wished to meet me," he said. When asked about his controversial decisions, including the bid to sell off varsity land and to admit students for degree courses without a plus-two qualification, Salam said all those were the propaganda of the CPI (M) cyber goons. "They registered 19 cases against me with police and anti-corruption embellishments. Please verify the present position of all those cases. In many cases, the investigators failed to charge me in the absence of any evidence. The courts absolved me of the need for evidence in the rest of the cases. They bru-

tally chased me and levelled heinous allegations against me for attempting to make the university the best in the country," he claimed. Asked why even Congress and IUML, which appointed him to the post, turned his enemies by the end of his tenure, Salam said that in his tenure between 2011 and 2015, he attempted to end political interference and collective bargaining by employee unions. "Such actions irritated both the UDF and the LDF," he said. Salam said the Malappuram district was constituted 65 years ago as the lone Muslim-majority district of the South. Still, it remains backward by unquestioningly supporting the Congress and IUML.

He claimed that only the BJP could ensure a new breath of life for Malappuram. A native of Chadayamangalam in the Southern Kollam district, resides in Thiruvananthapuram. Before retiring as vice chancellor of Calicut University, he was the head of the regional research station of Kerala Agriculture University at Vellayani in Thiruvananthapuram. In Malappuram, he is fighting IUML veteran E T Muhammed Basheer, who represented the nearby Ponanni Lok Sabha constituency in the outgoing Lok Sabha, and V Vaseef, the young leader of the CPI (M) youth wing DYFI.

Kuldeep Yadav: A millennial kid, who has shed his ego to adapt and excel

Kuldeep Yadav will turn 30 in less than six months and while experience and age has mellowed him down a bit, the ego and self-confidence is still intact. The football buff who spent his early teens kicking a ball in the park with friends and stayed up late to watch European football thinking he can do a better job than the likes of Arsene Wenger, Jose Mourinho, Carlo Ancelotti, Jurgen Klopp and Pep Guardiola is still full of belief that he can get any batsman out at any time. Injuries, loss of form have brought maturity and wisdom. He is not the youngster who, as he recalled in a podcast with Ravichandran Ashwin, didn't heed the advice of Kolkata Knight Riders bowling coach Carl Crowe to work on his length. Kuldeep admits he was too rigid or too scared to make any changes in his bowling.

"I was very egoistic. I had a lot of belief in my skill. I used to believe that I could get anyone out. I had so much confidence in my skill set that I thought what he was saying was not important," Kuldeep told Ashwin. Even now, he is keen to take over the mantle of India's leading spinner from the legendary off-spinner and is confident of holding his own in the run-fests in the IPL. However, a few years later, loss of form and a career-threatening knee surgery put his career on a crossroads. In the span of two years, he went from being hailed as "India's lead spinner in overseas Tests" by then head coach Ravi Shastri to becoming the fifth-choice tweaker after Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel and Washington Sundar. That was the time Kuldeep needed a comforting arm around his shoulder. Ashwin, in his podcast, said how it took Kuldeep a few years to even open up with him. His international form had nosedived after MS Dhoni retired.

"After Dhoni retired, my performance with the ball wasn't great. It happens that a person guides you and when that person's influence is not there anymore, suddenly everything is on your shoulders. It takes time for you to react to the situation... that probably happened to me," Kuldeep told The Indian Express. But the left-arm spinner is lucky to have found the required support. In his first year under Rishabh Pant's captaincy at Delhi Capitals, he scalped 21 wickets in 14 games. Last year, when Rishabh missed the tournament after a road mishap, Kuldeep had an average season, taking 10 scalps in 14 games. This year with Rishabh back and chirping "Ye wala achha tha Kullu (This one was nice, Kuldeep)", his performance has improved. He has picked 12 wickets in eight matches so far.

In the Indian set-up, Kuldeep has found comfort in the form of captain Rohit Sharma. "Rohit bhai has always supported me. When I was injured, he was continuously in touch with me, and specifically told me about what he wanted from me. After the injury, he picked me directly in the team," Kuldeep said in a select media interaction. "Now he is after me to improve my batting," Kuldeep burst into laughter. "He was impressed with my batting during the Test series against England. For the

past year, I have had more discussions with him on my batting than my bowling," he said. During the Ranchi Test, Kuldeep stitched a series-turning 76-run stand with Dhruv Jurel for the eighth wicket. In the IPL, against his former team KKR, he scored a career-best 26-ball 35.

There was once a perception that Kuldeep needed to work on the speed of his bowling; that the fizz was lacking and he was too slow to beat batsmen. His relationship with Kolkata Knight Riders soured drastically as everyone said he needed to increase his pace. It was like a maths teacher narrating a formula but not explaining how to solve a problem. "Sab kehte rahe speed badhao, but kaise karna hai wo kisi ne nahi bola (Everyone said, I need to increase my speed but no one told me how)," Kuldeep said. "I was scared to try new things. Before my injury, I had been bowling with the same action for 15 years. There were lots of questions in my mind," he said. After his rehab when a puzzled Kuldeep reached Kanpur, his childhood coach Kapil Pandey immediately realised that his ward was all over the place but he made sure that he would not let him throw in the towel. "I asked him first to tell me the suggestions he had received from everyone. He said 'Sunil Joshi ji wanted him to work on his angle. Rohit Sharma wanted him to bowl a tad quicker. Ashish Kaushik, a physio at NCA, warned him against putting too much weight on his front leg. He sounded insecure and feared that by trying new things he might end up losing his loop and turn,'" Kapil Pandey told "I sent him his old bowling footage and explained to him that since he gives more air to the ball and it goes above the eye line, the batsmen had a lot more opportunities to play the big shots. I didn't think he got my point. He was in two minds and insecure about losing his mystery. I literally shouted at him and told him to give it a try before jumping to any conclusion.

"After having a closer look at his medical report, I understood what Ashish ji meant. He wanted to protect his knee. We made a few adjustments in his run-up, I asked him to be aggressive. The results were not sudden. I made him bowl three hours in the morning and then a couple of hours in the evening at the nets but he needed match practice," said Pandey. He asked Kuldeep to play in a local T20 tournament in Kanpur. "Sir wanted me to get the taste of a match," said Kuldeep. "It was frustrating to start with. I was not getting my length right, I was losing the trajectory. I did work a lot and my leg would swell up but I would say, 'Sir, don't worry, I will apply ice'. He was with me through that journey. "With the new run-up, I increased my pace but was bowling flat. After a couple of matches, I realised that batsmen were not getting more time with this new action and run-up. That was the first ray of hope I saw after a long time," said Kuldeep. "In my first season with Delhi Capitals, (head coach) Ricky Ponting and Pant told me that I would get to play all the matches. Ricky even liked the changes I had made in my bowling. "In 2022 against Punjab Kings, I



lost my rhythm and without even realising I started bowling with old action. I remember during the strategic timeout, Shane Watson came and told me 'Mate, I want to see Kuldeep 2.0. Show us what you have done in the past games,'" recalls Kuldeep. Kuldeep's career has been like his bowling. It has turned, bounced, and drifted, but has found the accuracy and zip in the past couple of years. So what has changed? He had shed his ego and learnt from his mistakes. On the show Breakfast with Champions when host Gaurav Kapoor teases him about his weight, Kuldeep immediately replies: "Dhoke-dhake sab khaya hun (I had faced betrayal and setbacks)." There is a tectonic shift in Kuldeep's attitude as well. Now he is not happy being just the third spinner in India's Test team. In the podcast with Ashwin,

Kuldeep made his ambition clear to his senior. "You remember, Ash bhai, after the Hyderabad Test (against England) you told me if I was to play as the lead spinner, I must bowl 15 overs and not give away more than 25-30 runs in a spell. Earlier, I used to think about getting four wickets and it didn't matter how many runs I conceded." Even in the ongoing IPL, with the Impact Player rule and prevalent power-hitting, Kuldeep blames the bowlers for not executing their plans well. "I feel bowlers should be a bit braver. Instead of sticking to their own plans, they are more worried about the strength of batsmen. Look at Jasprit Bumrah. The other day, Ashutosh Sharma scooped his yorker for a six but has he stopped bowling the yorker? No, he is sticking to his strengths and that's why he is doing so well," said Kuldeep.

TS Vidyadhan Scholarship 2024 announced for underprivileged students

Hyderabad: Shibulal Family Philanthropic Initiatives has announced the opening of the Vidyadhan Scholarship applications for meritorious students from underprivileged families. The scholarship program also provides selected students with support through soft skills training, mentoring, and career counseling to enhance their personal and professional growth.

For the TS Scholarship Program 2024, the scholarship is available for students whose family annual income is less than Rs. 2 lakh and should also have scored 90 per cent or obtained 9 CGPA in their 10th Grade/SSC examination. The selected students will be granted a scholarship amount ranging from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 70,000 per year depending on the course and fee structure.

Interested applicants can submit their applications online by visiting



www.vidyadhan.org or by using the SDF Vidya App (available on the Google Play store) till June 15. For further information, they can also reach out to vidyadhan.telangana@sdfoundationindia.com or contact the Vidyadhan Helpdesk at 91 9663517131. Vidyadhan is a Shibulal Family Philanthropic Initiative under the aegis of Sarojini Damodaran Foundation, set up by Kumari Shibulal and S. D.