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GREEN WARS**

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सत्यमेव जयते

WHO IS AN ENEMY OF THE STATE?

**HOW THE CENTRE AND STATE GOVERNMENTS ARE
ATTEMPTING TO SUPPRESS DISSENT THROUGH
SEDITION CHARGES AND OTHER DRACONIAN LAWS**

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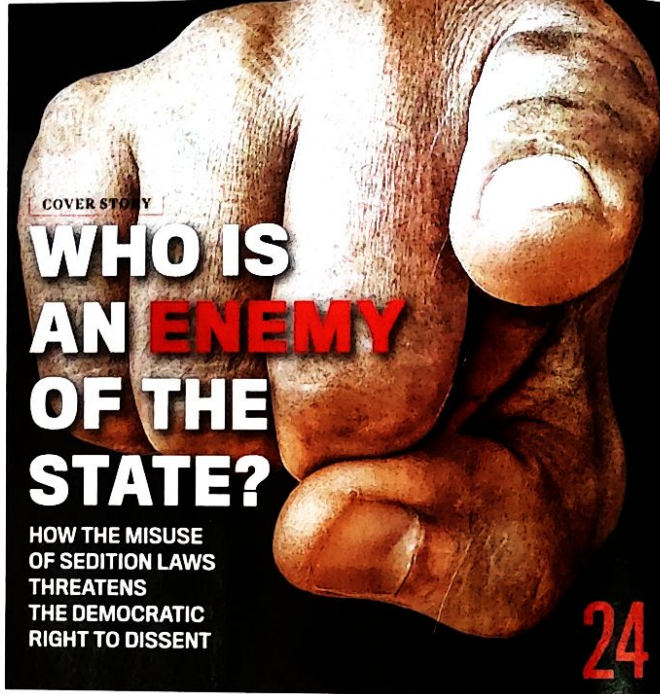
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DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE
Amit Shah offers prayers at the Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Feb. 18

BATTLE FOR BENGAL

THE TEMPLE RUN

By Romita Datta

Temple- and ashram-hopping are, of course, de rigueur for BJP leaders anywhere, but the fervour and commitment are hitting new levels in the Bengal poll campaign. And it's not just Ram and Hanuman (or Bajrangbali, the preferred appellation for the monkey god among the party's more hawkish supporters), temples of Kali and Durga are also now must-stops on the itinerary, especially for visiting BJP and Sangh VVIPs. This trend of propitiating the mother goddess caught on with BJP leaders after Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief Mamata Banerjee raised slogans of 'Jai Maa Kali' and 'Jai Maa

Durga' as a counter to the "north Indian" 'Jai Shree Ram'. Durga and Kali are household deities in Bengal and far more a feature of the everyday worship and vocabulary of the devout Bengali Hindu. This was also Mamata's strategy—to present the BJP as an aggressive outsider bent on redrawing the state's cultural landscape. The BJP soon cottoned on to Didi's plan, and has since done a desperate assimilation jig by going all out to celebrate Durga puja. Kolkata had its first BJP-organised community Durga puja in October 2020 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself gracing the occasion (virtually). BJP lead-