

Election 2021 –

Ruling parties of Assam, West Bengal and Kerala return to power

IT Desk
Imphal, May 2:

Ruling parties were poised to return to power in three states with Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress striding way ahead of the BJP in West Bengal while the BJP was comfortably ahead in Assam as was the LDF in Kerala, Election Commission trends indicated on Sunday.

As votes were counted for the assembly polls in four states and one union territory with strict Covid protocols in place, trends indicated that Tamil Nadu's ruling AIADMK could cede power to arch rival DMK. In Puducherry, the AINRC-led NDA was headed towards power.

The BJP has spearheaded the NDA's way well beyond the majority mark as the saffron party is leading in more than 74 Assembly seats against Congress-led alliance's 42 out of a total of 126 seats in Assam. While incumbent Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and state Finance and Health Minister and BJP's star campaigner Himanta Biswa Sarma won from Majauli and Jalukbari constituencies, respectively, incarcerated anti-CAA activist Akhil Gogoi is leading in Sibsagar seat, suggests initial trends of Assam assembly election results.

The Election Commission began counting votes for the 126 assemblies in Assam elections amid a three-tier security

arrangement and strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols.

Despite display of all its might, the BJP ruling the centre was unable to oust reigning queen Mamata Banerjee, who remained well entrenched with her party Trinamool Congress (TMC) retaining/leading in 210 seats out of 292 seats in the assembly elections, the results of which were announced on Sunday. The Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Sunday defeated her BJP rival Suvedu Adhikari in Nandigram by over 1,200 votes.

As the counting of votes for the West Bengal election continues on Sunday, the Election Commission data showed that Trinamool

Congress is all set to return to power in the state. Commenting on the possible poll outcome, BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya credited Mamata Banerjee for TMC's win, saying 'it seems Bengal has chosen Didi'.

"The TMC won because of Mamata Banerjee. It seems people have chosen Didi. We will introspect what went wrong, whether it was organisational issues, lack of face, insider- outsider debate. We will see what went wrong," Vijayvargiya said.

Meanwhile, Babul Supriyo and actor Yash Gupta are trailing from Tollygunge and Chanditala constituencies respectively. Locket Chatterjee is also trailing from Chunsura.

TMC ministers Firhad Hakim, Partha Chatterjee and Subrata Mukherjee are leading in Kolkata Port, Ballygunge and Behala West constituencies respectively.

The Election Commission of India will declare the West Bengal Election Result today. The politically charged state witnessed a high voltage campaign by Mamata Banerjee's TMC and the resurgent BJP. Though the Left, Congress and Indian Secular Front (ISF) are also in the fray, the West Bengal Assembly Elections are a bipolar contest between the ruling party and the saffron party.

According to the latest figures released by the Election Commission,

Mamata Banerjee led Trinamool has extended its lead in 207 Assembly seats, while the BJP is ahead in 78.

On the other hand in Tamil Nadu, with DMK coasting towards victory in the 2021 Tamil Nadu assembly polls on its own as it leads in 119 seats and allies further beef up the tally, the Dravidian party is all set to form government in the state of Tamil Nadu after a decade.

As per the Election Commission, the DMK is leading in 119 seats on its own.

If the trend continues till the end, then it will have the majority on its own to form the next government.

To get a simple majority in the 234-member Tamil Nadu Assembly, a party should win 118 seats.

In Kerala, the LDF is leading in 95 of the state's 140 constituencies. The UDF is leading in 43 seats.

The 2021 Kerala assembly election was a one-phase election held on April 6, 2021. The Kerala assembly has 140 seats – so a party or alliance needs to win 71 to form the government, a number the LDF seems to be comfortable crossing.

In these elections, the LDF was looking to retain power while the United Democratic Front (UDF) was hoping to make a comeback. The BJP-led National Democratic Front (NDA) has also launched a vigorous campaign, hoping to improve its vote share.

LDF's Pinarayi Vijayan has been the chief minister since 2016.

Left parties in Manipur join hands with working class

IT News
Imphal, May 2:

The CPI (M), CPI, RSP and AIFB has extended their solidarity with the international working class on the occasion of May Day. The Left Parties join the working class in the struggle to combat the pandemic and safeguard the rights of the working people. A joint statement said that India today, particularly Manipur, is in the grip of the worst humanitarian health crisis since independence. Worse, the scourge of the pandemic continues to intensify. Immediate measures to combat the pandemic, protect people's lives and livelihoods are needed to be undertaken by the central government on a war footing.

The left parties urge the Union government to ensure oxygen requirement to all hospitals in the country. The left parties also urged for launch of Free Universal Vaccination programme across the country.

It urged to spend the budgetary allocation of Rs.35,000 crores from the PM Cares Fund to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and to stop construction of the Rs. 20,000 crores Central Vista (New Parliament at Delhi) for utilization of the money for procuring vaccines. The left party also urged the Union Government to invoke Compulsory Licensing to produce both vaccines and life saving drugs by all competent facilities.

Serum chief, who had flown to UK to escape threats, promises to return 'in a few days'

Courtesy – the Telegraph
New Delhi, May 2:

Adar Poonawalla, CEO of the Serum Institute of India, now says he plans to return to the country "in a few days" after declaring he had gone into "extended" self-exile in Britain due to threatening demands for the Covid vaccine from chief ministers and powerful Indian corporate figures. Poonawalla tweeted he "looked forward to reviewing operations upon my return in a few days" following "an excellent meeting with all our partners & stakeholders in the UK." But he gave no details about the exact schedule for his return.

The 40-year-old Serum Institute boss triggered a Twitter storm after he told the Times, London, he had flown to Britain just before it banned travellers from India and that he planned an "extended stay" because of the threats he's been getting from chief ministers and top business people.

Twitter users greeted Poonawalla's announcement with surprise. According to @thetimes "Poonawalla has fled the country he is supposed to be manufacturing vaccines for. Not very reassuring..." commented Krishan Partap Singh, author of the Raisina Series, a trilogy of political novels.

Others said his widely publicized remarks to the leading UK newspaper were another blow to India's attractiveness as an investment destination. Poonawalla minced no words in his comments to *The Times*. In fact, "threats is an understatement," Poonawalla said, adding, "The level of expectation and aggression is really unprecedented. It's

overwhelming. Everyone feels they should get the vaccine. They can't understand why anyone else should get it before them." Poonawalla, who was given Y level Government security last week that includes police and commandoes, told *The Times* that the calls begin cordially but the tone usually changes dramatically when he told the callers that it's not possible to jump the queue. "They are saying if you don't give us the vaccine it's not going to be good...It's the tone. It's the implication of what they might do if I don't comply. It's taking control. It's coming over and basically surrounding the place and not letting us do anything unless we give in to their demands." Poonawalla told *The Times* that he planned to stay on in Britain for some time, "because I don't want to go back to that situation." He added: "Everything falls on my shoulders but I can't do it alone...I don't want to be in a situation where you are just trying to do your job, and just because you can't supply the needs of X, Y or Z you really don't want to guess what they are going to do."

In March British newspapers reported that Poonawalla was paying \$69,000 a week to rent a sprawling 25,000sq ft house in London's smart Mayfair district. The newspapers said it was the most expensive rental deal in London in recent times. His wife and children travelled to Britain some time ago. In remarks that are bound to cause alarm, Poonawalla also said his trip to Britain is partly business and that he may look at starting vaccine production outside India. He refused to comment further on his plans but added, "There's going to

be an announcement soon." Lord Uday-Lister, a former senior aide of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson visited the Serum Institute in March. Poonawalla admits he thought the worst might be over in December as the number of Covid cases began to fall. "I thought, 'We've done our bit. We'd struggled through 2020 to get everything ready. I thought I could put my feet up and take a vacation, but it's been the exact opposite. It's been chaotic.'" Poonawalla refused to comment on the Kumbh Mela and election rallies and added that, "I don't think even God could have forecast it was going to get this bad." He says: "We are really gasping for all the help we can get." He insisted that he supported India's ban on exports even though it has put him in a fix and left him unable to keep commitments.

Poonawalla refused to apportion blame for the explosion in Covid cases or say whether he believed that the Kumbh Mela and election rallies had contributed to the crisis. "If I give you the right answer, or any answer, my head would be chopped off...I can't comment on the elections or Kumbh Mela. It's too sensitive," he said.

At the same time, he said, "I don't think even God could have forecast it was going to get this bad." He said: "We are really gasping for all the help we can get." He insisted that he supported India's ban on exports even though it has put him in a commercial fix and left him unable to keep commitments. Serum Institute has hired around a thousand new employees and is operating its facilities for 20 hours daily, the maximum possible, he says.

PM Modi reviews usage of gaseous oxygen for medical purposes

New Delhi, May 2:

In line with his direction of exploring innovative ways to ramp up supply and availability of oxygen, PM Modi today chaired a meeting to review the usage of gaseous oxygen.

Many industries like Steel plants, refineries with petrochemical units, industries using rich combustion process, power plants etc have oxygen plants which produce gaseous oxygen which is used in the process. This oxygen can be tapped for medical use.

The strategy being used is to identify industrial units

which produce gaseous oxygen of requisite purity, shortlist those which are closer to cities/dense areas/demand centres and establish temporary Covid care centres with oxygenated beds near that source. A pilot for 5 such facilities had already been initiated and there is good progress on this. This is being accomplished through PSUs or private industries operating the plant & co-ordination of centre & state governments.

It is expected that around 10,000 oxygenated beds can be made available in a short period of time by making temporary hospitals near such plants.

State governments are being encouraged to set up more such facilities with oxygenated beds to deal with the pandemic.

PM also reviewed progress on setting up of PSA plants. He was informed that around 1500 PSA plants are in the process of being set up through contribution of PM CARES, PSUs and others. He directed officials to ensure speedy completion of these plants.

Principal Secretary to PM, Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary, Secretary Road Transport & Highways & other senior officials participated in the meeting.

Banks to be closed for 12 days in May 2021

IT Correspondent
Mumbai, May 2:

All banks, be it private or public sector, will be closed for 12 days in May throughout the country, according to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) holiday calendar list. The COVID-19 pandemic has already forced banks to cut short its working hours and staff attendance to 50%. These holidays have been notified by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under three brackets — the Negotiable Instruments Act, Holiday, Real Time Gross Settlement Holiday, and Banks' Closing of Accounts.

The banks will also remain closed on the second and the fourth Saturdays in May and four Sundays. The banks will also operate from 10 AM to 2 PM, as per the new guidelines. However, all banking services that are online seem to be available including ATMs, mobile banking, and online banking services even during holidays.

Bank holidays in May 2021:

- May 1, 2021: Maharashtra Din/May Day (Labour Day)
- May 2, 2021: Weekly off (Sunday),
- May 7, 2021: Jumad-ul-Vida,
- May 8, 2021: Second Saturday, May 9, 2021: Weekly off (Sunday),
- May 13, 2021: Ramzan-Id (Id-UI-Fitra) (Shawal-1),
- May 14, 2021: Bhagvan Shree Parshuram Jayanti/Ramjan-Eid (Eid-UI-Fitra)/Basava Jayanti/Akshaya Tritiya,
- May 16, 2021: Weekly off (Sunday),
- May 22, 2021: Fourth Saturday,
- May 23, 2021: Weekly off (Sunday),
- May 26, 2021: Buddha Pournima and
- May 30, 2021: Weekly off (Sunday).

Is the future of education online?



By - Vijay GarG

The purpose of education has always been to enlighten, mould, and stimulate young minds. And to that respect, the dynamism of a physical classroom, where the transfer of knowledge from tutor to students occurs, cannot be undermined.

We have been through a year that has put us all to the test, emotionally, mentally and physically. The Coronavirus pandemic forced us to hit the reset button on many aspects of life as we knew it - travel, business, social interaction, and of course, education.

While we all have taken our learnings from it, for the education sector, it has added a new layer to the existing system which, when channelled correctly, can be a game-changing experience to the way students access education, the way students harness opportunity. But are educational institutions up for the challenge?

The purpose of education has always been to enlighten, mould and stimulate young minds. And to that respect, the dynamism of a physical classroom, where the transfer of knowledge from tutor to student occurs, cannot be undermined.

Covid-19: Online learning

I am a big believer of the Socratic Method that involves dialogue-based interactions and question-based solutions - all achieved best in a physical classroom setting where there is more fluidity to deliberating, discussing and debating topics than in an on-screen environment.

But when the pandemic hit and the world went indoors, we did what we could do best with the tools in

hand. And what tools they turned out to be! Our technology-enabled homes got enabled. Our connectivity (and patience) were tested, but in the end, so was our ability to learn, to absorb and participate in a new setting.

Bedrooms converted into classrooms, screens into blackboards, keypads into pens and subjects into modules. But teachers remained teaching and students remained to learn. And they could be anywhere, plugging into the knowledge they seek.

Focus on innovation

We quickly realised that it was not just about changing the mode of delivery of education, but about maintaining or enhancing the quality of our delivery. We realised that the move from face-to-face to online represented a significant difference in the base assumptions about how we teach and how students learn.

This realisation led us to diligently think about how we can build capacity amongst our faculty so that they are effective in teaching online, how we can use this mode to make learning more student-centred, how we can help our students from being passive listeners to active learners.

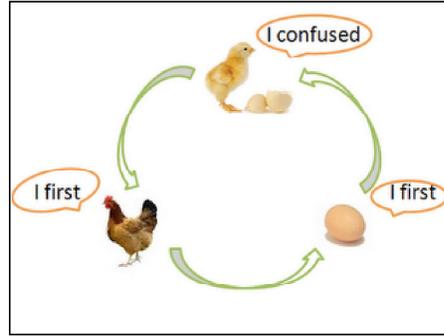
We decided that rather than emphasising the technology, we must focus on innovation so that our faculty can venture into trying new methods, encourage the faculty to evolve in this new role and share their learnings with their peers.

The truth is, we have all witnessed education as a path so far, one that is conscientiously embarked on until the path 'allows' us to pursue a different school or college to specialize in a particular area of interest. What if we have a wider path for our students? What if a child living in any part of the country can access a curriculum or be part of an institution in a different city, country or continent? Will they be poorer or richer for it?

The answers remain to be seen, but the education sector must do what it can to ensure 'learning' is at the heart of what we offer, not logistics.

An idiot trying to analyze egg and hen confusion

By: Heisnam Lakeshwar Singh
Head (Academic & Admin), JCRE Global College, Babupara, Imphal



Go down to any street catch one person and ask him "do you like the movie, *Three Idiots*". You don't need to hear his reply; I will tell you what he will say, of course he will reply yes. When people watch *Three Idiots* they find their idiots hidden inside them is provoked and that makes the movie a life story of everyone. Who else do not love their own life story? I mean this movie gives a chance to convince myself that there are always reasons why I failed. It helps me in finding excuses for the failure I faced, and also hope for finding success in future. Oh! Am I too negative? See I too love "three idiots" very much. (Bad that I cannot insert smiley here) Life is so unpredictable because we do not know everything. We do not know everything because that is not possible, that is not possible because the definition of life cannot be answered as we answered in university examination. There are different dimensions for defining our life. We are irrationally predictable and rationally unpredictable. Hmm! I am sure you are confused. Let me come to idiot part. I am neither practicing philosophy nor spiritualism; I am just wasting few minutes of my life trying to vomit what I have been engulfing from last couple of year.

Can I say that I am an idiot because I do not know the answer of the question **what comes first, hen or egg?** Or am I an idiot because I am thinking of answering this question? But wherever I go and enter I always encounter with this question and at the end I end up with confusion. Now I am 100% sure that you are thinking I am not only an idiot but become a lunatic too. **Hen and egg confusion is everywhere**; see the example, my/or state Manipur, which is facing lots of problem (which state do not have problem anyway?). Politics is one, worst affected, as many people claim. We follow democratic system of ruling government. We are the people who choose the right candidate. Therefore if something wrong

happens we are to be blamed. Same thing is happening at the present case of Covid tsunami. Government frame lot of advisory to cut the chain of spreading coronavirus. But who is following the advisory strictly? Similarly, the authority that made the Sops' and advisories break the same by themselves as reported in the news and social media. Government ban **thalab chongba, sumang kumei, and restrict the number of attendee in religious rites** to avoid social gatherings; however we all have seen how our so called public leaders (Ministers, MLAs) behaved in some of the recent musical concert and by-election of five assemblies in later part of 2020. **Regarding the Mt. Koubru impasses**, Chief Minister N. Biren expressed serious concerns over the deteriorating condition of Mt. Koubru. Chief Minister lamented, he feels like crying in seeing the condition of Mt. Koubru, which is reserve forest area. No trees are seen and even the roots have been uprooted in the Mt. Koubru. He blamed the government employee, particularly those in the Revenue and Forest department. He said none of the government employee rendered their duty with sincerity. Aren't these people employee of his government? It is also said, illegal encroachers were provided fake patta in wetland and other

reserve forest area of the state. Then the question is-who is the culprit? Encroachers or fake patta providers? These are "egg and hen confusion". But when we go deeper into the problem, we'll educated people, as they claim, says there is not even a single person who is trust worthy and capable, all are same. Again intellectual people says in - order to educate and guide people into right direction we need a very good leader. Since we do not have very good leader our people are confused in choosing right person. Again people are not good so they are not able to choose the right person, they do not give chance to develop a good leader. So people are blamed because government is not capable, and government is weak because people are not good, **again the same confusion**. Oh! Let me stop here.

We can put this question in international level too, big egg and big hen. The conflict between terrorist group of third world and USA government also can put in the confusion of egg and hen. USA upgrades its military power, they are getting stronger because the problem caused by those terrorist is increasing. When we look from the side of terrorist, so claimed by USA, they are becoming more aggressive and causing lots of

problem to USA because USA is getting more aggressive, their military power is expanding. Actually we can put this egg and hen confusion to every problem we face, it is kind of one size fixed all confusion. Starting from your personal problem like relationship with your boyfriend/girlfriend to international level problem. Oh!! I am sorry to entire chicken species for putting egg and hen in problems alone. Let me try to put them in some positive phenomena also. Everything has to be balanced, bad and good, positive and negative, ugly and beautiful. Once one of my friend from Bihar told me, when we were walking post dinner walk, every energy and shapes tends to achieve circular shape because that is the most stable state (noble / inert state). He was talking about the physical things; he was not talking about the procedures and phenomena. But phenomena are also follows the same rule. Good things we do today will come to us again; bad things we faced today will go back to its source again. It means whatever the action we have taken today will give fruit someday (I mean someday for sure, may not be tomorrow). When our moral gets down, because of continuous failure, when we don't want to wake up in the morning because of fear of reminding the failures, when we breakdown our enthusiasm because of doubts of failure, the simple word "do your duty don't think about the result" also sometime becomes the best word we ever heard. But this word is not that simple word, it has lots of meaning, the meaning can be found with help of egg and hen's circular movement. The Alchemist written by Paulo Coelho also talks about it. Where the treasure was found, and would he found the treasure if he did not travel his journey? Beauty and handsome doesn't measure based on look only; there are various attributes for measuring.

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Role of Press and its fundamental rights



By - Er. Prabhat Kishore

Developing countries are those which get their independence only after the Second World War. Before the War these countries were under the iron fists of the colonial powers and were exploited ruthlessly by imperialist power. Situation, however, completely changed after the World War; and one-by-one all the countries were free from colonial exploitation.

When the people of the former colonies get their independence, the leaders of those countries started feeling the immediate

necessity to remove the colossal poverty of the people. Thus the leaders formulated plan for the development of their country.

The important function in this country was, therefore, to start planning for the economic development so that fresh wealth could be created for distribution to the people to remove their poverty. The duty of the reporters in those countries was to publicize all the details about the development programme, so that people would have known what the government was doing. This is the concept of news in a developing country.

In most of the newspapers, the policy that is pursued is anti-government. The policy makers or the proprietors feel that in order to increase the circulation of the paper an anti-government slant is needed while reporting activities of the government. This is seen even with regard to the reporting or developmental activities. If this policy is pursued, it ultimately creates a feeling of resentment among the masses against the government.

It hampers the developmental activities of the government. It must be remembered that developmental activities are primarily at the general wellbeing of the people. If newspaper reports affect the developmental activity, ultimately common man suffers along with it. So, a change in the concept of the news is needed to expedite the development of the country.

There is nothing like absolute freedom of the press. The press enjoys the same freedom of expression and with the same limitation imposed by the requirements of society as available to the common citizen as a fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution. Article 19(1 A) of the Constitution provides: "All Citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression". Article 19(2) recognizes the right of the State to make laws imposing reasonable restriction on the exercise of the right to freedom of speech & expression in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign nations, public order, decency or morality, contempt of court, defamation, incitement to an offence, or sedition. A law limiting the freedom of

expression whether of the common man or the press already exists and it is necessary for the reporters and editorial staffs to be familiar with the provision of these laws, specially the Indian Penal Code (IPC), in so far as they relate to the news coverage.

A case of 'defamation' can arise over the circulation of a statement by someone containing defamatory references to another person or a corporate body. The fact to be remembered is that the person making the statement is named in the copy and is answerable for it does not get absolved. The use of adjective of defamatory nature with respect to person should be avoided in all circumstances for, however unpopular person may be, the law will always give him protection against defamation.

The concepts underlying 'Contempt of Courts Act 1971', as the press is concerned, publication of any matter calculated to scandalize or lower the authority to any court, prejudice or interfere with the due course of judicial proceedings or interfere with or obstruct the administration of justice in any other manner constitute contempt.

It is not open to newspaper to publish an item charging a particular judge with corruption,

"There is nothing like absolute freedom of the press. The press enjoys the same freedom of expression and with the same limitation imposed by the requirements of society as available to the common citizen as a fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution"

whatever the circumstances, nor can his conduct in court be adversely commented upon. The purpose in arming the courts with such absolute authority to punish people for contempt is the need to maintain the dignity of the courts and to ensure that justice is administered in an atmosphere free from conflict and tension.

By and large the press in India is reputed for its faithful and unbiased coverage of the proceedings of legislatures and the legislatures are generally indulgent to the press. But while they may overlook minor irritants the legislatures individually and legislature as a whole are zealous of their privilege and are bound to take note of serious transgression which includes deliberate suppression or distortion of a member's speech or other contributions to the proceedings aspersions cast on

a member's behavior in the House, imputation of motive to him for his speech or behavior of the House.

The law on obscenity is set out in Section 292 of the IPC. There is no definition as to what would amount to an obscene publication in this section, but courts, including the Supreme Court, has applied a test according to which a matter may be charged as obscene if it tends to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are opened to such moral influences.

Ethical values are undergoing a change in India, but a news agency is expected to apply to itself a vigorous standard and keep out of its reports anything that can offend decency in life or manners.

(The author is a technocrat & academician)

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