

# THE PERFECT VOICE



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## Low-profile Noel Tata to succeed half-brother at Tata Trusts

**New Delhi:** He was considered a potential candidate to lead Tata Sons - the holding company of the Tata Group, when legendary industrialist and his half-brother Ratan Tata was retiring in 2012. But the low-profile, Irish national Noel Tata saw his brother-in-law Cyrus Mistry take that role.

After the death of Ratan Tata, Noel, 67, succeeded him as the head of Tata Trusts, a collective of charities that indirectly controls the USD 165 billion business empire spread across 100 countries.

Ratan Tata, who is credited with taking Tata global and growing the conglomerate as one of India's most respected groups, passed away on October 9 at the age of 86. He was the chair for Tata Trusts, which owns 66 per cent of closely

held Tata Sons Pvt Ltd - the holding company of the group.

Tata Sons is 65.9 per cent owned by the trusts, 12.87 per cent by half a dozen Tata Group companies, and 18.4 per cent by the Mistry family. Tata Sons runs 30 firms across consumer goods, hotels, automobiles and airlines.

Noel is known for his relatively low-profile leadership style, a stark contrast to predecessor's more public-facing role. Though being on the board of several Tata Group firms, Noel has remained out of the limelight and instead focused on operations.

He is also on the board of key Sir Ratan Tata Trust and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust since 2019. His children - Maya, Neville and Leah - were appointed as trustees in multiple trusts associat-



ed with the Sir Ratan Tata Trust and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust earlier this year.

After graduating from Sussex University in the United Kingdom, Noel com-

pleted the International Executive Programme (IEP) from INSEAD in France.

Noel's career began at Tata International, where

he gained understanding of Tata Group's global operations. In June 1999, he joined his mother Simone Dunoyer's retail business, Trent, as managing director. Under his leadership, Trent expanded significantly, especially with the creation of the Westside retail chain.

In 2003, he took on new responsibilities when he was appointed director of Voltas and Titan Industries.

He currently serves on the board of various Tata Group companies, including as the Chairman of Trent, Tata International Ltd, Voltas & Tata Investment Corporation and as the Vice Chairman of Tata Steel and Titan Company Ltd.

He has been associated with the Tata Group for over 40 years.



**W**e name our daughters Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati; we worship the divine feminine power in the temples but oppress, repress and even attack the feminine power amidst us. That is the irony in the way India sees its women. After the safety of the daylight fades, women are seen as easy prey by the predators of the night. We mark the nine nights of Navratri, the festival of the goddess, by celebrating the dedication and valour of nine real-life women who brave the challenges of the night to pursue their dreams. **The series ends today.**

**PART - 10**

### The Safety Strategy

**"DON'T TRAVEL ALONE AT NIGHT; TRAVEL IN TWOS OR KEEP SOMEONE INFORMED," SAYS KOMAL LATH**

By Aditi Pai

Leading an all-women team means that Komal Lath, 39, has to look out for the safety of her colleagues when they are travelling or have events to attend. The founder of Tute Consult, an integrated marketing agency, the Mumbai-bred marketing professional started working at the age of 17 years and has worked with several brands over the past two decades. After gaining experience at various agencies, she started Tute in 2010 and has had brands like Carter, Priyanka Chopra, Pixi, Victoria's Secret and Insight as among her high-profile clients. "The profession that I am in involves a lot of networking, socialising, meeting people, having to attend social gigs which does mean that in a quite a few cases, we have late evening and travel involved," says Lath.

While she travels in her own car, she keeps a tab on her female colleagues when they are travelling home after a late evening. "I am not very open to my team members travelling by train late in the evening or even through dark alley streets. I insist they travel by uber-backed cabs which can be traced," she says.

Recent cases of attacks on women have worried her even more. "Nothing seems safe anymore; not a school, not a college, not public transport for sure and not even private spaces," says Lath. She confesses to waking up dreading some distressing news about attacks on women.



**KOMAL LATH,**  
Founder of Tute Consult, 39

It's especially concerning for her because Lath, since the inception of her company, has led an all-girls team.

Like most women, she has her share of experiences with men trying to get too close for comfort in public spaces and even miscreants misbehaving.

return to their hotel. "What was even more scary is that the men looked like they came from decent families because of the way they were dressed. It's scary and worrying," says Lath who has offices in Mumbai and Delhi.

Women, she says, must be vigilant at all times. It's essential to keep SOS numbers handy to be able to call trusted people in an emergency. "Don't travel alone at night; travel in twos or keep someone informed so they can check on you," she says. Lath recommends that women, when travelling at night, must take only cabs that can be traced at all times. "Keep someone informed about where you are off to," she says. A final piece of advice she offers is to carry a big bag, a 'weapon' most women have used in crowded public areas such as railway stations, malls and markets. "You never know when you need to knock someone or their parts off."

**“ Carry heavy bags when you're out; you never know when you'll need to knock someone or their parts off ”**

She recounts an incident in Delhi where she had taken her team for dinner to Hauz Khas after an event. A group of men started misbehaving with them. They went back to the restaurant and had to wait until the staff arranged taxis for them to



**An Indian Air Force C-295 aircraft being given water cannon salute after it successfully completed the first landing at the Navi Mumbai Airport on Friday. The trial was accompanied by a flypast of a Sukhoi-30 fighter jet.** Pic:PTI

### Anti-national activities going on in Kerala, says Guv

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on Friday intensified his attack on the ruling Left government by accusing CM Pinarayi Vijayan of keeping him in the dark about 'crimes against the nation' being committed in the state.

Khan also said that the Chief Secretary and the DGP were coming regularly to Raj Bhavan, "without authorisation from the CM" and now, "no more will they be welcome".

Khan said that the CM, while denying having used the terms 'anti-national activities' and 'anti-state ac-

tivities' in any public statements, has conceded that he generally mentioned 'crimes against the nation' were committed in the state.

"What is a crime against the nation? What kind of activity is it? Is it not more serious? Should you (CM) not have briefed me? Was it not your duty? You have failed to do your duty," Khan contended.

He further said that when such crimes against the nation are committed, he has to inform the President and the Central government and for that information was required.

### Rupee all-time low at 84.10 against US dollar

**Mumbai:** The rupee on Friday fell 12 paise to a record low of 84.10 against the US dollar, tracking a weak trend in domestic equities and relentless foreign capital outflows.

The situation in the Middle East continues to be volatile and might keep oil prices high and the rupee weak in the short term, according to forex traders.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened slightly strong at 83.97 against the US dollar. During the session, the local currency oscillated between a high of 83.96 and a low of 84.10. It finally settled at its all-time low of 84.10, a loss of 12 paise from its previous close. The domestic unit had closed at 83.98 on Thursday. **-PTI**

### NC-Congress stakes claim to form govt

**Srinagar:** The National Conference (NC)-Congress alliance Friday staked the claim to form government in Jammu and Kashmir as chief minister-designate Omar Abdullah called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha here.

Abdullah was unanimously elected as the leader of NC legislature party on Thursday, paving the way for his second term as the chief minister of J&K.

### Two Agniveers killed during field firing exercise

**ARMY ORDERS COURT OF INQUIRY**

**Nashik:** Two Agniveers were killed during a field firing exercise in Maharashtra, an officer said on Friday, adding the army has initiated a court of inquiry to determine the cause of the accident.

Gunner Gohil Vishvarajsinh (20) and Gunner Saikat (21) from the Artillery

Centre Hyderabad died during a field firing exercise at the Deolali Field Firing Ranges in Nashik district, the officer said.

A team of Agniveers was firing a field gun when one of the shells exploded, the official said, adding the duo sustained injuries and were taken to the military hospital at Deolali, where they were pronounced dead.

Based on a complaint by Havildar Ajit Kumar, a case of accidental death has been registered with the Deolali Camp police, and further investigations are on, he said.

"Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi and all ranks

of the army salute the supreme sacrifice of braveheart Agniveers (Gunner) Gohil Vishvarajsinh and Agniveer (Gunner) Saikat, who laid down their lives in the line of duty while undergoing training at the firing ranges," the army said in a



post on X. The army has ordered a court of inquiry to find out the exact cause of the accident, it said.

The army offers deepest condolences and stands firm with the bereaved families in this hour of grief, it added. **-PTI**

## Mahadev app promoter Chandrakar may be extradited to India

**New Delhi:** Sourabh Chandrakar, one of the main promoters of the Mahadev betting app, is expected to be brought to India soon following his recent formal arrest in Dubai on the basis of an Interpol issued arrest warrant in a money laundering and fraud case, official sources said Friday.

Chandrakar along with another promoter of the app, Ravi Uppal was detained and put under "house arrest" in that

country late last year following the ED's request for issuance of a Red Notice (RN) against them.

An RN is issued by the Interpol.

Sources said Chandrakar is expected to be either extradited or deported to India over the next few days after he was formally placed under arrest in Dubai recently. The ED is in the process of sending relevant documents for his extradition to Dubai authorities following which a

competent court there will be approached, they said.

Indian consulate sources in Dubai told PTI that they have "not heard anything from UAE authorities yet."

Chandrakar is stated to have left for Dubai in 2019 and before that he used to run a juice shop named "Juice Factory" with his brother in Bhillai town of Durg district in Chhattisgarh.

The ED has alleged that its probe in the Mahadev



Online Book (MOB) gaming and betting app has shown involvement of var-

ious high-ranking politicians and bureaucrats from Chhattisgarh, the

state where Chandrakar and Uppal hail from.

MOB app, as per the federal agency, is an umbrella syndicate arranging online platforms for enabling illegal betting websites to enrol new users, create user IDs and laundering of money through a layered web of benami bank accounts.

The ED has arrested a total of 11 people in this case till now. Two charge sheets have also been filed by the agency till now, in-

cluding against the two promoters. The Chhattisgarh Police too is investigating the case.

The projected proceeds of crime in this case are about Rs 6,000 crore, according to the agency.

The ED has alleged in its charge sheet that Chandrakar got married at Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, in February 2023 and about Rs 200 crore "in cash" was spent for this event.

Private jets were hired to ferry Chandrakar's rela-

tives from India to the UAE and celebrities were paid to perform at the wedding, the agency alleged.

It had claimed that the alleged illegal funds generated by the app were shared as bribes to politicians and bureaucrats in the state even as it has summoned many celebrities and Bollywood actors for questioning on the mode of payment and their links with the online betting platform. **-PTI**

# Sambhajiraje carving out space for himself

By Abhijit Mulye

**Mumbai:** While stating that he wishes to make Maharashtra politics free of treachery, Chhatrapati Sambhajiraje has tried to carve out a space for himself distinctly away from the Congress, Shiv Sena and the NCP. He accused all the major leaders including Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar of cheating the people and added that he formed a separate political party to be distinctly different from all of them.

Sharad Pawar became the national leader while he was in Congress. He felt as if he had made Sonia Gandhi the leader of the party. When he realized the reality, he formed a separate



party while stating that he doesn't want to work under anybody. Similarly, Balasaheb Thackeray always opposed the Congress. But, his son Uddhav Thackeray made all the adjustments for power. Similar is the case with the BJP. Their leader including PM Narendra Modi criticized the NCP and accused them of

corruption and later accommodated them in the government. "Do you feel this is alright?" Sambhajiraje asked as he addressed the Dasara Rally of his Maharashtra Swarajya Party at Pune on Friday.

of Shiv Sena under CM Eknath Shinde and NCP under DCM Ajit Pawar, Sambhajiraje said adding that he wants his party to move ahead with a distinctly different ideology.

He also came down heavily against the use of the word 'Rajakiya Yutti' (Political Alliance). This is a new word to describe the alliance of the BJP and the NCP under Ajit Pawar. It connotes the politics of convenience, he said.

"I won't accuse anyone. Though the NCP of Sharad Pawar and Ajit Pawar are different and the Shiv Sena of Uddhav Thackeray and Eknath Shinde are different, they can come together for power anytime. No one can give a guarantee. To

stop this betrayal of people we have formed the Maharashtra Swarajya Party," Sambhajiraje said.

He also accused the all party politicians of not paying heed to real issues faced by the people. There are no Marathi schools. The health centres are in bad shape. Yet no one is talking about it, he said and added that his party has come into being to address such issues closer to people's hearts.

"I'm not fond of politics. But I've now learnt it. We shall not back off and let others continue to fool the people," he said while reiterating the party's resolve to contest assembly elections with complete dedication.



Hindutej Navratri Utsav Mandal pays tribute to industrialist Ratan Tata by placing his portrait near a floral rangoli of Renukamata at a pandal during the Navratri festival in Karad on Friday. Pic: PTI.

## Man held for 70 fake firms

**Thane/Palghar:** A businessman was arrested for allegedly floating 70 fake firms that issued bogus invoices amounting to Rs 320 crore as part of an extensive Goods and Services Tax fraud, an official said.

Ashok Harilal Oza was held on October 10 and has been remanded in 13-day judicial custody, the CGST Mumbai Zone official added. "He generated Rs 320 crore worth of fake invoices through 70 bogus firms without actual supply of goods or services. He availed Input Tax Credit of Rs 22 crore and passed on ITC of Rs 26 crore fraudulently."

## Senior executive of private firm detained for hit-and-run death

**Pune:** A food delivery man was killed after a high-end car driven by a senior executive of a private firm hit the two-wheeler he was riding in Pune in the early hours of Friday, police said.

Ayush Tayal (34), who was driving the car, fled from the spot after the accident near Tadigutta in the city's Mundhwa area. Later, he was detained after police tracked him down with the help of CCTV footage, he said. The food delivery person has been identified as Rauf Akbar Shaikh.



"The car driven by Tayal crashed into Shaikh's bike. The accused fled the scene but was later detained after police used footage of CCTV cameras to identify the car and then track him down with its details," said Additional Commissioner of Police Manoj Pail. Tayal is a senior execu-

tive at a firm in Ranjangaon MIDC and he has been sent for a medical examination to ascertain if he was intoxicated at the time of the accident, the official said.

A case has been registered against Tayal under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Motor Vehicles Act, he added.

## Centre in TATR to be named after Tata

**Mumbai:** Forest minister Sudhir Mungantiwar said the Nature Interpretation Centre inaugurated at Moharli in Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve on Friday will be named after legendary industrialist Ratan Tata.

Mungantiwar, the state's forest minister, also said a memorial will be constructed for Tata in Chandrapur.

"A cancer hospital set up by Tata Trusts is functioning in Chandrapur. The Tata Trusts donated Rs 100 crore for this project. The NIC here will be named after Ratan Tata," the minister said.

## Raut lambasts govt over madrassa honorarium

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Friday targeted the Eknath Shinde government in Maharashtra and asked whether the decision to hike honorarium and salaries of madrassa teachers was not "vote jihad."

He said implementation of schemes like the Mukhyamantri Ladki Bahin Yojana or hiking the working capital of Maulana Azad Financial Corporation from Rs 700 crore to Rs 1,000 crore were being done

keeping electoral arithmetic in mind.

"Is this (schemes like Ladki Bahin and salary hike of madrassa teachers) not vote jihad? The salaries should increase of those who teach children but they (BJP) would have called it vote jihad had we done it," Raut said.

Hitting back, senior state BJP leader Kirit Somaiya said the government has not increased the salaries of Uddhav Thackeray and Sanjay Raut whose party resorted to vote jihad in the Lok Sabha polls.

The BJP's Mahayuti government does not differentiate on the lines of religion when it comes to health and education, Somaiya claimed.

As per a cabinet decision, the working capital of Maulana Azad Financial Corporation will be hiked from Rs 700 crore to Rs 1,000 crore. The honorarium for madrassa teachers with D.Ed degree will be increased from Rs 6,000 to Rs 16,000, while that of teachers with BA, B.Ed. BSc degrees will be hiked from Rs 8,000 to Rs 18,000.

## CRIME WATCH

### Rickshaw driver held for murder

**Thane:** Police on Friday arrested a 35-year-old autorickshaw driver for allegedly killing a fellow driver over past enmity in Thane. Police launched a probe after the body of an auto driver, identified as Dinesh Bhoir, was found in his three-wheeler in the Bhiwandi area on Thursday evening. Acting on inputs, police apprehended another rickshaw driver, whom Bhoir had assaulted after a fight a couple of days ago. Police did not disclose the name of the second rickshaw driver.

### Couple held for bludgeoning man to death

**Thane:** A couple has been arrested for allegedly killing a 24-year-old man, packing his body in a plastic bag and dumping it in a village in Thane. The district rural police on Wednesday arrested the accused, Mohammad Siraj Ansari (32) and his wife Razia, in connection with the murder that occurred on October 4. The body of the victim, Mohammed Aalam Ansari, was found dumped on an empty plot in Dharol village in Dharolgaon on the afternoon of October 4, senior inspector Govind Patil of the Kulgaon police station said. Based on a tip-off that the accused hailed from Jharkhand, the police team zeroed in on Ansari, and during interrogation, he revealed that the victim was his stepbrother, the officer said.

### Jeweller held for cheating customers

**Palghar:** A jeweller on the run for more than a year after allegedly duping several customers in Maharashtra's Palghar district was held from Madhya Pradesh, a police officer said on Friday. Two jewellers, identified as Kanaram Dalaram Chowdhari and Hotes Shantilal Dholakia from Rajasthan and Gujarat, respectively, had fled after cheating customers of Rs 1.38 crore between January 2022 and May 2023, Palghar Superintendent of Police Balasaheb Patil said. "Dholakia was arrested in 2023 but Chowdhari was absconding. On a tip off, Chowdhari was held from Indore in Madhya Pradesh. We have recovered Rs 17.71 lakh from him. Further probe is underway."

## One arrested in Pune gangrape

**Pune:** A week after a woman was allegedly raped by three men on Pune city's outskirts, police have made the first arrest, officials said on Friday, a breakthrough coming after nearly 700 cops worked on the case and scanned hours of CCTV footage.

The 21-year-old woman was allegedly raped by three unidentified men on Thursday (October 3) night in the Bopdev Ghat area where she had gone with a male friend.

"Footage from several CCTV cameras was scanned and on the basis of technical analysis, one suspect has been arrested and a search for the other two suspects was on," said Pune police commissioner Amitesh Kumar.

During the incident, the assailants had also tied and beaten up the victim's male friend, as per the complaint.

Police had declared a reward of Rs 10 lakh for information about the culprits and formed multiple teams to nab them.

The horrific incident had caused a furore in the city and police were under pressure to crack the case.

# Changing mindsets in Gadchiroli

By Correspondent

**What has been CRY's journey in initiating best breastfeeding practices amongst new mothers?**

Apart from education and protection, the area of health of children continues to be the topmost priority for CRY as for over four decades we have been persistently working towards the betterment of children of all ages. In our attempt of changing mindsets and age old practices we have taken care to see that the health of both the child and the mother need to be taken seriously and though our efforts in Gadchiroli we have managed to achieve that.

Let me share with you an example of Manjusha Ghanashyam Madavi from Ambezari village, in Kurkheda taluka from Gadchiroli district, who admits that she has seen quite significant changes in both maternal and child care taking place in her village over the years.

Manjusha is a mother of a new two-month-old baby and while growing up, she often saw how her village lacked child care practices. Due to lack of information on breastfeeding and neglected personal hygiene, the health of many newborns got neglected. Hospital deliveries were rare and superstitions often led to mothers and newborns being isolated in huts for a month. They were considered impure. Mothers did not feed their



In the deep tribal areas of Gadchiroli district, Child Rights and You has been successful in changing the mindset of the villagers to encourage breastfeeding among new mothers.

**Kreeanne Rabadi, Regional Director, CRY - West shares the process.**

## THE PERFECT INTERVIEW

first milk to the newborn. Today, the situation has improved a lot. More and more women now give birth in hospitals, and the practice of isolating mothers and babies is on a decline. Babies are receiving their mother's first colostrum milk, and mothers are educated on how to breastfeed their babies properly.

**What were the challenges you faced in Gadchiroli district and how did you overcome it?**

In the tribal regions of Kurkheda and Dhanora, traditional customs and limited knowledge on the benefits of breastfeeding have led to several problematic practices. Most residents failed to take breastfeeding seriously including new mothers. Here we engaged directly with the community, offering culturally sensitive education, and working alongside local health workers and leaders.

A majority of mothers often pri-

oritized household work and agricultural tasks over breastfeeding, which led to significant impact on the health of the infant. Most of the times, infants were left in cradles and fed only when they cried out in hunger. First milk or colostrum, generated from the new mother was either offered to the local deity or discarded as per their age-old customs due to several myths associated with it.

Another age-old practice was that of mothers feeding their infants while lying down at night a dangerous practice as it increases the risk of milk getting into the infant's airway, which can lead to choking.

Another issue was of post-delivery isolation where both the mother and child are deemed impure after birth and must reside separately in a designated hut, known locally as a 'zopadi', for almost a month. To overcome this, we conducted regular home visits to directly engage with lactating mothers, providing personalized support, guidance and information on self and infant feeding.



These visits were aimed at educating mothers on effective breastfeeding techniques, including proper methods and optimal feeding schedules. We also organized mothers' groups and meetings in the intervention area to build community support.

**What were the outcomes of your efforts?**

Gadchiroli is one of the remote districts in Maharashtra with communities residing in deep villages surrounded by forested areas. In Kurkheda and Dhanora through persistent education, community engagement, and in collaboration with local stakeholders, we not only enhanced breastfeeding practices but also significantly contributed to better maternal and child health outcomes. We have witnessed reduction in harmful traditional practices, such as post-delivery isolation, and seen improved awareness among mothers regarding the benefits of breastfeeding, have led to healthier infants and empowered mothers.

# I am tired, need rest: Bhujbal

POLITICAL OBSERVERS SAY IT IS THE MINISTER'S EMOTIONAL TACTIC TO FIELD NEPHEW FROM HIS SEAT

By Suyash Padate

**Mumbai:** "Believe me I am tired. Now, it's high time for me to take a rest, let me do that," Food and Civil Supply Minister Chhagan Bhujbal said while giving clear indication of his retirement from the active politics.

The aggressive and vocal OBC leader has toned himself down. "I need a rest, that's all. I can't say anything beyond this," Bhujbal told The Perfect Voice.

Bhujbal explained he is no longer interested in contesting any election. Let the next generation take over my social work,



he made it clear. When asked whether he had informed party leadership about his decision, the minister categorically said that no need to ask anyone while taking the

decision of retirement.

The NCP leader was upset with the Mahayuti leadership since Lok Sabha elections. Bhujbal was interested to contest from Nashik constituency. However, at the last moment he was denied the ticket. Since then the firebrand leader is sulking.

Significantly, by appealing to his son Pankaj and nephew Sameer to take responsibility for social work and to move forward in politics on their own with ability and contribution for the society. Now the news is doing the rounds that Bhujbal is really serious about his new move or just playing emotional games with the voters in the

run-up to the elections.

Bhujbal always taps into the emotions of the voters when a family member decides to enter the election arena. Bhujbal's son Pankaj has previously represented the Nandgaon constituency twice in a row. Bhujbal is planning to field his nephew and former MP Sameer Bhujbal on this seat in the upcoming assembly elections. Presently this seat is held by Shiv Sena Shinde camp. Sources said, now Bhujbal is eyeing on Nandgaon constituency. Shinde camp is in no mood to relent and they have started preparations to contest the election. So Bhujbal used his old weapon.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I feel Navneet Rana will not contest the Vidhan Sabha polls. Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule and DCM Devendra Fadnavis and other top leaders of the party have continuously said she will be sent to the Rajya Sabha, which I think is appropriate for her."



**Ravi Rana, Independent MLA**

# Trial flight lands at Navi Mumbai airport

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** The Navi Mumbai International Airport Ltd (NMIAL) successfully conducted the trial landing of an aircraft with the touchdown of an Airbus C-295 plane on Friday.

The Indian Air Force transport carrier C-295 landed at the Southern runway 26 of the airport at 12.14 pm, and was accorded the ceremonial water cannon salute, according to the airport operator.

This was followed by a flypast by a Sukhoi-30 fighter jet. The inaugural landing is not just a symbolic gesture but a critical milestone in the airport's journey from construction to full-scale operations, NMIAL said in a statement.

The event was attended by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol, deputy chief minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnis and senior officials from NMIAL and Adani Airport Holdings Ltd, among others.

The successful touchdown of the IAF C-295 marks an essential phase where the newly-built runway, taxiways, air traffic control systems and handling procedures are put to test to ensure that the airport meets all safety, regulatory and operational requirements, it said.

It allows engineers, aviation authorities and airport operators to evaluate the



performance and readiness of key infrastructure and signifies that the airport is on track to complete its final stages of development, paving the way for phased commercial operations set to begin in early 2025, the statement said.

NMIAL is a special purpose vehicle for the execution of this Rs 18,000-crore greenfield airport project with Adani Group holding 74 per cent equity in the SPV while City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) the remaining 26 per cent.

"As Adani Airport Holdings Ltd's (AAHL) first greenfield airport, NMIAL represents years of planning, investment and hard work. We are grateful to the Government of Maharashtra, the regulatory bodies including CIDCO and Airports Authority of India and all the other stakeholders who have come together to make this project possible," the statement quoted Director of AAHL Jeet Adani as saying.



Jeet Adani, son of Adani Group Chairperson Gautam Adani, during a trial landing at Navi Mumbai International Airport.

Pic: PTI

The chief minister said the Navi Mumbai airport will be a high capacity one and among the big aviation facilities in the country. Calling the facility "a big gift to people", Shinde said once it is commissioned, the congestion at the busy Mumbai airport will ease

considerably. "We are making efforts to start the commercial operations from the airport even before the stated timeline of March 2025, which will handle 9-crore people per annum," he said.

Due to construction of the 21.8-km 6-lane sea bridge Atal Setu, the upcoming airport has become close to both Mumbai and

Navi Mumbai, he pointed out. The iconic sea bridge, inaugurated in January this year, starts at Sewri in Navi Mumbai and concludes at Chirle village near Nhava Sheva in Raigad district.

The inaugural landing of the IAF C-295 represents a significant milestone in the Adani Group's development of the greenfield international airport, which started in August 2021, during the pandemic and is scheduled to be operational in early 2025, the airport operator said.

This landing demonstrates NMIAL's capacity, preparedness and readiness for joint operations between civilian and military authorities for a variety of potential missions, including disaster response and emergency landings, it said.

The airport is designed to accommodate both domestic and international passengers, with a 3,700-metre runway capable of handling large commercial aircraft, modern passenger terminals and advanced air traffic control systems.

The entire project is split into five phases, of which the first phase will have a capacity to handle 2 crore passengers annually. The first phase is expected to be commissioned by early next year.

Once all the five phases of the project are completed, the airport will have four terminals and two runways.



Preparation underway for Shiv Sena (UBT) Dussehra rally at Shivaji Park in Mumbai on Friday.

Pic : Bhushan Koyande

## Man dies in altercation with rickshaw driver

**Thane:** A 48-year-old man suffered a cardiac arrest and died following an altercation with an autorickshaw driver over the payment of a fare in Thane, police said on Friday.

The police have registered a case against the autorickshaw driver under section 105(1) (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and arrested him in connection with the incident that took place in Titwala town.

The victim, Anshuman Shahi, hailed a rickshaw to travel to the Titwala railway station and attempted to pay the fare with a Rs 50 note. The driver, Raja Bhoir, demanded a different note, and an argument ensued. Bhoir allegedly beat up Shahi but the latter collapsed and was taken to a nearby hospital, but doctors declared him dead on arrival.

## Block on Central Railway tomorrow

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Central Railway said it will operate special traffic and power blocks in the intervening nights of October 12-13 and October 13-14 to launch girders of the Carnac road over-bridge (ROB) between CSMT and Masjid stations.

In a release issued on Friday evening, CR said the block on October 12-13 will be of six hours, while the one on October 13-14 will be of three hours.

"The blocks are expected to impact suburban train services on the Main and Harbour lines as suburban services will remain shut between Byculla-CSMT on the main line and Vadala Road and CSMT on the Harbour Line.

During the block periods, suburban trains will be short-terminated at Byculla, Parel, Kurla, and Vadala Road stations," the

release said.

Several long-distance mail and express trains will be short-terminated at Dadar and Panvel, with some rescheduled, while several services will remain cancelled, which may cause some inconvenience to passengers, it added.



"Late night travellers will have to start early, especially on Saturday, as the last locals will depart much earlier than their scheduled departure. There will be no mega block on CR's suburban network on Sunday," the release informed.

Carnac Brigade, one of the prime east-west connectors in the southern part of the metropolis, was razed a few years ago. It is being rebuilt.



Dadar flower market was thronged by people to buy marigolds and torans ahead of Dussehra festival in Mumbai on Friday.

Pic: Bhushan Koyande

## Four held for smuggling 9.69 kg opium

**Mumbai:** Four persons were arrested by Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) for allegedly smuggling 9.69 kilograms of opium from Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh to Mumbai, an official said on

Friday. On a tip off, a truck was apprehended near a toll plaza as it entered Maharashtra in the early hours of Wednesday, the official said.

"During a search, we

found 9.69 kilograms of a substance, which a field test kit showed was opium. The receiver and supplier were held in Mumbai and Ratlam. A cultivator who diverted opium illegally was also held in MP. Four

persons have been charged under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act," he said.

Further probe to unravel the complete drug smuggling network is underway, the official added. -PTI

## Actor Sayaji Shinde to be star campaigner for NCP

By Abhijit Mulye

**Mumbai:** Veteran actor Sayaji Shinde will be the star campaigner of the Nationalist Congress Party, Deputy Chief Minister Ahit Pawar announced here on Friday after he formally inducted the actor into the party.

NCP working president Praful Patel, state NCP chief Sunil Tatkare and several other party leaders were present at the occasion.

Shinde has acted in several films in several Indian languages including Marathi, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, English, Gujarati and Bhojpur.

"From being an Abhineta (actor) Shinde will now be a Neta (leader)," Pawar said while defining the role of the actor in the party.

Speaking on the occasion, 65-year-old Shinde noted that he has played a politician in several films but is joining the party to pursue the work on environment and forestation front that he had started a

## Haryana should be repeated in Maharashtra: Pawar

The Haryana story shall repeat in Maharashtra and the Mahayuti would return to power after the assembly elections, NCP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said. Pawar, who was frank and forthcoming while interacting with the media after induction of actor Sayaji Shinde into the party, refuted all the allegations being levelled against the government, the alliance and his party and asserted that the alliance should return to power. "A wrong narrative was set during the Lok Sabha elections. Similar thing shall happen in Maharashtra," Pawar said.



On speculations over why he left the cabinet meeting midway, Pawar said that he had a program to attend at Ahmedpur where a farmers' meet was organized for which he had to leave the cabinet meeting a few minutes prior to it was concluded. "It was nothing more than

a rush to catch flight," he said. On why more people are joining the NCP(SP) Ajit Pawar said, "We have around 40-42 MLAs with us. They have those many vacancies and they need people to fill up those vacancies, which they are getting from other parties."

tively, I need to be a part of the system," he added.

Born in western Maharashtra's Satara district, Shinde started his acting career in Marathi theatre. His big break in Bollywood came with the 1999 film

"Shool" where he played the villain.

State minister and NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal noted that Shinde's filmography spans Marathi, Hindi and South Indian films.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I feel the Mahayuti government respects people of all religions, be it Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian and others, and the decision to increase the remuneration of Madarsa teachers is a good thing. This proves that the government is not anti-Muslim."

Ramdas Athawale, Union Minister



## Dussehra rallies to set tone for Assembly polls

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena and the rival Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) will hold their respective Dussehra rallies in Mumbai on Saturday in a show of strength and set the tone by attacking each other ahead of Maharashtra assembly polls.

While the Shiv Sena (UBT) will hold its rally at the historic Shivaji Park in Dadar, Shinde will address his faction at Azad Maidan in south Mumbai.

Incidentally, heavy rains on Thursday night have made both the venues sludgy. However, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said it would not be a dampener.

Shiv Sena leader and former MP Rahul Shewale said around 2 lakh people are expected to attend the rally at Azad Maidan to hear the CM.

Transport sources said Shinde-led Sena has booked 3,000 private buses to ferry its workers to the venue.

Ahead of the rallies, both sides have released



teasers.

The Shinde-led faction's teaser showed a tiger, with Sena written on it, being betrayed by tying it to the Congress with a rope. Ani-

mation used in the teaser goes on to show CM Shinde emerging and cutting the rope with an arrow.

In its teaser, the Shiv Sena (UBT) talks about sav-

ing Maharashtra's pride and burying traitors, a reference to MLAs who rebelled against Uddhav Thackeray.

At the rally, Thackeray, who blames the BJP for splitting his party, is also expected to launch attacks on its former ally.

Sources said the Shinde group has booked 3,000 buses, of which some 750 are coming from Nashik in northern Maharashtra.

A senior Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) official said, unlike in the past, the

Shinde faction has requested buses from the state transporter's fleet but no payment had been done till late afternoon.

Some pedestrians complained that banners and flex boards put up by the CM's group, especially outside the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation headquarters, were low and were inconveniencing those walking past. The rallies are expected to boost the morale of the workers from both the sides as the state will go to polls next month.

# Noel Tata steps in to fill huge shoes of late half brother

Mumbai: Noel Tata -- the half-brother of late Ratan Tata -- who takes over as Chairman of Tata Trusts, has been with the Tata Group for over four decades, slowly rising through the ranks in the salt-to-software conglomerate.

Having functioned mostly under the shadows of his illustrious half-brother, Noel (67) will now have the responsibility of leading the Tata Trusts -- broadly comprising Sir Ratan Tata Trust & Allied Trusts, and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust & Allied Trusts -- that hold a controlling 66 per cent stake in Tata Sons, the holding and promoter firm of Tata Group companies.

He is a Trustee on the boards of Sir Ratan Tata Trust and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust.

His appointment as



Chairman of Tata Trusts comes after the death of Ratan Tata late on Wednesday evening due to age-related health conditions. Son of Naval H Tata and

Simone N Tata, Noel Tata currently serves on the board of various Tata Group companies, including as the Chairman of Trent, Tata International

Ltd, Voltas & Tata Investment Corporation and as the Vice Chairman of Tata Steel and Titan Company Ltd.

He has been associated

with the Tata Group for over 40 years.

His last executive assignment was as the Managing Director of Tata International Ltd, the trading and distribution arm of the Tata Group, between August 2010 and November 2021. He had overseen the growth of the company from a turnover of USD 500 million to over USD 3 billion.

Before his stint in Tata International, Noel Tata served as the Managing Director of Trent Ltd, Tata group's retail arm. He played a pivotal role in the growth of Trent across formats, from a one-store operation in 1998 to over 700 stores across formats.

A graduate from Sussex University (UK), Noel completed the International Executive Programme (IEP) from INSEAD. -PTI

## RBI wants easier accessibility to Divyang

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India on Friday asked banks to review their payment systems to ensure easier accessibility to persons with disabilities.

All sections of the population, including differently-abled persons, are increasingly adopting digital payment systems, it said in a circular.

"To promote effective access, payment system participants (PSPs, that is, banks and authorised non-bank payment system providers) are advised to review their payment systems/devices in terms of accessibility to Persons with Disabilities," it noted.

Based on the review, banks and non-bank payment system providers may carry out the necessary modifications in payment systems and devices like point-of-sale machines, which can be accessed and used by persons with disabilities with ease.

The RBI also asked them to refer to the accessibility standards issued by the Ministry of Finance in February.

While selecting potential solutions for the purpose, care should be taken to ensure that the modifications or enhancements do not compromise security aspects of the systems, the central bank said.

PSPs have been asked to submit to the Reserve Bank, within one month, details of their systems/devices that need to be modified, along with a time-bound plan of action for achieving the same.

## Tech sector sees deals worth USD 635 mn



New Delhi: Indian tech sector witnessed deals worth USD 635 million in the July-September period of 2024, registering a 31 per cent increase in value year-on-year, according to a report released on Friday.

Consultancy firm Grant Thornton Bharat's Q3 Dealtracker report for the tech sector said the quarter witnessed the highest deal volumes since Q2 2023 but the lowest for the year 2024, reflecting more strategic investments rather than large-scale acquisitions.

Grant Thornton Bharat Partner Raja Lahiri said the recent interest rate cut by the US Fed, coupled with India's post-election stability, has infused new momentum into the deal landscape, with notable value and volume growth.

"With the elections behind in India, we saw an increase in deal activity both in terms of volume and value compared to the previous quarter.

"Q3 2024 witnessed 79 deals valued at USD 635 million, representing a 5 per cent increase in volumes and a 31 per cent increase in values," he said. Out of the total deals, 12 were valued at and over USD 20 million, the report said.

Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) activity rebounded after a significant drop in Q1 2024, growing by 44 per cent sequentially to 26 deals in Q3 2024.

Deal values in M&A

surged 205 per cent to USD 116 million, up from USD 38 million in Q2, according to the report.

M&A volumes increased year-on-year by 53 per cent, but values decreased by 89 per cent, reflecting an absence of big-ticket deals.

Moreover, the report said that nearly 65 per cent of transactions did not disclose deal values, which also contributes to the decline in overall deal valuation.

"The investors remain quite bullish on the Indian story. India has been one of the key beneficiaries of capital flowing into the markets," Lahiri said, adding that the large number of IPOs lined up should give enough confidence to investors in exit opportunities.

With some investors expected to make stellar exits from these IPOs, they should have enough capital to make fresh investments even after returning a part of it to their LPs (Limited Partners), he said.

Furthermore, the funding activity in the startup ecosystem has improved significantly year-on-year with the number of deals and funding values increasing nearly 62 per cent and 40 per cent respectively, the report said.

Grant Thornton Bharat offers services and solutions in assurance, tax, technology, managed services, deals, ESG and risk consulting. -PTI

## Drug regulator meets WHO standards

New Delhi: Drug regulator CDSCO and the National Regulatory Authority of India have met the standards set up by the World Health Organisation for a functional vaccine regulatory system

A team of international experts from various countries led by the World Health Organisation (WHO) headquarters in Geneva reviewed India's vaccine regulatory system from September 16 to 20, the health ministry said in a statement.

Safety, efficacy, and quality were the three basic parameters of assessment of vaccines, it said.

**The Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation in collaboration with WHO, has made exemplary efforts towards this achievement. India is known for its affordable vaccines and generic medicines.**

**P. S. Srivastava, Health Secretary**

The WHO has established global standards and benchmarks for assurance of vaccine quality through the development of tools and guidelines, benchmarking of the National Regulatory Authorities (NRA) and pre-qualification programme of vaccines, the statement said.

The WHO NRA re-benchmarking was aimed to assess and document the status of the India regulatory system in the area of vaccine regulation, re-benchmark the status of the India vaccine regulatory system against the WHO NRA Global

Benchmarking Tool (GBT) and measuring the maturity of the system.

"India has been declared 'functional' against all the core regulatory functions of the WHO Global Benchmarking Tool Version VI. India's vaccine regulatory system was benchmarked in 2017 against Global benchmarking tool (GBT) version V which is now revised to GBT VI with raised bars and stringency in bench-marking criteria," the statement said.

India retains maturity level 3 with highest marks in several functions. -PTI

## Wockhardt gets nod for antibiotic

New Delhi: Drug firm Wockhardt on Friday said the national drug regulator has accorded a favourable recommendation for its novel antibiotic developed for the treatment of community-acquired bacterial pneumonia (CABP) in adults.

The Subject Expert Committee (SEC) of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has provided a favourable recommendation for Miquaf (nafthromycin), the drug firm said.

## India's first integrated cyber command, control center in Mahape

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Maharashtra launched the country's first integrated state-level cyber command and control center to facilitate and fast track cybercrime investigations, improve conviction rate, build capacity within police force and raise awareness of citizens regarding cybercrimes.

The facility located at Mahape will create a safe and resilient digital environment, empowering citizens, business and critical infrastructure to protect against cybercrimes.

L&T Technology Services, in consortium with M/s KPMG Assurance and Consulting Services LLP as Forensics & Technology Investigation partner, executed this strategic project for Maharashtra Cyber department, a statement by L&T Technology Services said.

The command and control center (CCC) will serve as a one stop shop for all grievance management through multiple channels like 14407, which will be operational from 15th October including web portal, mo-



As part of the launch, a dedicated helpline of the cybercrime command centre - 14407 - was announced. The centre is scheduled to start functioning at full capacity from October 15, said officials. The cyber security project aims to train 5,000 police personnel annually, further strengthening capabilities in tackling cybercrime.

**8,249**  
No of cybercrime cases recorded in Maharashtra in 2022

**48 per cent**  
Increase in no of cybercrimes in 2022

bile app, among others. The Nodal Cyber Police station and 50 district cyber police stations will investigate the cases with help of TAI (technology assisted investigation) for citizen and enterprise complaints while the state's Computer

Emergency Response Team (CERT-MH) will attend to cyber incidents related to critical infrastructure and national security in coordination with other agencies.

"Maharashtra has set a benchmark to provide a world class platform to tackle Cyber Crimes with global cutting edge technologies and highly skilled cyber experts. This ensures the timely resolution of cybercrimes and assures digital safety for citizens, enterprises and critical infrastructure," said Shri

**Maharashtra is at the forefront of the technology sector in India, and this project should serve as a model for other states in enhancing their cyber security frameworks.**

**- Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Minister**

Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra, who inaugurated the facility.

"L&T Technology Services is delighted to collaborate with the Maharashtra State Cyber Department on this groundbreaking project executed in a record time leveraging our experience in setting up and managing 25+ smart & safe Cities command centers and Security Operation Centers," said Mr. Amit Chadha, CEO and Managing Director of L&T Technology Services.



Australian Naval Commander Rear Admiral Christopher Smith visits the Indian Naval Base INS Satpura. Pic: PTI

## Forex kitty drops by USD 3.71 bln

Mumbai: India's forex reserves dropped by USD 3.709 billion to USD 701.176 billion for the week ended October 4, the RBI said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the reserves had jumped by USD 12.588 billion to an all-time high of

USD 704.885 billion.

For the week ended October 4, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 3.511 billion to USD 612.643 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

Expressed in terms of dollar, the foreign currency

assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves decreased by USD 40 million to USD 65.756 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by USD 123 million to USD 18.425 billion, the apex bank said. India's reserve position with the IMF was down by USD 35 million to USD 4.352 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed. -PTI

## Peak office rent at Nariman Point rises 52 pc

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Maximum office rent at Nariman Point in Mumbai has touched Rs 569 per square foot, up 52 per cent since 2018, Knight Frank India on Thursday said, projecting over 90 per cent growth in rentals by 2030 on strong demand.

On Thursday, real estate consultant Knight Frank India released a report 'South Mumbai -- A Renaissance', highlighting how ongoing enhancements in transit-related infrastruc-



ture are expected to drive the revitalisation of South Mumbai.

These infrastructure improvements are set to significantly increase the appeal of the area for both businesses and investors, it

added.

"Notably, office rentals in Nariman Point, one of the city's most iconic commercial districts, are projected to see a sharp rise. Top (maximum) rentals in Nariman Point will increase

from the current Rs 569 per sq ft to Rs 1,091 per sq ft by 2030, reflecting strong demand for premium office space in the area," the consultant said.

In the early 2000s, Nariman Point was Mumbai's premier business hub, with rental rising steadily from Rs 200 per sq ft in 2003 to Rs 550 per sq ft in 2007.

However, the global financial crisis and the increasing appeal of Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) led to downward trajectory in office rental to Rs 402 per sq ft

in 2012.

By 2018, Nariman Point's rental price further depreciated to Rs 375 per sq ft, significantly lower than Rs 833 per sq ft at BKC and Rs 460 per sq ft in the NCR.

However, the top rental prices in Nariman Point appreciated to Rs 569 per sq ft by the first half of 2024, surpassing top rentals of leading central business districts of both Bengaluru (Rs 353 per sq ft) and NCR (Rs 429 per sq ft).

"Between 2018 till H1 2024, top rental rates in Na-

riman Point have surged by 52 per cent, significantly outpacing rental growth of BKC, where rents have grown by 20 per cent," Knight Frank said.

Knight Frank India Chairman & Managing Director Shishir Bajjal said, "South Mumbai is witnessing a renaissance, spurred by the transformation of strategic infrastructure across the city. This renewed interest in premium office spaces is already reflected in rising property prices."

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

**"We generally don't charge tariffs. I started that process, it was so great, with the vans and the small trucks, etc. China will charge us a 200 per cent tariff. Brazil is a big charger. The biggest charger of all is India."**



**Donald Trump, Former President, US**

# Kannada flag hoisting mandatory for businesses

**Bengaluru:** Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Friday said Kannada flag should be hoisted compulsorily at all educational institutions, businesses and factories, including those operating in the information technology and biotechnology sector, in Bengaluru on November one, the state's formation day.

He said about 50 per cent of people residing in the city and Bengaluru Urban district are from other states, and they should also give priority to learn Kannada.

"...we are marking 50 years of Mysore state being renamed as Karnataka. November one is a day of celebration for Kannadigas...as in-charge Minister for Bengaluru I have formulated a new programme



as part of which at all schools and colleges, factories, business including IT-BT sector Kannad flag should be hoisted compulsorily," Shivakumar said.

An order to this effect would be issued, he told reporters here.

"All organisations, educational institutions, factories, businesses and others should compulsorily hoist Kannada flag. Government celebration of Rajyotsava will be

held at one place, but at private and government educational institutions too celebrations should be held compulsorily aimed at instilling a sense of love and affection among students towards Kannada language," Shivakumar said.

Everyone should feel that one cannot live in Karnataka without knowing Kannada, Shivakumar said.

Schools and colleges, along with hoisting the Kannada flag on November one, should also hold cultural programmes, like it is held on Independence and Republic Days. Respect should be shown towards the Kannada flag, he said.

The Minister said he was not asking factories and businesses to organise cultural events, but the

Kannada flag should compulsorily be hoisted.

Asked if those who do not abide by the government order would be penalised, he said: "I'm informing everyone that on this Kannada land, learning Kannada is their duty, we have made Kannada as a subject compulsory at schools.... such events of hoisting Kannada flags are organised at villages, but in Bengaluru city -- as district minister I'm making it compulsory."

Shivakumar also warned pro-Kannada organisations of legal action if they try to force the move on institutions or businesses. "They (institutions and businesses) will do it voluntarily after the government has asked them to do it," he said.



Priests perform 'Shastra Puja' on the ninth day of Durga Puja festival at the Jharkhand Armed Police temple in Ranchi on Friday. Pic:PTI

## Akhilesh uses JP sentiments, urges Nitish to pull out of NDA

**Lucknow:** The SP chief Akhilesh Yadav on Friday garlanded a bust of Jayaprakash Narayan mounted atop a vehicle outside his residence where hundreds of party workers had gathered after authorities blocked his visit to the JP International Centre citing security concerns.

The late JP, as the socialist leader and fierce critic of the Emergency was known, has emerged as the latest centre of the tussle between the ruling BJP and the opposition party.

Yadav also appealed to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to withdraw support to the NDA, saying the



BJP government in Uttar Pradesh stopped 'Samajwadis' from paying tributes to Narayan, a socialist ideologue, and asserting that the JD(U) chief owes his political emergence to the JP movement.

In the morning, he slammed the BJP government in the state for putting up barricades near his

### JD(U) snubs Akhilesh

**Patna:** The JD(U) on Friday rebuffed Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav's statement calling for Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's exit from the BJP-led NDA. In a strongly worded statement, JD(U) national spokesman Rajiv Ranjan Prasad said, "It is a bizarre remark from Akhilesh Yadav who does politics in the name of JP (Jayaprakash Narayan), but never cares for the principles of the late leader who fought against dynasty rule all his life". The JD(U) spokesperson said that the Samajwadi Party was "in the clutches of one family" and hence Yadav "must not have the temerity to invoke the legacy of JP".

house on Vikramaditya Marg here to prevent 'Samajwadis' from visiting the

site and garlanding JP Narayan's statue on his birth anniversary.

## Delhi Police nabs sharpshooter

**New Delhi:** The Delhi Police has arrested a 37-year-old sharpshooter who was wanted in multiple criminal cases. The accused identified as Aiman, a resident of the Bhalswa Dairy area, was declared a proclaimed offender by a court in Punjab.

"Aiman was involved in nine criminal cases, including extortion, attempt to murder and under the Arms Act. He worked as a sharpshooter for a notorious gangster," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Satish Kumar. Acting on a tip-off, the police arrested Aiman from a rented accommodation in the Bhalswa Dairy area, the DCP said.

## Body of missing pilot recovered a month later

**Ahmedabad:** The body of a missing Indian Coast Guard pilot has been recovered over a month after a helicopter belonging to the maritime security agency crashed into the Arabian Sea off Gujarat coast, officials said on Friday.

Three crew members went missing after the ALH MK-III helicopter fell into the Arabian Sea off Porbandar on September 2. While the bodies of two crew members were recovered subsequently, a search continued to trace Rakesh Kumar Rana, the pilot in command of the mission.

Rana's body was recovered from the sea, nearly 55 km southwest of Por-

bandar, on October 10, the Coast Guard said in a release.

"ICG (Coast Guard) along with the Indian Navy and other stakeholders continued unrelenting search efforts to locate Commandant Rakesh Kumar Rana, who was the Pilot in Command of the mission.

"His mortal remains will be cremated as per service traditions and honour. A warm salute to the three brave souls from Rank and File of the Indian Coast Guard who laid down their lives in the line of duty," it said.

The Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) of the Coast Guard with four crew members met with the accident

while trying to evacuate an injured man on board motor tanker Hari Leela, nearly 30 nautical miles from the Porbandar coast.

While one of the four crew members on the helicopter, diver Gautam Kumar, was rescued immediately, three went missing. A day later, the bodies of pilot Vipin Babu and diver Karan Singh were recovered. But Rana remained missing, prompting a massive search operation.

As part of the search by the Coast Guard and Indian Navy, more than 70 air sorties and 82 ship days involving several vessels were pressed into service, added the release.

-PTI

## RSS warns action against 'defamatory' remarks

**Thiruvananthapuram:** The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in Kerala has warned of legal action against the alleged "defamatory" remarks made against the outfit inside the state Assembly by the ruling and opposition members.

The right wing outfit said it was "condemnable" that those holding responsible positions are making baseless allegations inside and outside the House that the RSS was behind the disruption of Thrissur Pooram this year.

In a statement, senior RSS leader N Easwaran, Prantha Karyavahak (north Kerala), asked on what basis they were raising such "wrong" things.

The Sangh leaders would soon meet Governor Arif Mohammed Khan and Speaker A.N. Shamsheer over the matter, he said.

Those holding responsible positions, including the minister, the MLA and the opposition leader are unnecessarily using the name of the Sangh in their blame game for their political gains, the RSS leader alleged.

"This cannot be allowed. The RSS has no time or interest to intervene in such controversies," he said.

Alleging that the attempt

to drag the name of the RSS into political controversies was "ill-motivated", Easwaran also said legal action would be initiated against such attempts.

He also charged that the allegations were part of continuing attempts to deliberately create tensions and controversies in Kerala's iconic festivities like the Thrissur Pooram and the Sabarimala pilgrimage.

The disruption of the iconic Thrissur Pooram festival ignited a heated debate in the Kerala Assembly on Wednesday, as the opposition UDF alleged it occurred with the knowledge of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, while the ruling LDF dismissed calls for a judicial probe and said a comprehensive investigation is underway.

The Congress-led UDF opposition has been alleging for some time that the festival was disrupted with active knowledge of Vijayan as per his secret understanding with the RSS leaders. It is said that there were alleged police interventions in the Thrissur Pooram rituals and the subsequent controversies had taken the sheen off the annual spectacle held in April this year.



A man holds a placard during a 'mass convention' called by junior doctors near the hunger strike site in Kolkata on Friday. Pic:PTI

## Threat of acid attack over clothing, man fired

**Bengaluru:** A business development professional who threatened a man that he would throw acid on his wife's face over her choice of clothes has been sacked from the company.

The police, too, have launched an investigation against Nikith Shetty.

"... kindly tell your wife to follow a good dress, especially in Karnataka or else I may splash acid on

her face," Shetty allegedly said in a personal message on October 9 to Ansar, who immediately alerted the police and shared its screenshot.

"This is serious. @Dgp-Karnataka @CMofKarnataka @DKShivakumar. This person is threatening to throw acid on my wife's face for her choice of clothes. Please take immediate action against this person to

prevent any incident from happening," Ansar said in an online post.

"I don't think women are safe in this organisation," he said. Shetty's company sacked him after a netizen brought the matter to its notice.

"The man who threatened my wife @KhyatiShree\_ with acid attack lost his job. The company acted promptly and fired him.

## J-K has oldest MLA at 80

**Srinagar:** BJP's 29-year-old Shagun Parihar is the youngest member of the newly elected Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, while National Conference veteran Abdul Rahim Rather aged 80 is the oldest member.

Parihar, who lost her father and uncle in a terror attack in 2018, is the only member of assembly below the age of 30 while Rather, the seven-time MLA from Chara-e-Sharief, is the only octogenarian in the house, data compiled by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) reveals.

According to the ADR data, the average age of an MLA in Jammu and Kashmir is 55.71 years, which is reflected in the number of legislators with 32 falling in the age group of 51 to 60 years.

23 MLAs are between the ages of 41 and 50 years, while 22 members are in the age group of 61 to 70 years. There are six MLAs who are aged below 40. There were three women MLAs in the last assembly which was dissolved in the 2018 elections and the number has remained unchanged this year too.

Debutant Parihar from Kishtwar has joined them this year.

## BJP flays Congress over withdrawing riot cases

**New Delhi:** The BJP on Friday accused the Congress government in Karnataka of indulging in "politics of appeasement" and asked how will the party protect the country's democracy if it cannot even protect the police personnel of the state under its rule.

This came after the Karnataka government decided to withdraw a criminal case registered against a group of people, who had attacked the policemen with stones in Hubbali town on April 16, 2022.

"I am absolutely flabbergasted. This is nothing but the politics of appeasement. There were extremely serious allegations. There was an attack on a police station. Over 158 people were involved in this case of serious rioting," BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj told a press conference at the party headquarters here when asked for comment.

The police personnel had suffered injuries in the incident, she said and asked if the Congress government in Karnataka cannot



protect the "protectors of the country", how will it protect democracy.

"I am really shocked to see that Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar wrote to the Karnataka Police department asking for withdrawal of these cases. This is in contravention to the report submitted both by the state police department as well as the law department," the BJP MP said.

Swaraj alleged that the Congress government in Karnataka has decided to withdraw the case to serve its selfish political interest.

"The Karnataka government is only practicing politics of appeasement," she added.

-PTI

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"From six to eight per cent voting in Jammu and Kashmir to over 60 per cent voting shows that the people believe in the democratic setup and support scrapping of Article 370."



J.P. Nadda, President, BJP

## Bungalow at centre of row formally allotted to Atishi

**New Delhi:** The controversial 6, Flagstaff Road bungalow in Civil Lines was formally allotted to Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Friday, two days after she was allegedly forcibly made to vacate it, officials said.

They said the bungalow in Civil Lines has been formally allotted to Atishi after completion of due process of handover and preparation of inventory.

An offer letter issued by the Public Works Department (PWD) mentioned that as the bungalow is un-



der investigation by the CBI and other agencies for various "violations", the allot-

tee is "advised" to extend full cooperation in the probe.

The BJP targeted Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal dubbing the bungalow, in which he lived as the Delhi chief minister for nine years, as "Sheeshmahal" for alleged irregularities in its reconstruction, costly interiors and household items there.

The bungalow was at the centre of an intense tussle involving the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the lieutenant governor (LG) office after Kejriwal vacated it earlier this month.

The PWD letter stated that the bungalow was allotted to Chief Minister Atishi according to the provisions of Delhi Administration Allotment of Government Residences (General Pool) Rules, 1977.

The offer letter requested her for submission of an acceptance duly forwarded with three copies of family photo, within eight days after which she will be given an "authority slip" by the PWD in order to take possession of the bungalow. "In case of failure to take

the possession of the allotted bungalow within the time specified, the allotment will be treated as cancelled," said the letter.

It stated that the allottee will have to vacate if she was in occupation of any other government bungalow within 15 days after taking possession of the 6, Flagstaff Road residence.

Atishi was allotted AB-17 bungalow on Mathura Road, after her appointment as minister of Delhi government last year.

-PTI

# Delhi HC says pollution level at all-time high

**New Delhi:** Pollution in Yamuna River is at an all-time high, the Delhi High Court has remarked while refusing to stay an eviction notice issued to the residents of an unauthorised colony located in the river floodplain.

The high court observed the argument that the colony in south Delhi did not fall in the floodplain, as the risk of flooding was only one in 25 years, and did not hold water.

"Moreover, even if it is assumed that Shram Vihar Colony is situated outside the flood plains, yet it falls within zone 'O', which is an ecologically fragile zone and is being primarily used for horticulture and has a wealth of flora and fauna," a bench of Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said.

"It needs to be borne in mind that zone 'O' has been conceived for rejuvenation of River Yamuna and eco-friendly development in line with the river and its morphology," it said.

The bench, therefore, dismissed the applications, saying the occupants over there were not entitled to any stay on the eviction notices.

The high court also referred to a recent news report based on a finding of the Delhi Pollution Control Committee which said the faecal coliform levels were 1,959 times the permissible limit and 9,800 times the desired limit where the river exits the city.

The news report pointed out that the faecal level



A devotee throws puja material into the Yamuna river on the last day of the 'Navratri' festival in New Delhi on Friday.

Pic: PTI

was at an all-time high in September 2024, with untreated sewage flowing into the river from nearby unauthorised colonies being one of the main reasons.

"This court takes judicial notice of the fact that the pollution in river Yamuna is at an all-time high," the bench said in its October 8 order.

The court was hearing applications filed by residents of the colony who sought a stay on the eviction notices issued on September 27.

The counsel for the residents contended that the colony did not fall within the floodplain of Yamuna River while relying on the National Capital Territory

of Delhi (Recognition of Property Rights of Residents in Unauthorised Colonies), Regulations, 2019. He further claimed that the colony was situated on private land.

Advocate Prabhsahay Kaur, representing the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), argued that the colony fell in zone 'O', which was conceived for rejuvenation and eco-friendly development in line with the river and its morphology.

She said the colony fell in the definition of floodplain as mentioned in River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Authorities Order, 2016.

According to Kaur, Sh-

ram Vihar had not been included in the list of 1,731 unauthorised colonies recognised by the Delhi government and was not due for recognition in future.

The court noted that though the applicants claimed the colony to be on private land, they had neither brought on record any sanctioned plan nor any completion certificate post-construction.

"It is a settled law that even owners of a private land have to take permission from the statutory authority before carrying out any construction and if that is not done, the construction is liable to be demolished," the bench underlined.

-PTI

## WASTE TO BEST

# Heaps of Garbage Along the Roadsides



By  
Dr. Sanjay Joshi

**F**riends, in my earlier article last week, I had described the pitiable conditions of cows and the human ragpickers. At this point, may I take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude for those ragpickers?

In fact, these are the people to whom we should always be thankful. Why? Because they are doing a wonderful job for us. Through their act, they are reducing the volume of waste before it is taken away by the garbage trucks to the designated dumping grounds. Reduction in volume is one very crucial and important activity in waste management. But while doing so, just as the cows end up in consuming the plastic bags innocently, unknowingly, these poor ragpickers also are at very high health risks.

First, they do not wear any personal protection like masks, gloves, long boots etc. Why? Simply because they do not have money to buy such things! Secondly, they are unaware of maintaining their own personal hygiene. Due to this, they often fall sick and there are chances that they might carry the germs unknowingly and eventually spread infection in the community leading to epidemic like situations.

However, those poor souls have no choice because collecting saleable articles from the garbage heaps is the only means of earning their daily meals. Now coming to the secondary



disposal of these garbage heaps from the streets to some other area designated as the dumping ground or garbage depot. In larger cities, they have created area wise 'transfer stations' where such garbage collected from the roadsides is brought by the workers before taking it to the dumping ground. At such transfer stations, this garbage is sorted out into varied materials as per its composition.

This act is essential and important as segregated waste can be easily 'treated' and disposed off without causing much harm to the environment. Of course, such transfer stations are not available everywhere. So, at such places, the heaps of garbage collected from different localities in a town or city are directly taken to a dumping ground.

A dump yard or a dumping ground is an open place belonging to an urban local body which is earmarked

for collecting and storing the garbage. It is a final destination or abode for thousands of tons of garbage collected from all over the city mostly in unsegregated form. So, such garbage is a mixture of wet or biodegradable waste and dry or non-biodegradable waste.

Now, as the villages become towns and towns become cities which further expand into metropolitan as a result of rapid urbanization, selecting and earmarking a suitable site for a dumping ground becomes very difficult for the local civic authorities and there are multiple social, economical and environmental issues associated with it. I will discuss these issues and possible solutions through my next few articles in this column.

(The writer is an environment specialist. Views personal.)



The first snowfall of the season at Shri Hemkund Sahib Gurudwara in Chamoli district on Friday. The doors of the Gurudwara have been closed for the winter season.

Pic: PTI

## Leopard beaten to death after attack

**Jaipur:** A leopard was beaten to death by villagers after it attacked a 55-year-old man in Udaipur district of Rajasthan on Friday, police said.

The incident occurred in Sayra area in the early hours when the leopard attacked Devaram's cattle

outside his house, they said.

According to police, when he opened the gate to check on the cattle, the leopard attacked him, leaving him injured.

Hearing his cries for help, the villagers quickly gathered and surrounded

the area where the leopard was hiding. They started hitting the animal with sticks and other objects, leading to its death on the spot, police said.

The injured is undergoing treatment at the district hospital, they added.

The area is located about

25 km from where forest and police teams have been searching for a man-eater leopard over the past several days.

However, authorities are yet to confirm if the dead leopard is the same one being tracked.

-PTI

## Gandhisagar forest festival

**Kota:** The third edition of Gandhisagar Forest Retreat & Festival is set to begin from October 14, offering a mix of nature, adventure and culture to travellers in the heart of Madhya Pradesh.

The festival, aimed at turning Gandhisagar into a premier tourism destination, seeks to attract global adventurers while also boosting local employment and regional growth.

The Gandhisagar Festival, set against the backwaters near Mandsaur, promises visitors a mix of adventure, entertainment, and cultural experiences, including traditional art, performances and local cuisine, said Shiv Shekhar Shukla, Principal Secretary Tourism & Culture and Managing Director of the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board (MPTB).

This year the event will introduce all-weather tents with premium amenities to enhance guest comfort, said another official Sanjeev Saxena.

-PTI

## Ladakh gets world's highest MACE Observatory

**Leh/Jammu:** The Union Territory of Ladakh gets the Major Atmospheric Cherenkov Experiment (MACE) observatory, the world's highest imaging Cherenkov telescope, located at an altitude of over 4,300 meters in Hanle.

This observatory underscores India's advancements in space and cosmic-ray research capabilities.

Dr Ajit Kumar Mohanty, the secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, officially inaugurated the MACE observatory here, an official spokesperson said.

Built indigenously by the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) with support from the Electronics Corporation of India Limited and other Indian industry partners, the MACE is the largest imaging Cherenkov telescope in Asia, he said.

The inauguration ceremony, held as part of the



DAE's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, included the unveiling of commemorative plaques by Dr Mohanty at the Hanle site.

Addressing the importance of balancing tourism and scientific activities within the Hanle Dark Sky Reserve (HDSR), Additional Secretary Ajay Ramesh Sule encouraged the students to pursue career in science and technology.

BARC's Physics group Director Dr S.M. Yusuf underscored the MACE telescope's significance in advancing India's capabilities in space and cosmic-ray research.

A pictorial compilation documenting the MACE project journey was released during the ceremony. Dr Mohanty also felicitated the village leaders, the school headmaster, and the lama of the Hanle Gompa.

The MACE telescope, observing high-energy gamma rays, will contribute to global efforts to study phenomena like supernovae, black holes and gamma-ray bursts, he said.

He added it aims to foster international collaborations, bolstering India's role in multimessenger astronomy.

-PTI

## AstroSat, NASA capture eruptions from stellar wreckage

**Bengaluru:** India's AstroSat and NASA's space observatories have captured dramatic eruptions from stellar wreckage around a massive black hole, the ISRO said on Thursday.

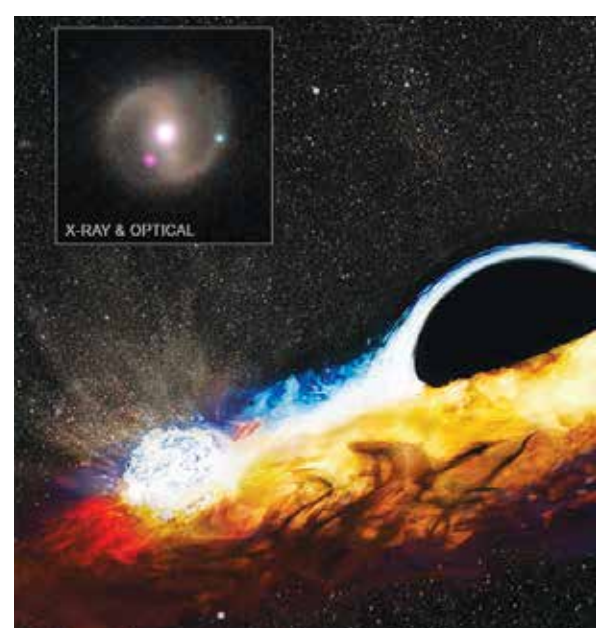
A massive black hole has torn apart one star and is now using that stellar wreckage to pummel another star or smaller black hole that used to be in the clear - this discovery was made using NASA's space observatories - Chandra, HST, NICER, Swift - and ISRO's AstroSat, the Indian space agency said.

"It provides astronomers with valuable insights, linking two mysteries where there had previously

only been hints of a connection", Bengaluru-headquartered ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) said in a statement.

In 2019, it was noted, astronomers witnessed the signal of a star that got too close to a black hole and was destroyed by the black hole's gravitational forces. Once shredded, the star's remains began circling the black hole in a disk in a type of stellar graveyard.

Over a few years, however, this disk has expanded outward and is now directly in the path of a star, or possibly a stellar-mass black hole, orbiting the massive black hole at a previously safe distance, ac-



ording to ISRO.

The orbiting star is now repeatedly crashing through the debris disk, about once every 48 hours, as it circles. When it does, the collision causes bursts of X-rays that astronomers captured with Chandra.

According to ISRO, scientists have documented many cases where an object gets too close to a black hole and gets torn apart in a single burst of light. Astronomers call these "tidal disruption events" (TDEs).

In recent years, astronomers have also discovered a new class of bright flashes from the centers of galaxies, which are detected only in X-rays and repeat many

"Imagine a diver repeatedly going into a pool and creating a splash every time she enters the water," Matt Nicholl of Queen's University Belfast, the UK, the lead author of the study that appears in the current issue of 'Nature' was quoted as saying in the ISRO statement. "The star in this comparison is like the diver and the disk is the pool, and each time the star strikes the surface it creates a huge 'splash' of gas and X-rays. As the star orbits around the black hole, it does this over and over again.

times. These events are also connected to supermassive black holes, but astronomers could not explain what caused the semi-regular bursts of X-rays. They dubbed these "quasi-periodic eruptions," or QPEs, it was stated.

"There had been feverish speculation that these phenomena were connected, and now we've discovered the proof that they are," said co-author Dheeraj Pasham of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

-PTI

We now realise we need to wait a few years for the eruptions to 'turn on' after a star has been torn apart because it takes some time for the disk to spread out far enough to encounter another star.

- Gulab Dewangan, Co-Author from IUCAA

# Modi calls for peace in Eurasia, West Asia

Navy ship didn't sink because captain was a woman: NZ official

Vientiane (Laos): Noting that the most negatively affected countries due to ongoing conflicts in various parts of the world are those from the Global South, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday called for the restoration of peace and stability in regions such as Eurasia and West Asia as soon as possible.

Addressing the 19th East Asia Summit, Modi said solutions to problems cannot come from the battlefield.

Amid increasing Chinese assertiveness in the region, the prime minister also said a free, open, inclusive, prosperous, and rules-based Indo-Pacific is crucial for the peace and progress of the entire region.

The peace, security, and stability in the South China Sea are in the interest of the entire Indo-Pacific region, Modi stressed.

"We believe that maritime activities should be conducted in accordance with UNCLOS. Ensuring freedom of navigation and airspace is essential. A robust and effective Code of Conduct should be developed. And, it should not impose restrictions on the foreign policies of regional countries," the PM said.

"Our approach should focus on development and not expansionism," Modi asserted.

He noted that the most negatively affected countries, due to ongoing conflicts in various parts of the world, are those from the Global South.

There is a collective desire for the restoration

## Indian handicrafts gifted to leaders

Narendra Modi presented an array of intricately crafted gifts, showcasing India's rich cultural heritage, to the leaders of Laos, Thailand, New Zealand, and Japan at the 21st India-ASEAN Summit, officials said. Among the notable gifts, Modi gave New Zealand's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon a pair of majestic silver lamps adorned with rubies from Maharashtra. These gifts, which highlight India's artistry and craftsmanship, also included a vintage brass Buddha statue with mina (enamel) work for Lao President Thongloun Sisoulith, a Patan Patola scarf for Naly Sisoulith, the President's spouse, a Kadamwood embossed Buddha head for Lao Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone, and a malachite and camel bone box featuring a Radha-Krishna theme for his spouse. Kadamwood is known for its durability and intricate embossing. The vintage brass Buddha statue, gifted to President Sisoulith, is a masterpiece of South



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Thailand Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra on the sidelines of East Asia Summit in Vientiane, Laos. Pic:PTI

Indian craftsmanship, originating from Tamil Nadu. Crafted by skilled artisans, it symbolises the deep-rooted influence of Buddhist philosophy across Asia.

For Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, Modi presented a low-height wooden table from Ladakh, a vibrant piece featuring intricate carvings that embody

the cultural essence of the Himalayan region. Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba received a silver peacock figurine, crafted with detailed nakkashi (carving) work from West Bengal.

of peace and stability in regions such as Eurasia and West Asia as soon as possible, he said.

"I come from the land of Buddha, and I have repeatedly stated that this is not the era of war. Solutions to problems cannot come from the battlefield," Modi said. It is essential to respect

sovereignty, territorial integrity, and international laws, he said, adding that with a humanitarian perspective, "we must place a strong emphasis on dialogue and diplomacy".

In fulfilling its responsibilities as a 'Vishwabandhu', India will continue to make every effort to contribute in this

direction, Modi said.

His remarks came amidst conflicts between Ukraine and Russia in Eurasia and the Israel-Hamas war in West Asia.

Asserting that terrorism also poses a serious challenge to global peace and security, Modi said that to combat it, forces that believe in humanity

must come together and work in tandem.

"And, we must strengthen mutual cooperation in the areas of cyber, maritime, and space," Modi added.

At the start of his address, the prime minister expressed his deep condolences to those affected by "Typhoon

## East Asia Summit countries invited to Nalanda University

Narendra Modi on Friday invited East Asia Summit countries for the first-ever Heads of Higher Education Conclave to be held at Nalanda University in Bihar. "Reiterating the importance of the EAS mechanism and reaffirming India's support to further strengthen it, the PM recalled support received from EAS Participating Countries on the revival of Nalanda University. The PM took this opportunity to invite the EAS countries for a Heads of Higher Education Conclave to be held at Nalanda University," an official statement said. The statement did not mention the date of the conclave.

Yagi", a destructive tropical cyclone which impacted Southeast Asia and South China in September this year.

"During this challenging time, we have provided humanitarian assistance through Operation Sadbhav," he said.

Modi also said India has consistently supported the unity and centrality of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

ASEAN is also pivotal to India's Indo-Pacific vision and Quad cooperation, he said.

There are important similarities between India's "Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative" and the "ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific", the prime minister pointed out.

"We endorse ASEAN's approach to the situation in Myanmar and support the Five-Point Consensus. Furthermore, we believe it is crucial to sustain humanitarian assistance and implement suitable measures for the restoration of democracy," Modi said.

"We believe that Myanmar should be engaged rather than isolated in this process," he

said. As a neighbouring country, India will continue to uphold its responsibilities, he added.

In his remarks, Modi also said the revival of Nalanda was a commitment made at the East Asia Summit.

"This June, we fulfilled that commitment by inaugurating the new campus of Nalanda University. I invite all the countries present here to participate in the 'Heads of Higher Education Conclave' to be held at Nalanda," he said.

The PM asserted that the East Asia Summit is a key pillar of India's Act East Policy.

The East Asia Summit comprises eighteen participating countries, including ten ASEAN member states -- Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam -- and Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America.

-PTI

# Israel's airstrike warnings terrify Lebanese civilians

Beirut: As the war between Israel and Hezbollah intensifies, Lebanese civilians are increasingly paying the price -- and this dangerous reality often becomes clear in the middle of the night: That's when the Israeli military typically warns people to evacuate buildings or neighbourhoods to avoid airstrikes.

Moein Shreif was recently awakened at 3 a.m. by a neighbor calling to alert him that Israel planned to strike a nearby building in his middle-class suburb south of Beirut where Hezbollah has a strong presence. Shreif, his wife and their three children quickly fled their multi-story apartment building and drove away. Within minutes, explosions rang out, he said later that day upon returning to see the smoldering ruins of his building and the one next door.

"I didn't even have time to dress properly, as you can see," said Shreif, a well-known Lebanese folk and pop singer who was still wearing his pajamas from the night before. "I didn't take anything out of the house."

> So far, Ain Ebel -- a mostly Christian village -- hasn't been bombed, although surrounding villages whose residents are predominantly Shiite Muslims have been. Salam's teenage children are terrified of going home, especially since Israel launched a ground invasion.

> So far, evacuation notices in Lebanon have been far more limited than in Gaza, but the messages in both places have a common theme. In Gaza, Israel says it is targeting Hamas militants embedded among Gaza's civilians. In Lebanon, it warns of similar behavior by Hezbollah, a Hamas ally.

Israel and Hezbollah have been exchanging strikes nearly every day since the start of the war in Gaza. Hezbollah says it will fire rockets into Israel until there's a cease-fire in Gaza; Israel says its fighting to stop those attacks, which have forced tens of thousands of Israelis from their homes.

**1.2 million -- No of Lebanese people displaced by the war**  
**1,000 -- No of shelters for the civilians**

But it wasn't until late last month, when Israel dramatically expanded its aerial campaign against Hezbollah, that Lebanese people began receiving reg-

ular warnings about upcoming airstrikes. Human rights groups say Israel's warnings -- which aren't issued before many airstrikes -- are inadequate and sometimes misleading.

On Sept. 23, Israel made 80,000 calls into Lebanon, according to Imad Kreidieh, head of the country's telecommunications company -- presumably recorded warnings about upcoming airstrikes. The calls caused panic. Schools shut down. People rushed home early from work. It ended up being the deadliest day of airstrikes in Lebanon in decades, with over 500 people killed -- roughly one quarter of all those killed in Lebanon the past year.

-AP



A Lebanese woman passes next to destroyed cars at the site of Thursday's Israeli airstrike in Beirut, Lebanon on Friday. Pic: AP/PTI

# 20 killed in attack on miners in Balochistan

Karachi: At least 20 miners, including from Afghanistan, were killed and eight others injured on Friday when terrorists attacked a private coal mine with rocket launchers and automatic weapons in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province. A group of armed men attacked the Junaid Coal company in the Dukki area of the province and then escaped into the mountains. The attack is the latest in a string of violent incidents in Pakistan and comes ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's summit to be held in the national capital.

There were around 50 workers at the site and some of them escaped unhurt after running into the nearby mountains or remaining hidden deep in the mines, he added.

Some of the coal workers belonged to Afghanistan. According to District Chairman Dukki Haji Khair Ullah Nasir, the attackers used hand grenades and rocket launchers in the attack. He said that there are ten coal mines located in the area. Nasir said that the attackers also set ablaze mining machinery before

fleeing the scene.

Johar Khan Shadzai, a doctor in Dukki, said: "We have received 20 bodies and six injured so far at the district hospital." No group has claimed responsibility for the attack so far.

Police, paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC) and rescue teams rushed to the spot after the attack. Police sources said that the death toll may rise as some injured miners were in critical condition.

SHO Dukki Hamayan Khan said the armed men first gathered the miners in different groups and then sprayed bullets on them. Heavy contingents of police and FC have cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to arrest the culprits.

Pakistan has witnessed a worrying surge in terrorist attacks in the ongoing year with fatalities in the first three quarters surpassing the numbers recorded in all of 2023. As per the third Balochistan, bordering Iran and Afghanistan, is home to a long-running violent insurgency. Baloch insurgent groups have previously carried out several attacks targeting CPEC projects. -PTI

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We are very concerned about China's increasingly dangerous and unlawful activities in the South China Sea which have injured people, harmed vessels and contradict commitments to peaceful resolutions of disputes."

Antony Blinken, Secretary of State, US



# Nobel Peace Prize to atomic bombing survivors

Stockholm: The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded Friday to Nihon Hidankyo, a Japanese organisation of survivors of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for its activism against nuclear weapons.

Jorgen Watne Frydnes, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, said the award was made as the "taboo against the use of nuclear weapon is under pressure."

He said the Nobel committee "wishes to honour

all survivors who, despite physical suffering and painful memories, have chosen to use their costly experience to cultivate hope and engagement for peace."

Hidankyo chairperson Tomoyuki Mimaki, who was standing by at the Hiroshima City Hall for the announcement, cheered and teared up when he received the news.

"Is it really true? Unbelievable!" Mimaki screamed. Efforts to eradicate nu-



clear weapons have been honoured in the past by the Nobel committee. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons won the peace prize in 2017,

and in 1995 Joseph Rotblat and the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs won for "their efforts to diminish the part played by nuclear arms in international politics and, in the longer run, to eliminate such arms."

This year's prize was awarded against a backdrop of devastating conflicts raging in the world, notably in the Middle East, Ukraine and Sudan.

"It is very clear that threats of using nuclear weapons are putting pres-

sure on the important international norm, the taboo of using nuclear weapons," Watne Frydnes said in response to a question on whether the rhetoric from Russia surrounding nuclear weapons in its invasion of Ukraine had influenced this year's decision.

"And therefore it is alarming to see how threats of use is also damaging this norm. To uphold an international strong taboo against the use is crucial for all of humanity," he

added.

Alfred Nobel stated in his will that the peace prize should be awarded for "the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses."

Last year's prize went to jailed Iranian activist Narges Mohammadi for her advocacy of women's rights and democracy, and against the death penalty. -AP

## EDITORIAL

## Grandiose Gambits

As Maharashtra gears up for its Assembly elections, a familiar ritual unfolds: grand proclamations aimed at wooing key voter blocs. The state cabinet, under Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, recently made sweeping promises designed to boost its electoral fortunes. Yet, such gestures beg the perennial question: are these pre-election pledges fulfilled once the ballots are cast?

The BJP-Shiv Sena-NCP-led Mahayuti government is making sweeping promises, from raising the income limit for the OBC 'non-creamy layer' to increasing Madrasa teachers' salaries. The proposed income ceiling jump from Rs. 8 lakh to Rs.15 lakh would extend reservation benefits to more OBC families. While it seems like a step towards uplifting weaker sections, implementing this solely for Maharashtra without similar changes in other states raises questions about its financial feasibility.

Beyond the OBC vote bank, the government has also turned its attention to the minority community, particularly Madrasa teachers. Their salaries were significantly raised, accompanied by an emphasis on the modernization of religious schools. While integrating modern education into Madrasas through the Dr. Zakir Hussain Madarsa Modernisation Scheme may be an admirable goal, the timing is telling. The cabinet also bolstered investment for the Maulana Azad Minority Financial Development Corporation. Additionally, welfare co-operative boards were announced for several other communities, with capital investments of Rs. 50 crore each. Given that the minorities voted against the Mahayuti in the Lok Sabha election, such initiatives are part of a broader strategy to court them.

Then, there is the draft ordinance to grant constitutional status to the Maharashtra State Scheduled Caste Commission. While this may appear as a genuine step toward safeguarding the interests of Scheduled Caste communities, one must ask why such measures surface only in the months leading up to elections.

Maharashtra's electoral history is replete with examples of grand pre-election proclamations that either fell short of implementation, or were not implemented as swiftly as promised.

At the time of the 2004 Assembly election, the Congress-NCP alliance, led by Sushilkumar Shinde, promised sweeping loan waivers to address rural distress. Ahead of the 2019 election, the BJP-Sena government expanded the Shiv Bhojan Thali, a subsidized meal program for the poor. While initially implemented, its reach was criticized due to inadequate infrastructure and inconsistent supply.

These examples underscore that big announcements are part of a well-worn electoral strategy, a pattern where parties make bold pledges to key voting blocs just before the elections, only to let those promises languish in bureaucratic limbo or become diluted after power is secured. Will this time be any different?

## GLOBAL AFFAIRS

## The FPÖ: An Unlikely Voice Against EU Ambitions in Austria



By  
Christoph Ernst

Some victories are no real surprise. The Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) led the polls for years. Now it became the strongest force in the elections. Herbert Kickl, the incarnation of evil for all parties to the left of the centre, won most votes and can now claim the chancellorship. That is why the media are talking about an 'earthquake.'

Kickl is less charismatic as his predecessors Jörg Haider and Heinz-Christian Strache, but he dares to challenge the powerful European Union (EU) and its leader Ursula von der Leyen. So supposedly the danger of an 'Orbanisation' looms, as Kickl may opt for the path of his Hungarian neighbour, and, like the obstinate Victor Orban, promises to resist the EU's migration policy ambitions.

The question is whether this would be so bad. The Austrian election results are not difficult to interpret: the major-

**As Herbert Kickl's party emerges as the strongest in post-election Austria, it challenges the EU's migration policies and highlights a growing disconnect between the political elite and voter concerns.**

ity voted for the FPÖ and its conservative counterpart, the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP). The Socialists (SPÖ), Greens and Communists received only 30 per cent. But although, unlike Germany, Austria has no 'firewall against the right' and the FPÖ has already been part of several governments, the media are now beginning to give an exegesis of the will of the electorate, and unsurprisingly, they urge there should be an ÖVP/SPÖ government.

Once again, it seems, the will of the people is swept under the carpet. As all parties except the FPÖ ignore the wishes of the 'sovereign' regarding the key issue of migration, which is precisely why more and more voters are opting for the only available opposition. As long as mass immigration at the expense of the locals continues, this is not likely to change. It does not take rocket-science to comprehend that, but the self-proclaimed 'elites' continue to ignore it.

The 'alternative' favoured by the media is an alliance between the ÖVP and the SPÖ and a third partner, which would in fact be a continuation of the present stalemate.

It is highly questionable whether and how such a ménage à trois could agree on anything beyond the redistribution of money. The Austrian Socialists and the ÖVP have far less in common than the ÖVP and the FPÖ, so that the ÖVP is now stuck between a rock and a hard place, and with it the whole country. Needed are reforms that tackle burning taboos, something the ÖVP and SPÖ are equally incapable of, which in turn, of course, only strengthens the position of the FPÖ, if such a coalition breaks up.

That, more or less, is the official 'narrative'. The framework is a struggle between 'left' and 'right' and the desired goal is a kind of popular front of 'democrats' against the reborn 'Austrofascists'.

The rise of conservative movements against the growing state encroachment from the 1990s onwards was a godsend for Europe's transnational elites,



allowing them to delegitimise popular discontent. In Austria, Jörg Haider positioned the FPÖ as the representative of the 'little people'. His bizarre nostalgia for the Austrian pre-war era provided the template for framing him as a right-wing extremist.

At the same time, his criticism of migration and the long-term domination of the country by the SPÖ and ÖVP drove more and more voters into his arms. Instead of responding to his legitimate demands, however, the established political cartel stylised him as a new Hitler and prophesied the end of democracy.

In this way, they gave a moral charge to complex social issues that needed to be addressed, made them a taboo to discuss and turned them into a battle between the forces of darkness and the forces of light. The tactic worked brilliantly and became the blueprint for dealing with 'populists' such as the AfD. Since then, the 'fight against the right' has been the pan-European playground for denouncing any scepticism concerning the global 'transformation' as propagated by the World Economic Forum, the EU and the postmodern left.

Any doubt is reflexively denounced as a precursor to right-wing extremism,

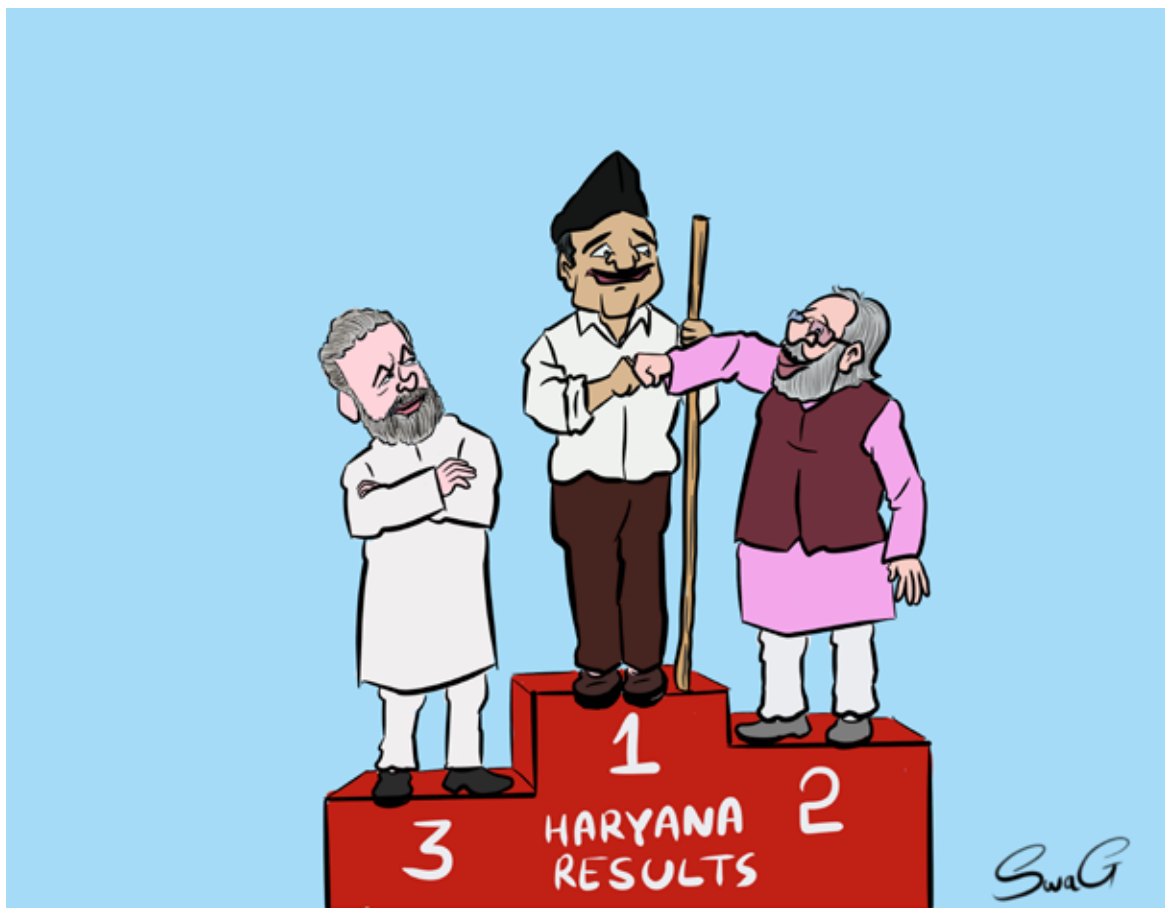
thus in effect holding the liberal sections of society hostage.

While I have never shared Jörg Haider's views and have always detested him and his party, today the FPÖ stands as the only party in Austria questioning the EU's dubious ambitions and detrimental migration policy. It defends citizens' rights to free speech, cash ownership, and self-determination, addresses regulatory excesses from the pandemic, supports arms sales in Ukraine, and emphasizes the need for diplomatic talks with Russia. These positions may not be universally accepted, but they are not solely 'right-wing' and deserve a place in a healthy democratic discourse.

If someone had asked me twenty years ago who would articulate such topics, I surely would have guessed some sort of 'progressive' force. Now, by a strange twist of trends, it is the FPÖ. But that doesn't make the issues themselves any less crucial. It just shows how dramatically times change.

*(The author is an historian and novelist who writes historically-aware crime fiction. He is currently working on a book on Germany's migration crisis. Views personal)*

## SATIRE WITH SWAG



## Temple board defends virtual queue reservation in Sabarimala

The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), the apex body that manages the Sabarimala Temple, on Friday justified the state government's decision to allow darshan only through virtual queue booking system during the upcoming annual pilgrimage season.

The system is needed to ensure the safety and security of pilgrims and the hill shrine, it said. Addressing a press conference here, TDB President P S Prashant said the decision was taken with a good intention and anyone who arrives at the Lord Ayyappa temple would not have to return without getting darshan.

While the now discontinued spot booking option was just an entry pass, the virtual queue booking on

the other hand was an authenticated document for pilgrims at Sabarimala, he said.

The number of spot bookings done during the 2022-23 season was 3,95,634, and it rose to 4,85,063 in the following season, he said. "Normally, when there is virtual queue system, the spot booking should have got reduced. But, here, the spot booking increased which was not good."

However, he did not give a reason on why spot booking increased despite the availability of virtual booking during the last season.

To a related question, he wondered if anybody would bother to opt for a virtual queue if spot booking was also made available. The TDB president further said it was good for the

Board if the number of pilgrims increases as it would be a boost to revenue by way of hundi collection and sale of "appam and aravana" prasadam.

However, the safety of pilgrims is of paramount importance to the TDB and not the revenue, he said.

"The safety of pilgrims and the temple are equally important. Sabarimala is not like any other temple. Crowd management is of utmost importance at the hill shrine.

In the virtual queue system, pilgrims can book their darshan tickets and prasadam online through the official website of the Sabarimala temple. In spot booking, pilgrims can book slots for their darshan at designated centres identified by the TDB.

## STATES WATCH

## An Eternal Power Struggle Between AAP and the Centre

The latest skirmish between the BJP-led Centre and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Delhi government unfolded in the heart of the city's upscale Civil Lines area after the Delhi Public Works Department (PWD) locked 6, Flag Staff Road – the bungalow that Delhi's Chief Minister Atishi had only recently moved into.

Predictably, the AAP has cried foul, alleging that the CM was "forcibly" evicted from her residence, her belongings unceremoniously removed. The Central government, backed by the Lieutenant Governor's office, claimed that the bungalow had to be sealed for "inventorisation," plunging Delhi into yet another bizarre political tug-of-war between the BJP and the AAP.

This latest drama began last week when Atishi moved into the bungalow after her predecessor, Arvind Kejriwal, vacated the property and shifted to a new residence in Lutyens' Delhi, assigned to one of AAP's Rajya Sabha members. Unlike other states, Delhi has no designated official residence for its chief minister, a fact that complicates an already tense situation between the local government and the Centre.

**Ahead of the Delhi polls 2025, the Aam Aadmi Party's Atishi faces eviction from her bungalow amid allegations of coercion by the Centre, highlighting escalating tensions between AAP and the BJP over control in the national capital.**

The L-G's office argued that the bungalow needed to be sealed for inventory purposes and assured that the residence would be reallocated to the current chief minister after the process was complete. An official in the L-G's office clarified that Atishi had not been officially allocated the residence and that as a minister, she had already been assigned a bungalow on Mathura Road. According to them, she had moved into 6, Flag Staff Road without the required paperwork, and her premature occupation of the house was the real issue.

The AAP alleges that the sealing of the bungalow is part of a broader conspiracy by the BJP to undermine the authority of its government in Delhi. Atishi's office was quick to issue a statement, accusing the L-G and the BJP of "forcibly removing the CM's belongings" and preparing to allot the house to a "big BJP leader." According to AAP MP Sanjay Singh, Atishi's belongings were "thrown out" of the residence, with the party releasing videos of SUVs and mini trucks purportedly transporting her goods from the bungalow. The accusation, like many in Delhi's political theatre, was dramatic, playing to an already polarized audience.

As part of its continual combat with the BJP, the AAP has been mired in a slew of controversies and legal challenges in recent months. First the excise policy, which has led to the arrest of several prominent leaders. In March this year, ahead of the Lok Sabha election, Arvind Kejriwal was arrested in connection

with alleged irregularities in the excise policy, to be released on bail following a Supreme Court order in September.

Other leaders, including former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, have faced similar fates. Last year, the Centre's controversial ordinance

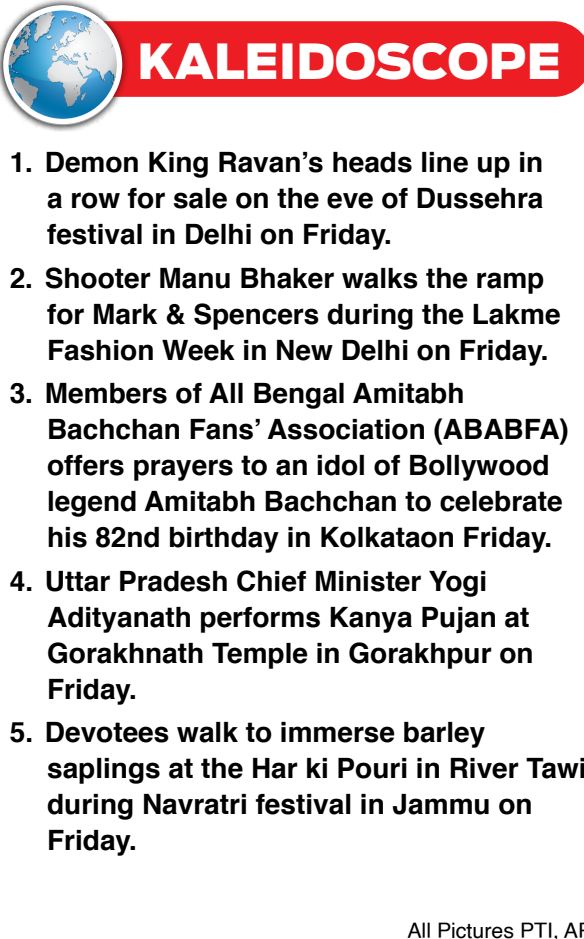


DELHI

in May, which effectively reversed a Supreme Court ruling and reinstated the Lieutenant Governor (L-G) as the final authority on the posting and transfer of bureaucrats, again led to sabre-rattling between the AAP and the BJP. That move not only nullified the Supreme Court's recognition of the Delhi government's control over services but also established a National Capital Civil Service Authority. The L-G, bolstered by this ordinance, became the final decision-maker on transfers, rendering the Kejriwal-led government even more beholden to the Centre.

This pattern of back-and-forth legal and political battles has become a hallmark of Delhi's governance and the latest imbroglio over the chief minister's residence is merely the most recent example ahead of the Assembly election in February 2025.





### KALEIDOSCOPE

1. Demon King Ravan's heads line up in a row for sale on the eve of Dussehra festival in Delhi on Friday.
2. Shooter Manu Bhaker walks the ramp for Mark & Spencers during the Lakme Fashion Week in New Delhi on Friday.
3. Members of All Bengal Amitabh Bachchan Fans' Association (ABABFA) offers prayers to an idol of Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan to celebrate his 82nd birthday in Kolkata on Friday.
4. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath performs Kanya Pujan at Gorakhnath Temple in Gorakhpur on Friday.
5. Devotees walk to immerse barley saplings at the Har ki Pouri in River Tawi during Navratri festival in Jammu on Friday.

All Pictures PTI, AP

### READERS' CHOICE

## RSS's 99-Year Journey: From 1980 to a Vision for the Future



By  
Shreyas Pannase

In 1980, the RSS emerged as a powerful political force, leveraging the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi movement to elevate Hindu nationalism and solidify its influence in shaping India's socio-political landscape. The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi movement catapulted the BJP and the RSS to national prominence by constructing the Lord Ram temple. It tapped into the religious sentiments of millions and became a rallying point for Hindu nationalism.

#### India's Global Leadership

The election of long-time swamyamsevak and former Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi, as Prime Minister in 2014 marked a turning point in Indian politics and the RSS's influence on national affairs. Modi's leadership emphasised economic growth, national security, and cultural revival, with initiatives like Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat positioning India as a global force. His foreign policy strengthened ties with major powers like the U.S., Russia, and Japan, while en-

The RSS has emerged as a pivotal force in shaping India's trajectory as a global leader, driven by its unwavering commitment to cultural values, economic self-reliance, and social welfare.

hancing India's role in world organisations. The RSS has shaped Modi's policies, especially in education, culture, and social welfare, with its affiliates involved in various development initiatives.

#### Nation-building

One of the most remarkable aspects of the RSS's journey has been its consistent focus on social welfare and nation-building through a wide range of social initiatives at the grassroots level to improve the lives of ordinary Indians. Seva Bharati, an RSS affiliate, operates in underdeveloped regions, offering healthcare, education, and disaster relief.

#### Promotion of Education

The RSS' Vidya Bharati network of schools promotes education in rural and semi-urban areas and emphasises Indian cultural values and national pride among students. Through its various affiliate organisations, such as the Sanskriti Bharati and the Akhil Bharatiya Itihas Sankalan Yojana, the RSS has worked to revive interest in India's ancient history, languages, and traditions.

#### Vision for India

The RSS sees India as a global leader that can offer a unique development model based on cultural values, economic self-reliance, and social harmony. It believes India's rise as a global leader must be rooted in its civilisational values the principles of Dharma, truth, and justice that have guided Indian society for millennia. This vision of global leadership is not about dominance or hegemony but about offering a model of development that promotes sustainability, inclusivity, and human well-being.

#### Economic development

A key pillar of the RSS's vision for India's future is economic self-reliance, achieved by reducing dependence on foreign goods and fostering domestic industries and innovations. This vision aligns with the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative launched by the Modi govern-

ment, which seeks to make India self-sufficient in key sectors such as manufacturing, defence, and technology. The RSS believes that economic development must go hand in hand with social justice. The organisation is involved in initiatives aimed at empowering marginalised communities and promoting inclusive growth.

#### Cultural Leadership

In addition to its economic aspirations, the RSS believes that India's rich cultural heritage, rooted in the principles of Sanatana Dharma, has much to offer the world through values, philosophy, and way of life. It has been at the forefront of efforts to promote Indian culture and values globally. Through its affiliate organisations, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Hindu Swamyamsevak Sangh, the RSS has worked to connect the Indian diaspora with their cultural roots and promote a positive image of India abroad.

#### Humanitarianism

At the core of the RSS's vision is Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam—the world is one family, which envisions India as a peaceful, responsible global citizen contributing to world stability and welfare. The organisation has led relief efforts during COVID-19 and promoted peace both domestically and internationally.

#### The Future of the RSS

The challenge for the RSS will be to adapt to a rapidly evolving world while staying true to its core values. As India rises globally, the RSS's role in shaping its destiny remains crucial in India, as well as global leadership and human welfare. The next phase of the RSS's journey will bring new challenges and opportunities, but its commitment to service, discipline, and national pride will guide its path toward a strong and prosperous India—one that stands tall as a global leader and development model.

(The author is an official of Vishwa Samvad Kendra, Mumbai. Views personal)

### EXPERTS' VOICE

## How Safe Are Ships and Shipping?



By  
Capt. Naveen S Singhal

On 26th March 2024, a 9900 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) container ship DALI, sailing with 21 Indian crew, allided with the Baltimore Bridge, causing significant structural damage to the 1972 built Francis Scott Key (FSK) Bridge.

The collapse of the bridge tragically resulted in the loss of six workers who fell into the river while on duty. This disaster has also severely disrupted Baltimore's port operations, cargo movement, businesses, and social life.

While the ship owner and ship management company managing the vessel DALI have claimed for limiting their liability to about US\$ 43 million as per an 1851 act, however, two US Congressmen are sponsoring a bill, "Justice for Victims of Foreign Vessels Act," to increase the liability for foreign-flagged ships up to 10 times the value of the ship. If passed, the law would apply retroactively from 25th March 2024, which is a day before DALI's allision with the bridge.

What went wrong with vessel DALI and what caused the incident is still under investigation by NTSB (US Marine Investigation Agency) and the FBI. The initial reports suggest a failure of the ship's propulsion machinery to restart promptly from a state of blackout.

DALI's incident should be seen as the last straw that broke the camel's back regarding the outdated and strained ISM Code (International Safety Management Code), the bible of the shipping industry. "Established in 1998 by the IMO (International Maritime Organization), the 26-year-old code is not in sync with the 21st-century complexities of the



shipping industry. The ship owner controls the operational expenses but cleverly shifts the responsibility for the vessel's safe management and operation to ship management company. It is like the ship owner who owns a gun, but the license is in the name of the ship management company. Thus, by using the shoulder of the ship management company, the ship owner fires the budgetary cuts, at the cost of the safety of the crew, vessel, and cargo. This practice has flourished over the past 20 to 25 years due to intense competition in the ship management industry. Furthermore, by transferring the management and operation of the vessel to a ship management company, the ship owner absolves themselves of responsibility due to a lack of privity or knowledge.

In the past centuries, ships sank more because of nature's fury; however, in the 21st century, more ships are foundering due to 'depleting management system standards and practices' under a flawed ISM code.

Indian ship owners, such as SCI and Great Eastern predominantly, spend quality resources and money to manage the operation of their vessels. In the charter market, ship owners may struggle as those who transfer their vessels to ship management companies incur lower operational costs, often compromising ship safety and crew welfare. This highlights the need for the DG of Shipping (India) to propose these changes that create a level playing field.

1. Shipowners must appoint

a Designation Owners representative (DOR) to monitor vessel activities, ensuring owner accountability for safety and operations.

2. The Chief Engineer must be given the authority to stop a vessel from sailing or divert it for urgent safety repairs.

Shipowners must be aware of the vessel's condition, including any machinery or equipment issues.

Charterers must be notified if the vessel is in poor condition and requires urgent repairs. Shipping companies must annually assess how much they have benefitted from implementing quality and safety practices.

The deadline for filing claims in U.S. courts for the DALI incident was September 24. Various parties, including the Maryland state government, the city mayor, and affected individuals, have filed claims, along with the insurance company covering the bridge for \$300 million. However, the estimated cost of a new bridge exceeds \$2 billion, and it may take years to resolve these claims, with neither side likely to receive everything requested. If regulators fail to address the shortcomings of the ISM code and ignore the lessons from the DALI incident, the shipping industry will bear the greatest cost, sacrificing 'safer ships and cleaner oceans.'

(The author is a Marine and Shipping Consultant. Views personal)

