

THE PERFECT VOICE



Another case against Narsinghanand ... pg 3



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Seven of family killed as fire breaks out

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Seven persons, including three minors, were killed after a fire broke out in a double-storey shop-cum-residential structure in Mumbai on Sunday morning, a fire official said.

The incident took place at 5.20 am at Siddharth Colony in Chembur area, he said.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde later visited the site. He announced a high-level probe into the incident and a compensation of Rs 5 lakh for the kin of the deceased.

The ground floor of the structure was used as a shop and the upper floor as residence, an official said.

The blaze was confined to the electric wiring and installations in the shop at the ground floor and spread to the upper floor, he said, adding it was a 'level-one' fire.

Seven persons were injured in the incident. They were taken to the Rajawadi Hospital where all of them were declared brought dead, the official said.



A fire broke out in a double-storey shop-cum-residential structure at Siddharth Colony, Chembur in Mumbai on Sunday.

PIC: Bhushan Koyande

Fire engines, water tankers and other assistance were rushed to the spot and the blaze was doused by 9.15 am, the official said.

The deceased have been identified as Paris Gupta (7), Manju Prem Gupta (30), Anita Gupta (39), Prem

Gupta (30), Narendra Gupta (10), Vidhi Chediram Gupta (15) and Gitadevi Dharamdev Gupta (60), he said.

CM Shinde visited the site and met family members of the victims.

Later, talking to report-

ers, he said the incident was very unfortunate.

The chief minister announced a high-level probe in the incident and a compensation of Rs 5 lakh for the kin of the deceased.

The cost of treatment of the injured persons will be

borne by the government, he said.

If the slum rehabilitation work has run into hurdles, the issues would be looked into, he added.

The CM was accompanied by Union minister Ramdas Athawale.

VP questions judiciary's powers

New Delhi: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday delved into the issue of separation of powers, saying executive governance by the judiciary is jurisdictionally beyond its constitutional mandate.

He urged the intelligentsia and academia to catalyse national discourse to ensure deference to constitutional essence by the three wings—the executive, the judiciary and the legislature.

Speaking at the felicitation ceremony of veteran Congress leader and former Jammu and Kashmir governor Karan Singh on the completion of 75 years in public life here, he also said the convergence of forces both within and outside inimical to India, and anti-national narratives are matters of deep concern.

UN like an old company, not updated: Jaishankar

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday took a critical view of the United Nations, saying it was "like an old company", not entirely keeping up with the market but occupying the space.

During an interaction at the Kautilya Economic Conclave here, he also said that two very serious conflicts are going on in the world. "And where is the UN on them, essentially a bystander," the minister said.

In response to a query on the possible outcome of the US elections, he said the US actually has "made a shift", geopolitically and in its economic outlook, and irrespective of the outcomes in November, many of these trends will "intensify" in the days to come.

Jaishankar took part in the interactive session on



'India and the Globe' and spoke of India's role and challenges amid changing global dynamics.

"So, we are both a lifting tide and a bit of paradoxical one, a ballast as well," Jaishankar said as he enumerated some of the steps India has taken to help other countries, including its neighbours such as Sri Lanka.

Asked about his upcoming visit to Pakistan to at-

tend a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), he again sought to rule out any bilateral talks with his Pakistani counterpart.

"I am going there for a certain job, a certain responsibility. And, I take my responsibilities seriously. So, I am going there to represent India at the SCO meeting, and that is what I am going to do," Jaishankar said.

Police save Rs 1 cr in 24 hrs

Mumbai: More than Rs 1 crore was saved in the last 24 hours due to action by the Mumbai police against online fraudsters after its 1930 cyber helpline received timely alerts, an officer said on Sunday.



Thanks to the helpline, police teams intervened in multiple online fraud cases, including that of a "digital arrest" and prevented victims from losing Rs 1,01,58,727 in the last 24 hours, he said.

In 2024 so far, the amount saved from the clutches of cyber fraudsters stands at Rs 114 crore, the officer informed.



We name our daughters Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati; we worship the divine feminine power in the temples but oppress, repress and even attack the feminine power amidst us. That is the irony in the way India sees its women.

After the safety of the daylight fades, women are seen as easy prey by the predators of the night.

We mark the nine nights of Navratri, the festival of the goddess, by celebrating the dedication and valour of nine real-life women who brave the challenges of the night to pursue their dreams.

PART - 5

Flying High

THE PILOT SAYS STAY DETERMINED AND LET YOUR WORK PROVE YOUR CALIBRE

By Ruddhi Phadke

She's in the air at any time of the day or night. It could be at 6 AM or even 11 PM. As a captain, her security is assured but before she got her pilot's license, Ankit Dhanavade, 35, worked as a ground staff member. Back then, the 4 AM reporting time at the airport seemed daunting as Dhanavade travelled to the airport on her scooter. "I have had my uncomfortably scary moments every day. Forget humans, even dogs have chased me. Considering the rising number of crimes against women, I always carried a paper cutter with me," she says.

Her training made her feel secure. "It covered self-defence, patiently dealing with passengers, dealing with unruly behaviour and emergencies. We were completely trained for all types of situations from terror attack to emergency landing to dealing with misbehaviour," she says.

Challenges are not just external. Women, she says, face challenges even in their own home. As a 16-year-old, when Dhanavade told her family that she wanted to be a pilot, her choice met with resistance. "The very first reaction from my parents and grandparents was, who will marry you? Being a pilot implies travelling and not being at home for days together. I was denied permission. However, I was very sure. I did not budge. I revolted," she says.



CAPTAIN ANKITA DHANAVADE, 35, pilot, Indigo Airlines

about big crimes but every single day, there are several reactions that hamper the self-confidence of a woman. People ridiculed my parents' decision to spend on pilot training for a woman. I chose to not react, ignore and avoid all of those people," she says.

Considering the rising number of crimes against women, I always carried a paper cutter with me while travelling on my own.

She needed to work so Dhanavade worked as a cabin crew member for one year in Jet Airways and then joined Indigo Airlines as ground staff member where she worked for three years. In 2017, she secured a job as a pilot in Indigo Airlines. Late nights are part of her work profile but her safety is taken care of. "Being a pilot, I am very much secured. Security guards, pick up and drop is very much sorted for pilots. However, I felt extremely

unsafe when I worked as a ground staff," she says. Despite people's speculation and her family's concern about how marriageable a woman pilot is, Dhanavade is set to tie the knot in a month from now. But not before facing uncomfortable and chauvinistic questions. "I met many boys through this arranged marriage process. All of them rejected me because I was a pilot. I came across horrible reactions. The most common questions asked were, 'do you cook?' and 'How will you keep yourself available for home,'" she says.

Times are changing but stereotypes aren't easy to crack as Dhanavade has experienced. "Cooking is just one of the routine home chores which even a man should be able to manage. Rather than being worried about cooking, people must ask if the girl has trained herself in self-defence. That is the need of the hour," she says.

Her word of advice to women is—learn self-defence techniques. "Stop relying on others for protection. Women must pull up their socks, stay undeterred, chase their dreams, stay determined and find their own ways to protect themselves," she says.

Youth spreads voting awareness in US through Rangoli

A MUMBAIKAR CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF AMERICANS WITH HIS SKILLS AS A RANGOLI ARTIST

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Doing an awesome job, Mumbai-based Rangoli artist Jayant Sawant drew big portraits of two rival candidates fighting in the US elections. Donald Trump of the Republican Party and Kamala Harris of the Democratic Party, through the traditional art of Rangoli. Significantly, it took three days for Jayant to draw the Rangoli, which became an instant hit with the people visiting the event. The artwork, which created awareness about voting, became the talking point of the event.

D Tribals Foundation, an NGO in the USA, recently organised an 'International Swadeshi Mela,' an Indian

American Trade Fair, at Naperville city in the state of Illinois in the USA. On this occasion, Mumbai-based Rangoli artist Jayant Sawant drew big portraits of two rival candidates fighting in the US elections. Several prominent personalities from Illinois, including Democratic Congressman Bill Foster, visited the Rangoli and applauded Jayant's artistry.

Jayant, a Kandivali resident, was specially invited by the D Tribals Foundation to participate in the Swadeshi Mela event. "I had many themes on my mind for Rangoli. But keeping in mind the ongoing presidential elections in the US, I decided to zero in on that par-



Jayant Sawant

ticular theme as I was confident it would strike a chord with the Americans. My intuition proved right," he said.

The concept behind choosing the US presidential elections as a Rangoli theme was to create awareness about voting for the polls that will be held in November, he added further.

For someone like Jayant, who has not received formal

training of Rangoli, the USA event proved to be a one of its kind experience as he was overwhelmed by the spontaneous response of Americans to his efforts. "I honed my Rangoli skills only by watching other artists and emulating them. It was the first time I was drawing a Rangoli overseas. All the hard work I put in to draw the Rangoli was rewarded by American people's positive feedback. They appreciated my work and congratulated me. Many of them even sought to know more about the art of Rangoli," he pointed out.

Jayant has been a Rangoli artist for a decade now and has participated in several Rangoli exhibitions in Ma-

harashtra and other parts of the country. Although portrait Rangoli is his forte, he is also an expert in wall mural painting, stone painting, canvas painting, sculpture and tattooing. While Jayant continues to follow Rangoli as his passion, he undertakes government and private works for his other skills to make a living.

Arun Sao, the deputy chief minister of Chhattisgarh, also visited the event. Nag Jaiswal, a community leader in Naperville praised Jayant's work on X by saying, "Sand art of Middle Class Kamala and Businessman Trump. The artist from India spent 3 days to complete the art in Naperville, Illinois."



Status quo on interest rate likely

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank is unlikely to cut the benchmark interest rate in its forthcoming bi-monthly monetary policy review later in the week as retail inflation is still a cause of concern, and there is a possibility of the Middle East crisis deteriorating further, impacting crude oil and commodity prices, say experts.

Earlier this month, the government reconstituted the Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel - Monetary Policy Committee (MPC). The reconstituted panel, with three newly appointed external members, will commence its maiden meeting on Monday. MPC Chairman RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das will reveal the outcome of the three-day discussion on Wednesday (October 9).

The government has tasked the central bank to ensure that Consumer Price Index (CPI) based retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

In the current context, experts feel that the RBI may not follow the US Federal Reserve, which lowered the benchmark rates by 50 basis points, and the central banks of some developed



6.5
The unchanged repo rate

nations, which have reduced the interest rates.

"We do not expect any change in the repo rate or stance by MPC. The reason is that inflation for September and October will be above 5 per cent, and the present low inflation is due to the base effect. Besides, core inflation is inching upwards," said Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda.

Further, the recent Iran-Israel imbroglio can intensify, and there is uncertainty here, he said.

"Hence, the status quo is the most likely option even for new members. Inflation forecast may be lowered by 10-20 bps and no change in GDP forecast likely," said Sabnavis.

The central bank last hiked the repo rate to 6.5 per cent in February 2023 and since then, it has held the rate at the same level.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said that given the undershooting in the initial first quarter GDP growth relative to the MPC's forecast and the likely sizeable undershooting in the second quarter CPI inflation print as well, "we believe a stance change to neu-

tral may be appropriate in the October 2024 policy review".

This could be followed by a shallow rate-cutting cycle of 25 bps each in December 2024 and February 2025, she added.

The RBI kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent in its August bi-monthly review amid risks from higher food inflation.

This was the ninth consecutive MPC meeting, which decided to maintain the status quo on the rate front.

SBM Bank India Head Treasury Mandar Pitale believed that the MPC has persistently advocated a restrictive policy until inflation aligns durably towards the 4 per cent target.

"With the unfavourable base effect taking the next couple of CPI prints near 5 per cent plus or minus, it will pose a major challenge for MPC to start easing from the October meeting," Pitale said, adding that the MPC is also expected to deliberate upon the global factors like growth-inflation behaviour in developed economies.

The government has appointed Ram Singh, Saugata Bhattacharya, and Nagesh Kumar as external members of the MPC. They have replaced Ashima Goyal, Shashanka Bhide, and Jayanth R Varma. -PTI

Jewellery brands opt for franchise

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Indian jewellery retail brands are increasingly opting for franchisee models to expand their retail footprint, according to a report by a domestic brokerage house.

"Organized jewellers were earlier following the COCO (company owned company operated) operating model, and would open 10-15 stores annually; however, they are now increasingly adopting the franchise model FOFO (franchisee owned franchise operated) to expand in Tier III & IV centers and take advantage of strong demand there," said the Systematic Institutional Equities report quoting an industry expert.

The franchise model allows them to open more than twice as many stores compared to COCO, without taking on debt, the report said. The Indian jewellery market, worth USD 90 billion consisting of 90 per cent gold and 10 per cent diamonds, is experiencing a 12 per cent compounded annual growth with the organized sector now forming 20 per cent of the jewellery industry.

Factors like stock market volatility, wedding season, and economic stability have fueled gold demand and the margin differential between company owned and franchise models is around 4-6 per cent.

According to the management of Kalyan Jewellers, which has a successful track record in creating substantial demand for franchise stores both inventory and store capex are being done by the franchise partners in the second phase.

INVESTMENT MATTERS

Why buying high P/E ratio stocks is risky?



By Mangesh Kulkarni

The Indian stock markets have generated significant wealth for investors over the past 3-4 years. The Nifty50 index has seen a return of 48.5 per cent over this period. Similarly, the Nifty smallcap 100 and Nifty midcap 150 indices have shown impressive returns of 76.6 per cent and 96.8 per cent respectively during the same time frame. However, some individual stocks have underperformed the broader markets. The primary reason for this underperformance is often attributed to their high valuation.

To begin with, let's look at the Price to Earnings (P/E) ratio, which is a key valuation metric. This ratio provides insight into how much investors are paying for each dollar of a company's earnings, with higher ratios indicating a more expensive stock. Generally, stocks with a P/E ratio below 15 are considered value stocks, those between 15 and 25 are seen as fairly valued, and those above 25 are deemed expensive. Now, let's examine the stocks in the Nifty 500 index that have significantly fallen short of the index's performance over the last 3 years.

Out of around 500 stocks in Nifty500 index, about 25 have either seen no return or have returned very little. Prominent examples include Bata, Asian Paints, Metropolis, Star Health, Mphasis, SBI Cards, and Jubilant Foodworks, all



Stock	3 years return	P/E ratio (Sept 2021)
Asian Paints	0%	94.8
Metropolis	-19.3%	64.1
Mphasis	-4.4%	48.8
SBI Cards	-22.9%	106.2
Jubilant Foodworks	-15.4%	143.7

Source - Screener

of which had a P/E ratio above 25 in September 2021. This data suggests that investing in high P/E stocks can be a risky move, as these stocks often lag behind the overall market.

While the P/E ratio shouldn't be the sole consideration for investment, it's undeniably a crucial one. Investors should also look at other

financial ratios such as Return on Equity (ROE), Return on Capital Employed (RoCE), and Debt to Equity (D/E) ratio in conjunction with the P/E ratio. Stocks that show consistent profit growth, a healthy ROE, low debt, and a reasonable P/E ratio are more likely to generate above-average returns in the stock market.

Bhavish Agarwal, Kunal Kamra spar over service quality

New Delhi: A war of words broke out between Ola founder Bhavish Agarwal and stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra on Sunday on social media platform X

over the after sales and service quality of the company's electric scooters.

It started when Kamra responded to a post on X by Agarwal, who posted a pho-

to of Ola's gigafactory, by putting a picture of several Ola Electric scooters parked together seemingly waiting for servicing. -PTI

SBI plans to increase headcount

New Delhi: The country's biggest lender State Bank of India (SBI) intends to recruit about 10,000 new employees during the current financial year to meet its general banking requirement and foster its technical prowess.

The bank has invested significantly in technology to provide seamless customer service as well as to strengthen the resilience of its digital channels.

"We are strengthening our workforce, both on the technology side as well as on the general banking side. We have recently announced around 1,500 technology people recruitment both at the entry level and slightly at the higher level."

2,32,296
Total staff strength of SBI

22,542
No of SBI branches across the country as of March 2024

65,000
No of SBI ATMs

85,000
No of SBI business correspondents

50 crore
No of SBI customers



A man sailing a small boat plucks lotus flowers from a water body for sale in a wholesale market during the festive season at Bahiri in Birbhum district, West Bengal on Sunday. Pic: PTI

Kunal Kamra



Do Indian consumers have a voice? Do they deserve this? Two wheelers are many daily wage workers lifeline.

Is this how Indians will get to using EV's? Anyone who has an issue with OLA electric leave your story below tagging all.

Give a total refund to anyone who wants to return their OLA EV & who's purchased it in the last four months. People not being able to get to their workplace need your accountability. Show your customers that you truly care.

Bhavish Agarwal



Since you care so much come and help us out! I'll even pay more than you earned for this paid tweet or from your failed comedy career. Or else sit quiet and let us focus on fixing the issues for the real customers.

Chot lagi? Dard hua? Aaja service center. Bahut kaam Hai. I will pay better than your flop shows pay.

We have enough programs for our customers if they face service delays. If you were a genuine one, you would have known.

Hotel rooms to see robust demand

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Hotel rooms in Mumbai are expected to see robust demand for the remaining month of the current financial year due to strong wedding business and release of pent-up demand impacted by the elections and weather disruptions in the preceding quarter, said a report by a domestic brokerage house.

Rates have started rising back to near high single digits and early double digits post the muted perfor-

mance in the first quarter (Apr-Jun) as demand continues to remain strong, said the report by Antique Stock Broking.

During the previous financial year, the hotel industry witnessed a rate growth of 20 per cent for large hotel chains such as IHCL, Marriott, and EIH in India, and the momentum is expected to remain solid on the rates front in 2024-25 as well.

According to rating agency - CareEdge - the Indian hospitality sector is

currently experiencing an upcycle, driven by favourable demographics, robust domestic demand (with supply clearly lagging behind demand growth), increased investments, and ongoing improvements in infrastructure and connectivity.

Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) registered a strong growth of 14 per cent during 2023-24 and for 2024-25 and is expected to grow by approximately 8-9 per cent, building on the high base of the previous

year.

India currently has around 166,000 branded hotel rooms/keys and over the next five years, the industry is expected to add approximately 55,000 rooms, with supply registering a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 4.5-5.5% during this period.

The segment mix is shifting towards Upper Mid-scale and Midscale Economy, with over 60 percent of new supply expected to be added in these segments. This growth is driven by



several factors, including a growing middle class, a significant uptick in business travel (especially from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)), and an expanding scope of business activities into Tier 2, Tier 3, and Tier 4 cities, the

rating agency said.

Over the past five years, India's travel and tourism sector has contributed approximately 5 per cent to the country's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with still relatively low penetration.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If you look at cloud services as a segment, India is one of the fastest-growing countries for Google. We are working with multiple stakeholders who are essentially using Google Cloud services and then over a period of time, this usage has been incrementally growing."



Bikram Singh Bedi, Vice President, Google Cloud India

Nature's Fury Takes High Toll



Women wade through floodwaters in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand on Sunday.



Residents of the waterlogged Kendriya Vihar Apartments are seen after heavy rainfall in Bengaluru.

L&T eyes role in NASA's successor to International Space Station

New Delhi: After powering ISRO's space missions for more than five decades, India's largest engineering firm Larsen and Toubro has now set its eyes on the international market, particularly the next International Space Station.

L&T was earlier in talks with Jeff Bezo's Blue Origin for supplying orbital launch capabilities and space habitat solutions but the negotiations ran into some difficulties.

"Some remnants of that dis-

ussion continue till today but now with NASA. So, we are also hopeful that when the US requires its next space station, Indian firms will have a role to play in the supply chain," Vikas Khita, Vice President, L&T Precision Engineering and Systems, told PTI.

Khita, who was speaking on the sidelines of an industry meet organised by Geospatial World, said the firm was also interested in building space ports, space parks and manufacturing clus-



ters, areas which are expected to get a boost considering the government's opening up of the space sector for private participation in 2020.

"In commercial terms, we are

India is set to play a significant role in the future space economy, aiming to capture about eight per cent of the global market by 2033. The global space industry is projected to be worth around USD 1.8 trillion by 2035.

India's space economy is also expected to grow from its current value of around USD 8.4 billion to USD 44 billion by 2033.

looking at a fivefold increase in turnover by 2033 of the space economy and a large part of this increase is to come from the upstream and the downstream sectors," he said.

L&T has been involved in the production of a range of hardware for every project of ISRO, including the Chandrayaan, Gaganyaan, and Mars Orbiter missions.

The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited-L&T consortium is also producing five Polar Satellite Launch Vehicles (PSLV), marking the industry's maiden foray in building rockets for the space agency.

The engineering firm is also learnt to have evinced interest in the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV), as ISRO is all set to transfer technology of the newly developed rocket to the private industry.

-PTI

Two foreign mountaineers rescued

Gopeshwar: Two foreign women mountaineers, who were stranded at a height of 6,015 metres on way to the Chaukhamba III peak in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, were rescued on Sunday morning.

The mountaineers - Michelle Theresa Dvorak from the USA and Fav Jane Manners from the United Kingdom - were stranded since October 3. Two IAF helicopters began a search operation to trace them on Friday. They were joined by mountaineering trained State Disaster Response Force personnel on Saturday to assist in the operations.

UP villagers kill sixth wolf

Bahraich (UP): The last one of the pack of six wolves that had created terror in Mahsi tehsil has been killed by the locals in Tamachpur village of this district, officials on Sunday said.

The wolf killed late Saturday night under the Ramgaon police station area is a female and not lame as suspected earlier, they said.

The wolf's body has been sent for post-mortem, the officials said.

"Late Saturday night we got information that people

had killed a wolf in Tamachpur village under Ramgaon police station of Mahsi tehsil. When we reached there, we found the dead wolf and the bodies of a goat. There were injury marks on the wolf's body and it was bleeding," Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Ajit Pratap Singh told PTI.

"On closer inspection, we found that the dead wolf was an adult female. When we inquired, we found out that the wolf had entered the inhabited area and was carrying away a goat.



Tourists play with snow after the higher reaches of Gulmarg received season's first snowfall at Apharwat on Sunday.

Pic: PTI

10 die in Meghalaya flash floods

Shillong: At least 10 people died, including seven of a family, in rain-induced flashfloods that ravaged Meghalaya's South Garo Hills district in the past 24 hours, officials said.

Incessant rainfall has triggered landslides in Gasapara region of the district, they said on Saturday. The family of seven were

inside their home in the remote village of Hatiasia Songma when a landslide struck on Saturday, a senior official said.

The deceased include three minors. Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma held a review meeting on the situation across the five districts of Garo Hills.

He expressed deep sor-

row over the loss of lives, as three persons from Dalu and seven people from Hatiasia Songma were confirmed dead.

Personnel of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and SDRF have been deployed to carry out search and rescue operations in the worst-affected areas, they said.

Six children drown while bathing

Sasaram (Bihar): Six children drowned while bathing in Sone river in Bihar's Rohtas district on Sunday, officials said.

One child was missing while another was rescued by the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF).

"The incident took place in Tumba village when eight children were taking a bath in Sone river in the morning. According to villagers, the children slipped into deep waters," Rohtas District Magistrate Udit Singh told PTI.

"Police officials along with SDRF personnel launched a search operation. The SDRF personnel fished out six bodies and one child was still missing. One child was rescued and taken to a nearby hospital and he is out of danger," Singh added.

Search operation is underway to trace the missing child, she said.

"All children were in the age group of 10-12 years. We are trying to ascertain the identity of the deceased. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem examination," the official added.

Climate change hits Kashmir's apple crop

Srinagar: The Kashmir valley's apple production has witnessed a significant decline this year, primarily due to unprecedented weather patterns and reduced precipitation. The impact is substantial, with the Kashmir Fruit Growers and Dealers Union reporting a stark 30 to 40 per cent reduction in apple production across the region.

Beyond the quantitative decline, farmers are grappling with a noticeable deterioration in fruit quality, further compounding their concerns.

"The situation is dire," said Bashir Ahmad Bashir, President of Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers and Dealers Association. "We have seen production plummet by at least 30 per cent for the second consecutive year. The erratic weather patterns have completely disrupted our traditional growing season."

The changing climate has manifested in various ways throughout the growing season.

March brought unusu-

ally dry conditions with high temperatures, followed by an unexpectedly wet and cool April.

A prolonged dry spell then set in, severely impacting fruit development during crucial growth stages.

Local farmers, who once viewed climate change with scepticism, now find themselves at the forefront of its effects.

The decline in both quantity and quality has sent shockwaves through Jammu and Kashmir's agricultural economy.

The apple industry, which employs thousands of families and contributes significantly to the region's economy, faces unprecedented challenges.

Orchards that once produced premium-grade apples are now yielding fruit that barely meets market standards.

The combination of rising temperatures, irregular precipitation, and extreme weather events poses a fundamental threat to Kashmir's apple-growing tradition.

Death toll from Hurricane Helene rises to 227

Helene is the deadliest hurricane to hit the mainland US since Katrina in 2005

By Bruce Schreiner

Frankfort (US): The death toll from Hurricane Helene inched up to 227 on Saturday as the grim task of recovering bodies continued more than a week after the monster storm ravaged the Southeast and killed people in six US states.

Helene came ashore on September 26 as a Category-4 hurricane and carved a wide swath of destruction as it moved northward from Florida, washing away homes, destroying roads and knocking out electricity and cellphone service for millions.

The number of deaths stood

at 225 on Friday; two more were recorded in South Carolina the following day. It was still unclear how many people were unaccounted for or missing, and the toll could rise even higher.

Helene is the deadliest hurricane to hit the mainland US since Katrina in 2005. About half the victims were in North Carolina, while dozens more were killed in Georgia and South Carolina.

The city of Asheville, in the western mountains of North Carolina, was particularly battered. A week later, workers used brooms and heavy machinery to clean mud and dirt outside of New Belgium Brewing



Company, which lies next to the French Broad river and is among thousands of city businesses and households affected.

So far, North Carolinians have received more than USD

27 million in individual assistance approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said MaryAnn Tierney, a regional administrator for the agency. More than 83,000 people have registered

for individual assistance, according to the office of Governor Roy Cooper.

In Buncombe County, where Asheville is located, FEMA-approved assistance has surpassed USD 12 million for survi-

vors, Tierney said on Saturday during a news briefing.

"This is critical assistance that will help people with their immediate needs, as well as displacement assistance that helps them if they cannot stay in their homes," she said.

She encouraged residents impacted by the storm to register for disaster assistance.

"It is the first step in the recovery process," she said. "We can provide immediate relief in terms of serious needs assistance to replace food, water, medicines, other life safety, critical items, as well as displacement assistance if you cannot stay in your home."

The country music star has announced a USD 1 million donation to the Mountain Ways Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to providing immediate assistance to Hurricane Helene flood victims.

In addition, her East Tennessee businesses as well as the Dollywood Foundation are combining efforts, pledging to match her donation to Mountain Ways with a USD 1 million contribution.

Parton said she feels a close connection to the storm victims because so many of them "grew up in the mountains just like I did".

-AP

Strike on mosque kills 19 as Israel bombs northern Gaza, southern Beirut



A man bangs a drum during a march as pro-Palestinian supporters rally in Sydney on Sunday.



Flames and smoke rise from an Israeli airstrike in Dahiyeh, Beirut, Lebanon on early Sunday.

Pics: AP/PTI

Deir Al-Balah: An Israeli strike on a mosque in the Gaza Strip early Sunday killed at least 19 people, Palestinian officials said, as Israel intensified its bombardment of northern Gaza and southern Beirut in a widening war with Iran-allied militant groups across the region.

Displaced people were sheltering at the mosque that was struck near the main hospital in the central town of Deir al-Balah. A further four people were killed in a strike on a school sheltering displaced people near the town.

The Israeli military said both strikes targeted militants, without providing evidence.

An Associated Press journalist counted the bod-

ies at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital morgue. Hospital records showed that the dead from the strike on the mosque were all men.

Israel is still battling Hamas in Gaza a year after the group's attack on Israel, and has opened a new front in Lebanon against Hezbollah, which has been trading fire with Israel along the border since the war in Gaza began. Israel has also vowed to strike Iran itself after Tehran launched a ballistic missile attack on Israel last week.

The widening conflict risks drawing in the United States, which has provided crucial military and diplomatic support to Israel, as well as US-allied Arab countries that host American forces. Iran-allied mili-

tant groups in Syria, Iraq and Yemen have already joined in with long-distance strikes on Israel.

Israeli forces return to Jabaliya

The Israeli military, meanwhile, announced a new air and ground offensive in Jabaliya, in northern Gaza, home to a densely populated refugee camp dating back to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation. It circulated photos and video footage showing a column of tanks heading toward the area.

Israeli forces encircled Jabaliya as warplanes struck militant sites inside, the military said. Over the course of the war, Israel has carried out several large operations there, only

to see militants regroup.

Israel reiterated its call, from the opening weeks of the war, for the complete evacuation of northern Gaza. Up to 300,000 people are estimated to have remained in the heavily destroyed north after earlier Israeli warnings that sent around a million fleeing to the south.

"We are in a new phase of the war," the military said in leaflets dropped over the area. "These areas are considered dangerous combat zones."

Palestinian residents reported heavy Israeli strikes across northern Gaza. The Civil Defence — first responders who operate under the Hamas-run government — said several homes and buildings had been hit

Macron responds to Netanyahu's accusations

French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday reiterated his call for a partial arms embargo on Israel — a demand that prompted an angry response from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In a written statement, Macron's office said he favours a halt to arms exports for use in Gaza because a ceasefire is needed "to stop the mounting violence, free the hostages, protect civilians and clear the way to the political solutions needed for the security of Israel and the whole Middle East."

Macron's earlier similar remarks led Netanyahu to release a video statement in which he called out the French president by name and referred to such calls as a "disgrace."

Macron's office insisted that "France is Israel's unflinching friend" and called Netanyahu's remarks "excessive."

and they were not able to reach them because of the bombardment.

Residents posted about

the airstrikes and mourned their relatives on social media. Imad Alarabid said in a Facebook post that an

Heavy bombardment of southern Beirut

In Beirut, airstrikes lit up the skyline and loud explosions echoed across the southern suburbs, known as the Dahiyeh, throughout the night, as Israel struck what it said were Hezbollah militant sites.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said the area was hit by more than 30 strikes overnight, the heaviest bombardment since September 23 when Israel escalated its air campaign.

The targets included a gas station on the main highway leading to the Beirut airport and a warehouse for medical supplies, the agency said. Some of the overnight strikes set off a long series of explosions, suggesting that ammunition stores may have been hit.

Israel's military confirmed it was striking targets near Beirut and said about 30 projectiles had crossed from Lebanon into Israeli territory, with some intercepted.

Hezbollah said it successfully targeted a group of Israeli soldiers in northern Israel "with a large rocket salvo, hitting them accurately." It was not possible to confirm the claim.

At least 1,400 Lebanese, including civilians, medics and Hezbollah fighters, have been killed and 1.2 million driven from their homes in less than two weeks. Israel says it aims to drive the militant group away from its border so that tens of thousands of Israeli citizens can return to their homes.

Iranian-backed Hezbollah, the strongest armed force in Lebanon, began firing rockets into Israel almost immediately after Hamas' October 7 attack, calling it a show of support for the Palestinians. Hezbollah and Israel's military have traded fire almost daily.

Last week, Israel launched what it said was a limited ground operation into southern Lebanon after a series of attacks killed longtime Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and most of his top commanders. The fighting is the worst since Israel and Hezbollah fought a monthlong war in 2006. Nine Israeli soldiers have been killed in ground clashes that Israel says have killed 440 Hezbollah fighters.

Elaiha, a Health Ministry medic, said he was wounded and bleeding. -AP

Imran's party vows to continue protest

By Sajjad Hussain

Islamabad: The situation remained tense in Pakistan's capital on Sunday as jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party vowed to continue its protest against the government, a day after violent clashes between security forces and his supporters that left one policeman dead and several others injured.

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) party, in an overnight meeting, decided that the demonstration would go on until the release of Khan, who has been in jail since August last year.

The situation in Islamabad and neighbouring Rawalpindi, which witnessed the violent clashes on Saturday remained tense. However, there were no reports of violence in



the twin cities on Sunday, indicating that the situation was improving gradually.

The mobile phone services have also been restored in the two cities which had been suspended on Friday.

The political committee of PTI decided that if Gandapur was arrested, senior party leader Azam Swati would lead the protest. If Swati is arrested, a new

leader will be chosen to take command, according to the Dawn newspaper.

The political committee also criticised the disappearance of Gandapur. The committee warned that there would be 'serious repercussions' if he was arrested.

Former National Assembly speaker and senior PTI leader Asad Qaiser told the Dawn newspaper that PTI's political committee decided to continue the protest as long as it gets a clear directive from Khan to end the protest.

"It was also decided that Azam Swati will lead the protest if Gandapur is arrested." -PTI

Pope names 21 new cardinals

Rome: Pope Francis named 21 new cardinals Sunday, significantly increasing the size of the College of Cardinals and further cementing his mark on the group of prelates who will one day elect his successor.

They include a man who will be the oldest cardinal — Monsignor Angelo Acerbi, a 99-year-old retired Vatican diplomat who was once held hostage for six weeks in Colombia by leftist guerrillas — and the youngest — the 44-year-old head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Melbourne, Australia, Bishop Mykola Bychok, named in a nod to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The new cardinals will get their red hats at a ceremony, known as a consistory, on Dec. 8, an important feast day on its own that officially kicks off the Christmas season in Rome. It will be Francis' 10th consistory to create new princes of the church and the biggest infusion of voting-age cardinals into the college in Francis' 11-year pontificate. Acerbi is the only one of the new intake who is over 80.



Italian Police and demonstrators clash during a march in support of Palestinians in Rome on Saturday.

Pic: AP/PTI

N Korea, China mark 75th anniversary of ties

Seoul: The leaders of North Korea and China marked the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relations on Sunday by exchanging messages that expressed hopes for stronger ties, as outsiders raised questions about their relationship.

The message exchange came as North Korea and Russia have been sharply expanding their coopera-

tion while China apparently keeps its distance. Experts say that the level of exchanges and commemorative programs between North Korea and China in the coming months will provide a clue to the exact status of their ties.

Since North Korea and China established diplomatic ties on Oct. 6, 1949, their relationship has often

been described as being "as close as lips and teeth."

China, North Korea's biggest trading partner and main aid provider, has been suspected of avoiding fully implementing U.N. sanctions on North Korea and sending clandestine aid shipments to help its impoverished neighbor stay afloat and continue to serve as a bulwark against U.S. influ-

ence on the Korean Peninsula.

But many observers say China is reluctant to form a three-way, anti-West alliance with North Korea and Russia as it prefers a stable regional security environment to tackle numerous economic challenges and maintain relationships with Europe and its Asian neighbours. -AP

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Kamala Harris is a radical-left Marxist. She is a woman that is not respected in Congress. She was laughed at Congress. Nobody thought she could win. They did a coup of Biden. Whether you like him or not, I am not a particularly big fan."

Donald Trump, Former President, US



Musk accompanies Trump at rally

By Lalit K Jha

Washington: Former US president Donald Trump on Saturday returned to Butler, a city in Pennsylvania where he narrowly escaped an assassination bid 12 weeks ago, and addressed thousands of his supporters in this key battleground state, urging them to elect him as the next president of the United States.

Joined by high-profile figures like Tesla owner Elon Musk and his run-

ning mate, Senator J D Vance, Trump (78) made a passionate plea to "defeat" Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic candidate in the November 5 presidential poll.

"We must stop her country-destroying regime, radical-left agenda once and for all. We cannot have it happen. So you must get out and you must vote," Trump said in Pennsylvania, which in this election cycle has emerged as a must-win situation for both candidates.

Trump launched a scathing attack on Harris and accused her of being a failure on multiple fronts, including border security and economy. "She imposed a natural gas export ban on Pennsylvania, which is killing your energy workers and your pricing," he said.

The former president said if elected, on the first day of his presidency, he would seal the border and stop the migrant invasion into the country. "We will begin the largest deporta-

tion operation in the history of the United States," he said, adding that 2024 is the most important election in the history of the country.

In his brief speech, Musk said this is a must-win situation for the country.

"President Trump must win to preserve the Constitution. He must win to preserve democracy in America. This is a must-win situation. So I have one ask for everyone in the audience, everyone who watch-

He (Biden) got 14 million (1.4 crore) votes. If you believe in democracy or a system, he got 14 million votes. And she (Harris) got none. She was the first one out, 22 candidates, and she never made it to Iowa. She quit before Iowa, and now she is running. And that is okay. But, you know, we spent USD 150 million beating Biden, and as soon as he was down and out for the count, they said, let us take him out. We will give somebody else to run. Never happened before.

Donald Trump

es this video, everyone in the livestream. This one request is very important. Register to vote. And get everyone you know and everyone you do not know, drag them to register to vote.... Then make sure they actually do vote. If they do not, this will be the last election. That is my prediction," he said. -PTI



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KALEIDOSCOPE

1. A woman performs 'garba' during 'Navratri' festival celebrations in Jaipur on Saturday night.
2. BJP MP and actor Manoj Tiwari, playing the role of 'Parshuram', performs during the 'Ramliila' organised by Lavkush Ramliila Committee at Red Fort ground on Saturday night.
3. Fishermen hold 'Kambavala' fishing net, at the Vizhinjam coast in Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday.
4. Indian Air Force's (IAF) aerobatics team 'Surya Kiran' performs during an air show as part of the 92nd anniversary celebrations of IAF at Marina Beach in Chennai on Sunday.
5. A devotee lights a lamp during the 'Lakh Deepam dedication' event organised as part of Navratri celebrations, at Puthiyakavu Shree Bhagavathy Temple in Kozhikode on Sunday.

All Pictures PTI, AP



5

READERS' CHOICE

The 99-Year Journey: RSS's Contribution to India's Rise as a Global Leader



By
Shreyas Pannase

Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar's vision was influenced by the idea of Hindu Rashtra, a nation that draws its strength from its cultural and civilisational heritage, rooted in Hindu philosophy and culture. The organisation sought to instill a sense of pride in this heritage while addressing social issues such as caste discrimination and untouchability.

In its early years, the RSS focused on building a disciplined cadre of Swayamsevaks to serve the nation. The daily routine of the Swayamsevaks included physical exercises, group discussions on history and culture, and various forms of social service. The RSS, while aligned with the broader goal of freeing India from British rule, maintained a distance

Freedom Struggle

During the Indian freedom struggle, the RSS, while aligned with the broader goal of freeing India from British rule, maintained a distance

The RSS has grown into one of the world's largest voluntary organisations. In this first of a two-part series, we will examine the RSS's origins, ideological foundations, and evolution up to 1980.

from the Indian National Congress and other political movements. The RSS believed that the focus on political independence was overshadowing the need for social and cultural unity. The RSS was wary of the Congress's policies of appeasement towards the Muslim League and its emphasis on non-violence, which the RSS saw as impractical in the face of British repression.

Despite these differences, the RSS was not completely disengaged from the freedom movement. Many RSS members, including Dr. Hedgewar himself, participated in various nationalist activities. However, the RSS's primary focus during this period remained on character-building and social unity, believing that these would be crucial for India's long-term strength and stability.

Response to Partition

After India's independence in 1947, the country faced deep divisions along religious and caste lines, with the partition leading to widespread violence and displacement. In response, the RSS saw its mission of promoting social unity and national integration as more critical than ever. It set up camps for refugees, providing food, medical aid, and assistance in resettling displaced families, particularly in Punjab and Delhi. In the aftermath of partition, the RSS intensified its efforts to foster Hindu unity and nationalism, playing a significant role in aiding communities affected by the communal violence.

Rebuilding of India

Following independence, the RSS focused on nation-building through grassroots efforts, believing India's strength and prosperity depended on active citizen participation in social and cultural renewal. They established a network of affiliate organisations, the Sangh Parivar, which worked in education, rural development, health, and economic self-reliance.

In 1951, under the leadership of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, the RSS established the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), the political wing of the

RSS that aimed to provide a nationalist alternative to the Congress Party. Although the BJS remained a relatively small party during its early years, it laid the foundation for the eventual rise of the BJP, which would later become the dominant political force in India.

Cultural Initiatives

The RSS placed a strong emphasis on education as a means of fostering national consciousness and cultural pride. In 1952, the Vidyarthi Parishad (now known as the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, or ABVP) was established as the student wing of the RSS. The ABVP aimed to promote national values among students and provide an alternative to leftist ideologies that were prevalent in many Indian universities. In addition to the ABVP, the RSS also established the Vidya Bharati network of schools, which sought to provide an education rooted in Indian culture and values.

Role in Defending Democracy

A defining moment in the history of the RSS was the Emergency (1975-1977) when then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi suspended civil liberties while the government clamped down on political opposition, censoring the press, and imprisoning thousands of activists and leaders.

The RSS, along with other opposition groups, resisted the Emergency and defended democratic rights. RSS Swayamsevaks were at the forefront of the JP Movement, led by Jayaprakash Narayan, which called for the restoration of democracy and civil liberties. RSS members were arrested and imprisoned, but the organisation continued its activities underground, helping to mobilise public opinion against the government's authoritarian measures.

The RSS's role in defending democratic values earned it widespread respect and legitimacy, even among sections of the population that had previously been critical of it.

(The writer is a fellow with Vishwa Samvad Kendra in Mumbai. Views personal.)

FILMS AND ME

SECTOR 36 – Could Have Been Stronger



By
Shoma A. Chatterji

Aditya Nimbalkar makes his directorial debut with a very challenging subject. Sector 36 is sandwiched somewhere between a psychological thriller and a police thriller. The challenge is further sharpened by the fact that the film is an adaptation of the brutal Nithari killings in Noida in 2005 when 36 small children from a neighbouring slum were lured to the house of a businessman and he, along with his sociopath servant, would not only slaughter the kids to death but would also cook them on a specially made oven and eat their flesh. The tragic outcome of the final verdict in the case was that both the rich businessman and his servant were acquitted of all the crimes for lack of proper evidence! Or was it because the kids came from the slums from families who lived below the poverty line and had no clue how to get the killers sentenced for life or to death? No one knows and now, no one ever will.

The local police inspector Ram Charan Pandey (Deepak Dobriyal) takes charge of the investigation, not really interested in trying to catch the killer/s because, like his colleagues in the force – is disinterested and interested only in commanding his juniors to remind them who is boss. The film does not acquire the definition of a police thriller till we are half-way through the killings of slum kids who go missing and never come back. But he pulls up his socks when, during a Ram Leela jatra in the locality where he is perhaps portraying Ravana, he witnesses his little daughter being carried away by a masked man. Pandey gives hot chase but the killer



runs free. Later, the kid is rescued and brought to her mother.

Prem (Vikrant Massey) is a servant at the home of Balbir Bassi (Akash Khurana), a rich businessman with shady deals and powerful enough to wrap DCP Rastogi (Darshan Jariwalla) round his fat little finger. Prem is a psychopath who is full of so much confidence that he quite plainly narrates his entire series of killings of small children, chopping their bodies, allowing the blood to flow and then, reports that he cooked and consumed them as his abusive uncle had taught him the taste of human flesh enough for him to get addicted.

The psychological tensions come across in scenes of the killings followed by suggestions that Prem is cooking and consuming them, gruesome enough for the lay viewer to take this for a horror film with so much blood, so many pictures of missing children stuck on the walls of the slum, the policeman cringing while crushing a cockroach with his shoe but doing it nevertheless and finally, building up everything to lead to a sad and unexpected anti-climax.

Sector 36 disproves the theory that the whole is more than the sum of its parts because in this film, with an ending that does not justify the build-up is quite disappointing.

Vikrant Massey's nonchalant approach to his killings, his kidnapping of the slum kids with chocolates, defines him as the most cold-blooded and pathological serial killer one has seen in recent times. But the tragic back story of the sexual abuse by an uncle weakens his villainy. The young sex worker who is killed and buried in some garden is another bright spot in all that blood and gore.

Deepak Dobriyal, underutilised, is understated and evolving from beginning to end till he goes missing. Akash Khurana and Darshan Jariwalla are as good as they always are. The editing is sharp, jet-paced and the cinematography captures the narrow bylanes of Delhi, the Ram Leela performance-to-be and the spacious interiors of Bassi's palatial home standing in contrast to the place where Prem does his killings offers a good contrast but also adds to the confusion about the location where the heinous crimes are actually committed. The music is quite effective but it was not really needed.

Sector 36 is a sharp, well-etched, character-driven story where the police thriller and the psychological thriller come together to make for an unhappy marriage.

(The writer is a veteran journalist based in Kolkata. Views personal.)

Sachin joins NCL ownership group

By Seema Hakhu Kachru
and Lalit K Jha

Washington/Texas: Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar has joined America's National Cricket League (NCL) ownership group, a move that is expected to give a big boost to the sport in the United States in the coming years.

"Cricket has been my life's greatest journey and I am pleased to join the National Cricket League at such an exciting time for the sport in the US," Tendulkar said after the NCL announced that the batting legend has joined them.

"The NCL's vision to create a platform for world-class cricket while inspiring a new generation of fans to resonate with me. I look forward to being part of this new initiative and witnessing the growth of cricket in the US first hand," Tendulkar said.

The NCL tournament

This season, the NCL brings together cricket legends like Sunil Gavaskar, Zaheer Abbas, Wasim Akram, Dilip Vengsarkar, Sir Vivian Richards, Venkatesh Prasad, Sanath Jayasuriya, Moin Khan and Blair Franklin. The cricketing heroes will mentor and coach the next generation of players.



opens with a performance by singer Mika Singh and features themed nights, bringing a Coachella-like energy, a media release said.

It will also feature top-tier players from around the world, including Shahid Afridi, Suresh Raina, Dinesh Karthik, Shakib Al Hasan, Robin Uthappa, Tabraiz Shamsi, Chris Lynn, Angelo Mathews, Colin Munro, Sam Billings, Mohammad Nabi and Johnson Charles.

"We are incredibly excited to welcome Sachin Tendulkar to the National Cricket League family," said Arun Agarwal, chairman of the NCL.

Tendulkar will present the championship trophy to the winning team at the NCL's inaugural tournament, marking a historic moment for the sport's rise in the United States, the



media release said.

"His influence in cricket is comparable to what Pele does in soccer or Babe Ruth in baseball. Sachin's commitment to the game, along with his global appeal, will be key as we introduce cricket to new audiences in America. His involvement highlights the NCL's goal to inspire future generations and establish cricket as a major sport in the US,"

Agarwal said.

NCL said while sports legends like Michael Jordan elevated basketball to global heights and Brady carved out a dynasty in football, Tendulkar's influence reached beyond cricket fields, inspiring billions across the world. His presence changes the sport itself, much like how Muhammad Ali became an ambassador of boxing or how Tiger Woods revolutionised golf. Tendulkar was not just a player -- he was the face of cricket's rise into a worldwide phenomenon, his mastery of the game making him a household name far beyond cricket-loving nations.

Headquartered in Dallas, the NCL has introduced an innovative Sixty Strikes format, a fast-paced version of the game.

-PTI

Indian women bag silver in Rugby

Mumbai: Indian women's rugby team clinched a silver after going down to Philippines 5-7 in the final of the Asia Rugby Emirates Sevens Trophy in Kathmandu.

The Shikha Yadav-led side reached the summit clash after thrashing Guam 24-7 in the semifinal to top the table.

In the league round, India had stamped their authority, outclassing Sri Lanka 29-10 and Indonesia 17-10. The tournament was held over Friday and Saturday.

Expressing pride in the team's silver medal performance, Indian skipper Shikha said they would strive for gold in future competitions, while also thanking their coach Waisale Serevi and the support staff.

"Winning the silver again is special, but the team is eager to continue the work that each player has been putting in, to convert the colour of this medal to gold," Shikha said in a release.

"Personally, I am extremely proud of the way the team has played against formidable sides and has showcased great character at a stage as big as this.

"This is the most important event of the year for the team and we will come home knowing that we gave it our absolute best. We

thank our Head Coach, Waisale Serevi and the entire supporting staff for this medal," she added.

-PTI



First place winner Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia of a Ducati Lenovo Team, right, talks with 2nd place Spanish rider Jorge Martin of a Prima Pramac Racing after the MotoGP race at the Twin Ring Motegi circuit in Motegi.

Pic: AP/PTI

Badal Doshi dominates Sprint Championship

Indore: Mumbai's Badal Doshi shone in the fourth round of the FMSCI Indian National Rally Sprint Championship for two-wheelers, clinching victories in both the premier open and privateer classes here.

In the Open up to 550cc class, Doshi clocked an impressive 4:35.600 to claim victory, followed by Amarendra Sathe in second place with a time of 4:55.800, and Abhishek Pardeshi (4:59.600).

Doshi also excelled in the privateer up to 550cc class, finishing first with a time of 4:37.600 to make it a double.

The scooter (up to 210cc) category saw Syed Asif Ali emerge victorious, com-



pleting the course in 5:02.900.

Muzaffir Ali (5:11.900) and Shamim Khan (5:13.800) took the second and third places respectively.

In the veterans above 50Y class, Amarendra Sathe took the top honors with a time of 4:54.600, followed by

MD Saeed (5:11.100) in second and Mohan Sethiya (5:47.000) in third.

The event also featured the support sprint rally for local participants.

In the 131cc up to 165cc class, Mohd Yasir Ishaq clinched first place with a time of 4:40.500, ahead of Ali Subur (4:52.000) and Arhman Mohd Khan (4:54.500).

In the ladies up to 260cc category, Anamta Khan secured first place with a time of 9:02.300, followed by Pooja Singh in second at 9:55.800.

The next round will be in Guwahati November 24 before concluding with the finals in Pune or Bangalore on December 14-15.

-PTI

Global Chess League

Alaskan Knights stay unbeaten

London: PBS Alaskan Knights continued their unbeaten run, while Ganges Grandmasters secured their first win in a dramatic day three of the Tech Mahindra Global Chess League here.

The PBS Alaskan Knights extended their lead with a dominant 12-3 win over the Ganges Grandmasters, maintaining a perfect record with four consecutive victories, earning them 12 match points and 49 game points.

Defending champions Triveni Continental Kings

played two matches on Saturday -- winning the first 15-3 against American Gambits, where Alireza Firouzja defeated world number two Hikaru Nakamura, but narrowly losing the second to Ganges Grandmasters.

Triveni remained in second place with six match points and 43 game points, just six behind the leaders.

Alpine Sg Pipers also impressed, defeating upGrad Mumba Masters 12-4.

They now sit in third place with six match points, though their 27 game points

from three matches leave them behind Triveni. upGrad Mumba Masters, in fourth place, have only one win from four matches and 29 game points after losing to the Pipers.

Big upset

The final match saw the surprise of the day with Ganges Grandmasters, led by former World Champion Vishwanathan Anand, finally breaking their losing streak with a 10-8 win over Triveni.

With one win and 24 game points from four matches, they now sit in fifth place.

Hikaru Nakamura's American Gambits are in last place, with only one match victory and 16 game points from three matches, having been dismantled 15-3 by Triveni.

Anand's team, desperate for their first victory after three crushing defeats, was under immense pressure.

-AP



Members of Colla Joves Xiquets de Valls form a Castell or human tower, during the 29th Human Tower Competition in Tarragona, Spain on Sunday.

Pic: AP/PTI

Indian Army beats US Military

Sacramento (USA): The Indian Army arena polo team delivered a gritty performance, defeating the US Military in a thrilling test match, marking their first international engagement since 2019.

The Indian team, comprising Prithvi Singh, Yatinder Kumar, Mrityunjay Singh and RK Gautam, won 13-10 at the Lakeside Polo Club near here.

Mrityunjay, despite sustaining an injury during the second chukker, continued to compete until the fourth chukker, before being substituted by Gautam.

Arena polo, while quite similar to the outdoor version is played on 300 feet by 150 feet field, enclosed by a wall of four or more feet in height. The regular polo is played on a 10-acre field with just the boundary lines and no walls.

A normal game of polo consists of four chukkas of seven-and-a-half minutes each.

-PTI

Vengsarkar academy trials for U14

By correspondent

Mumbai: Dream 11 Vengsarkar Cricket Academy will be having selection trial for the under 14 age group for the boys on October 8 and 9 at 3 p.m. at the academy's ground at the Oval maidan, Churchgate.

The players who are born after September 1, 2010 and before September 01, 2013 are eligible to participate. They are required to carry their birth certificate and wear white cricket uniform while coming for the selection trial on the above days.

For more details, contact Amit Jadhav on 9892600155.



India's wicketkeeper Richa Ghosh (second right) celebrates the wicket of Pakistan's captain Fatima Sana (left) with her teammates during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 match between Pakistan and India at Dubai International Stadium, United Arab Emirates on Sunday. India won the match.

Pic: AP/PTI

Varinder shocks top seed Rajpal

By correspondent

Mumbai: Playing with plenty of grit and determination Varinder Singh scored an upset win against top seed Sanjay Rajpal recording a fluent 11-7, 5-11, 11-8 and 12-10 victory in the MO50 semi-finals of the third Mumbai Masters Squash Championship 2024, organized under the auspices of the Squash Rackets Federation of India and played at the Cricket Club of India courts on Sunday.

In the summit clash, Varinder will challenge UAE's Niraj Makhija who

defeated Dalip Tripathi 11-6, 7-11, 11-9, 11-6 in the second semi-final.

In the MO40 semi-finals, the top two seeds set up a meeting in the final. The number one seed Paul Ipe eased past Aditya Maheshwari coasting to a straight game 11-8, 11-2 and 11-6 victory.

Second seed Sanjay Pawar brushed aside the challenge from joint 3-4 seed Abhishek Laxminarayan pulling off a 11-8, 6-11, 11-8 and 11-6 win in the second semi-final.

Results (all semi-finals) - MO40: 1-Paul Ipe bt Aditya Maheshwari 11-8, 11-2

11-6; 2-Sanjay Pawar bt 3-4-Abhishek Laxminarayan 11-8, 6-11, 11-8, 11-6.

MO45: Praveen Murthy bt Shaileendra Pratap Singh 11-7, 7-11, 11-7, 11-6; 3-4-Benjamin Nedarapalli W/o Kuncheria Marattukalam.

MO50: Varinder Singh bt 1-Sanjay Rajpal 11-7, 5-11, 11-8, 12-10; Niraj Makhija (UAE) bt Dalip Tripathi 11-6, 7-11, 11-9, 11-6.

Procoach: 1-Atul Kumar Yadav bt 3-4-Suraj Bhatt 9-11, 11-3, 13-11, 11-4;

3-4-Akhilesh Kumar bt Raja Yadav 11-6, 7-11, 11-6, 11-9.