

THE PERFECT VOICE



Police summon Kamra after his refusal to apologise ... pg 3



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The whole year I visualised about finishing games: Ashutosh ... pg 10

Cash Discovery Row

SC panel commences inquiry, visits house

New Delhi: The three members of a Supreme Court-appointed in-house committee visited the residence of Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma on Tuesday as it commenced its inquiry into allegations of discovery of a cash pile at his residence here.



Lawyers Allahabad High Court Bar Association during an indefinite strike over Justice Yashwant Varma's transfer in Prayagraj on Tuesday. Pic: PTI

Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of the High Court of Punjab and Haryana, Justice G S Sandhwalia, Chief Justice of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh, and Anu Sivaraman, a judge of the High Court of Karnataka, reached Justice Varma's official residence at 30, Tu-

ghlak Crescent and were inside for around 30-35 minutes. The committee is learnt to have inspected the site before leaving in the afternoon, the sources said. It is not known whether Justice Varma was at his

residence when the inquiry panel reached. The findings of the crucial inquiry will decide the fate of Justice Varma who is facing allegations that "four to five semi-burnt sacks of Indian currency notes" were found in his

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Lutyens home following a fire incident at around 11.35 pm on March 14.

The apex court Collegium had recommended the repatriation of Justice Varma, who was de-rostered by the Delhi High Court following a directive from Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, to his parent Allahabad High Court.

Justice Varma strongly denounced the allegations and said no cash was ever placed in the storeroom either by him or any of my family members.

Two phase inquiry

In 2014, while dealing with a case of alleged sexual harassment of a subordinate court judge in Madhya Pradesh at the behest of a sitting judge of the high court, the top court laid down the in-house procedure and said in the first stage of the in-house procedure, the prima facie veracity of the allegations contained in the complaint is ascertained. The top court had said it is the "second stage of the in-house procedure" relating to sitting judges of high courts which could lead to serious consequences. The second stage is monitored by none other than the CJI. -PTI

Yunus to begin key China visit

Beijing/Dhaka: Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus will start his four-day visit to China on Wednesday during which he is scheduled to hold talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping to re-orient bilateral ties.

Yunus' visit to Beijing comes ahead of his request for a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the upcoming BIMSTEC meeting at Bangkok to be held from April 2 to 4.

Yunus will begin his China visit by taking part in Boao Forum for Asia, the annual meeting of Beijing's strategic think-tank. "China welcomes Chief Adviser Yunus to attend the conference in China", Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said on Tuesday. "Let me stress that China and Bangladesh are traditional friendly neighbours and comprehensive strategic cooperative partners".

In Dhaka, the Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen told the media that the Chief Adviser's visit to China would be very successful, productive and a milestone visit with announcements.

"This is going to be the most important visit by a Bangladeshi leader in 50 years," Yunus' press secretary Shafiqul Alam quoted Yao as saying after his meeting with Yunus on March 16.



BJP leader Uma Khapre with party workers holding portraits of industrialist Ratan Tata reaches Vidhan Bhavan demanding a Bharat Ratna for him in Mumbai on Tuesday. Pic: PTI

Indian-origin man found dead

Houston: A 30-year-old Indian-origin man was found dead in Princeton, Texas, on Sunday in what local authorities suspect to be a case of suicide but investigations are ongoing.

Abhishek Kolli, from Gudivada in Andhra Pradesh's Krishna district, had been reported missing a day earlier, prompting a search operation involving law enforcement and community members.

His body was discovered the following day, leaving his family and loved ones devastated.

Kolli, who had been married for just a year, had pre-



viously lived with his wife in Phoenix, Texas, before relocating to Princeton.

Aravind shared. "We want to honour his memory with dignity, without the shadow of financial worry hanging over us."

To cover funeral expenses and transport his body back to India, Aravind launched a GoFundMe campaign, which has already raised over USD 59,000 in less than 24 hours. The outpouring of support highlights the strong sense of community among Indian-Americans, and the Telugu community in the US has stepped in to assist with financial and logistical support. -PTI

Now, Kamra mocks 'Viksit Bharat'

By Quaid Najmi

Mumbai: Undaunted by protests and clamour to jail him from the ruling ally Shiv Sena, standup comedian Kunal Kamra hit back with a new video - this time targeting the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the state and centre, as well as right-wing outfits.



The new parody song is "Hum honge kangaal ek din..." which Kamra presented as the new Anthem of a Viksit Bharat (Developed India), comes with a higher dose of satire than the one ostensibly targeting Shiv Sena's Deputy CM Eknath Shinde two days ago which sparked a nationwide furor.

Without batting an eyelid, Kamra sings it to the accompaniment of a guitar - and peals of audience laughter - and dares the powers-that-be which have summoned him for a probe in Mumbai.

The number has barbs and stings, like: 'Mann me andhvisshwas, Desh ka satyanash'; 'Honge nange charo aur', 'Karenghe dange charo or', 'Police ke pange charo aur'; 'Man me Nathuram, Harkate Asaram'; 'Hoga gai ka prachar', 'Leke haathon me hathiyar'; 'Hoga Sangh ka shish-tachar', 'Janata berozgar', 'Garibi ki kagaar'; and closing with the crescendo 'Hum honge kangaal ek din...'

For effect and views, Kamra has strategically interspersed it with videos of the vociferous protests against

him, the raw violence perpetrated by Shiv Sena activists at the Hotel Continental (Khar), the naked vandalism, his effigies being burnt at several places.

Not surprisingly, in barely a couple of hours (till 5.30 pm), Kamra's new video got more than five-lakh eyeballs, 30K-plus likes, and around 2K shares.

The shooting venue or date of the latest video is unclear since rowdy Shiv Sainiks had vandalized The Habitat Comedy Club in the hotel and later a civic squad came and razed certain alleged unauthorized portions there.

Buoyed by support and sympathy from all over the country and outside, the new video virtually mocks and cocks a snook at the Mahayuti allies or the police which have called for a 'grilling' after his tight 'roasting' of Shinde.

Currently in Puducherry, Kamra has assured full cooperation and sought a week's time from the Mumbai Police to come and record his statement in the issue on the boil for three days now.

The Shiv Sena activists continued to slap dire warnings to Kamra and how they would deal with him 'Senastyle' if he refused to apologize to Shinde.

Another FIR was registered against Kamra in Dombivli police station on Monday.

More reports... Page 3 and 4

54 killed in Sudan airstrike

Cairo: An airstrike blamed on the Sudanese military hit a local market in Sudan's western region, igniting a huge fire and killing at least 54 people, aid groups said Tuesday. The military denied targeting civilians.

The strike took place Monday in the village of Tora, north of el-Fasher, the capital city of North Darfur province, said Adam Rejal, a spokesman for the General Coordination, a local group helping displaced people in Darfur.

Brig. Gen. Nabil Abdullah, a spokesperson for the Sudanese military, denied that they targeted civilians.

He told The Associated Press that these allegations were "incorrect, which are raised whenever our forces exercise their constitutional and legal right to deal with hostile targets."

The strike tore apart a large part of the village's weekly market, leaving many bodies charred, according to footage shared by Support Darfur Victims, a local group that provides support to victims of the Darfur conflict.

New JNPA HQ at Rs 1,000 cr

Mumbai: Jawaharlal Nehru Port plans to invest around Rs 1,000 crore to set up its 20-storied corporate headquarters building, which is expected to come up by April 2027. JNPA Chairman Unmesh Wagh said on Tuesday.

Speaking with reporters here Wagh also said that the country's premier container port is set to surpass 10-million TEUs container capacity next month, which would make it the first port in the country, including those in private hands, to have such a milestone.

Spread over 3.16 acre of land, the iconic tower will also house

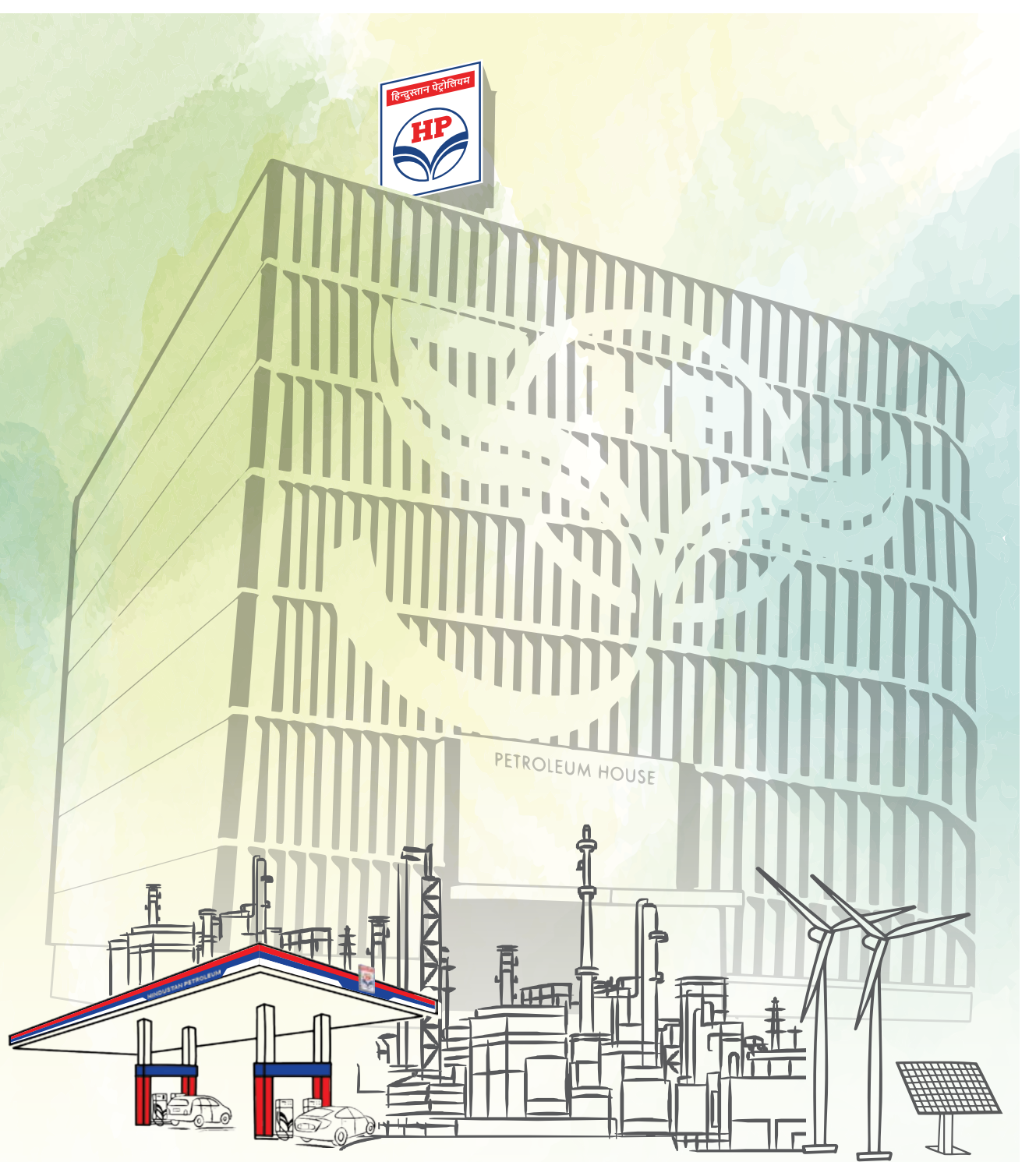
the office of the shipping regulator Directorate General of Shipping, the headquarters of the upcoming Vadhvan Port, India Ports Global, which is an arm under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways for undertaking international port projects, among others, besides a 2000-seat capacity and a A digital observatory atop the iconic building, the JNPA chairman said.

He said the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has on Monday accorded its approval for the development of this corporate office building.

"We continue to advance our

infrastructure to support growing trade demands. JNPA's vision for excellence extends beyond port operations to creating world-class infrastructure. The development of our Corporate Office at Malet Bunder in the Mumbai Port area reflects our commitment to efficiency and seamless coordination," Wagh stated.

The total project cost would be to the tune of approximately Rs 1,000 crore including land, building, interior and amenities, Wagh said, adding it is being designed with an FSI of 4.0 and in a construction area of around 9 lakh sq ft.



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Alleged Extortion Against Minister

Phone calls of Supriya, Rohit will be probed: CM

NCP (SP) LEADERS WERE IN TOUCH WITH MAN LINKED TO ATTEMPTED EXTORTION OF JAYKUMAR GORE

Mumbai: Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday alleged leaders of the opposition Nationalist Congress Party (SP) were involved in a "conspiracy" against his cabinet colleague Jaykumar Gore in a case involving a woman.

Replying to a motion initiated by the opposition in the state assembly, Fadnavis said there was proof of communication between NCP (SP) leaders SupriyaSule and Rohit Pawar, and one of the accused in the case where three persons, including the woman, have been arrested for trying to extort money from Gore.

The CM, who holds the home portfolio, said the entire episode will be probed. Gore, the BJP MLA from the Man constituency in Satara district, is Cabinet Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

Last week, the BJP minister had claimed the woman, who had accused him of harassment, tried to extort money from him to settle the matter.

Demand of Rs 3 crore
According to police, the woman had demanded Rs 3 crore from Gore to end "everything".

Battle of Panipat symbol of Marathas' bravery

The third battle of Panipat was a symbol of the bravery of Marathas and not the defeat, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said in the state assembly on Tuesday. Replying to a debate on the 'Last Week Motion' initiated by the opposition, Fadnavis said the state government is building a 'Shiv Smarak' (memorial of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj) in Agra. Land is also being acquired for building a memorial in Panipat (Haryana), where the third battle of Panipat was fought between the Marathas



and (Afghan ruler) Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1761, he said. To this, opposition NCP (SP) MLA Jitendra Awhad asked why a memorial is being built in Panipat where Abdali defeated the Marathas. "Panipat is not a symbol of our bravery or our defeat. It will remind me of defeat. It was between Ahmad Shah



Abdali and (Maratha general) SadashivraoBhau. There is no memorial of defeat in the world," Awhad said. Fadnavis then said, "The battle of Panipat is a symbol of Marathas' bravery and not defeat." Talking about the historic battle, the CM said it reflected Marathas' valour.

The emperor in Delhi was paying "chauth" (a kind of tribute) to Marathas. When Abdali conquered Delhi, he wrote to Marathas asking them to come to save Delhi, Fadnavis said. The Marathas went to Delhi, defeated Abdali. The Afghan ruler then fled and camped across the Yamuna river, he said. Abdali then wrote a letter to Marathas seeking a truce that Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan should be considered his territory and rest of the country will be of Marathas, the CM said.

"She had demanded Rs 3 crore to end the case related to her allegations against Jaykumar Gore. She was caught while accepting Rs 1 crore of the total amount," a police official said last week.

The woman was later arrested from Satara by the local crime branch.

The Opposition has been demanding Gore's resignation over allegations of harassing the woman and sending her objectionable photos, while the minister has dismissed the charges, asserting he was acquitted by a court in the case long

ago. Gore had earlier said a case under section 354 (molestation) of the Indian Penal Code was registered against him in 2017, but the trial court acquitted him in 2019.

Call data records

Speaking in the assembly on Tuesday, Fadnavis also pointed to Gore's acquittal more than five years ago.

The CM said three people have been arrested in the matter (related to attempted extortion) so far -- the woman, a reporter, Tushar Kharat, and a person named Anil

Subedhar.

"All three conspired (against Gore) and there is evidence against them. WhatsApp (messages) and calls were exchanged between them. Unfortunately, NCP (SP) people were involved and I say this with proof," he told the house. Fadnavis said one Prabhakarao Deshmukh spoke to all three accused more than 100 times. Videos (of alleged conspiracy against Gore) were sent to him.

"...SurpiyaSule and Rohit Pawar made calls to Tushar Kharat and videos that were made against Gore were sent to these people. This will be probed," he said. Fadnavis emphasised opposition and ruling parties are political opponents and not enemies. Earlier this month, Gore moved privilege motions against Kharat, Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut in the assembly, accusing them of maligning his image in relation to the 2017 case in which he was acquitted. Fadnavis remarked that the privilege committee has become "toothless".



Home buyers march in protest against City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra Limited at Vashi, Navi Mumbai on Tuesday. Pic: PTI

2008 Malegaon Blast Trial

Victims urge to extend special judge's tenure

Mumbai: Victims of the 2008 Malegaon bomb blast have urged the Bombay High Court Chief Justice to extend the tenure of the special NIA judge, saying his likely transfer will delay the trial.

Generally, judges of the additional sessions courts are posted in a sessions division for two to three years. The NIA special judge A K Lahoti has been posted in the city civil and sessions court in Mumbai since June 2022.

As he will complete three years of his tenure at Bombay (Mumbai) in the coming months, the victims are apprehensive that he may be transferred to another station during the upcoming annual general transfers without concluding the trial, the blast victims stated in a letter sent

through advocate Shahid Nadeem. "The case is a matter of grave public importance and extremely voluminous in nature", it said, adding that the accused persons who are on bail may not be in a hurry but victims are desperate for justice. The victims apprehend that any change in the presiding officer may cause an unavoidable delay in the trial as the newly posted presiding officer would be required to familiarise himself with the entire voluminous charge sheet along with exhibited documents.

The prosecution has examined 323 witnesses while the defence examined eight witnesses in the blast case. The trial is at the concluding stage with the court recording the final state-

ments of the accused.

"The hapless victims of the 2008 Malegaon bomb blast case wish to seek your intervention and pray before your authority to extend the tenure or retain the special judge till the end of the trial," the letter said. The trial commenced in 2018 after the special NIA court framed charges against Lt Col Prasad Purohit, the then BJP MP Prayag Singh Thakur and five others on charges of terror activities, criminal conspiracy, and murder, among others.

Six people were killed and more than 100 injured on September 29, 2008, when an explosive device strapped to a motorcycle went off near a mosque in Malegaon town in north Maharashtra, some 200 km from Mumbai.

Act of 'revenge'

KIN OF ACCUSED ALLEGES AGAINST MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Nagpur: The brother of Yusuf Sheikh, an accused in the March 17 communal violence in Nagpur, has claimed the civic body started demolition of a portion of their house despite the family having all sanctions and possessing documents for the building.

Ayaz Sheikh claimed the house of his brother was built legally and alleged that the Nagpur Municipal Corporation's (NMC) action on Monday to demolish its balcony, on the ground that it was "unauthorised", was an act of "revenge".

The demolition was stayed after the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court intervened following pleas by Yusuf Sheikh and Fahim Khan, an alleged mastermind behind the communal violence.

While the two-storey residence of Khan was flattened by civic authorities who claimed it was constructed illegally, the house of Yusuf Sheikh in the Mahal Gate area was spared after the HC intervened and stayed the bulldozer action.

After the demolition was

'Police alertness could have averted violence'

Senior Congress leader Hussain Dalwai on Tuesday said alertness on the police's part would have avoided the last week's violence in Nagpur city. The former Rajya Sabha MP who was part of the fact-finding committee set up by the opposition party following the violence of March 17 visited affected areas and met the Nagpur police commissioner here. Speaking to the media, Dalwai asked why the police allowed participants in the protest led by Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal to burn an effigy, stating that ordinarily police never give permission for burning things during such protests.

NAGPUR RIOTS

stopped, Ayaz Sheikh, while speaking to the media, alleged the NMC's action was undertaken with an intention to take "revenge".

"We had no involvement in the riots and this property belongs to my father and I am the owner of this property since the 1970s. We are law-abiding citizens and Hindus and Muslims stay together here."

Ayaz Sheikh said they received a notice from the NMC about the planned demolition of the "illegal" portion of the building and it was pasted on Saturday on the house wall.

"I showed them (civic staff) property documents and sanctioned building plan. They told us to bring the documents to the NMC office in Civil Lines for verification. However, when we went there they refused to take the documents from us," he said.

"Even then, we sent the documents to the NMC via post. On Monday, we again went to the NMC office, but by that time they had already issued orders for demolition," he added.

Ayaz Sheikh claimed when the civic body came to know his family has approached the HC and sought a stay, the NMC intensified its demolition work and razed a portion of the house.



Dy CM Ajit Pawar with NCP MLA Anna Bansode files his nomination for the post of Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Pic: PTI

Contract for Number Plates

Due Process followed: Minister

Mumbai: Transport minister Pratap Sarnaik on Tuesday denied allegations that the contract for fitting high-security registration plates (HSRP) on old vehicles was awarded illegally.

Raising the issue in the legislative council through a calling attention notice, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Anil Parab claimed that

transport department officials awarded the contract before the current state cabinet was formed. "The contract for fitting HSRP on all vehicles registered before April 1, 2019, was issued without following proper procedure, and in a manner that benefited select companies," he said. In his reply, Sarnaik

said, "The allegations are baseless. The tender process was carried out with due diligence, and all necessary precautions were taken."

As many as 16.58 lakh vehicles have already registered for new number plates, and the department aims to cover the maximum number of vehicles by June 30, he added.

VIP Treatment to Arrested BJP Worker

Two policemen suspended in Beed

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: Two police personnel were suspended in Maharashtra's Beed district on Tuesday after a video showing a local BJP worker, arrested in a case of assault, receiving a special treatment went viral, officials said.

Beed Superintendent of Police (SP) Navneet Kanwat suspended two policemen attached to the Chaklamba police station after the video showing Satish Bhosale alias Khokya getting special treatment, an official said.

"The SP suspended two police naik - Kailas Khantane and Vinod Surwase - posted at the Chaklamba police station. Also, a show-cause notice was issued to the Chaklamba station in-charge Sandip Patil," the official said.

Bhosale, an aide of local BJP MLA Suresh Dhas, was arrested from Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh earlier this month after an FIR was registered against him for allegedly assaulting a man with a cricket bat.

Bhosale is facing other criminal cases too, includ-

ing one registered by the Forest Department.

The video shared on social media on Monday showed Bhosale sitting on the ground outside the Beed district jail and eating. As he gets up, a person in civilian dress is seen pouring water on his hands. A group of eight to ten people is standing around him and he is talking to them without any interference from the police.

A local official told PTI that the video seemed to have been shot before Bhosale was sent in judicial custody.

Talking to reporters, SP Kanwat said action would be taken in the matter.

"This is a very serious matter and the concerned person will be suspended. A show-cause notice will also be issued to the officer who was in charge," he said.

Following Bhosale's arrest earlier this month, the state forest department had demolished his residence that he allegedly constructed illegally on a piece of forest land in ShirurKasar area of Beed.

Teen survivor to continue pregnancy

Mumbai: An 18-year-old survivor of sexual assault informed the Bombay High Court that she was willing to continue her pregnancy after a medical board opined that termination in the advanced stages would cause complications and affect her future pregnancies.

The girl had moved the Bombay High Court earlier this month seeking permission to terminate the 32-week pregnancy, which she claimed was a result of a sexual assault by a

relative.

As per her plea, a case was also registered against the man in February.

Last week, the HC referred the girl to a medical board of the state-run J J Hospital.

The hospital, in its report, said there was no abnormality in the foetus and that at this stage, even if the pregnancy is terminated, the baby would be born alive.

It stated that termination of pregnancy at such a late stage may also cause



medical and health issues for the girl in the future.

Following the medical board's opinion, a division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Neela

The court, in its order, said the situation was explained to the teen and her mother.

"Initially, the petitioner and her mother insisted on terminating the pregnancy. However, when the medical situation was explained, the petitioner changed her mind and agreed to continue the pregnancy for the next four weeks," the court said.

The girl, however, told the court that she would require financial and medical support.

The bench then directed the J J Hospital to examine her every week and/or as per the doctor's advice and then to admit her at the time of delivery.

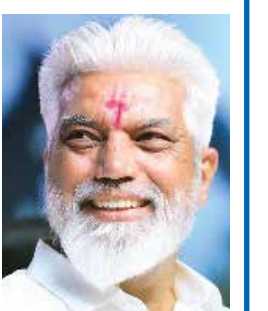
The court ordered that the state government bear the delivery and all other medical expenses.

The bench said when the baby is born, if the petitioner desires, she can give it up for adoption, and the state government shall then assume responsibility for the baby.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The Revas to Redi highway will be developed in two phases with an estimated cost of Rs 26,000 crore. It will be a concrete road. In the first phase, nine creek bridges will be constructed. The land acquisition process is in final stage."



Dada Bhuse, Minister, Port

Police summon Kamra after his refusal to apologise

Mumbai: Comedian Kunal Kamra stood his ground and stubbornly refused to apologise for his jokes targeting Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde who reminded him about maintaining decorum and limits to freed speech but asserted he did not support vandalism.

"I will not apologise or hide under the bed waiting for the controversy to die down," a defiant Kamra asserted in a late Monday night statement as his controversial comments made during a show in Mumbai continued to stir politics in Maharashtra and beyond.

While Shinde said the comments - a parody targeting him -- were like "taking supari (or contract)"

to speak against someone, many others weighed in too and the Mumbai Police issued notice to the stand-up comedian.

The 36-year-old comic, who has often courted controversy for his anti-establishment views, has been asked to appear before the Khar police in Mumbai in connection with a case filed against him for defamation, officials said on Tuesday.

Kamra doubled down on his stand by sharing an edited video of his stand up act where he juxtaposed videos of Shiv Sainiks demolishing the venue in Mumbai where he recorded the show and burning his pictures and effigies



with the parody song "Hum honge kangal, hum honge kangal ek din... Mann me andhviswas, desh ka satyanash..." playing in the background.

The comedian, who is in Puducherry according to his Instagram bio, has updated his X header photo with a disclaimer that reads: "This programme contains coarse language, offensive content & is unfit for consumption by those whose feelings and sentiments can be hurt. No one but you are liable for any outrage or hurt that you

claim is caused by your voluntary viewership."

Strong reactions

In his response, Shinde told BBC Marathi on Monday, "There is freedom of speech. We understand satire. But there should be a limit. This is like taking a 'supari' (contract) to speak against someone."

On the Shiv Sainiks vandalising the studio, Shinde said: "Action causes reaction. I will not speak much on this. I do not justify vandalism."

On Sunday night, Shiv

Sena members damaged the Habitat Comedy Club

Repercussions for what you say: Kangana

Disgracing anyone in the name of comedy is in bad taste, actor and MP Kangana Ranaut said on Tuesday as she weighed in on the ongoing controversy over comic Kunal Kamra's remarks on Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's political career. Ranaut, a BJP MP from Himachal Pradesh's Mandi, was speaking to reporters outside the Parliament here. "You may be anyone but disrespecting anyone (is not good). You are disgracing

Kamra's jibe is like taking 'supari': Shinde

Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has likened comedian Kunal Kamra's jibe at him to taking "supari" (contract) to speak against someone, and said there should be a decorum while making a satire, otherwise the "action causes a reaction". Freedom of speech is there, but there should be a limit, Shinde said on Monday reacting to Kamra's comments. The Shiv Sena leader further said he does not focus on who says what as his work speaks for him.

in Khar, where Kamra's show took place, as well as a hotel in whose premises the club is located.

Police on Monday arrested Shiv Sena functionary Rahul Kanal and 11 others for ransacking the show venue. A Mumbai court granted them bail the same day.

Kamra, whose video has garnered over 4.3 million views in just two days, in his statement on Monday night said: "What I said is exactly what Mr. Ajit Pawar (1st deputy CM) said about Mr. Eknath Shinde (2nd Deputy CM). I don't fear this mob."

"Our right to freedom of speech and expression is not only to be used to fawn over the powerful and rich even though today's media would have us believe otherwise. Your inability to take a joke at the expense of a powerful public figure does not change the nature of my right. As far as I know, it is not against the law to poke fun at our leaders and the circus that is our political system," Kamra insisted.

Division of opinion

The issue has led to reactions across the spectrum with many defend-

Police issue notice to Kamra

The Mumbai Police have issued a notice to stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra in connection with a case for allegedly making derogatory remarks against Eknath Shinde. Kamra has been asked to appear before the Khar police here in connection with the case registered against him, an official said. "We have issued an initial notice to Kamra as a probe has been started into the case against him," the official said without giving more details.

ing the comic, while others criticising Kamra for taking things too far.

Priyanka Chaturvedi of the rival Shiv Sena (UBT) party said Shinde's "goons" have proved Kamra right.

"Kunal didn't take any name; all he said was a man with a beard who went to Guwahati & was a puppet of Fadnavis. What made Shinde's goons believe it was about their SUPREME LEADER & go vandalise the place? (sic)" Chaturvedi wrote on X.

Filmmaker Hansal Mehta also defended Kamra, saying no matter how deep the disagreement and how sharp the provocation, violence, intimidation, and humiliation are not justified.

In a series of X posts, the acclaimed director recalled his ordeal with the Shiv Sena around 25 years ago when the workers of the then undivided political party vandalised his office.

Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut said Kamra won't bow down before anyone.

"I know Kamra. We share the same DNA. He is a fighter. He won't apologise. If you have to act against him, you have to take recourse to lawful steps," Raut told reporters.

Maharashtra Minister of State for Home Yogesh Kadam of the Shiv Sena said, "The DNA of Kamra and Raut could be the same. He (Kamra) is mad and so is this person (Raut)."

The issue also echoed in the Lok Sabha where Shiv Sena member Dhairyaashel Mane on Tuesday demanded that stand-up comedy platforms that promote hate speech and create tension in society be banned.

Mane said some people are running their political agenda through stand-up comedians.

Senior BJP leader and former minority affairs minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi also called out Kamra.

Some people consider "freedom of expression" as their "right to freestyle anarchy", Naqvi said.

Father seeks FIR against Aaditya



Mumbai: Satish Salian, father of former celebrity manager Disha Salian, on Tuesday, submitted a complaint to the Joint Commissioner of Police demanding the registration of a case against Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Aaditya Thackeray and others in connection with his daughter's death in 2020.

Salian visited the office of the joint commissioner of police (crime) in south Mumbai accompanied by his lawyer, days after he moved the Bombay High Court seeking a fresh probe into the circumstances surrounding the death of his daughter and former manager of actor Sushant Rajput in June 2020.

The HC petition stated that "Disha was raped and



murdered, and there was a politically-orchestrated cover-up to protect certain influential persons".

The petition demanded the registration of an FIR against Aaditya Thackeray and transferring the probe to the CBI.

The petition will likely come up for hearing in the first week of April.

Aaditya Thackeray had said he would respond to the allegations in court.

"I am expecting justice for my daughter," Satish Salian told reporters after submitting a written com-

plaint to the JCP.

"I won't speak now. I am feeling dizzy," he said.

His lawyer, Nilesh Ojha, said a written complaint was submitted to the Mumbai Police demanding the registration of a case against Aaditya Thackeray and others.

Disha Salian died on June 8, 2020, after falling off the 14th floor of a residential building in suburban Malad, six days before Bollywood star Rajput allegedly committed suicide in his apartment in Bandra.

NCPCR seeks FIR, flags bullying claim

Thane: The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has sought a first information report (FIR) in connection with the suicide of a Class 9 student who jumped off a school building in Navi Mumbai last month, flagging his father's allegation about bullying at the school.

A Class 9 student allegedly committed suicide by jumping off the fifth floor of a school in Navi Mumbai's Seawoods area on February 7, following which the police registered a case of accidental death.

The NCPCR, in a letter to the Thane district collector dated March 17, said it had received a complaint from the deceased boy's father, alleging that the teen had been bullied at school, which led to the suicide.

The boy's father also claimed that he was not shown the CCTV footage from the school, the commission stated.

The letter stated that other students had informed their parents about bullying in the school, and the complainant had tried to get an FIR registered, but there was no action from the police.

'Incomplete rituals portend harm'

FRAUDSTERS SQUEEZE RS 12.50 LAKH OUT OF SOFTWARE ENGINEER

Mumbai: Seeking divine intervention for overcoming insecurities of life cost dear to a Mumbai-based software engineer who paid Rs 12.50 lakh to cyber crooks disguised as astrologers who exploited his vulnerabilities to extort money, officials said.

The victim, a resident of the BKC area, had downloaded the DevineTalk app dedicated to 'astrology' to find solace in life, unaware that sharing personal issues is going to leave him poorer financially and frustrated.

After downloading the app, the techie spoke to a "spiritual guide", identified as Nishant, in January. He was suggested to perform a ritual to heal his life by paying Rs 6,300, police said.

After brooding for a week, the victim finally convinced himself to perform the ritual and contacted Nishant again, who told him that one "bade Maharaj" would perform the 'kriya' or the

procedure.

"Nishant facilitated the conversation between the software engineer and Bade Maharaj through a conference call," as per the FIR.

The fraudsters then started showing their true colours with Bade Maharaj demanding Rs 15,300 more to start the ritual and Rs 28,000 under a different pretext. The victim met these demands by paying up electronically, police said.

"When the victim demanded proof that rituals were performed by Bade Maharaj, the latter called up in the night and demanded an additional Rs 20,000 saying some rituals are incomplete," police said.

When the software engineer hesitated, the Bade Maharaj told him that incomplete rituals could harm his life.

Police said Nishant again facilitated a conversation between the techie

and Bade Maharaj. By this time, the victim had ended up paying Rs 2.41 lakh.

However, the fraudsters didn't stop.

They convinced the software engineer that incomplete rituals would harm him at deeper levels and extorted more money.

The victim pulled various resources including a credit card and even borrowed from private money lenders to pay up.

"He collectively paid more than Rs 12.20 lakh over six days in January," an official said.

As the accused demanded more money, the victim sought help from his friends who told him that he was taken for a ride by cyber fraudsters in the name of astrology.

The software engineer then contacted the customer support of the Astrology app, where a woman assured him about finishing the rituals and also offered three 'meditation' sessions for free, the official said.

Teacher booked for thrashing student

Mumbai: Police have registered an FIR against a woman teacher for allegedly beating up an 11-year-old girl student for talking in the classroom at a school in Mumbai, an official said on Tuesday.



The teacher hit the class 5 student with a cane multiple times on her wrist, back and waist on March 21 at the school located in Chembur area, causing her injuries, the official said quoting a complaint lodged by the girl's father.

The teacher punished the girl claiming she was talking in the class, whereas the student was merely looking behind, the complaint claimed.

Based on the complaint, a case has been registered against the teacher under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Juvenile Justice Act, the official said.

An investigation was underway in the case, the police added.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"To ensure proper coordination of all road concretization projects in Mumbai, a decision has been taken to appoint an IAS officer. This officer will be responsible for overseeing the quality and progress of the work."



Uday Samant, Minister, Industries

Dharavi: 63k tenements surveyed

Mumbai: In a significant milestone for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, the ongoing survey has surpassed the scope of the last survey done in 2007-08 to map and document one of Asia's biggest slum's residential and commercial structures.

With more than 63,000 tenements already surveyed - and counting - the present survey has gone well beyond the earlier benchmark of approximately 60,000 ground-floor tenements, officials said. Under Slum Rehabilita-

tion Authority (SRA) guidelines, only ground-floor tenants are typically considered eligible for free housing. "Our survey has crossed an important and crucial milestone, one that the government can look back on with pride. This redevelopment scheme is not limited to ground-floor tenements but also covers upper-floor structures. It shows that the government is committed to ensuring housing for all. No one in Dharavi will be left behind," DRP CEO SVR Srinivas said.



According to the latest survey figures, lane recce has been completed for more than 95,000 tenements, more than 89,000 tenements have been numbered, and door-to-door surveys have been completed for more than 63,000 tenements. Unlike the ear-

lier survey, the present survey includes ground floor and upper floor structures, existing SRA buildings, slum dwellers on RLDA Land, and all religious structures.

"We are talking of huge numbers here and we have entered the last phase of

the survey. The numbers clearly show that Dharavikars are in favour of redevelopment and are actively participating.

"That said, we urge everyone to participate at the earliest so that the next stages of the redevelopment can begin. Those residents who have missed the survey must volunteer for it quickly. We may not be revisiting tenements whose residents have either refused to participate or have not shared their documents despite repeated requests and attempts for the

survey," Srinivas added. Commenting on the progress, an NMDPL spokesperson said, "We are pleased to be nearing the end of the survey and encourage any resident who hasn't been covered yet to come forward as soon as possible. We have seen a tremendous response from Dharavikars. Their positivity and desire for a dignified life have propelled this redevelopment project forward. We salute their spirit and respect their dream for a better life for themselves and for their future generations".

BJP to continue opposing Kamra's "Fake Narrative"

By Abhijit Mulye

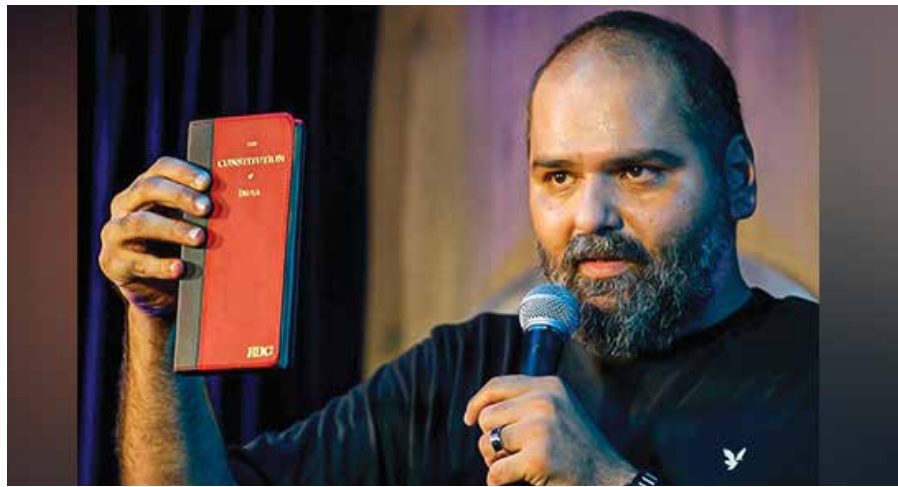
Mumbai: Though the Shiv Sena appears to have softened its stand against comedian Kunal Kamra, the BJP has not softened its tone against him. Moreover, the party leaders say that Kamra is part of a larger network that has been spreading fake narrative and the party's fight against it shall continue.

The BJP, that rushed to help Maharashtra deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on the first day, on the contrary, isn't backing off. This has led to questions about the intentions of the party.

The BJP, however, isn't deviating CM Fadnavis' statement that spreading lies and defaming others for personal gains shall face action. BJP MLA Ram Kadam reiterated the argument against Kamra that he has crossed all limits and hence is being targeted.

"It is the arrogance of a foolish person who makes controversial statements only for publicity for which the studio where he made these remarks has been bulldozed," Kadam added while justifying the state government's action in the case and added, "If any other studio in Maharashtra allows him to perform and illegal construction is found there, it will also be demolished."

Calling Kamra "anti-Constitutional", Kadam added, "This kind of person speaks against the prime minister, the home



minister and even the judiciary. These are anti-constitutional elements. Legal action will be taken against him. If he performs in any studio in Maharashtra, its illegal construction will be bulldozed."

While justifying the party's tough stand against the comedian, Kadam also accused Kamra of building his career on anti-BJP rhetoric. "He is not alone. There are many like him," he added.

Another senior BJP leader, Vishwas Pathak too said that the party shall not bow down to anyone who is seen spreading fake narrative. According to party's internal analysis of things, the 2014 victory is attributed to young population that had grown up with the social media and party's machinery that cleverly used the new media to expose the fake narrative spread by the nexus of politicians, media and urban Naxals. The trio, however, took over the so-

cial media during the demonetization in 2016 since when several likes of Kamra have popped up. The party is not opposed to entertainment, parody or comedy. But, it shall certainly oppose any attempt to spread fake narrative, remains the BJP's stand which makes it clear that the issue will pull on.

Proving a point

By Suyash Padate

Mumbai: The aggression displayed by Shiv Sena led by Eknath Shinde after the Kunal Kamra row was to prove a point to the Uddhav Thackeray faction that they are the real Sena which carry Balasaheb's legacy. A joke has turned out to be no laughing matter as Shiv Sena ransacked a hotel in Khar area, where stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra shot his show in which he mocked Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. The Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena faction has also filed FIRs against the comedian, demanding swift action against him. Moreover, they warned him of dire consequences, with one Sena leader even saying, "Let alone Maharashtra, Kunal Kamra cannot freely

go anywhere in India, Shiv Sainiks will show him his place."

After the rampage, news started doing the rounds as to why Shinde faction which is part of ruling Mahayuti has become so aggressive. The so called agitation at the studio is the style of Balasaheb Thackeray's Shiv Sena to revert back in such a manner. Both factions of Sena have been engaged in supremacy battles right from the split in the party. Shinde camp is leaving no stone unturned to establish its strength. Kunal Kamra episode got the chance to Shinde Sena to show that they are the real followers of Balasaheb. As the BMC elections are approaching the Sena took this opportunity to take on the UBT faction.

Civil society flays 'Urban Terrorism' against comedian

By Quaid Najmi

Mumbai: Prominent citizens from different walks of life have strongly condemned the 'urban terrorism' tactics and vandalism by ruling party politicians targeting stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra.

"The Constitution of India guarantees every citizen's Right to freedom of speech and opinion. No 'law abiding' citizen has the right to take the law in his / her own hands and indulge in vandalism. This is an act of Urban Terror," they contended. The statement has been signed and issued by: G. G. Parikh, Tushar Gandhi, Chitra Palekar, Darshan Mondkar, Faranaz Karabari, Feroze Mithiborwala, Guddi S L, Javed Anand, Dr. Kailash Gaikwad, Niyati, Ram Puniyani, Rajiv Shankar, Sandeep Pandey (Magsaysay Award laureate) Sanjeev Chandolker, Shubha Prabhu-Satam, Shilpa Parulekar, Sharad Kadam, Santosh Ambekar, Suvarnarekha Jadhav, Uttam Ghosh, Vikas Naiknavare, Yashodhan Paranjipe,

and more.

Deploring the extremist tactics by leaders of the ruling MahaYuti alliance in Maharashtra, the statement said that "these people lack the intellectual ability to engage in dialogue or discussion with opposing views and opinions," plus the mindset to appreciate humour and satire. "We sympathise with their limitations and volunteer to educate them if they have the will. We urge the CM (Devendra Fadnavis) - who has been broadcasting his resolve to use bulldozers to 'punish' people he accuses of rioting - and is pushing through a draconian law to punish those he brands 'Urban Naxals' to act promptly vis-à-vis members of his ally (Shiv Sena) who are acting as 'urban terrorists', destroying private property, terrorising and intimidating honest, law abiding citizens," urged the signatories. They denounced the Shiv Sena's 'terror tactics' displaying their 'bravery' by vandalising a

private hotel property used by Kamra to shoot one of his shows in which he referred to the betrayal by Deputy CM Eknath Shinde in his lust for power. Urging the Mumbai Police Commissioner to crack down on those who have taken the laws in their hands, they reminded the Police of their oath 'to serve the Constitution and protect citizens' - not to obey and serve the government in power.

The eminent reiterated their solidarity with Kamra and decried the heinous efforts to smother his Constitutional rights and freedom of expression - which the Maha Vikas Aghadi allies Congress-Shiv Sena (UBT)-Nationalist Congress Party (SP) also vociferously endorsed. The plea came even as Mumbai Police summoned Kamra, 36, following multiple complaints lodged after he recited a poem with 'gaddar' (traitor) jibes pointed at Shinde, without taking his name, but ignited a huge political fracas, and the Shiv Sena baying for the comedian's scalp.

Government discontinues Gold Monetisation

New Delhi: The government has decided to discontinue the Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS) starting from Wednesday in view of the evolving market conditions, the finance ministry said.

However, the banks may continue their short term gold deposit schemes (1-3 years), the ministry said in the statement on Tuesday.

Till November 2024, approximately 31,164 kilograms of gold have been mobilised under GMS.

The Gold Monetisation Scheme was announced on September 15, 2015, with the objective to reduce country's reliance on the import of gold in the long run and mobilise gold held by households and institutions in the country to facilitate its use for productive purposes.

The GMS is comprised of 3 components - Short Term Bank Deposit (1-3 years); Medium Term Government Deposit (5-7 years), and Long-Term Government Deposit (12-15 years).

"Based on the examination of the performance of the Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS) and evolving market conditions, it has been decided to discontinue the Medium Term and Long Term Government Deposit (MLTGD) components of the GMS w.e.f. March 26, 2025," the ministry said.

The Short-Term Bank Deposits (STBD) offered by the banks under GMS shall continue at the discretion of the individual banks based on the commercial viability as assessed by them. The detailed guidelines of Reserve Bank in this regard shall follow.

Torres Scam

Accused encouraged cash investments

Mumbai: The accused in the multi-crore Torres scam offered two per cent higher returns on cash and avoided accepting investments online so that they could misappropriate the funds easily, the charge sheet filed by the city police has said.

Investors were also encouraged to buy moissanite stones and gold/silver jewelry through cash, claimed the charge sheet, filed before a local court a few days ago.

The company also offered attractive gifts such as flats, cars, mobile phones and television sets to entice customers, it said.

A two per cent higher rate of return was offered for cash investments to facilitate misappropriation of invested funds, the charge sheet said, adding online payments were avoided on pretexts such as a slow Internet connection or network issues.

Platinum Hern Pvt Ltd, owner of Torres brand, is accused of cheating around 14,000 investors of at least Rs 142 crore through a combination of Ponzi and multi-level marketing (MLM) schemes.

The city police's Economic Offences Wing has so far arrested seven persons in the case.

The scam victims included a pani-puri stall owner, housewives, salaried persons and businesspersons.

The 27,000-page charge sheet was filed before the special Maharashtra Protection of Interest of Depositors Act court here.

Besides Platinum Hern Pvt Ltd, it named Tania alias Tazagul Xastova, Valentina Ganesh Kumar, Sarvesh Surve, Alpesh Khara, Tausif Riyaz, Armen Atian, Lallan Singh.

The charge sheet said that Platinum Hern trained its employees to provide attractive information to prospective investors before the firm's showroom was opened. These showrooms were equipped with expensive decorative items. "Additionally, they enticed customers by promising gifts like iPhones for purchases exceeding Rs 20 lakh, weekly lucky draws with prizes like gold and silver jewelry, televisions, scooters, Toyota cars and flats," the charge sheet said.

His lawyer informed the court that Mallick is a journalist and founder of Raftar, a digital news platform, and had requested to be discharged.

The investigating officer informed the court that his digital channel had posted



Police personnel detain a member of a Muslim organization protesting against the recent Nagpur violence in Mumbai on Tuesday.

Journalist jailed for anti-govt content

Karachi: A senior Pakistani journalist was on Tuesday sent to jail on a 14-day judicial remand in Karachi for allegedly airing anti-state content on his digital platform.

Farhan Mallick, arrested last week by the police from his residence, was produced before the Judicial Magistrate East in Karachi City Court.

His lawyer informed the court that Mallick is a journalist and founder of Raftar, a digital news platform, and had requested to be discharged.

The investigating officer informed the court that his digital channel had posted

anti-state videos. The court then asked the officer to specify which videos were involved and to show them. Additionally, the court inquired about the complainant in the case.

After hearing the arguments, the court sent Mallick to jail on 14 days of judicial remand and issued notices regarding his bail application.

Mallick, a former news director at Samaa TV, was arrested on March 20 in Karachi. The next day, he was handed into the Federal Investigation Agency's custody for four days.

The FIR filed on March 20 against Mallick states

that he was involved in posting anti-state videos on his channel targeting dignitaries.

Any person found guilty of spreading such information could be sentenced to up to three years in prison or fined up to 2 million, or both under the new PECA act.

Media bodies and rights activists have slammed the arrest of Mallick and Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) leaders. The Sindh government has also come down hard on BYC leaders, who were arrested for trying to hold a protest outside the Karachi Press Club on Tuesday.

ETS launches TOEIC Link

New Delhi: Educational Testing Service, known for conducting crucial tests such as TOEFL and GRE, has launched in India an advanced online English proficiency test designed to meet the evolving needs of employers, universities and training.

TOEIC Link offers a flexible, fast and modular approach to assessing English skills, helping businesses streamline hiring processes and academic institutions better prepare students for global career opportunities.

"In today's professional landscape, organisations need an English assessment that is both reliable and adaptable. TOEIC Link offers a modern solution that delivers speed and flexibility while upholding the research-backed rigour that ETS is known for," said Ratnesh Jha, global general manager of institutional products at ETS.

For more than 45 years, the TOEIC programme has been the gold standard for workplace English assessments, taken by over 136 million test takers worldwide. TOEIC Link builds on this legacy, leveraging ETS research-driven expertise to deliver a modern, AI-secured and scalable testing solution.

SC deliberates on Disqualification Pleas

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday deliberated whether a high court could ask a legislative assembly speaker to act within a particular time to decide on the pleas seeking disqualification of lawmakers.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and Augustine George Masih was hearing arguments on the pleas raising the issue of alleged delay by the Telangana Assembly Speaker in deciding on the petitions seeking disqualification of some BRS MLAs who had defected to the Congress.

"We are not going into the merits of the matter. We are only on the question as to whether a high court can... when the speaker does not exercise his jurisdiction, direct the speaker to act in accordance with law within a particular period."

One of the pleas in the apex court has challenged the November 2024 verdict of the Telangana High Court in a matter concerning petitions seeking the disqualification of three BRS MLAs who joined the ruling Congress.

The other petition be-

fore the top court relates to the remaining seven legislators who defected.

A division bench of the high court had in November last year said the legislative assembly speaker must decide the disqualification petitions against the three MLAs within a "reasonable time".

The division bench had delivered its verdict on the appeals challenging the September 9, 2024 order of a single judge.

The single judge had directed the secretary of the Telangana Assembly to forthwith place the petition seeking disqualification before the Speaker for fixing a schedule of hearing within four weeks.

During the arguments on Tuesday, senior advocate C A Sundaram, appearing for BRS leader Padi Kaushik Reddy, said the basic question is whether a constitutional court has the power, authority and jurisdiction to require a constitutional authority to act as per constitutional mandate.

Justice Gavai observed that the Tenth Schedule was brought only to avoid 'Aaya Ram Gaya Ram'.

Rs 858 crore remains unutilized: Panel

New Delhi: The budgetary allocation of Rs 858 crore for pollution control in 2024-25 remains unutilized due to lack of approval from the Union Environment Ministry for the continuation of the scheme, a parliamentary panel has said in its report.

In the report tabled in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, the department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate

FUND FOR POLLUTION CONTROL

Change said air pollution has assumed "gigantic proportions", affecting not just Delhi but many other cities.

"In such a scenario, the committee is shocked to note that amount to the tune of Rs 858 crore allocated for 'Control of Pollution', which is 27.44 per cent of the annual revised allocation of the ministry, remains unutilized since the approval for continuation of Control of Pollution

Scheme till 2025-26 is awaited," the 31-member panel headed by BJP Rajya Sabha member Bhubaneswar Kalita said.

"At a time when the ministry is required to address the grave and critical challenge of deteriorating air quality, the ministry has not been able to decide the continuation of the concerned scheme, as a result of which not even 1 per cent of the funds allocated for the scheme have been



utilized so far," the panel said.

Under the 'Control of Pollution' scheme, the Centre provides financial assistance to pollution control boards/committees

and funding for the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) which aims to reduce particulate pollution in 131 highly polluted cities by 40 per cent by 2026 compared to 2019-20 levels.

The committee noted that rising pollution not only leads to various health issues but also harms the environment.

"The scenario of air pollution in the country is indeed very grim and has been affecting one and all," it said, recommending that the ministry take serious note of the reasons for this gross underutilization.

It also observed that while plantation drives are carried out frequently, the survival rate of these plants is very low. -PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Our water, our right. Tamil Nadu has taken a political stand before. We have approached the court and are confident of getting justice. Let them do what they want — one can obstruct court proceedings."



D K Shivakumar, Deputy CM, Karnataka

'Finance Bill offers unprecedented tax relief: Sitharaman

New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said the Finance Bill 2025 provides unprecedented tax relief, and the 13.14 per cent projected growth in personal income tax collection is "realistic" and supported by solid data.

Replying to the discussions on Finance Bill 2025 in the Lok Sabha, Sitharaman also said the customs duty rationalisation announced in the Budget will support manufacturing units, domestic value addition, promote exports, facilitate trade and also provide relief to the common people.

In the 2025-26 Budget, the government has hiked income tax rebate to Rs 12 lakh per annum from Rs 7 lakh earlier. For the salaried class, this rebate will be Rs 12.75 lakh per year after taking into account the standard deduction. The hike in I-T rebate will lead to tax foregone to the tune of Rs 1 lakh crore in FY26.

Sitharaman said the Budget also provides "marginal relief" under the Income Tax law for those taxpayers whose income exceeds Rs 12 lakh per annum by a small margin.

"The Finance Bill provides unprecedented tax relief to honour taxpayer... We have recognised the contribution of the middle



class," she said.

Buoyancy in personal income tax

Collections in personal income tax have shown considerable buoyancy in the last few years and they have been increasing around 20 per cent year-on-year, the minister added.

"For the year 2025-26, the personal income tax collection is projected at Rs 13.6 lakh crore. The Revised Estimates for 2024-25 is Rs 12.2 lakh crore. So, Rs 12.2 lakh crore is going to be Rs 13.6 lakh and this is done with a certain realistic calculation," Sitharaman said.

The personal I-T revenue is projected to grow by 13.14 per cent in FY26, after

taking into account a 7 per cent dip after factoring in the Rs 1 lakh crore revenue foregone.

"So, the projected collections for income tax for 2025-26 are based on solid data," Sitharaman added.

With regard to an amendment regarding the abolition of the 6 per cent Equalisation Levy on online advertisements, Sitharaman said it was done to address "uncertainty in the international economic conditions".

Boost to domestic production

Talking about Customs tariff rationalisation, she said the Budget 2025 aims to boost domestic production and enhance export

competitiveness by reducing duties on raw materials and inputs, making domestic products more cost-effective.

Taking forward the comprehensive review of the Customs rate structure announced in the July 2024 Budget, the Union Budget 2025-26 proposes to remove 7 customs tariff rates for industrial goods.

The two tranches of rationalisation of customs tariff carried out so far have reduced the number of tariff rates from 21 to 8, including 'zero' rated goods.

"Many Indian exports will become more competitive as the cost of imported inputs reduces," Sitharaman said.

'Nudge' campaign

The finance minister said the tax department carried out a 'nudge' campaign, asking taxpayers to voluntarily disclose their foreign income and assets. SMS and E-mails were sent to around 19,501 select taxpayers, asking them to review their Income Tax Returns filed for the AY 2024-25 based on information available on Income Tax of foreign deposits etc.

As a result of the campaign, out of 19,501 taxpayers, a total of 11,162 taxpayers revised their returns and filled Schedule Foreign Assets Form, declaring total assets of Rs 11,259.29 crore, disclosing foreign income of Rs 154.42 crore.

In addition to the above, 883 taxpayers revised their ITR and corrected their status from resident to non-resident in the revised return for AY 2024-25.

Due to this outreach, there was a 'ripple effect', which resulted in an additional 13,516 taxpayers declaring foreign assets of Rs 7,564 crore and foreign income of Rs 353 crore approximately in their revised ITR for AY 2024-25.

Cumulatively, this simple nudge resulted in the declaration of foreign assets worth Rs 29,208 crore and foreign income of Rs 1,089 crore in Schedule FA by 30,161 taxpayers, Sitharaman said.



Army jawans during the third day of the search operation following suspicious movements in the Hiranagar sector area in Kathua district on Tuesday.

Pic: PTI

Kolkata Doctor Rape and Murder

Victim was under acute mental stress

Kolkata: A consultant psychiatrist has claimed that the RG Kar hospital rape and murder victim was under acute mental stress for various reasons and had sought professional help from him around a month before her death on August 9 last year.

Long duty hours, discrimination in allotment of shifts, and the "knowledge about irregularities" in the state-run hospital had been giving the 30-year-old medic extreme mental discomfort, claimed psychiatrist Mohit Ranadip on Monday.

Talking to a leading Bengali TV channel, the mental health specialist said that if needed, he is ready to testify before the CBI, which investigated the rape-murder case.

"She had told me about 36 hours of continuous duty, discrimination in allotment of shifts in the roster, and the acute mental pressure she was in as she had seen many irregulari-

ties in the purchase of medicines and medical equipment. I asked her if everyone was given similar shifts, she replied in the negative," Ranadip said. The psychiatrist said he had given the post-graduate trainee (PGT) certain advice and she was supposed to return for follow-up counselling. "However that could not happen," Ranadip said.

The parents of the woman and a section of her colleagues had earlier claimed that she was being victimised for pointing out certain improprieties in the purchase of medicines and equipment by the hospital which she had stumbled across during her duty hours.

Dr Sandip Ghosh, the principal of the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital when the crime took place, was arrested in connection with the alleged financial irregularities in the medical establishment.

Several leaders of the ruling Trinamool Congress had repeatedly stressed that the party wanted a comprehensive probe by the CBI, a central agency.

However, the party also alleged that the Left and certain groups were levelling false charges against the ruling establishment to malign the state government and the health service doctors.

The Calcutta High Court on Monday directed the CBI to produce the case diary related to its investigation into the rape-murder case on the next date of hearing.

The court asked whether the central agency was considering the possibility of gang rape or the destruction of evidence in its probe.

The doctor's body was discovered in the seminar room of the state-run hospital in north Kolkata on August 9, 2024.

-PTI

'Targeted with insulting references'

CLAIMS MUSLIM MLA; SEEKS PROTECTION FROM SPEAKER

Gandhinagar: Lone Muslim MLA in the Gujarat Assembly, Imran Khedawala, has sought protection from the Speaker alleging "insulting references" were made about him by some members of BJP while referring to him as a person from a "particular community".

Following this, Speaker Shankar Chaudhary advised all legislators to refrain from making personal references and appealed to ministers and MLAs to respect each other.

Khedawala, who represents the Jamalpur constituency in Ahmedabad city, on Monday, asked the status of a proposed over-bridge whose alignment passes through Muslim-dominated Juhapura and Sarkhej areas.

He sought information about the bridge work schedule through a supplementary question.

Minister of State Jagdish Vishwakarma replied, saying he needed Khedawala's help in the completion of the work "as there are more than 700 non-veg lorries, shops, ki-

osks, more than 1,200 rickshaws, and around 11 garages of a particular community illegally encroaching the area".

He said around six religious encroachments of "a particular community" also exist.

The minister further said Khedawala's "unauthorised" office in Jamalpur was recently razed.

"Whenever the state government demolishes encroachments, Opposition members conspire to defame the government with political malaise. Whenever we remove encroachments, members of Congress conspire to defame the government intending to be visible on social media and TV (channels)."

"When the government removes encroachments, please support it and do not prevent it," he said.

Khedawala denied that his office was unauthorised and offered to show legal documents.

After question hour, he raised the Point of Order in the House.

-PTI

'Saugat-e-Modi' kit to Muslims

Lucknow: The minority front of the Uttar Pradesh BJP will distribute a kit named 'Saugat-e-Modi' to 32 lakh poor Muslims on the occasion of Eid.

The kit will contain clothes along with vermicelli ('sevaiyan'), sugar, dry fruits and women's clothes.

BJP UP Minority Morcha president Kunwar Basit Ali told 'PTI-Bhasha' on Tuesday that the morcha will distribute a kit of essential items for the festival to 32 lakh poor Muslims across the country on the occasion of Eid.

Ali said this campaign started on Tuesday. Under this, the functionaries of Minority Morcha will contact 32,000 mosques and after getting information from there, will provide 'Saugat-e-Modi' kit to 100-100 poor Muslims of the respective areas on the occasion of Eid.

He said the purpose of this initiative is to give poor Muslim families a chance to celebrate Eid. This is in line with the BJP's spirit of Antyodaya, he said.

Ali said the party has always worked with the spirit of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and this initiative is also a step taken in the same direction.



Lawyers shout slogans during their protest against the alleged murder of an advocate, at the Telangana Assembly in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

Pic: PTI

Probe into fracas at Youtuber's house

Chennai: The Tamil Nadu Police CB-CID wing will probe the incident of a group barging into popular Youtuber and political activist, 'Savukku' Shankar's house here and pouring sewage, the DGP's office has said.

The move comes in the wake of Shankar making "certain allegations against the Greater Chennai Police and the Commissioner of Police," in an interview, a release from the office of Director General of Police, Shankar Jiwal, said.

"Hence, the Commissioner of Police, Greater Chennai Police requested for transferring the aforementioned CSR to any other agency for enquiry. Based on the request, the

petition in G-3 Kilpauk Police Station CSR No 118/2025 has been transferred to CBCID for further enquiry," the release from the Head of Police Force (HoPF) said.

On Monday, 'Savukku' Shankar's residence here was targeted by a group of persons who allegedly dumped "sewage and human faeces" inside the house, a move that resulted in widespread criticism, including from ruling DMK ally, the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK).

Shankar, is a vocal critic of the ruling DMK in the state.

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami, BJP Tamil Nadu President K Anna-

malai, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi top leader Thol Thirumavalavan, MDMK chief Vaiko and actor-politician Vijayal Tamizhaga Vettri Kazhagam general secretary N Anand had strongly condemned the incident and sought tough action against the perpetrators of the crime.

On the trigger to the incident, Shankar had claimed that in December 2024 he exposed "corruption" vis-a-vis the use of 230 vehicles, provided under a government scheme, for sewage clearance related tasks and a top Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) leader had a key role in facilitating corruption and receipt of kickbacks.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Two organisations of the Hurriyat, J&K People's Movement and the Democratic Political Movement, have announced the severing of all ties with separatism. I welcome this step towards strengthening Bharat's unity."



Amit Shah, Union Minister, Home

Red Fort: SC disposes PIL for conservation

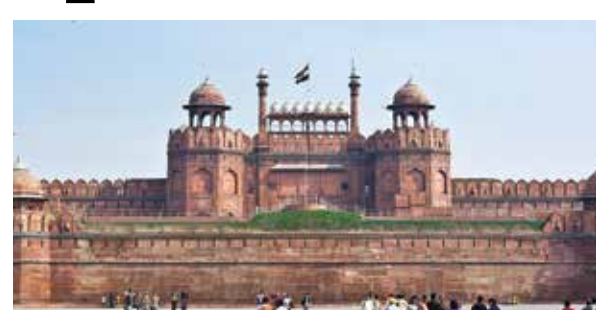
New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday disposed of an over-two-decade-old PIL seeking the restoration and conservation of the 17th-century Mughal-era monument, Red Fort, saying that its expert panel has complied with most of the directions.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh disposed of the plea filed by petitioner Rajeev Sethi in 2003, claiming that the conservation of the monument was not done as per the international standard.

The top court noted that on August 6, 2004, it constituted a nine-member panel comprising the Director General of Archeological Survey of India.

"Since then, 20 years have passed and we have no reason to believe that the expert committee has not complied with the directions of the court... if anything has not been done or if anything has been left out, the petitioner has the liberty to move the court with a fresh petition," the bench said.

The top court said that



in August 2004, the court not only constituted an expert panel but also issued comprehensive directions for the conservation of the monument.

The bench told advocate

keeping the petition pending for so long.

In 2004, while constituting a nine-member panel, the top court had asked it to ensure that a comprehensive conservation management plan, in accordance with internationally accepted principles, was drawn up and take appropriate steps for the conservation and restoration of the monument.

In November 2003, the top court appointed senior advocate Harish Salve as amicus curiae for assisting the court in the matter and

to inspect the renovation and restoration work by the Archaeological Survey of India at the monument.

The top court had also asked Salve to verify the allegations of the petitioner that the restoration and conservation work done at Red Fort was not up to international norms.

It had asked Salve to visit the Red Fort along with the then Solicitor General Kirit Raval and petitioner's advocate Kapil Sibal and furnish the report.

-PTI

India's FY26 GDP growth forecast cut to 6.5 pc

New Delhi: S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday cut India's GDP growth projections to 6.5 per cent for the next fiscal as it expects that economies in the APAC region will feel the strain of rising US tariffs and pushback on globalisation.

In its Economic Outlook for Asia-Pacific (APAC), S&P said despite these external strains, it expects domestic demand momentum to remain solid in most emerging-market economies.

"India's GDP will grow 6.5 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, we expect. Our forecast is the same as the outcome for the previous fiscal year, but less than our earlier forecast of 6.7 per cent," S&P said.

The forecast assumes that the upcoming monsoon season will be normal and that commodity—especially crude—prices will be soft.

Cooling food inflation, the tax benefits announced in the country's budget for the fiscal year ending March 2026, and lower borrowing costs will support discretionary consumption in India, S&P said.

The global credit rating agency expects central banks in the Asia Pacific region to continue cutting benchmark interest rates through this year.

"The Reserve Bank of India will cut interest



Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Budget session of Parliament in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Pic: PTI

rates by another 75 bp-100 bp in the current cycle, we project. Easing food inflation and lower crude prices will move headline inflation closer to the central bank target of 4 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 2026 and fiscal policy is contained," S&P said.

Last month, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reduced the repo rate by 25 basis points from 6.50 per cent to 6.25 per cent in its monetary policy review.

S&P said Asia-Pacific economies will feel the strain of rising US tariffs specifically and a pushback on globalisation more generally.

However, we see domestic demand momentum broadly holding up, especially in the region's emerging-market

economies "Given the volume of policy measures and external pressures hitting Asia-Pacific, the robustness of our forecasts underscores the resilience of the regional economies," it added.

S&P said that the Donald Trump administration in the US is changing economic policy in key areas.

Domestically, immigration reduction, deregulation and cuts to taxes and government spending are in focus.

Externally, US import tariffs are rising across the board. So far the new US government has imposed an additional 20 per cent tariff on imports from China; 25 per cent levies on some imports from Canada and Mexico, with levies on other prod-

ucts postponed for a month; and a global 25 per cent tariff on steel and aluminium.

The US has also announced an intention to impose "reciprocal tariffs" and tariffs on cars, semiconductors and pharmaceuticals.

In our view, the import tariffs will lower growth in the US and abroad, and raise US inflation.

"We now expect the US Federal Reserve to cut its policy rate by 25 basis points (bp) only one time in 2025, in the end, and make three such cuts in 2026.

"The heightened uncertainty about US economic policy and its impact, notably around tariffs, is weighing on investment in the US and elsewhere," S&P said.

-PTI

BNMC approves Rs 1,097.49 cr budget

Thane: The Bhiwandi-Nizampur Municipal Corporation (BNMC) in Maharashtra's Thane district has approved a budget of Rs 1,097.49 crore for the financial year 2025-26, with key allocations for city development and infrastructure.

The budget was approved on Monday by municipal commissioner Anmol Sagar, who is also the administrator, as the five-year term of the corporation has already ended.

Sagar emphasised the need for a balanced approach to revenue generation and development projects, with a strong focus on urban improvement and civic amenities.

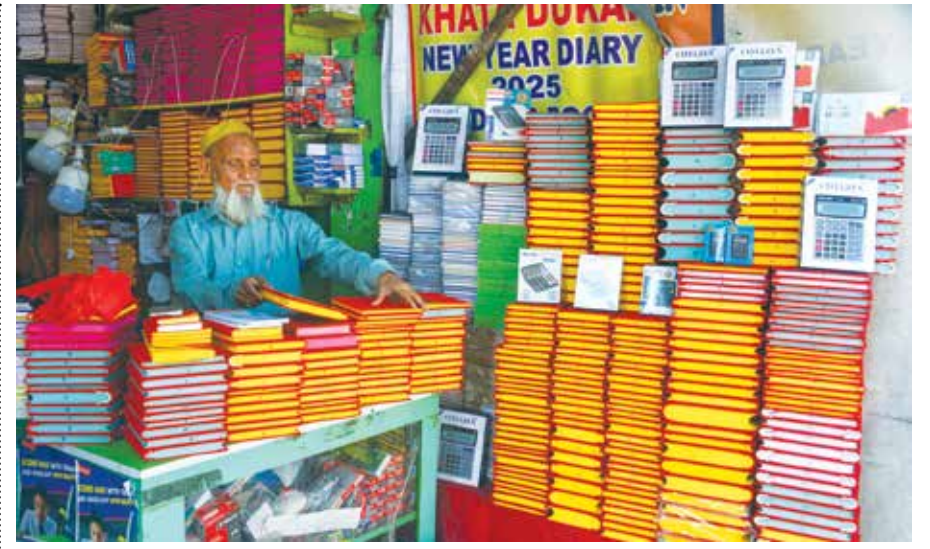
He highlighted the administration's efforts to raise funds through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in line with the 100-day action plan.

The civic body expects to garner Rs 398.78 crore in Goods and Services Tax (GST), Rs 97.96 crore in property and water taxes, a development fund of Rs 15.30 crore, and other income sources totalling Rs 90.37 crore.

The BNMC has made significant allocations, including Rs 201.43 crore for water supply, Rs 108.82 crore for public works, Rs 38.69 crore for health services, and Rs 2.05 crore for garden maintenance.

To boost revenue, the administration plans to intensify efforts toward property tax collection, which has been a previously neglected source of income.

In the healthcare sector, outpatient services have begun at BGP Hospital.



A seller arranges a ledger books at his shop in Siliguri in West Bengal ahead of the start of the new financial year.

Pic: PTI

Trade Talks With US 'India must be cautious'

New Delhi: India must be cautious while negotiating the proposed bilateral trade agreement with the US, as the absence of Fast Track Trade Authority in America makes any pact vulnerable to Congressional changes, economic think tank GTRI said on Tuesday.

It also said that the certification process allows the US to effectively re-negotiate the trade agreement after it is signed, demanding domestic legal changes, regulatory reforms, and policy shifts that could undermine India's sovereignty.

"As negotiations continue, the path forward demands not only diplomatic skill but also vigilance against legal asymmetries embedded in America's trade playbook," Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

Without the Fast Track Authority in place and with the precedent of post-agreement certification allowing the US to impose

additional demands, the

risk of asymmetric obligations is real, he added.

The US Fast Track Trade Authority (also known as Trade Promotion Authority) is a special mechanism that allows the American President to negotiate trade agreements and present them to Congress for an up-or-down vote, without amendments or procedural delays.

This authority has historically played a key role in finalising and approving FTAs (Free Trade Agreements) swiftly, having enabled major agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Srivastava said that however, since 2021, this authority has lapsed and has not been renewed and without this authority, any trade agreement negotiated by the US President is exposed to Congressional scrutiny, possible amendments, delays, or outright rejection.

He added that even more concerning for India is the US's post-FTA certification mechanism, a practice

where America unilaterally determines whether a partner country has fulfilled its obligations under the agreement.

The agreement does not enter into force until the US issues this certification, which historically has been used to pressure countries into making additional legal and policy changes not specified in the original FTA text, Srivastava said.

"These two factors create serious uncertainty. They can allow the US to change the deal later or demand more than what was originally agreed. India must proceed with caution as it negotiates its FTA with the US. The absence of the authority exposes any finalised agreement to unpredictable legislative intervention in Washington," he said.

Amid US President Donald Trump's plan to impose reciprocal tariffs on April 2, Indian and American officials will start formal talks on the proposed trade agreement from Wednesday here.

-PTI

Flammable devices found at Tesla dealership



Austin: Austin police said they're investigating several incendiary devices found at a Tesla dealership on Monday on the city's north side, the latest in a series of events targeting the company owned by billionaire Elon Musk.

Austin police responding to a report of hazardous materials found the devices and called in the city's bomb squad, which took them into police custody without incident, the department said in an email to The Associated Press.

There were no reports of injuries or damage.

"This is an open and ongoing investigation, and there is no further infor-

mation available for release at this time," the department said.

Attacks on property carrying the logo of Elon Musk's electric-car company are cropping up across the US and overseas, along with protests nationwide in response to the billionaire's work with the Donald Trump administration cutting federal funding and the workforce.

On Saturday, a man drove his car into protesters outside a Tesla dealership in Palm Beach County, Florida. No one was injured, and the man was arrested on an assault complaint.

In California, police said

a counter-protester was arrested on Saturday after activating a stun gun during an anti-Musk demonstration outside a Tesla dealership near downtown Berkeley. Nobody was hurt. The 33-year-old man was awaiting charges on Monday.

Several more cases of violence targeting Tesla include cybertrucks being set on fire in Seattle and shots fired at a dealership in Oregon. Tesla showrooms, vehicle lots, charging stations and privately owned cars also have been targeted.

FBI Director Kash Patel said on Monday that the bureau is taking steps to crack down on an "increase in violent activity toward Tesla".

The agency has created a task force to coordinate investigative efforts into the attacks with officials at the bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, an FBI spokesman said in a social media post.

"This is domestic terrorism. Those responsible will be pursued, caught, and brought to justice," Patel said in a post on X.

-AP



A researcher at Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai, that is contributing to groundbreaking studies aimed at advancing healthcare solutions for Goa's Longitudinal Cohort Study.

Pic: PTI

Mandatory quality norms for hinges

New Delhi: The government has issued mandatory quality norms for hinges to curb the import of sub-standard goods and boost domestic manufacturing of these goods, according to a notification.

The Hinges (Quality Control) Order, 2025 was issued in this regard by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on March 21, this year.

Under these orders, items cannot be produced, sold, traded, imported and stocked unless they bear the Bureau of Indian

Standards (BIS) mark.

The notification said this order would not apply on these goods manufactured domestically for exports; and up to 200 articles imported for the purpose of research and development by manufacturers of hinges per year with the condition that such items would not be sold commercially.

"Any person who contravenes the provisions of this order shall be punishable under the provisions of the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016," it said, adding the order will

be implemented from July 1, 2025.

Violation of the provision of the BIS Act can attract imprisonment of up to two years or a fine of at least Rs 2 lakh for the first offence. In case of second and subsequent offences, the fine will increase to a minimum of Rs 5 lakh and extend up to 10 times the value of goods or articles.

Various initiatives, including the development of QCO, are being undertaken by the department to develop quality sensitisation among users and manufacturers alike.

AI-powered camera surveillance system

New Delhi: Vedanta group firm Hindustan Zinc Ltd on Tuesday said it has deployed an advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered camera surveillance system across its operations in order to enhance the workplace security.

By leveraging the advanced AI-powered surveillance system Detect AI, the company is enhancing workplace safety, eliminating manual intervention and augmenting operational efficiency.

This solution "ensures workplace safety, operational efficiency and compliance monitoring," it said in a statement.

The safety monitoring system integrates with existing IoT (Internet of Things)-enabled surveillance infrastructure thereby reducing the need for manual intervention.

Utilising real-time image

and video analytics, deep learning models, and edge computing, it autonomously detects unsafe industrial practices such as non-adherence to protective equipment guidelines, unauthorised personnel access, and work-at-height protocols. The system categorises these non-compliances using predictive analytics and triggers automated alerts via cloud-based AI inference engines thereby generating comprehensive data-driven insights.

"...we have embedded technological excellence and automation into our operations to power ahead on the path of sustainable and responsible growth. It is our vision to eliminate manual intervention and automate our processes with advanced technologies..." Hindustan Zinc CEO Arun Misra said.

-PTI



India, Singapore to enhance Digital Shipping Corridor

By Gurdip Singh

Singapore: India and Singapore on Tuesday signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) for Green and Digital Shipping Corridor (GDSC), with a focus on digitalisation and decarbonisation.

The Singapore-India GDSC, when established, will enhance collaboration from both countries and help accelerate the development and uptake of zero or near-zero GHG emission technologies and the adoption of digital solutions, a joint release from Mari-

time and Port Authority of Singapore and Ministry of Ports, Shipping and

The minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal said his visit to Singapore with a high-level marine sector delegation will strengthen the long-standing relationship.

Moreover, the "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" will deepen and broaden cooperation between the two countries, he noted.

Sonowal is on a three-day visit to Singapore and



is attending the maritime week which is expected to see participation from 20,000 delegates and exhibitors from around the world.

Under the LoI, both

malising the partnership through a memorandum of understanding on a Singapore-India GDSC.

The LoI was signed by R Lakshmanan, Joint Secretary in the MoPSW and Waterways and Teo Eng Din, Chief Executive of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore.

The LoI signing in Singapore was witnessed by Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State for Sustainability and the Environment of Singapore and Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda

Sonowal.

Since 2022, the GDSC has grown to include over 28 stakeholders across the maritime, energy and finance value chains.

"These initiatives reaffirm Singapore's commitment to working with like-minded partners to advance maritime digital innovation and decarbonisation," Khor said at the signing of LoI on the second day of the Singapore Maritime Week.

The maritime week is being held from March 24-28.

Sonowal.

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"These initiatives reaffirm Singapore's commitment to working with like-minded partners to advance maritime digital innovation and decarbonisation," Khor said at the signing of LoI on the second day of the Singapore Maritime Week.

The maritime week is being held from March 24-28.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Businesses willing to transform to fill the customer service gap and meet rising demands for speed, personalisation, and efficiency have a critical choice to make-- embrace AI-driven efficiency or risk losing customer loyalty."



Sumeet Mathur, Senior Vice President & MD, ServiceNow India

-PTI

US-Yemen Conflict

Trump officials face backlash for leaking plans

Washington: Top national security officials for US President Donald Trump, including his defence secretary, texted war plans for upcoming military strikes in Yemen to a group chat in a secure messaging app that included the editor-in-chief for The Atlantic, the magazine reported in a story posted online.

The National Security Council said the text chain "appears to be authentic".

Trump initially told reporters he was not aware that the highly sensitive information had been shared, two-and-a-half hours after it was reported. He later appeared to joke about the breach.

The material in the text chain "contained operational details of forthcoming strikes on Iran-backed Houthi-rebels in Yemen, including information

about targets, weapons the US would be deploying, and attack sequencing", editor-in-chief Jeffrey Goldberg reported.

It was not immediately clear if the specifics of the military operation were classified, but they often are and at the least are kept secure to protect service members and operational security.

The US has conducted airstrikes against the Houthis since the militant group began targeting commercial and military vessels in the Red Sea in November 2023.

Just two hours after Goldberg received the details of the attack on March 15, the US began launching a series of airstrikes against Houthi targets in Yemen. The National Security Council said in a statement that it was looking



into how a journalist's number was added to the chain in Signal group chat.

In addition to Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, it included Vice-President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Tulsi Gabbard, Trump's director of national intelligence.

Goldberg said he received the Signal invitation from Mike Waltz, Trump's national security advisor, who was also in the group chat.

Hegseth in his first comments on the matter attacked Goldberg as "deceitful" and a "discredited so-called journalist" without offering further explanation. He did not shed light on why Signal was being used to discuss the sensitive operation or how Goldberg ended up on the message chain.

Row over Pro-Palestinian parking spot design

NY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SUES DISTRICT FOR PAINTING OVER HER PRO-PALESTINIAN PARKING SPOT DESIGN

New York: A New York student is suing after high school officials painted over a parking spot that she had decorated with a watermelon slice -- a symbol of support for Palestinians.

The lawsuit filed this month in Brooklyn's federal court argues that the Half Hollow Hills Central School District violated the student's free speech rights and inflicted emotional trauma on her when it painted over her design in September, just days into the new school year.

The student, who is identified in the suit by the pseudonym Jane Khan, had joined other classmates in decorating her parking spot -- an annual tradition at Half Hollow Hills High School West -- located on Long Island.

The senior painted a watermelon slice featuring a keffiyeh scarf-like pattern, followed by the phrase "Peace Be Upon You" and her name written in Arabic. The student is described as a Muslim American of Pakistani descent.

"Ms Khan's inclusion of the watermelon with a keffiyeh design was an expression of her solidarity with Palestinians -- something she feels arises in part from her Muslim identity and Pakistani heritage."

Israeli strikes on Gaza kill 23 people overnight

Deir Al-Balah: Palestinian medics said Israeli strikes killed at least 23 people in the Gaza Strip overnight into Tuesday.

Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip killed more than 65 Palestinians over the past day, including women and children, the Gaza Health Ministry said.

The dead include three children and their parents, who were killed in a strike on their tent near the southern city of Khan Younis, according to Nasser Hospital, which has received a flood of dead and wounded since Israel resumed heavy bombardment of Gaza last week,

shattering the ceasefire that had halted the 17-month war.

Israel's campaign in Gaza has killed more than 50,000 Palestinians and wounded more than 113,000, according to the Health Ministry, which does not say how many were civilians or combatants. Israel says it has killed around 20,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Israel launched the campaign vowing to destroy Hamas after its October 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel, in which militants killed some 1,200 people and abducted 251.

Oscar-winning director attacked

Jerusalem: Israeli settlers beat up one of the Palestinian co-directors of the Oscar-winning documentary film "No Other Land" on Monday in the occupied West Bank before he was detained by the Israeli military, according to two of his fellow directors and other witnesses.

The filmmaker -- Hamdan Ballal -- was one of three Palestinians detained in the village of Susiya, according to attorney Leah Tsemmel.

Police told her they're being held at a military base for medical treatment and she said she hasn't been able to speak with them.

US senator jailed for soliciting minor

St Paul: A US judge on Monday blocked the release of a former Minnesota state senator charged with soliciting a minor, after prosecutors levelled fresh allegations that he tried to obstruct the FBI's investigation from jail.

US magistrate judge Shannon Elkins ruled that Justin Eichorn should remain jailed instead of being released to a halfway house on Tuesday as previously scheduled. A pretrial hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, when the issue will be addressed again.

Eichorn's attorneys didn't respond to voice-mails and emails from The Associated Press on Monday. Eichorn has not publicly commented since his arrest during a sting operation in Bloomington last Monday.

The 40-year-old former Republican lawmaker from Grand Rapids resigned after he was charged with attempted coercion and enticement of a minor to engage in prostitution, a felony that carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years.

In their motion to keep Eichorn in jail, prosecutors said they had learned that the former senator had arranged with a Grand Rapids woman -- identified only as 'Individual A' but described as a close associate -- to retrieve a computer and other items from the St Paul apartment where he lived alone during legislative sessions.

Prosecutors said both Eichorn and the woman had been warned that his calls from jail were not private and would be recorded.

-AP

Fresh US airstrikes in Yemen

Dubai: US airstrikes targeting Yemen's Houthi rebels pounded sites across the country into early Tuesday, with the group saying one attack in the capital killed at least two people and wounded more than a dozen others.

The American strikes on the rebels, who threaten maritime trade and Israel, entered their 10th day without any sign of stopping.

They are part of a campaign by US President Donald Trump targeting the rebel group while also trying to pressure Iran, the Houthis' main benefactor.

So far, the US has not offered any specifics on the sites it is striking, though Trump's National Security Advisor Mike Waltz claimed the attacks have "taken out key Houthi leadership, including their head missileer".

Fourth death in Alaska avalanche

Anchorage: A teenager has died after triggering an avalanche, the fourth person killed in snow slides in Alaska this month.

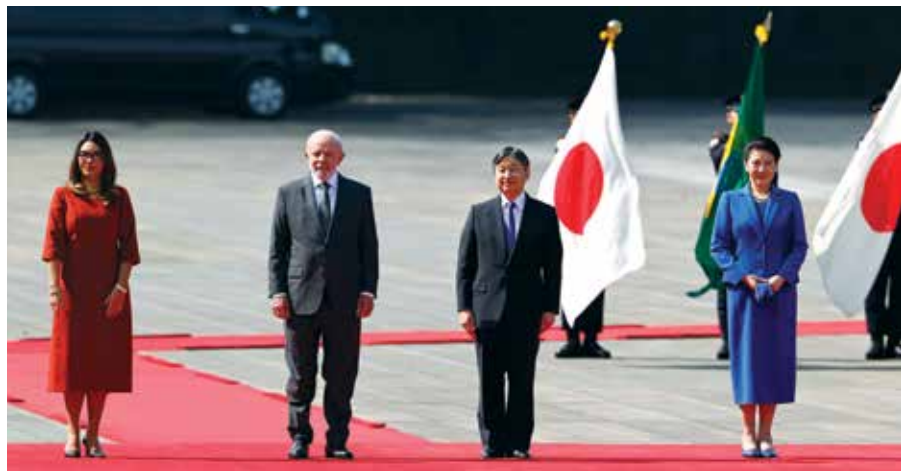
Alaska State Troopers said the body of 16-year-old Tucker Challan of Soldotna was recovered from the avalanche on Sunday by the Alaska Mountain Rescue Group.

Troopers said a group of snowmachiners were riding on Saturday on the backside of Seattle Ridge in Turnagain Pass, a popular winter recreation area about 97 km southeast of Anchorage.

"Witnesses said a juvenile male triggered an avalanche and died after being buried," troopers said in a statement.

Challan was buried about 10-feet deep in the slide that measured about 500-feet wide, said Wendy Wagner, director of the Chugach National Forest Avalanche Center.

Conditions are worrisome because a weak layer is located about 3-feet beneath the snow surface, with newer snow falling on top of the weak layer.



Brazilian first lady Rosangela da Silva, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Japanese Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako at a welcoming ceremony in Tokyo on Tuesday. Pic: AP/PTI

Renewed civil war in Sudan

United Nations: South Sudan is teetering on the edge of a renewed civil war, the top UN official in the world's youngest nation has warned, lamenting the government's sudden postponement of the latest peace effort.

Calling the situation unfolding in the country "dire", Nicolas Haysom said international efforts to broker a peaceful solution can only succeed if President Salva Kiir and his rival-turned-vice president, Riek Machar, are willing to engage "and put the interests of their people ahead of their own".

There were high hopes

when oil-rich South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 after a long conflict. But the country slid into a civil war in December 2013, largely based on ethnic divisions when forces loyal to Kiir, an ethnic Dinka, battled those loyal to Machar, an ethnic Nuer.

More than 40,000 people were killed in the war, which ended with a 2018 peace agreement that brought Kiir and Machar together in a government of national unity. Under the agreement, elections were supposed to be held in February 2023, but they were postponed until December 2024 -- and again until 2026.

The latest tensions stem from fighting in the country's north between government troops and a rebel militia, known as the White Army, which is widely believed to be allied with Machar.

Haysom, who heads the nearly 18,000-member UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan, warned that a relapse into open war would lead to the same horrors that ravaged the country, especially in 2013 and 2016. He said the UN takes the threat of the "ethnic transformation" of the conflict very seriously.

Trump's manager sues Daily Beast

Washington: The co-manager of US President Donald Trump's successful 2024 campaign has sued the Daily Beast for defamation over stories regarding how much he was paid for his work.

The lawsuit on behalf of Chris LaCivita said the online publication's stories that he was paid USD 22 million over two years -- later corrected to USD 19.2 million -- "created the false impression that LaCivita was personally profiting excessively from his work for the campaign and that he was prioritising personal gain over the campaign's success".

The Daily Beast said it stood by its reporting, calling the lawsuit "meritless and a transparent attempt to intimidate the Beast and silence the independent press".

Celebrity attorney Mark Geragos is representing LaCivita in the lawsuit, filed in the US District Court in Richmond, Virginia. The filing was first reported by Axios. The case continues a trend of aggressive action taken against the news media.

Putin gifts Trump personalised portrait

Moscow: A painting of Donald Trump hanging with other presidential portraits at the Colorado state Capitol will be taken down after the US president claimed that it was "purposefully distorted", according to a letter obtained by The Associated Press.

House Democrats said in a statement that the oil painting would be taken down at the request of Republican leaders in the Legislature. Colorado Republicans raised more



Senate Minority Leader

than USD 10,000 through a GoFundMe account to commission the oil painting, which was unveiled in 2019.

House Democrats said in a statement that the oil painting would be taken down at the request of Republican leaders in the Legislature. Colorado Republicans raised more

Paul Lundeen, a Republican, said he requested for Trump's portrait to be taken down and replaced by one "that depicts his contemporary likeness".

"If the GOP wants to spend time and money on which portrait of Trump hangs in the Capitol, that's up to them," the Democrats said.

The portrait was installed alongside other paintings of US presidents. Before the installation, a prankster placed a picture of Russian President Vladimir Putin near the spot intended for Trump.

Initially, people objected to artist Sarah Boardman's depiction of Trump as "nonconfrontational" and "thoughtful" in the portrait, according to an interview with Colorado Times Recorder from the time.

But in a Sunday night post on his Truth Social platform, Trump said he would prefer no picture at all over the one that hangs in the Colorado Capitol. The Republican lauded a nearby portrait of former President Barack Obama -- also by Boardman -- saying "he looks wonderful".

US holds separate talks with Russians

Dubai: US negotiators worked on a proposed partial ceasefire in the 3-year-old war in Ukraine on Monday, meeting representatives from Russia one day after holding separate talks with a team from Kyiv.

It has been a struggle to reach even a limited, 30-day ceasefire -- which Moscow and Kyiv agreed to in principle last week -- with both sides continuing to attack each other with drones and missiles.

One major sticking point is what targets would be off-limits to strike, even after US President Donald Trump spoke with the countries' leaders, because the parties disagree.

While the White House said "energy and infrastructure" would be covered, the Kremlin declared that the agreement referred more narrowly to "energy infrastructure." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said he would also like to see infrastructure like railways and ports protected.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The claim that white people were being persecuted in South Africa is a completely false narrative. We should challenge the completely false narrative that our country is a place in which people of a certain race or culture are being targeted."

Cyril Ramaphosa, President, South Africa



Bihar Diwas at Indian Consulate in New York

By Yoshita Singh

New York: The culture and heritage of Bihar was celebrated as diaspora from the state commemorated 'Bihar Diwas' during a special event here that also honoured four prominent members of the community for their outstanding achievements and contributions.

The Consulate General of India in New York, in collaboration with Bihar Foundation USA (East Coast Chapter) and the Bihar Jharkhand Associa-

tion of North America (BJANA), hosted 'Bihar Diwas 2025' Saturday, bringing together over 130 members of the Indian-American community to honour the state's heritage, progress and growing global presence, a press release by Bihar Foundation USA -- East Coast said.

On the occasion, four members of the Indian-American community from the state were honoured with the 'Bihar Vishwa Gaurav Samman' for their contributions.

The honourees were



Founder of Tiger Analytics Mahesh Kumar, awarded for advancing Bihar's IT and innovation ecosystem; Global Head of People at KPMG Dr. Abhishek Tiwary for empowering youth through leadership and opportunity creation. Managing Director at

Bank of America Sharad Kumar for his excellence in the financial sector and leadership within the diaspora and Agricultural Scientist Dr. Prakash Jha for leveraging technology to drive food security and uplift rural communities, the statement said.

The event included congratulatory messages from Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary.

Choudhary, who also serves as Chairman of Bihar Foundation, Patna, specifically acknowledged Mahesh Kumar for helping establish a strong IT presence in Patna and inspiring entrepreneurship in Bihar.

He emphasised that "NRIs must give back to their roots and work for their land."

Consul General of India in New York Binaya Pradhan spoke about Bihar's contributions to education, culture, and history -- mentioning icons such as Nalanda University, India's first president Dr Rajendra Prasad and Aryabhata.

Bihar Foundation Patna CEO Kundan Kumar reaffirmed the organisation's strong commitment to the welfare of the global Bihar diaspora. He announced the establishment of a dedicated grievance cell to address issues faced by Non-Resident Indians.

EDITORIAL

Defiling History

Maharashtra reveres Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj not merely as a historical figure but as an eternal symbol of valour, governance and justice whose deeds continue to guide the state even today. To insult his legacy is to strike at the very soul of the state. Yet, individuals like Prashant Koratkar, a former journalist, seem determined to do just that when he allegedly demeaned the iconic 17th century Maratha warrior-king with crass and offensive remarks under the guise of historical debate.

Koratkar was arrested in Telangana after he was accused of making derogatory and abusive statements about Shivaji in a phone call to historian Indrajit Sawant. The sheer audacity of his language, rather than any intellectual argument, is what set off the backlash. Far from engaging in scholarly discussion, he apparently resorted to crude insults, sparking protests from outraged citizens who rightly demanded accountability. His defenders will cry foul about free speech, but speech that deliberately provokes and offends the deeply held sentiments of millions is not intellectual discourse but is tantamount to incitement. (Koratkar has claimed his voice in the clip was doctored).

Koratkar's statements form part of a disturbing trend where historical figures of immense cultural significance are demeaned under the pretext of revisionism. Actor Rahul Solapurkar recently found himself embroiled in controversy for belittling Shivaji's legendary escape from Agra. Such provocations do not emerge from a genuine desire for historical truth but from a deep-seated contempt for a past that continues to inspire pride among many.

Shivaji Maharaj was not merely a warrior but a visionary leader who laid the foundation for Swarajya (self-rule) that resisted the Mughals' imperial domination. His governance model, military tactics and inclusive administration stand as hallmarks of his greatness. He was no mere regional king but a statesman who changed the course of Indian history. To tarnish his image with cheap insults is to betray the legacy of a leader who fought for justice and self-respect.

Critics argue that the Maharashtra government's crackdown on Koratkar is excessive. But when a public figure spews vitriol against an icon so revered, the state cannot remain passive. Law and order must extend beyond protecting physical assets to also safeguard the dignity of the past. The protests in Jalna and elsewhere reflect not just anger but a collective demand for respect.

Freedom of speech is a fundamental right, but with rights come responsibilities. One cannot hide behind liberty while wilfully maligning a leader who remains the pride of Maharashtra. There is a difference between academic debate and deliberate provocation. Maharashtra has always been a land of progressive thought, where even its most revered figures have been discussed and analysed. But insults and crude statements are merely attempts to court controversy at the expense of a state's heritage.

Maharashtra must remain vigilant against those who seek to undermine its history through disrespect and distortion. If there are new interpretations of history to be made, let them be rooted in research and scholarship, not in the reckless words of those seeking notoriety. The legacy of Shivaji Maharaj is not up for slander, nor should it be.

NATIONALISM FIRST

Time for Atonement: Veer Savarkar and the Stolen Legacy of a Patriot

By
Rajeev Puri

On February 10, 1949, a special court exonerated Vinayak Damodar Savarkar of any involvement in the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. Yet, history has not been as kind. The mere inclusion of his name in the case, despite a lack of evidence, remains a travesty of justice, one that casts a long shadow over his political career and deprived India of an influential voice.

The Gandhi assassination trial, which began on May 27, 1948, and lasted eight months, resulted in the sentencing of nine individuals. Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte were sentenced to death, four others received life imprisonment, one was given a seven-year term, and another was acquitted due to lack of evidence. The only person who managed to evade legal repercussions was Digambar Badge, who turned approver. Savarkar's arrest and subsequent acquittal should have been the end of the matter. However, his political marginalization continued well beyond the trial.

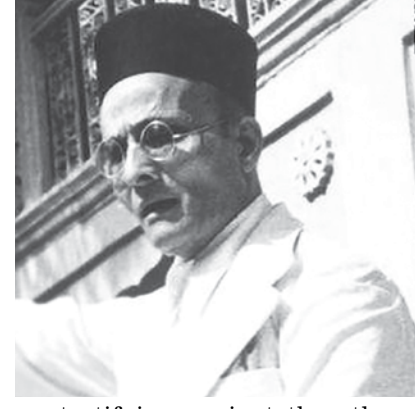
As India reassesses its history, justice demands acknowledging Savarkar's contributions to the freedom struggle and the injustices he endured over Gandhi's assassination.

Dr. Pankaj Phadnis, a Savarkarite, has argued before the Supreme Court that the trial was, in fact, a 'mistrial.' He contends that Savarkar was falsely implicated in a political conspiracy aimed at sidelining him. The timing of his arrest and the lack of substantial evidence to prove his involvement in the plot lend some weight to this argument. Savarkar was a vocal critic of what he termed 'distorted secularism,' advocating for equal treatment of majority and minority communities. He also opposed the transfer of Rs. 55 crores to Pakistan, warning that it would be used against India. His vision for an assertive India included sending 10,000 young men to the United States for military training and another 10,000 to develop a scientific temperament—an agenda that, if realized, could have reshaped India's strategic landscape.

The aftermath of his acquittal was no less punitive. He was arrested again in 1949 and released only after agreeing not to contest the 1952 elections. A man whose ideological clarity and vision could have contributed significantly to Indian politics was silenced, leaving a vacuum that was never quite filled. He passed away in 1966, never again holding an electoral post.

The assassination of Gandhi was a carefully plotted act, orchestrated by a motley group of men, each with their own grievances and motivations. Nathuram Godse, a former editor of the Hindu Rashtra, was transformed from a mild-mannered writer into a radical Hindu nationalist after his early interactions with Savarkar in Ratnagiri. Narayan Apte, his close associate, was an ex-Indian Air Force officer who shared Godse's ideological fervour.

Other figures involved included Vishnu Karkare, who dedicated himself to aiding Hindu-Sikh refugees in Ahmednagar, and Gopal Godse, Nathuram's younger brother, who was swept up in his brother's radicalism. Digambar Badge, an arms dealer, was initially a co-conspirator but later turned approv-



er, testifying against the others. Shankar Kistya, Badge's servant, had little understanding of the plot but was caught in its web. Madanlal Pahwa, a refugee from West Punjab, had seen Muslim atrocities firsthand, while Dr. Sadashiv Parchure played a key role in procuring the Beretta pistol that fired the fatal shots.

The conspiracy took shape as Gandhi's perceived 'Muslim appeasement' policies enraged the plotters. His fast to pressure the Indian government into transferring Rs. 55 crores to Pakistan was the final straw. On January 20, 1948, an initial assassination attempt at Birla House failed. Pahwa detonated a bomb to create chaos, but the others were unable to execute their plan in the ensuing melee. The police's inefficiencies allowed them to escape and regroup.

On January 30, they struck again. Gandhi, as was his custom, had no security checks for visitors. Godse entered first, followed later by Apte and Karkare. As Gandhi walked towards his evening prayer meeting, Godse stepped forward, folded his hands in greeting, and fired three shots. Gandhi collapsed. Witnesses were divided on whether he uttered his famous last words, "Hey Ram." What is undisputed is that Godse raised his hands and called for the police, eager to prove that his act was deliberate, rational and ideological.

The police, under Bombay's Chief Minister Morarji Desai and Police Chief

Jamshed Nagarvala, moved swiftly. Savarkar's house was raided, and thousands of letters and documents were seized, but no evidence directly linked him to the assassination. However, Badge's testimony that he overheard Savarkar telling Godse and Apte, "Yashasvi houn ya" (Come back victorious), became the cornerstone of the prosecution's case against him. Gopal Godse, in later interviews, revealed that Badge had been tortured into naming Savarkar.

Despite the shaky foundation of the case, Savarkar was dragged through the legal process. In Judge Atmacharan's verdict on February 10, 1949, Savarkar was acquitted due to lack of evidence. Godse and Apte were sentenced to death, while others received varying degrees of imprisonment. The only person visibly distressed by the verdict was Badge, the betrayer.

Justice G.D. Khosla, one of India's most respected jurists, later remarked that had the trial been decided by a jury, Godse might have been found not guilty, given the public sentiment at the time. The real injustice, however, was not just the trial but the post-acquittal punishment of Savarkar, when his political career was deliberately stifled - a fate undeserving for a man of his ideological stature.

As India reassesses its history, it is imperative that a more balanced narrative on Savarkar emerges. He was a revolutionary, a thinker and a nationalist whose contributions to India's freedom struggle remain overshadowed by the controversy surrounding his alleged involvement in Gandhi's assassination.

A nation's moral fabric is not just defined by its heroes but also by how it treats those whose legacies have been unfairly tarnished. In Savarkar's case, the scales of justice have remained unbalanced for too long.

(The author is a motivational public speaker. Views personal.)

GLOBAL WATCH

Stopping Venezuela, Strangling India

Donald Trump has fired another salvo in his trade wars, this time at Venezuela. The U.S. President has announced a sweeping 25 percent tariff on any country that dares to import Venezuelan oil, effectively weaponizing global energy markets against Nicolás Maduro's regime. The announcement, made on Trump's Truth Social platform, cited Venezuela's alleged export of criminals (including members of the notorious Tren de Aragua gang) as the reason for this economic punishment. The move, however, has little to do with crime and everything to do with geopolitics.

India, which has become Venezuela's largest buyer of crude, now finds itself in an awkward position. If Trump's tariffs are enforced, Indian oil giants like Reliance Industries and Indian Oil Corporation will have to rethink their procurement strategies. Given that India imported a staggering 22 million barrels from Venezuela in 2023, amounting to 1.5 percent of its total crude purchases, the implications could be costly.

Trump's move is less about punishing Venezuela than coercing U.S. allies into compliance - a familiar tactic from his first term, notably against Iran. But Venezuela lacks Tehran's geopolitical clout or sanctions-proof trade networks. Instead, it wields oil as both a lifeline and a weapon, a strategy dating back to Hugo Chávez's defiance of American dominance.

Before U.S. sanctions throttled its economy, Venezuela was the third-largest supplier of crude to the United States, exporting over 1.5 million



barrels per day in the early 2000s. Chávez used oil to cement alliances, offering preferential deals to Cuba and other left-leaning governments. His successor, Nicolás Maduro, continued this trend, albeit under grimmer economic conditions. The U.S. crackdown on Venezuelan oil in 2019 forced Caracas to turn to alternative buyers, chief among them, India and China.

For India, Trump's move complicates an already delicate balancing act. Indian refiners have increasingly relied on Venezuelan crude, especially after American sanctions on Russian oil narrowed their options. The appeal of Venezuelan oil lies in its deep discounts, often undercutting Middle Eastern crude by \$15 to \$20 per barrel. This makes it particularly attractive for price-sensitive Indian refiners.

If imposed, Trump's tariffs would force Indian refiners to pay a premium on Venezuelan crude, effectively neutralizing the price advantage. The tariffs could deter Indian firms from dealing with Venezuela altogether, pushing them back towards more expensive Middle Eastern suppliers.

India's economy is surging, with oil demand projected to rise steadily over the next decade. The country is on track to overtake China as the world's largest driver of oil consumption growth by 2030. While India scrambles for alternatives, China stands to benefit. Beijing, already

Venezuela's second-largest oil buyer, will likely seize the opportunity to increase its influence.

Trump's tariffs, far from isolating Venezuela, could end up deepening its dependence on China. The last time Washington imposed sweeping sanctions on Venezuela, China stepped in to fill the vacuum. If history repeats itself, Beijing will gain even greater leverage over Venezuela's energy sector, further diminishing U.S. influence in Latin America.

Venezuela's oil wealth - 303 billion barrels, the world's largest - has been both a blessing and a curse. Discovered by foreign firms in the early 20th century, crude made Venezuela the top exporter by the 1920s by supplying oil to a war-ravaged Europe and an industrializing United States. In the 1970s, the industry was nationalized under Petróleos de Venezuela S.A. (PDVSA), a state-run oil giant, PDVSA, thus boosting OPEC influence. However, the 1980s oil crash left Venezuela in debt, forcing an IMF bailout and deepening its economic turmoil.

For India, the path forward is unclear. New Delhi has historically been pragmatic in its energy dealings, resisting American pressure when it suits its interests. It defied U.S. calls to halt Russian oil imports after the Ukraine war, securing lucrative discounts in the process. But Venezuela, unlike Russia, lacks the geopolitical weight to make defiance worthwhile.

STATES WATCH

Hour of the Technocrat

Few figures in Kerala's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have commanded as much attention in recent years as Rajeev Chandrasekhar. The suave technocrat-turned-politician, once the BJP's great hope for breaking the Congress-Left duopoly in Thiruvananthapuram, has now been elevated to state president. His appointment marks a shift in the party's strategy, an acknowledgment that its traditional playbook has yielded little in a state where Hindutva appeals have fallen flat. But will this pivot work?

As BJP state president, Chandrasekhar faces an unenviable task. The party's only Lok Sabha win in Kerala, in the form of Suresh Gopi's victory in Thrissur, came from a celebrity candidate rather than a broader ideological shift. The BJP remains a distant third force in a state where the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Communist-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) dominate political life.

Chandrasekhar was picked to contest Thiruvananthapuram in last year's Lok Sabha elections. At the time, the BJP seemed to have found its answer to Congress stalwart Shashi Tharoor. Both men exuded the polish that appeals to Kerala's urban elite: impeccable English, foreign university credentials and an air of cosmopolitan sophistication. Chandrasekhar had a fighting chance. Until the final hours of vote counting, he led Tharoor, only to lose by a slender margin of 16,077 votes.

The BJP has long struggled to crack Kerala's electoral code. So, Chandrasekhar's elevation is a calculated gamble. Unlike his predeces-

The BJP's Kerala gambit in form of Rajeev Chandrasekhar's elevation marks a strategic shift, but can he deliver?

sors, many of whom were bogged down by controversy, he brings a corporate sheen and a technocratic approach that could appeal to Kerala's aspirational middle class. His career, spanning telecommunications, media and finance, lends credibility to his rhetoric on development and technology, which he vigorously pushed during his Lok Sabha campaign.

That campaign, notably, avoided overt communal rhetoric. Earlier, Chandrasekhar's remarks following the 2023 Kalamassery blasts which linked the attack to "appeasement politics" and "jihad" had landed him in legal trouble. However, observers predict that a balancing act, between development-focused pragmatism and ideological posturing, will define his leadership in Kerala. With the BJP eager to court Christian voters, a demographic that has shown tentative signs of engagement with the party, Chandrasekhar will have to avoid alienating this bloc while also consolidating the BJP's traditional base.

The BJP's track record in Kerala has been uninspiring. Multiple state chiefs have been more notable for their gaffes than their electoral successes. K. Suresh's dramatic posturing during the 2018 Sabarimala controversy gained media attention but little else.

Chandrasekhar's appointment suggests the BJP is betting on competence over theatrics. Yet, his own political journey has been uneven. His attempt to dethrone Tharoor was one of the BJP's most expensive campaigns in Kerala, featuring star endorsements and extensive media blitzes. Despite this, he failed to break the Congress-Left duopoly.

Worse, his credibility took a hit when it emerged that he had not transferred his voter registration from Karnataka, rendering him ineligible to vote in Thiruvananthapuram.

Yet, the national party machinery will not give up on Kerala easily. With Narendra Modi securing a third term, the BJP will likely double down on its southern push, using both development and cultural issues to expand its base. Chandrasekhar's role

will be pivotal in shaping this effort. His challenge is not just to make the BJP competitive in more constituencies but to shed the image of the party as an interloper in Kerala politics.

His ability to do so will depend on whether he can stay disciplined. If he sticks to a message of governance and economic development, he could build credibility beyond the BJP's core voters. If, however, he succumbs to the temptation of communal rhetoric to energise the base, he could risk reinforcing the very barriers that have kept the BJP out of power in Kerala for decades.

KERALA



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KALEIDOSCOPE

1. Bill Murray and Naomi Watts and Bing the Great Dane attend the premiere of *The Friend* at IPIC Theaters on Monday.
2. MIG-29K of the Indian Navy flies during the bilateral naval exercise VARUNA 2025 between Indian Navy and the French Navy.
3. A shepherd leads a herd of sheep under almond trees in full bloom in Pulwama district of south Kashmir on Monday.
4. Former Australian cricketer David Warner with actors Nithiin, Sreeleela, Ketika Sharma and others during pre-release and trailer launch event of a film in Hyderabad.
5. People visit the Taj Mahal on a summer day in Agra on Tuesday.



5

All Pictures: PTI, AP

EXPLAINERS

How Greenlanders Unite to Fend Off US

Lisa Solrun Christiansen gets up at 4 am most days and gets to work knitting thick wool sweaters coveted by buyers around the world for their warmth and colorful patterns celebrating Greenland's traditional Inuit culture.

Her morning routine includes a quick check of the news, but these days the ritual shatters her peace because of all the stories about US President Donald Trump's designs on her homeland.

The daughter of Inuit and Danish parents, Christiansen, 57, cherishes Greenland. It is a source of immense family pride that her father, an artist and teacher, designed the red-and-white Greenlandic flag.

Island of anxiety

Greenlanders are increasingly worried that their homeland, a self-governing region of Denmark, has become a pawn in the competition between the US, Russia and China as global warming opens up access to the Arctic. They fear Trump's aim to take control of Greenland, which holds rich mineral deposits and straddles strategic air and sea routes, may block their path toward independence.

Those fears were heightened Sunday when Usha Vance, the wife of US Vice President JD Vance, announced she would visit Greenland later this week to attend the national dogsled race. Separately, National Security Adviser Michael Waltz and Energy Secretary Chris Wright will visit a US military base in northern Greenland. The announcement inflamed tensions sparked earlier this month when Trump reiterated his desire to annex Greenland just two days after Greenlanders elected a new parliament opposed to becoming part of the US. Trump even made a veiled reference to the possibility of military pressure, noting the US bases in Greenland and musing that "maybe you'll see more and more soldiers go there."

David vs. Goliath

While Greenland has limited leverage against the world's greatest su-



perpower, Trump made a strategic mistake by triggering a dispute with Greenland and Denmark rather than working with its NATO allies in Nuuk and Copenhagen, said Otto Svendsen, an Arctic expert at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Trump's actions, he says, have united Greenlanders and fostered a greater sense of national identity.

Denmark recognised Greenland's right to independence at a time of its choosing under the 2009 Greenland Self-Government Act, which was approved by local voters and ratified by the Danish parliament. The right to self-determination is also enshrined in the United Nations charter, approved by the US in 1945.

US national security

But Trump is more focused on the economic and security needs of the US than the rights of smaller nations. Since returning to office in January, he has pressured Ukraine into giving the US access to valuable mineral resources, threatened to reclaim the Panama Canal and suggested that Canada should become the 51st state.

Now he has turned his attention to Greenland, a territory of 56,000 people, most from indigenous Inuit backgrounds. Greenland guards access to the Arctic at a time when melting sea ice has reignited competition for energy and mineral resources and attracted an increased Russian military presence. The Pituffik Space Base on the island's northwest coast supports

missile warning and space surveillance operations for the US and NATO.

Strategic importance

It's not that Greenlanders don't like the US. They have welcomed Americans for decades.

The US effectively occupied Greenland during World War II, building a string of air and naval bases. After the war, President Harry Truman's government offered to buy the island because of "the extreme importance of Greenland to the defense of the United States." Denmark rejected the proposal but signed a long-term base agreement.

When Trump resurrected the proposal during his first term, it was quickly rejected by Denmark and dismissed as a headline-grabbing stunt. But now Trump is pursuing the idea with renewed energy.

A model in the Marshall Islands?

Even so, Trump has his admirers in Greenland. And there is no greater fan than Jørgen Boassen. When he spoke to *The Associated Press*, Boassen wore a T-shirt featuring a photo of Trump with his fist in the air and blood streaming down his face after an assassination attempt last year. Underneath was the slogan, "American Badass."

Trump must act to secure America's back door, Boassen says, because Denmark has failed to guarantee Greenland's security. But even he wants Greenland to be independent, a US ally but not the 51st state. -AP

How to Protect Children From Social Media?

Social media is a complex environment that presents both opportunities and threats for adolescents, with self-expression and emotional support on the one hand and body-shaming, cyberbullying and privacy violations on the other. This complexity underscores the challenge to regulating teen social media use, but it also points to another avenue for protecting young people: how social media platforms are designed.

The growing debate around teen social media use has intensified, with recent bipartisan policy efforts in the US, such as the Kids Online Safety Act, seeking to protect young people from digital harms. These efforts reflect legitimate concerns. However, broad restrictions on social media could also limit benefits for teens, throwing the baby out with the bath water.

I am a researcher who studies online safety and digital well-being. My recent work with colleagues in computer scientist Pamela Wisniewski's Socio-Technical Interaction Research Lab underscores a critical point: social media is neither inherently harmful nor entirely beneficial. It is a tool shaped by its design, how teens use it, and the context of their experiences.

In other words, social media's impact is shaped by its affordances – how platforms are designed and what they enable users to do or constrain them from doing. Some features foster connection while others amplify harms. As society moves toward practical solutions for online safety, it is important to use evidence-based research on how these features shape teens' social media experiences and how they could be redesigned to be age appropriate for young people. It's also important to incorporate teens' perspectives to pinpoint what policies and design choices should be made to protect young people using social media.

What teens say about social media

While social media's worst outcomes such as cyberbullying or mental

health crises are often in the spotlight, our research shows that teens' experiences are far more nuanced. Instead, platforms enable diverse outcomes depending on their features and design.

Teens commonly described negative experiences involving social drama, cyberbullying and privacy violations. For example, Instagram was a focal point for body-shaming and self-esteem issues, driven by its emphasis on curated visual content. Facebook triggered complaints about privacy violations, such as parents sharing private information without teens' consent. Snapchat, meanwhile, exposed teens to risky interactions due to its ephemeral messaging, which fosters intimate but potentially unsafe connections.

At the same time, teens expressed that social media provides a space for support, inspiration and self-expression, particularly when offline spaces feel isolating. Teens used social media to cope with stress or seek out uplifting content.

Platforms such as Snapchat and WhatsApp were key spaces for seeking connection, enabling teens to build relationships and find emotional support. Snapchat, in particular, was the go-to platform for fostering close personal connections, while YouTube empowered teens to promote their creativity and identity by sharing videos.

Many praised Instagram and Snapchat for providing inspiration, distraction or emotional relief during stressful times. Teens also used social media to seek information, turning to YouTube and Twitter to learn new things, verify information or troubleshoot technical problems.

These findings underscore a critical insight: Platform design matters. Features such as algorithms, privacy controls and content-sharing mechanisms directly shape how teens experience social media.

These findings further question the perception of social media as a purely negative force. Instead, teens' experiences highlight its dual na-



ture: a space for both risk and opportunity.

Key to safer social media

The concept of affordances – design and features – helps explain why teens' experiences differ across platforms and provides a path toward safer design. For example, Instagram's affordances such as image sharing and algorithmic content promotion amplify social comparison, leading to body-shaming and self-esteem issues. Snapchat's affordances, such as ephemeral messaging and visibility of "best friends," encourage personal connections but can foster risky interactions. Meanwhile, YouTube's affordances, such as easy content creation and discovery, promote self-expression but can contribute to time-management struggles due to its endless scroll design.

By understanding these platform-specific designs and features, it is possible to mitigate risks without losing the benefits. For example, Facebook could allow for appropriate levels of parental oversight of teen accounts while preserving privacy. Instagram could reduce algorithmic promotion of harmful content. And Snapchat could improve safety features.

This safety by design approach moves beyond restricting access to focus on improving the platforms themselves. By thoughtfully redesigning social media features, tech companies can empower teens to use these tools safely and meaningfully.

-The Conversation

The whole year I visualised about finishing games: Ashutosh



Visakhapatnam: Ashutosh Sharma says he spent the whole year visualising the finishing line after pulling off a miraculous heist for Delhi Capitals against Lucknow Super-giants in Visakhapatnam. Ashutosh attracted attention with his exemplary finishing skills last season when he turned up for Punjab Kings. However, he did not leave the season a fully satisfied man as he did not meet his own expectations.

It is early days in IPL 2025 but the 26-year-old, who plays for Railways in domestic cricket, was pleased with his stellar 66 not out off 41 balls that brought Delhi Capitals back from the dead on Monday night.

Ashutosh was quick to highlight the role played by IPL debutant Vipraj Nigam as the duo changed the course of the game after Delhi Capitals found

themselves down and out at 113 for six chasing 210.

It was the contentious Impact Player rule that allowed Ashutosh to play the innings of his life.

He changed gears dramatically after collecting 20 runs off the first 20 balls he faced. The last 11 balls he faced yielded 46 runs as he finished the game with a six over the bowler's head and the majority of his five sixes came down the ground.

"Missed out on finishing the game on a couple of occasions in the previous season. The whole year I focussed and visualised it. Had the belief that if I play till the

last over, anything can happen.

"Well played to Vipraj. I asked him to keep hitting. He was very calm under pressure. Want to dedicate this award to my mentor Shikhar (Dhawan) paaji," said Ashutosh.

Ashutosh and Shashank Singh made a name for themselves with their exploits for Punjab Kings before the franchise released the former ahead of the auction.

To become part of a serious discussion in the context of Indian cricket, Ashutosh knew he could not sit on past performances.

"Last year was really good but that's history for me. I have taken the positives from there and worked on myself, to improve whatever weaknesses I had. I'm applying what I did in domestic cricket."

With number 11 on strike in the 20th over and six runs needed for a

Dhoni on Impact Player: It's how T20 cricket has evolved

Former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni was not quite convinced about the need for the Impact Player rule when it was first introduced in the IPL but now sees it as a part of T20 cricket's evolution.

The 43-year-old, who remains a talismanic figure for the Chennai Super Kings despite relinquishing captaincy last year, said he does not consider himself an Impact Player as he remains the first-choice wicketkeeper of his side.

"When this rule was implemented, I felt it wasn't really needed at that time. In a way, it helps me, but at the same time, it doesn't. I still do my wicket-keeping, so I am not an impact player," Dhoni told 'JioStar'.

"I have to be involved in the game. A lot of people say the rule has led to more high-scoring games. I believe it's more due to the conditions and the comfort level of players," he added.

The rule has been criticised by the likes of India's Test and ODI skipper Rohit Sharma and star all-rounder Hardik Pandya, both of whom believe that it can affect the growth of all-rounders as teams tend to choose big-hitting batters for this role.

Dhoni said the rule does give teams the comfort of an extra batter for crunch situations. "The number of runs being scored isn't just because of an extra batsman. It's about the mindset, teams now have the comfort of an extra batter, so they play more aggressively," he said.

"It's not that all four or five extra batters are being used, it's just the confidence of having them. This is how T20 cricket has evolved," he added.

amous win, it is natural to be nervous but Ashutosh remained confident.

"I was confident. It's part of the game. Whether it's an appeal or not a run. It

wasn't part of my batting, so I was confident that if he took a single, I would be able to hit a six. I was really confident about my ability," said Ashutosh after smashing Shahbaz Ahmed

for a maximum to seal the win.

With a match-winning effort in the opening game of the season, Ashutosh has raised the bar for himself. -PTI



We have to mix and match: Klusener

LSG assistant coach Lance Klusener says his injury-hit team has no option but to "mix and match" until it starts getting players back.

Injuries to as many as four fast bowlers -- Avesh Khan, Mayank Yadav, Mohsin Khan and Akash Deep -- have dealt a big setback to LSG.

They failed to defend 209 against Delhi Capitals on Monday night with Dew also playing a part. "At the moment, we don't

have a lot of reserves with the ball, so we're going to have to just probably mix and match until we start getting players back," Klusener said at the post-match media interaction.

"But that's just the nature of it. We're going to have to stand up and stand tall with the bat in Hyderabad [venue of their next game] as we saw in the first game."

"We're looking forward to that, but as I said, it's

an opportunity for some youngsters as well, getting their first opportunity. I was really happy for Shardul Thakur (injury replacement) - two wickets in the first over," he added.

Though skipper Rishabh Pant felt LSG had enough runs on the board, Klusener felt they were 20 to 30 runs short. "If I have to put a finger on it, I would like to say we've probably left 20 or 30 runs with the

bat out there. That was probably why we ended up being under pressure with the ball. "I thought they [DC] finished well with the bat, but the reason why we're in that position is because we didn't score enough runs, which we should have. "I thought when the bowlers got it right, there was a little bit of spin, so I thought it was a very good wicket. There was a little bit in there for everybody." -PTI

Constitution of AIFF

SC commences final hearing

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday commenced hearing on pleas related to the finalisation of All India Football Federation's Constitution after its draft was prepared by former apex court judge Justice L Nageswara Rao on the apex court's direction.

A batch of pleas including one filed by the Federation was listed for final hearing before the bench comprising Justices PS Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi.

The pleas were put up before the bench headed by Justice Narasimha as Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna on January 6 recused himself from hearing, saying he might have heard these cases in the Delhi High Court earlier.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, who is assisting the bench as an amicus curiae, started the submissions by referring to important clauses of the AIFF's Constitution and said that some members and former players have certain objections to cer-



tain clauses.

He said a person can remain an elected office bearer of the AIFF for a total period of 12 years and the cooling off period of four years has to be observed after eight years as an office bearer of the sports body. Also, a person cannot remain a member of the sports body after attaining 70 years of age.

The bench said it will hear on next Wednesday the counsel who have objections to the draft Constitution of the sports body.

Earlier, the top court had asked former apex court judge L Nageswara Rao to prepare the Constitution of the AIFF.

Later, the bench took note of the draft Constitution and asked Justice Rao to prepare a report after taking note of the objections of various stakeholders to various constitutional schemes.

It had directed the Football Sports Development

Limited (FSDL), a Reliance subsidiary that operates a top-tier football league, the Indian Super League, to bear the expenses of the Justice Rao panel.

"In the circumstances, we request Justice L N Rao, former judge of this court, to take up the task of considering the draft Constitution as proposed by the Committee of Administrators (CoA of AIFF) which is now being propounded by the learned amicus curiae (senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan)," it had said.

The bench urged the former judge to hear all stakeholders including AIFF, state football associations, the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and FSDL on the draft constitution in preparing the final report.

"The exercise of considering the draft Constitution and submitting a comprehensive report, bearing in mind the objections which have been addressed by all the stakeholders, will be effectively carried out by July 31, 2023," it had said. -PTI



Asha returns against Pragya Chidial during their Class-4 round-1 Table Tennis match at Khelo India Para Games in New Delhi on Tuesday. Pic: PTI

Sachin engages with children

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar on Tuesday attended the NMMC Cricket Trials, where he engaged with children and shared valuable insights. Sachin's presence enriched the children's experiences and boosted their confidence.

In its continuous stride to better lives through health, education, and sports, the Sachin Tendulkar Foundation (STF) is supporting an initiative, to identify and nurture young cricketers from municipal schools.

This initiative has been

in place since October 2022 and as part of this effort, SRT10 Global Academy's centre at DY Patil Sports Academy, in collaboration with the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC), has been conducting trials to identify promising young cricketers. These selected children will receive free coaching and development support under STF's guidance, which will help shape their cricketering career better.

Sachin also addressed school principals and teachers, acknowledging their role in encouraging both girls and boys.

National Women's Hockey League Maharashtra defeats Manipur

Ranchi: Odisha, Maharashtra and Bengal emerged winners on day six of the final phase of National Women's Hockey League here on Tuesday.

While Odisha defeated Mizoram 2-0 in shoot-out after both the teams were locked 1-1 at the end of regulation time, Maharashtra beat Manipur 4-0.

In another match, Bengal eked out a narrow 1-0 win over Madhya Pradesh.

In the first match of the day, Sanjana Kiro (5th) opened the account for Odisha before Laltlanchhungi (55th) equalised for Mizoram. Drupti Naik and captain Sumi Mundari scored in the shoot-out out of the first three chances Odisha got.

In the other match, Maharashtra rode on goals from Sanika Chandrakant Mane (3rd), Tanushree Dinesh Kadu (36th), Sanjana Raikwar (54th) and Nikku Gurjar (59th) to register an easy win over Manipur.

14th Insurance Shield T20 cricket

Mumbai Police into final

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Mumbai Police Gymkhana registered a comprehensive 10-wicket victory against New India Assurance in the semi-finals of the 14th Insurance Shield T20 cricket tournament, organized by Oriental Insurance Company and played at Cross Maidan on Tuesday.

The Mumbai Police bowlers did well to dismiss New India Assurance for a low total of 73 all out in 16.3 overs. The top scorer was Sanskar Dadelkar who scored 36 runs. The leading wicket-takers were Hashim Sayyed 3 for 18, Nishit Balla 2 for 8 and Mahadev Kadam 2 for 22 which restricted the opponents to a paltry total.

In response the Mumbai Police batters did not lose a wicket reaching 77 for no loss in 7.1 overs. Opening batsmen Jayesh Chandankar and Tanmay Mayekar were unbeaten on 41 and 34 runs respectively



as the team crossed the finish line.

In the second semifinal, Union Bank of India defeated Choughule SC by a narrow 13 runs.

Brief scores: New India Assurance 73 all out, 16.3 overs (Sanskar Dabelkar 36; Hashim Sayyed 3/18, Nishit Balla 2/8, Mahadev Kadam 2/22) lost Mumbai Police Gymkhana 77 for no loss 7.1 overs (Jayesh Chandankar 41*, Tanmay Mayekar 34*). Result: Mumbai Police Gymkhana won by 10 wickets.

Union Bank of India 157 for 8, 20 overs (Roop Yadav 68, Mohammad Shaikh 22; Rohit Yadav 3/6) beat Choughule SC 144 for 7, 20 overs (Jitesh Raut 31, Soham Maki 31, Ajay Jaiswal 30; Gaurav Banwar 3/19, Tanay Khandeshi 2/19). Result: Union Bank won by 13 runs.

ICC retains Nitin Menon in Elite Panel of Umpires

Dubai: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Tuesday included Allahuddin Paleker of South Africa and England's Alex Wharf in the ICC Elite Panel of Umpires which features Nitin Menon as the only Indian, while Jayaraman Madangopal has been promoted to the Emerging Panel.

Michael Gough and Joel Wilson will make way for the two new entrants in Paleker and Wharf.

According to BCCI sources, the 50-year-old Madangopal has been promoted to the Emerging Panel which makes him eligible to officiate in overseas Tests and ODIs. For-

mer Tamil Nadu player Madangopal has so far officiated in one Test, 22 ODIs and 42 T20Is.

Meanwhile, Menon is ranked second behind Richard Illingworth in the Elite Panel of Umpires.

Paleker, a former first-class cricketer from South Africa, has officiated on-field in four Tests, 23 ODIs and 67 T20Is in men's international cricket and a total of 17 women's international games — having also officiated at major ICC tournaments such as men's T20 World Cup 2024, and the Under-19 men's Cricket World Cup 2024.

Wharf brings a wealth of experience from his 16-

year first-class career, having also featured in 13 ODIs for England.

Wharf has officiated on-field in seven Tests, 33 ODIs, and 45 T20Is in men's international cricket, and has stood at the recent ICC men's and women's World Cups, the respective men's and women's T20 World Cups in 2024 and the men's Champions Trophy in 2025.

ICC chairman Jay Shah gave his warm wishes to the two new entrants, Paleker and Wharf, while also thanking the outgoing umpires, Gough and Wilson.

"By definition, being an elite official brings with it scrutiny and pressure, but we are confident that both



Allahuddin and Alex possess the temperament, experience and skill to deliver consistently at this very top level," Shah said in a statement.

"On behalf of the ICC, I wish them all the best for the upcoming season as well as for the future. We would also like to place on record our sincere thanks to both Joel and Michael for their services to the world game, over a number of years."

Paleker expressed his gratitude for the promotion and acknowledged the support of his mentors, colleagues, and family.

"This is a significant moment in my umpiring career. It's an honour to be named in the elite panel, and I look forward to reposing the faith shown in me. Being on this panel brings both pride and re-

sponsibility, but I am confident that my experience officiating across formats will stand me in good stead," he said.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family, friends, coaches, mentors, the ICC, and Cricket South Africa for backing me and all my colleagues who supported me over the years.

"To my father, Jamalodien, who was also an umpire. He is my inspiration and role model, his teachings have brought me to this stage. Lastly, to my wife Shakira, you have been through this incredible journey with me. I want to thank you for all the sac-

rifices, support, and patience you've shown; you have been my pillar of strength."

Wharf acknowledged the guidance and support he has received throughout his career.

"I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the ICC and ECB for the opportunities they've provided over the years. I am truly appreciative of their guidance and constant support," he noted.

"This milestone would not have been possible without the amazing colleagues who have shared their expertise with me and those who have supported me both on and off

Smriti, Deepti retain spots

Dubai: India vice-captain Smriti Mandhana and all-rounder Deepti Sharma held on to their third positions respectively in the latest ICC Women's T20I batter and bowlers' rankings issued here.

Besides Mandhana, no other Indian is in the top-10 with skipper Harmanpreet Kaur placed 11th position, Jemimah Rodrigues ranked 15th and Shafali Verma a rung below.

The batters' list is led by Australia's Beth Mooney, followed by teammate Tahlia McGrath.

Mooney increased her lead at the top following scores of 75 not and 70 against New Zealand. Phoebe Litchfield gained three places to move to 22nd overall following an innings of 32 in the second clash with the White Ferns.

Star all-rounder Melie Kerr gained two places on the list for T20I batters following her innings of 40 in the second match of the series against Australia, while fellow New Zealander Georgia Plimmer improved 20 spots to move to 50th on the back of some consistent innings at the top of the order over the last month.

Deepti continued to occupy her third spot among bowlers behind England's Sophie Ecclestone and Sadia Iqbal of Pakistan.

The plaudits continue to arrive for Annabel Sutherland as the Australian all-rounder reached a new career-high rating on the latest ICC Women's T20I bowling rankings.

Sutherland, who has featured in the ICC Women's ODI Team of the Year in the last two years and won the ICC Women's Player of the Month award twice in 2024, reached a new personal best rating for T20I bowlers.