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## YOUR OPINION, OUR EFFORTS

# THE PERFECT VOICE



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A beacon of hope for rural athletes

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## Roy raped doctor in inebriated condition: CBI

**Kolkata:** The CBI on Monday filed a chargesheet accusing Sanjay Roy, who was a civic volunteer with the Kolkata police, of raping and murdering a junior doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College Hospital on August 9.

The incident had caused widespread outrage and led to a long strike by junior doctors in West Bengal. The accused Sanjay Roy, a civic volunteer attached to the police outpost of the hospital, was arrested soon after and subsequently, the case was handed over to the CBI.

On Monday, 58 days after the rape-murder, the CBI filed the first chargesheet in the case – a 45-page document that was submitted to the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (ACJM) Court in Sealdah.

"Sanjay Roy has been charged with rape and murder. There is no mention of a gangrape (in the chargesheet). Sanjay Roy is the only accused who committed the crime. However, the probe is still going on. He was in an inebriated condition when the crime was committed. This is mentioned in the charge sheet," said a source in CBI.

# D-Day for BJP ahead of Maha polls

#### By Correspondent

New Delhi: The counting of votes for both the Haryana and Jammu & Kashmir Assembly elections will take place on Tuesday.

The poll results are likely to have an impact on the Maharashtra Assembly election due in next month. The dates for the Maharashtra elections are likely to be announced after Dussehra. The BJP is in power in Haryana since 10 years. A defeat will cause a loss of face to the party.

This J&K assembly election assumed significance as it was the first since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019 and after the former state was bifurcated into the union territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. The National Conference and Congress jointly fought the electoral battle, while the Peoples Democratic Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party contested independently. Several strong independent candidates are also in contention.

The key contesting par-



ties in Haryana included the BJP, Congress, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), as well as the pre-poll alliances between the Indian National Lok Dal-Bahujan Samaj Party (INLD-BSP) and Jannayak Janta Party (JJP)-Azad Samaj Party (ASP). Several rebel and independent candidates may also bag seats.

Exit polls predicted that the Congress is likely to form the next government in Haryana, while its alliance with the National Conference may have its nose in front in Jammu and Kashmir. Based on a poll of polls, the Congress may bag 55 of Haryana's 90 assembly seats, with the majority mark at 45. The Congress-NC combine could get 43 seats in J&K, which also has 90 assembly seats.



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.

Set boundaries whenever and wherever required. Be aware of your surroundings when traveling for work or with new people

# **Setting Boundaries**

PART - 6

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONAL ADVISES WOMEN TO BE AWARE OF THEIR SURROUNDINGS WHILE STAYING OUT LATE DESPITE MUMBAI BEING A RELATIVELY SAFE CITY

#### By Ruddhi Phadke

She's seen men stare her down on the streets of Mumbai but the crowds on the roads have always made her feel safe and confident even late at night. Chandana Buch, 35, a public relations professional working with The Other Circle is quick to draw a comparison between Mumbai and Delhi where she's worked earlier. "Compared to Mumbai, Delhi is much more unsafe. With Delhi, I have had to face drunk driving almost every day during late evening commutes. It was way too scary and what was worse is that I couldn't even abandon the taxi I was commuting in. Who wants to be left on streets in Delhi after dark? So, it was a tricky situation that nobody would want to be in," says Buch who grew up in Gujarat's Saurashtra in a large joint family. She recalls an incident in Delhi when a copassenger in a taxi pool struck up a conversation with her and continued to "text stalk" her. "In Delhi. I clung on to my brother most of the times and only

went out with my old and

महाराष्ट्र शासन



**CHANDANA BUCH,** 35, PR professional, Mumbai

known friends. Eventually, I left the city after around 11 months," she says.

Buch, who has been working for a decade now has lived in Mumbai and Delhi and for a brief period of time in Dallas, USA. While handling clients that have been businesses in the field of entertainment, lifestyle and real estate, late nights are usual for her.

Despite the relative safety that Mumbai offers, it's not that she's been untouched by the actions of miscreants. She recalls being "intimidated by men staring" at her several times while travelling back home post midnight Mumbai," says Buch. Buch is happy that her firm takes care to ensure the safety of its women employees and colleagues too have been caring and supportive. "The Group Head insists on knowing the details of our travel and ensures our safe return. I have had some wonderful colleagues in the past. We would make sure to drop each other safely and track rides until the last one gets home,' she says.

in Mumbai. "However, Making the cities safer, staying confident was eassays Buch, is a process ier because the streets that has to start at home were busy and crowded," "It has to start by sensitizshe says. The Shakti mills ing young boys and girls rape case where a woman about respecting each photographer was raped other. Boys must be taught in the middle of a dilapihow to show respect and dated and isolated mill how to make the surcompound worried severroundings friendly and al working women back not intimidating for anythen. "When the Shakti one," she says. The best mill incident that hapway to stay safe is to avoid pened with a female phoprolonged work hours unless absolutely necessary. tographer, it became a point of discussion for all "Also set boundaries whenever and wherever of us women who worked in similar fields. It surely required. Be aware of kept me much more alert your surroundings when traveling for work or with and in caution for a long new people," is advice that time about my timings and surroundings. Fortu-Buch has for women who nately, I have never landhave to stay out of home beyond midnight. ed in a risky situation in



नरेंद्र मोदी प्रधानमंत्री

# <mark>पाच लाखांपर्यंत</mark> मोफत उपचार...

योजनेअंतर्गत राज्यातील सर्व नागरिकांना उपचाराचा लाभ उपचाराची खर्च मर्यादा प्रती कुटुंब प्रति वर्ष दीड लाखावरून पाच लाख. योजनेतून (१ जुलै २०२२ ते ३१ ऑगस्ट २०२४ पर्यंत) १० लाख ७३ हजार रुग्णांनी घेतला लाभ, यापोटी ४३५६.१२ कोटीचा खर्च



आपले सरकार आडके सरकार

MAHARASHTRA 2

THE PERFECT VOICE **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024** MUMBAI

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# **Ajit Pawar may** shift base from **Baramati to Shirur**

THE DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER IS LIKELY TO FIELD **YOUNGER SON JAI IN HIS PLACE** 

#### **By Suyash Padate**

Mumbai: Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar may shift his constituency from Baramati to Shirur in the upcoming Assembly election, said a source.

Recently while addressing a meeting, Pawar had hinted not to contest the election from Baramati.

He said, "I will give a candidate, you have to vote for him". With this categorical statement, news started doing the rounds that Pawar may shift to Shirur. Since Shirur constitu-

ency is known as the stronghold of NCP, Pawar has started taking stock of the situation. At the same time, he is gauging the mood of the party rank and file in that assembly segment.

Due to which the fight in this constituency is likely to be between Ajit Pawar and Ashok Pawar, the incumbent MLA who is loyal with Sharad Pawar.

After the split in the NCP, Shirur MP Dr. Amol Kolhe and MLA Ashok Pawar had decided not to join Ajit's faction and remain loval with Sharad Pawar. Ajit Pawar had warned Ashok Pawar saying, "I will ensure that you will not be elected to the legis-

lative Assembly." Ashok Pawar will have a big challenge if Ajit Pawar



Ajit Pawar may field his younger son Jai from Baramati. His older son Parth had lost the Lok Sabha election from Maval in 2019. Jai is believed to be more connected and grounded than his brother. Jai is likely to face Yugendra Pawar, the son of Ajit's younger brother Shrinivas.

Pawar will be nominated

However, after his state-

ment, party state president

Sunil Tatkare said, 'Bara-

mati is Ajit Pawar's DNA.

So, he will fight from Bara-

Mitkari, the spokesperson

of NCP, he said, "So far

nothing has been decided.

Ajitdada is a big leader and

he can contest from any

constituency in the state."

that Ajit Pawar should con-

test from the Baramati as-

see how this battle will

play out in the family turf

It will be interesting to

sembly constituency.

to ensure his victory.

Meanwhile, The BJP

When contacted Amol

from Baramati'.

mati itself.

contests elections from Shirur assembly constituency

The source said that Ajit had considered Karjat-Jamkhed constituency initially. However, he realised that it was not feasible for him to contest from there since his nephew Rohit Pawar represents the constituency.

Ajit had stated that he is 'no longer interested in contesting from Baramati' since the defeat of his wife Sunetra in the Lok Sabha election. She was tailing in Baramati Assembly segment, represented by Ajit Pawar for six terms.

Ajit later clarified that 'if there is a demand from the activists and the approval of the parliamentary committee, (his son) Jai

# Rijiju slams Rahul Gandhi

Pune: Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday said the Congress during its rule had reduced the ministry of minority affairs into "Muslim affairs ministry" and its leader Rahul Gandhi was now spreading a fake narrative that minorities are unsafe in India.

Rijiju said Muslims must not become the vote bank of the Congress as it was damaging the nation as well as the community itself.

"As the in charge of the Minority Affairs Ministry, I want to clarify certain things. During its regime, the Congress reduced the Minority Affairs Ministry to a Muslim Affairs Ministry. We are trying to change that impression. Our government is working equally for all minorities in the country. It is committed to national interest," he said.

Asserting that the Congress narrowed the focus of the ministry since it saw Muslims as a vote bank, Rijiju said, "The Narendra Modi government's schemes are benefiting Muslims just like they benefit other communities. Then why should Muslims remain a vote bank for the Congress? This is damaging not just for the nation but for Muslims as well. When they become the vote bank of one political party and its allies, it does more harm than good."

"The Union government will work keeping all six minority communities in core group has suggested the country together and will make "people aware that a wrong narrative is being spread by Rahul Gandhi and his associates that minorities are not safe in India. Gandhi is speaking ill of India on foreign soil this time round and what and is collaborating with steps will Ajit Pawar take anti-India forces.



Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi cooks food with Ajay Sanade, who belongs to the Dalit community, at the latter's residence in Kolhapur, Maharashtra. Pic: PTI

## Harshavardhan admits invisible support to Sule

#### By Correspondent

Mumbai: Former Cabinet minister and BJP leader Harshvardhan Patil joined the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) at a rally in Indapur, his home constituency, ending weeks of speculation about his political future. Patil, one of the most high profile leaders to switch over to the NCP (SP) in recent months, had joined the BJP from the Congress before the 2019 Vidhan Sabha elections.

He was welcomed into the NCP (SP) by party president Sharad Pawar. Addressing the rally, Pawar praised Patil for his endur-



ing dedication to agricultural policy and rural de-Indapur and his longvelopment, highlighting standing support for Supriya Sule in the Lok Sabthe significant contributions made by both Harshha elections. "Our support to you was invisible," said vardhan and his father, former Baramati MP Patil, referring to his be-Shankarrao Patil. hind-the-scenes support

Harshvardhan Patil, in his speech, acknowledged the strong backing he re-

## Vehicles set ablaze as two groups clash

Akola: Two groups clashed with each other, pelting stones and setting fire to vehicles in a locality in Mainjured two others while harashtra's Akola city on they were sleeping on a platform at Nagpur rail-Monday, police said.

Harshvardhan The BJP on Monday questioned the integrity of Harshvardhan Patil. The BJP attributed Patil's exit and switching over to the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) to his "personal ambitions for power."

**BJP slams** 

dress, highlighted Harshvardhan Patil's familial ties with the Pawar family and took a dig at the Ajit Pawar faction's election symbol.

## **CRIME WATCH**

### One held for murder in Thane

Thane: A 28-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly killing a man and dumping his body near a hill in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Monday. The police arrested the accused, Ramesh alias Bala Shyamlal Mali, from Kalwa late on Sunday night, an official said. The body of a 27-year-old man was found dumped at the base of a hill in Kalwa on October 2, and the deceased was later identified as Rahul Umeshkumar Prajapati, a resident of Bhaskar Nagar, senior inspector Ashok Uttekar of the Kalwa police station said. The body, which bore injury marks, was sent for post-mortem, and the Kalwa registered a case of murder against unidentified persons, he said. During the probe, the police team found CCTV footage of the accused and the victim moving together in the area. The accused is being interrogated, and the motive behind the killing is vet to be ascertained, the official said.



Man bludgeons two to death, injures two others Nagpur: A man bludgeoned two persons to death

They took the accused, Jai Kumar Kewat (45), into with a wooden plank and custody, he said.

According to the GRP-Ganesh Kumar (40), a resident of Tamil Nadu, and an

#### Constable dies by suicide in Palghar

Palghar: A 26-year-old constable allegedly committed suicide at his home in Maharashtra's Palghar district, police said on Monday. The incident took place in Vasai area on Sunday, an official from police control room said, adding a probe was on to ascertain the reason behind the extreme step. Constable Sagar Athnekar, posted at the Mira Bhavander-Vasai Virar police control room. allegedly hanged himself from the ceiling of his house. the official said. The body was later sent t for postmortem and a case of accidental death was registered.

#### Four held for woman's death

Palghar: Four persons were arrested on Monday in connection with a wall collapse incident in which a 22-year-old woman lost her life in Maharashtra's Palghar district, police said. The wall of an under-construction structure collapsed on Raksana Lahange, a worker, in the Vasai area on October 4, said sub-inspector Ashok Sapkal of the Naigaon police station. The police were tipped off about it after the victim's cremation, and a case was registered against the two owners of the land and two contractors at the construction site, he said.

Union Minister Ramdas Athawale visits Bollywood actor Govinda to inquire about his health at his residence in Mumbai on Monday. Pic: PTI

As per preliminary information, the clash occurred between groups belonging to two communities after an autorickshaw hit a motorcycle in the Gadge Nagar area in the afternoon, an official said.

form No. 6, an official said. The groups pelted stones at each other and set fire to A patrolling team of the three two-wheelers and an GRP heard the screams autorickshaw before the and rushed to the scene immediately police arrived at the scene.

way station in Maharashunidentified destitute man tra on Monday morning, the Government Railway Police (GRP) said The unprovoked attack

occurred in the early hours

of the day while the vic-

tims were asleep on plat-

for Sule during the Bara-

mati Lok Sabha contest.

Supriya Sule, in her ad-

died in the attack that took place. Two others sustained

serious injuries and are undergoing treatment at Mayo Hospital, the official said.

The GRP has registered a case of murder, and further investigation is underway, he said. -PTI

Guv announces tribal

university in Nashik

Palghar: Maharashtra

Governor C P Rad-

hakrishnan on Monday an-

nounced a tribal university

## Key accused in admission cheating case arrested

#### By Correspondent

Mumbai: Police have arrested a key accused in a case where a Mumbai resident was cheated of around Rs 81 lakh in the name of facilitating admission for his son in an MD course at Pune's BJ Medical College, an official said on Monday.

The accused, identified as Anil Ramchandra Tambat, was nabbed from Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar in central Maharashtra, around 375km from the metropolis, on Sunday by a

process.

Mumbai police team after a 10-month-long investigation into the case, said the Borivali police station official

According to the official, Tambat and his co-conspirators Sandeep Waghmare, Abhijeet Patil, and Bhushan Patil have been charged with duping a businessman dealing in medical devices.

The complainant in the case, Mangesh Anant Rane, a resident of Mumbai's Kandivali who runs a medical and surgical supply business, was looking for admission for his son, who completed his MBBS in 2019, in an MD programme. Despite his efforts, Rane's son could not secure admission to an MD course, said the official.

Later, Rane came in contact with Waghmare who introduced him to Abhijeet Patil, Tambat and Bhushan Patil. They assured Rane that his son would get a seat through the government quota. On their suggestion, the businessman's son reapplied for NEET PG (Na-

trance Test-Postgraduate) exam, he said.

Three days later, Rane received an email claiming his son had secured a seat at BJ Medical College, Pune. Believing the email was from the college, Rane followed the next steps and submitted all necessary documents, including his son's certificates. The businessman then paid Rs 94 lakh to Tambat, Rs 8.5 lakh to Abhijeet Patil, Rs 23 lakh to Waghmare, and Rs 11 lakh to Bhushan Patil, totalling Rs 1.36 crore. After

receiving the money, the four sent a set of documents along with a "college ID card" to the businessman, claiming his son had secured admission in the prestigious college, he said.

"I have decided to set up However, Rane later disa tribal university in Nacovered that the documents shik, which will include and the ID card were fake world-class institutions and when he demanded his like a medical college modmoney back, they returned elled after AIIMS, an engi-Rs 55 lakh, but withheld Rs neering school akin to IITs, 81 lakh. Instead of retuning and a management school the remaining money, the like IIMs. This initiative will ensure that tribal stufour fraudsters threatened to kidnap and kill his son if dents have access to the he approached the police. best education."

in Nashik

## **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

"I received a phone call from someone asking me to come on October 14 just like I have visited Indapur. I asked where and for what purpose. I was told it is for the same purpose as



in Indapur. I asked where to visit? Phaltan. Understood? So, the next stop is Phaltan. After that most of the month is booked."

Sharad Pawar, President, NCP (SP)

Patole urges ECI to review DGP Shukla's extension Mumbai: The Congress that assembly elections are

has requested the Election conducted in a free and fair Commission of India to remanner. Patole stated that the view the "politically motivated" appointment of Matwo-vear extension granted harashtra DGP Rashmi to Shukla violated the Ma-Shukla and the service exharashtra Police Act. tension granted to her, say-Shukla was appointed as ing this could potentially

the Director General of Poinfluence the electoral lice in January 2024. According to Congress, Shuk-This is the second letter la was due to retire on 30th written by state Congress June 2024, upon reaching chief Nana Patole to the the age of superannuation. poll body over the last ten However, she has been ildays. In his previous comlegally granted an extension until January 2026. munication, Patole had

sought the immediate re-"The timing of the extenmoval of Shukla to ensure sion granted to Shukla,



coming so close to upcoming elections, also raises suspicions. Opposition parties have alleged that this decision was politically motivated, potentially influencing the electoral process." Patole stated.

He urged the ECI to take immediate action and re-

view Shukla's appointment and extension to ensure that laws and principles governing such appointments are strictly adhered to.

"This is not only essential for the integrity of Maharashtra's police force but also for the future of police governance across India.' Patole demanded.

He alleged that the service extension granted to Shukla erodes confidence in the fairness and impartiality of government actions, particularly when critical law enforcement positions are involved.

"The extension to Rashmi Shukla's tenure beyond her original retirement date is in clear violation of the Maharashtra Police Act, which mandates a twovear tenure for the DGP, provided they are not due for retirement during this period.

"By extending her tenure past the retirement date, the government has disregarded this critical provision, raising concerns about adherence to the rule of law," Patole stated in his letter

The Congress leader alleged that such "dangerous precedents" could have ramifications across India as they bypass the established norms of the UPSC.

"The process surrounding extending Rashmi Shukla's tenure lacks transparency, raising questions about the government's motivations. The decision appears to have been rushed, with little clarity or due consideration given to legal standards and public accountability," he stated in the letter. -PTI

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#### THE PERFECT VOICE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024 MUMBAI

## Tata dispels rumour about health **By Correspondent**

Mumbai: Tata Son's former Chairperson Ratan Tata has dispelled fears about his health saving that the claims of him being hospitalised after a drop in

blood pressure are

The 86-year-old industrialist was reportedly admit-

ted to the intensive care

unit at Breach Candy Hos-

pital in Mumbai on early

Monday after a sharp drop

in blood pressure. Accord-

ing to reports, the blood pressure of the veteran en-

trepreneur had drastically

fallen. In the wake of dete-

riorating health, he was

promptly rushed to the

emergency room of the

However, Tata allayed concerns about his health

saying the claims of him be-

ing hospitalised after a

drop in blood pressure are

The health update was

shared by the businessman

himself on the social media

post, in which he said that

he is currently undergoing

medical check-ups due to

his age and related medical

mours circulating regard-

ing my health and want to

"I am aware of recent ru-

hospital.

'unfounded.'

conditions.

'unfounded'.

MMR

First Ride on Underground Metro: A Superhit Experience

## JOY RIDE IN THE FIRST HALF, OFFICE GOERS IN SECOND PEAK HOUR

#### **By Anand Mishra**

On October 7, 2024, I embarked on an unforgettable journey as I rode Mumbai's first-ever underground metro. The moment I stepped into the cool, airconditioned ambiance of the Metro Aqua Line 3, the sweltering 39°C heat and 73 per cent humidity outside became a distant memory. It felt like stepping into another world, a reprieve from the bustling, hot city streets. Though, as a reporter, I had a chance to visit tunneling and other works, but when I saw fully furnished station premises, it was undefinable.

I was excited to catch one of the very first trains of this new underground line. I got my hands on one of the first tickets-an experience I had been looking forward to for months! Though the train wasn't packed, the excitement among the passengers was palpable. From families to office-goers, everyone seemed thrilled to be part of this historic moment. The BKC station was particularly impressive. This station is located at the heart of Mumbai's bustling business district, and seeing its modern design gave me hope for a smoother commute for thousands of employees like me who travel to BKC daily.

#### **Selfies and Social** Media

Of course, no ride is complete without taking selfies and capturing videos for social media. Everyone around me was doing the same, including me! I couldn't resist the urge to document this memorable experience and share it with friends and family. Calls were buzzing, and people were updating their social feeds about their "First Day, First Ride."

Meanwhile, metro operator MMRCL, while issuing a statement informed that by 6 PM, around 8,532 passengers had made their journey. A ticket booking clerk at

ांताक्रूझ मेट्रो Santacruz Metro

coaches during the evening peak hours as officegoers opted for the metro

#### Three apps for metro travel The commuters have questioned the rationale behind

not having a dedicated app for all metro lines. Tickets for the first phase of Metro 3 can only be purchased using the 'MetroConnect3' mobile app. The boarding and destination stations need to be selected from a drop-down menu on the app's homepage along with the date and type (single/return) of journey.

Tickets for the Metro 2A and Metro 7 corridors can be purchased separately via a mobile app called Metro 1, while the Versova-Andheri-Ghatkopar Metro 1 has a closed loop card, which is integrated with the NCMC and web-based applications such as Paytm and WhatsApp. "All metro lines in the city will be merged and operated by Maha Mumbai Metro Operation Corporation Limited. The operations of Metro 3 are also likely to be transferred to MMMOCL," said a metro rail source.

BKC station said. "While on their way home." the passenger count start-I spoke to one of my fellow passengers, Prashant ed low, more people flocked to the cool futuristic Wagh, who works in a

BKC-based app development company. He shared his excitement, saying, "I've been waiting for this day for years, and finally, it's here. This metro is like a blessing for us.'

#### A Joyride for the Curious

As a reporter, I was curious to know the feeling of the fellow passengers who were looking all-round the vast premises crafted beautifully with decent aesthetics. Then I met Kiran Dubye, a homemaker who could not resist herself and who took a small trip from Santacruz to BKC just to experience the new mode of transport. "I've been watching the construction of this line for



People ride a metro on the Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) to Aarey underground section of Mumbai Metro Line 3 after it was opened for public, in Mumbai

the past 3 to 4 years. Now that it's finally operational, I had to take a ride. Mumbai desperately needs more metros like this," she said, smiling and adding that she plans to bring her entire family for a joyride soon.

#### **Minor glitches**

There were a few issues reported as some passengers experienced glitches with the platform safety doors, causing delays at entry and exit points at a few stations. This was a concern since the first day of operation on October 7. Additionally, commuters

have requested an integrated app to manage ticketing across all metro lines, as different apps are currently required for various services. However, the service has been running smoothly overall, with many users expressing excitement over the new line and its comfort in the sweltering heat

#### A Milestone for Mumbai

This newly launched Metro Aqua Line 3 spans from the Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) to Aarey Colony, covering 12.69 km of the larger Colaba-SEEPZ-Aar-

ey Line. With ten stations, including Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA), Marol Naka, and Andheri, this line is set to significantly ease the city's traffic woes by reducing road congestion by up to 35%. I learned that it could even help cut fuel consumption by 3,54,000 liters annually-a win for both com-

muters and the environment. With a fare structure ranging from Rs 10 to Rs 50, it's affordable too. Even, I can't wait to make this my go-to travel option for a cooler, faster and comfort-

able commute.

assure everyone that these claims are unfounded. I am currently undergoing medical check-ups due to my age and related medical conditions. There is no cause for concern," Tata posted on Instagram. The noted industrialist further informed that there is no cause for concern. He

said, "I remain in good spirits and request that the public and media respect refrain from spreading misinformation.'

1993 Mumbai Serial Blasts Case Third phase of trial against seven accused begins

## **Pre-arrest** bail to **Mhatre By Correspondent**

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The third phase of trial in the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts case began in a special court on Monday against seven accused who were absconding and were held at different times

In two sets of trial, the court has convicted 106 persons, including Yakub Memon, who was hanged in July 2015, and gangster Abu Salem, who was extradited from Portugal in 2005 and sentenced to life.

Twelve bombs went off in various parts of the metropolis on March 12, 1993, killing 257 persons and injuring more than 700. It was among the deadliest terror attacks in the world at the time.

The latest trial began before special Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act judge V D Kedar on Monday with recording of testimony of two witnesses

The seven facing trial are Farooq Mansoori alias Farooq Takla, Ahmed Lambu, Munaf Halari, Abu Bakar, Sohaib Qureshi, Sayeed



still absconding. Qureshi and Yusuf Batka.

Court.

As per the prosecution, Mansoori had allegedly facilitated the lodging and transport of Lambu, Bakar, Qureshi and Batka. These four had gone to Pakistan for training in bomb-making.

Halari is accused of purchasing a scooter used in the blasts

The prosecution is likely to examine 41 fresh witnesses during the course of this phase of the trial.

According to an official, ed in 2017. Two of them got 26 accused in the case are the death penalty.

High Court on Monday granted pre-arrest bail to Shiv Sena leader Waman Mhatre, accused of making offensive remarks against a female journalist while she was reporting on a protest over sexual abuse of two minor girls in Badlapur in Thane district in August. A single bench of Justice

Mumbai: The Bombay

Sandeep Marne said prima facie provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act were not made out in the case as Mhatre was not aware or had no intention to comment against the complainant's caste (she belongs to

people were convicted. an SC community). Twelve of them, including "In my view, prima facie Yakub Memon, were there is room for holding awarded the death penalty. that the offences under pro-The sentences of 11 were visions of SC & ST Act are commuted to life imprisonnot made out against the ment by the Supreme Appellant (Mhatre)," the HC noted. Mhatre was Memon, who was held booked under relevant proguilty of conspiracy and fivisions of the BNS and also nancing the blasts, was exunder the SC/ST Act for allegedly making derogatory Six others were convictremarks and gestures against the woman journalist on August 20.

einn eins

ाच्या स्वाभिमानासाठ

भ्रष्टाचारी सरकार

નાય લાય

शच्या हक्काज्याती।

Workers of NCP (SP) and Congress take part in a protest against the Maharashtra government in Mumbai on Monday. Pic: PT

## NHSRCL invites bids for bullet train's track construction

Mumbai: The National High Speed Rail Corporation (NHSRCL) on Monday invited bids from eligible Indian and Japanese companies for the design, supply and construction of tracks for the Ahmedabad-Mumbai bullet train project in Maharashtra. NHSRCL, in a release,

said the bullet train track in Maharashtra will be 314 km long as the route alignment is 157 km between the train station at Bandra Kurla Complex and Zaroli village on the state's border with Gujarat.

The tender is for the design, supply and construction of tracks and trackrelated works, including testing and commissioning for the double-line highspeed railway, it said.

Technical bids are scheduled to be opened on Febru-

ary 3, 2025.

"This will be the last track construction contract for the bullet train project," the release stated, adding that it will also include track works for four stations and a rolling stock depot in Thane.

The work on track construction has already commenced in Gujarat, where the contracts were awarded to Indian companies.

As per the release, the ballast-less slab track system used in Japanese HSR (Shinkansen) will be used on India's first HSR project (MAHSR), and JICC, as the general consultant, has provided the detailed design and drawing of major track components.

The total cost of the project is pegged at Rs 1.08 lakh crore.

-PTI

## **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

"The 'Khokha and Dhokha' government in Maharashtra has committed immense corruption by deceiving the people in the name

of development. The people of Maharashtra are soon going to exact accountability from it."

> Priyanka Gandhi, Leader, Congress

## Event management firm owner loses Rs 1.22 cr in fraud

#### By Correspondent

ecuted on July 30, 2015.

In the first phase of the

trial that ended in 2007, 100

Mumbai: An event management company owner lost over Rs 1.22 crore to cyber fraudsters who tricked him into investing in share market IPOs promising lucrative returns, police said on Monday.

The complaint was lodged on October 5 at the North Region Cyber Police Station by a 47-year-old resident of Kandivali (west). According to the victim, the fraud unfolded between June 17 and August 28.

#### The victim encountered an advertisement on Instagram on June 17, promoting investment tips for the share market. He joined a WhatsApp group named "D41 Nuvama Services Group," which was purportedly dedicated to training individuals on share investments.

On August 19, a man identifying himself as Raman Varna, "chief strategist" at Nuvama Securities, contacted the victim via WhatsApp. He urged the victim to invest in the share



market and directed him to download an app through a link he provided, the officer said

banking details and passwords. Subsequently, he began transferring funds under the pretext of investing in shares.

The fraudsters started investing the victim's money in IPO (Initial Public Offering) without his consent and later claimed to deposit profits into other IPOs. After the victim had de-

posited over Rs 1.22 crore, the fraudsters demanded Trusting the source, the an additional Rs 2.25 crore. victim filled out the form, When the victim expressed disclosing sensitive personhis inability to comply, they al information, including allegedly coerced him into accepting a loan of the same amount, which they deposited into his trading account without his permission.

Realising he had fallen prev to a scam, the victim contacted the cyber helpline at 1930 on August 28 and lodged a formal complaint. Following an investigation, a case was registered against the unidentified fraudsters, the officer said.

The cyber police have initiated a probe into the matter. They are searching for the culprit.

# **BUSINESS**

THE PERFECT VOICE **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024 MUMBAI** 

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# mine blast

Kolkata: At least six people were killed and three others injured when explosives kept in a truck went off in a coal mine in West Bengal's Birbhum district on Monday, a police officer said.

The explosion occurred when detonators were being transported in the truck for planned blasts at the Gangaramchak and Gangaramchak-Bhadulia coal mines, an official of the West Bengal Power Development Corporation Ltd (WBPDCL) said.

The family of each of the deceased would receive a compensation of Rs 32 lakh - Rs 30 lakh to be provided by the agency operating the mine and Rs 2 lakh by the state government, Chief Secretary Manoi Pant said

The state administration would also offer a home guard's job to the family of each victim.

The incident happened around 10.30 am in Bhadulia village in which the captive mine of the WB-PDCL is situated.

"Six people were killed and three others were injured." Additional Superintendent of Police of Birbhum, Rana Mukherjee, said.

The incident occurred in the dump yard of the coal block, WBPDCL Chairman and Managing Director PB Salim told PTI.

"An investigation has been initiated to ascertain the cause of the blast. Those killed in the explosion were workers of the agency deployed for mine operations. Currently, we are providing assistance to affected workers," WBPD-CL Chairman and Managing Director P B Salim told

PTI.

# Six killed in coal Reviving ties: RuPay card launched in Maldives New Delhi: The inaugura-

tion of a new runway in the Maldives built under an airport redevelopment project assisted by India and the official launch of the RuPay

card in the archipelago nation on Monday are aimed at boosting economic ties and tourism cooperation between the two countries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu jointly virtually inaugurated the runway at the Hanimadhoo International Airport and also witnessed via weblink a live transaction using a RuPay payment service card in the Maldives.

The launch took place after the two leaders held extensive talks which Muizzu in his press statement said were to "chart a new path for the future collaboration".

The Maldivian president accompanied by First Lady Madam Sajidha Mohamed and a Maldivian delegation arrived in India on Sunday evening. Though the Maldivian president attended PM Modi's swearing-in cer-

emony in June, it is his first bilateral visit to India. Prior to the launch of dif-

ferent India-assisted projects in the Maldives, a small official video was played in which details about these projects were shared in the presence of the two leaders at the Hyderabad House

"The bonds between India and Maldives stretch back centuries, woven together through rich trade and cultural exchanges," it was narrated in the video.



Department of Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth and Governor of the Maldives Monetary Authority Ahmed Munawar exchange documents at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Monday. Pic: PTI

Over the years, this relationship has evolved, characterised by "mutual respect and unwavering support", underpinned by India's Neighbourhood First policy and SAGAR vision, it said.

India has always been the first responder in the Maldives during times of crisis. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Mohamed Muizzu, this relationship is to achieve greater heights," it added.

The RuPay card launch today will pave the way for strengthened India-Maldives relations by boosting tourism and economic cooperation, according to the India-Maldives video.

"It will allow Indian tourists to make cashless transactions easily, reducing cost and enhancing convenience, especially in the Maldives tourism sector."

The inauguration of the new runway at Hanimadhoo International Airport marks a "significant milestone in the airport's ongoing expansion project".

Its redevelopment, under an "Indian Line of Credit of USD 132 million", aims to provide complete new infrastructure including runway, ATC tower, ARFF block, hangar, cargo facilities, and passenger terminal building, it added.

Prime Minister Modi in his press statement after the bilateral talks said Pres-

ident Muizzu's visit adds "another chapter to our ties" After the talks, India also

handed over 700 social housing units to the Maldives built under the EXIM Bank's buyer's credit facilities.

Prime Minister Modi and President Maldives Muizzu met on Monday and "comprehensively reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral ties while noting the progress made by both countries in deepening their historically close and special relationship that has immensely contributed to the betterment of the peoples of the two countries," the MEA later said in a

statement.

## Frammer **Al raises** USD 2 mn

New Delhi: Video content creation platform Frammer AI has announced securing a USD 2 million (around Rs 16.8 crore) investment from Lumikai, which invests in gaming and interactive media platforms.

The fresh capital will be deployed into expanding Frammer's offerings into sports and entertainment and investing in data-training for its areas of focus. The funds will also be used to expand its tech team to meet the increasing demand, according to a company statement.

Frammer provides transcript and captions for each video, identifies the most interesting segments to generate monetizable short videos for various digital platforms, and produces vertical videos similar to YouTube Shorts and Insta Reels, Frammer AI names The India Today Group, Zee News, and insurance giant Acko among its clients. The company has also recently been named the AI content partner of Brightcove. a U.S.-listed company that provides streaming services globally.

Frammer AI was founded by three former employees of media group NDTV -- Suparna Singh, Arijit Chatterjee and Kawaljit Singh Bedi. Suparna Singh is former president and CEO of NDTV Group.

Lumikai founding partner Salone Sehgal said, "In a world where brands, enterprises, and media houses must consistently engage audiences through social media. Frammer AI's impressive client roster is testament to the value of their solution," she said. -PTI

## PROFILE The Wall of **Mutual Fund** Industry

#### By Mangesh Kulkarni

he Mutual Fund industry in India has seen remarkable growth in recent years, with numerous funds delivering stellar returns. However, achieving consistent outperformance is a rare feat in the investment world. Rajeev Thakkar, known for his courage, wisdom and calm nature. has succeeded in delivering substantial returns

for PPFAS's investors



**Rajeev Thakkar** CIO and Director, PPFAS Rajeev Thakkar began Asset Management

his career with Parag Parikh in 2001. Until 2013, PPFAS (Parag Parikh Financial Advisory Services) provided PMS (Portfolio Management Service) to its clients. Right from the start, Rajeev led the Research department at PPFAS. He is a Chartered Accountant, Cost Accountant, CFA Charterholder and a CFP Certificant.

PPFAS AMC is recognized for its flexicap fund. The Parag Parikh Flexi Cap Fund invests in top-tier stocks from large, mid, and small-cap companies, focusing on those with fair and appealing valuations. Launched in May 2013, the Parag Parikh Flexi Cap Fund boasts a history of over 11 years, achieving a CAGR of 20.16% since inception.

Furthermore, it has consistently outperformed the benchmark and its competitors over various time frames, establishing itself as a leading contender in the sector. With a solid track record of strong returns, the Parag Parikh Flexi Cap Fund has gained popularity among investors. As of August 31, 2024, it holds the largest AUM in the Flexi Cap Fund category, with much of the credit attributed to Rajeev Thakkar, the Chief Investment Officer and Director of PPFAS AMC.

Rajeev is a staunch advocate of the "value-investing" strategy, inspired by the investing style of Warren Buffett and Charlie Munger. His sharp eye for identifying undervalued companies through a disciplined approach has played a crucial role in the fund's outstanding performance.

## **FADA urges OEMs to take** corrective action

per cent year-on-year in

tail sales in India declined 9 vehicles and two-wheelers nal Equipment Manufacturwitnessed a year-on-year (Y-

New Delhi: Automobile re- ries including passenger FADA urges OEMs (Origiers) to take immediate cor-

## **Centre starts** selling tomatoes

New Delhi: The Centre on Monday started selling tomatoes at a subsidised rate of Rs 65 per kg in the na-

tional capital to provide

relief to the common man

and check abnormal profits

Tomatoes are being sold

at an average rate of Rs 90

per kg in the national

Consumer Affairs Secre-

tary Nidhi Khare flagged

off National Cooperative

Consumers' Federation of

by intermediaries.

capital.



September amid a massive buildup of passenger vehicle inventory due to sluggish demand, dealer's body FADA said on Monday, urging original equipment manufacturers to take corrective steps.

The overall registrations declined to 17.23.330 units last month from 18,99,192 units in September 2023, as most of the catego-

Commercial vehicle registrations declined 10 per cent year on year last month to 74,324 units.

Three-wheeler sales retail sales rose marginally to 1,06,524 units last month as compared with 1,05,827 units in September 2023.

Tractor sales rose 15 per cent year on year to 74,324 units last month.

Passenger vehicle registrations rose 1 per cent to 18,70,991 units as compared with 18,51,249 units in the year-ago period.

Two-wheeler sales increased 9 per cent year on year to 85,66,531 in the first half of the current fiscal.

Commercial vehicle registrations, however, fell marginally to 4,77,381 units in the period under review from 4,80,488 units in H1 of last fiscal.

Vehicle retail data was collated from 1,365 out of 1,429 RTOs across the country, it added.

O-Y) drop. "Despite the onset of festivals such as Ganesh Chaturthi and Onam. dealers have reported that the performance has been largely stagnant," Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) President CS Vigneshwar said in

a statement. Given the critical festive season around the corner,

financial setback, he said. This suggests that overall

rective measures to avoid a

market sentiment during these festive periods has been underwhelming, with a trend leaning towards flat or negative growth, he added.

Passenger vehicle sales declined 19 per cent Y-O-Y to 2,75,681 units last month from 3.39.543 units in the year-ago period.

gneshwar said.

he added.

India Ltd (NCCF) vans selling tomatoes at Rs 65 per "Seasonal factors such as kg. "We are trying to mod-Shraddh and Pitrapaksha. erate the prices of tomacoupled with heavy rainfall toes. With this market intervention, in the next 3-4 and a sluggish economy, days prices of tomatoes will have exacerbated the situation, leaving dealers with come down," Khare told rehistorically high inventory porters here.

NCCF has initiated a levels of 80-85 days' equivalent to 7.9 lakh vehicles market intervention by diworth Rs 79,000 crore," Virectly procuring tomatoes from mandis and selling FADA also calls on the them at a subsidised rate of Reserve Bank of India to Rs 65 per kg. Mobile vans issue an advisory to banks, would sell tomatoes at 50 mandating stricter chancolonies in the national nel funding policies based capital. The intervention is only on dealer consent and to protect consumers from on actual collateral, to prerecent increase in tomato vent dealers from facing prices and prevent windfall additional financial presgains for intermediaries, sure due to unsold stock, according to a statement. -PTI -PTI Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis with Pernod Ricard India CEO Jean Touboul during the inuguration and 'Bhoomi Pujan' of its 'malt distillery', at MIDC Butibori near Nagpur on Monday. Pic: PT

## Domestic air traffic to touch 300 mn by 2030

while 200 more airports are

expected to be developed in

Currently, India has 157

airports, heliports and wa-

terdromes. The number of

operational airports is ex-

At the conference, Civil

Aviation Secretary Vum-

trip per capita per annum

the next 20-25 years.

end of 2025.

New Delhi: India's domestic air passenger traffic is projected to touch 300 million by 2030 and about USD 11 billion is being spent to develop airports, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said on Monday.

The minister also said India and France can work together to develop a robust global SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuel) supply chain. He was speaking at a conference organised by the French Aerospace Industries Association (GI-FAS) in the national capital.

India is one of the world's fastest-growing civil aviation markets and airlines are expanding their fleets as well as networks to meet the rising demand. Naidu said the domestic air passenger traffic is projected to touch 300 million by 2030 for India is 0.13.

"If half of the Indians travel, we are looking at a market potential that is four times of what it is today".

He also emphasised that the government is open to do whatever is required for pected to reach 200 by the the civil aviation. Meanwhile, the minister also said the potential for partnership between India and lunmang Vualnam said air France is immense.

-PTI

## EV 2-wheelers margins tight amid challenging unit economics

#### By Correspondent

Mumbai: Despite the electric vehicle frenzy environment all around, all the two-wheeler electric original equipment manufacturers are currently unprofitable with negative margins from 2-35 percent, according to a report.

Currently, the EV twowheeler Industry has USD 1.3bn of annual revenues and, without incentives, generates USD 300-400 million of loss before interest and taxes at operating level, as per Bernstein – a private wealth

#### management firm report.

The two-wheeler electric vehicle segment has several start-ups, but it is not easy to succeed considering the unit economics.

Based on our assessment of cost structures, incentives, and pricing, Ola-E (a startup) leads the margin profile, followed by TVS, Bajaj, and Ather, the report said

One of the critical investor debates in the E-2W market is the evolving profitability of key players and who is leading on the cost/ margin front. To assess Toyota gets 827-acre land for EV Plant On Monday, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) has secured 827-acre land in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar for a new electric vehicle (EV) facility. This initiative is part of a larger project to create a greenfield smart industrial city, a collaboration between the Central and Maharashtra governments, through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) called Maharashtra Industrial Township Limited (MITL). The development areas include Shendta and Bidkin. The project has begun to draw in investments, with today's allocation of 827acre land to Toyota Kirloskar Motor Private Limited in Bidkin, a key area of the industrial city.

this, we tried building our assumptions. broad unit economics for Key factors include availcrucial players based on ability of subsidies, scale,

inhouse manufacturing mix, degree of localization vs imports, and product For TVS, it estimates a pricing/positioning. The per-unit EBITDA (earnings

profitability landscape is highly dynamic as OEMs are still gaining scale and increasing focus on localization/in-house manufacturing, while the productivity linked incentive subsidy has only recently started, the report said.

Bernstein analysis indicates that Ola-E is generating positive operating EBITDA from its premium models, such as the S1 Pro and S1 Air while incurring

a loss on its mass-market model, the S1X.

before interest tax depreciation and amortisation) loss of approximately 7.5 percent (around Rs 11K per vehicle), although it generates a gross profit margin of around 7 percent without subsidies. On the other hand, Bajaj Auto is likely incurring an EBITDA loss of around 10.5 percent (around Rs 15K per vehicle), along with losses at the gross profit level without subsidies, the report said.

### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

"We have set up a small working group of Central Government and state governments involved and the UAE to take forward this



establishment of a food corridor between the two countries on a mission mode basis."

> **Piyush Goyal**, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry

-PTI

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#### THE PERFECT VOICE **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024 MUMBAI**

# NATIONAL

# Shah says Naxals will be eliminated by 2026

has been adopted by acti-

vating the National Investi-

gation Agency (NIA) to

choke the financing of

Naxalites, which has re-

sulted in a shortage of fi-

nancial resources for them,

operations were conducted,

ensuring that the Naxalites

are surrounded, leaving

them with no opportunity

Naxalism, Shah said, it is

essential to give a final

push to eliminate this men-

ace once and for all and

urged the chief ministers

To completely eradicate

to escape, he added.

Multiple long-duration

he said.

New Delhi: Terming Naxals the biggest human rights violators, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said security forces have been carrying out "offensive operations" instead of defensive against the insurgents and have achieved big successes in recent times

Addressing chief ministers and top officials of the Naxal-affected states, Shah also said that all Left Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected states are committed to completely eliminating Naxalism by March 2026.

Due to the improved security situation, high voter turnout -- up to 70 per cent -- was witnessed in the Maoist-hit region in the last Lok Sabha polls. There was zero polling in the region earlier, he said.

Shah said more than 13,000 people from the northeast. Kashmir and LWE-affected areas have renounced violence and ioined the mainstream. He asked youths involved in the Maoist movement to give up arms and join the



mainstream, saying all states have prepared beneficial rehabilitation schemes for them.

The crucial meeting, which discussed anti-Naxal operations and development initiatives carried out in the affected areas, came days after the security forces killed 31 ultras in the forests of Chhattisgarh in one of the most successful

operations in recent times. "Security forces are now carrying out offensive operations instead of defensive operations earlier," Shah said.

An "offensive strategy"

of all affected states to review the progress of development and anti-Naxal operations at least once a month

Shah also requested the **Directors General of Police** to conduct such reviews at least once every 15 days.

Describing Naxals as the biggest hurdle to development, he said they are the biggest human rights violators who have been depriving over eight crore people, especially the tribals, of development and basic welfare opportunities.

He said that Naxalism prevents education, healthcare, connectivity, banking and postal services from reaching villages.

The home minister emphasised that in order to ensure that development reaches the last person in society, Naxalism must be completely eliminated. The Naxal-affected states

include Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana, Maharashtra. Jharkhand. Bihar. Andhra Pradesh and Madhva Pradesh

Chief ministers of

Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana and Maharashtra attended the meeting while other states were represented by senior ministers and officials.

Similarly, the deaths of civilians and security forces have declined by 70 per cent and the number of districts reporting violence came down to 16 from 96, he said.

The number of police stations reporting violence has also come down to 171 from 465. Of these, 50 police stations are new and this success is the result of joint efforts of all states and the central government, he added. -PTI

**30 years** For the first time, the number of casualties due to LWE was below 100 in 2022

16,463 No of incidents of violence occurred between 2004-14 7,700

No of incidents between 2014-24



CPI(M) leader Vrinda Karat greets climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and other protestors during his hunger strike at Ladakh Bhavan in New Delhi on Monday. Pic:PTI

## **Comments on Francis Xavier** No pre-arrest bail to Velingkar

Four persons, including

AAP MLA Cruz Silva, wom-

an leader Valanka Alemao

and Congress' Warren Ale-

mao, filed intervention peti-

tions in this case and op-

posed granting of

anticipatory bail to

A lawyer representing

Velingkar said his client's

statements were just "sug-

gestions" and that there

was no intention to hurt

Velingkar.

Panaii: A court in Panaii in Goa on Monday rejected the anticipatory bail plea of former RSS leader Subhash Velingkar, who has been booked for allegedly hurting religious sentiments.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Bosco Robert rejected the bail plea of Velingkar, who has been booked by Bicholim police for his alleged objectionable comments against St Francis Xavier, the patron saint of Goa.

The court rejected the petition of Velingkar at 9 pm.

He had filed the anticipareligious sentiments. He tory bail plea on Saturday told court the action against his client was "not democas several persons approached different police racv but mobocracy". stations seeking his arrest.

Advocate Amit Palekar, who represented Cruz Silva, said Velingkar had hurt religious sentiments, adding it had evoked strong reaction from people across the state.

Talking to reporters, Palekar said police served two notices asking Velingkar to remain present before the investigating officer, adding the accused should have cooperated with the police. -PTI

**NCERT books** 

on Amazon

New Delhi: NCERT text-

books for students from

Kindergarten to Class 12 as

well as for UPSC aspirants

will now be sold by author-

ised sellers on Amazon In-

### **Modi shares** 'garba' song

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday shared on X a 'garba' song he wrote as a tribute to Goddess Durga.

"It is the auspicious time of Navratri and people are celebrating in different ways, united by their devotion to Maa Durga. In this spirit of reverence and joy, here is Aavati Kalay, a Garba I wrote as a tribute to Her power and grace. May Her blessings always remain upon us," he wrote on X. He thanked Purva Mantri whom he lauded as a talented upcoming singer, for singing the garba song and presenting such a melodious rendition of it.

# **Minister accused of 'shifting' MUDA files**

Bengaluru, RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna on Monday lodged a complaint against Karnataka Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh for allegedly shifting crucial files and documents related to MUDA 'scam' involving CM Siddaramaiah.

In his complaint submitted to the Director General of Police Alok Mohan, he also accused the former Superintendent of Police of Lokayukta in Mysuru Suieeth of "conniving" with the Minister in shifting the files in July this year, officials said.

A complaint copy was also mailed to the DGP on Sunday seeking investigation into the matter.

In the complaint, he alleged that the then Mysuru Lokayukta SP Sujeeth had allegedly alerted the Minister when the MUDA scam surfaced following which the Urban Development Minister flew to Mysuru via helicopter and took away the crucial files and documents related to the scam.

Sujeeth had allegedly helped the Minister shift

these files

The Lokayukta police has registered a First Information Report (FIR) against Siddaramaiah and others in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment case, following a court order.

Recently, the Enforcement Directorate booked Siddaramaiah, his wife and some others in a money laundering case linked to the MUDA land allotment case, taking cognisance of a recent state Lokayukta FIR. PTI

## **Cong spent** Rs 585 cr on LS polls

New Delhi: The Congress, which had claimed a cash crunch ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha election, has now reported to the Election Commission that it spent around Rs 585 crore on the parliamentary polls and the state elections held alongside.

In its election expenditure report for the general election and the assembly polls in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim, the Congress said it has spent Rs 410 crore on advertisements and media campaign, and around Rs 46 crore on virtual

## Land-for-jobs case: Lalu Prasad, sons granted bail

were not arrested during the investigation.

The accused appeared before the court in pursuance to summons issued to them by the court earlier. The judge had issued the

summons after taking cognisance of a supplementary charge sheet against the ac-New Delhi: A Delhi court cused persons. The final on Monday granted bail to report was filed before the court by the Enforcement RJD chief and former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Directorate (ED) on August and his sons Tejashwi Ya-6. The ED filed its case dav and Tej Pratap Yadav in based on an FIR lodged by the land-for-jobs money the CBI. The case pertains to Group-D appointments Special Judge Vishal made in West Central Zone Gogne granted the relief to of the railways based in Ja-

balpur, Madhya Pradesh

during Prasad's tenure as

dia website as well, the ecommerce firm said on Monday. Amazon India said that it has partnered with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to facilitate the sale of books at maximum retail price (MRP) across all serviceable pin

In addition to serving individual customers, Amazon.in will work with NCERT on bulk ordering for government agencies

campaigns.

: and schools.

codes in India.

## **Two Malayalam** actors met gangster

Kochi: The names of two prominent Malayalam actors have emerged in a case involving a notorious gangster who was arrested from a star hotel here in connection with a drug case recently, according to police.

The names of actors Sreenath Bhasi and Prayaga Martin, who have been part of several hit movies, appeared in the custody application report submitted by the Maradu police investigating the case following the arrest of gangster Om Prakash.

Prakash was involved in several criminal cases. He and his accomplices were apprehended at the hotel in Maradu on charges of possessing banned narcotics.

The Maradu police, in their report, stated that they had received secret information indicating that the accused were procuring substances like cocaine from abroad and distributing them at DJ parties being organised in the city.

The accused had been under surveillance by the intelligence wing of the police

To evade police detection, the gangster booked hotel rooms in another person's name, according to the police. As a detailed investigation was conducted, it was found that over 20 individuals, including film actors Bhasi and Martin, had visited Prakash at the

hotel, the report noted. Prakash is accused in over 30 cases, police further stated. A senior police officer said a comprehensive investigation is being carried out in the case



Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh during the 'DefConnect 4.0' programme in New Delhi on Mondav PicPTI

over the brutal rape-murder

of a woman doctor from R G

Kar Hospital, bringing a

poignant urgency to this

is set to commence on Octo-

ber 9. Titled 'Lajja' (shame),

the Shri Saraswati and Kali

Mata Mandir Parishad in

Kolkata's Kankurgachi area

has unveiled an idol depict-

Bengal's biggest festival

year's celebrations.

## One killed, two injured in clashes in Tripura

Agartala: One person was killed and two others were injured in clashes between two communities over collection of Durga puja subscriptions in North Tripura district, police said Monday.

Eight people were arrested for their alleged involvement in the clashes on Sunday at Kamatala market and its adjacent areas. "One person succumbed to his bullet injury. Two others were also injured in the clash over the collection of puja subscriptions at Kad-

amtala. At least eight people have been arrested," North Tripura Superintendent of Police (SP) Bhanupada Chakraborty told PTI. Personnel of Assam Ri-

fles and Tripura State Rifles (TSR) have been deployed in sensitive areas of Kadamtala, he said, adding that senior police officials are camping there. During the clashes, two

houses were vandalised by the mob and heavy police deployment was made to bring the situation under control, the SP said. Prohibitory orders have been imposed in Kadamtala area on Sunday, following the clash, police said.

Dharmanagar Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Sajal Debnath clamped the curbs under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita at Kadamtala till Wednesday to restore normality.

Senior Congress MLA Sudip Roy Barman slammed Chief Minister Manik Saha for being "inactive" after the violence in the Kadamtala.

## **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

"In Jharkhand 'maati', 'beti', 'roti' are in danger because of infiltration. It is our pledge to protect them. Infiltrators are coming to Jharkhand, marrying daughters

here, purchasing land and increasing their influence in local bodies. This is very dangerous and it is ruining Jharkhand."

> Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Union Minister

# **Puja Themes : From RG Kar to environment**

#### **By Supratik Sengupta**

Kolkata: Durga Puja organisers in the city and its outskirts are channeling their installation creativity into a powerful commentary on pressing issues ranging from women's rights and social justice to environmental threats and rapid urbanisation.

Yet, amidst the vibrant ing the goddess covering festivities, only one puja her face with her palms in committee dared to acfront of a woman's body. knowledge the chilling real-Talking to PTI, a spokesperity of the ongoing protests son for the committee ex-



plained, "As visitors enter the pandal, they will see the goddess covering her face in shame while the body of a woman lies before her." The lion accompanying the goddess is also depicted sitting before the body, its head lowered in mourning. Nearby, a white apron and stethoscope - symbols of the medical profession - are displayed beside the idol. The 82-year-old Hazra Park Durga Puja, linked to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, has themed its celebration

around social justice and community empowerment, titled 'Suddhi' (purification). "Our Puja serves as a reminder of the importance of social justice," said Sayan Deb Chatterjee, joint secretary of the Hazra Park Durgotsab Committee. The puja has historically been organised by the Dalit community. While the Young Boys

Club has chosen 'Ek Tukdo Aakash' (One Slice of Sky) as its theme to highlight ecological threats stemming Azadgarh Sevak Sangha in the city has themed its celebration around the ancient Dokra art form, a 4,000-yearold metal casting tradition from the Harappan and Mohenjo-Daro civilisations. While the Youth Association of Mohammad Ali Park opted for a conventional theme, recreating the White House in central Kolkata, the Banerjeepara Puja Mandir Samity in Shyamnagar has focused its theme on the trafficking of women.

from rapid urbanization, the

laundering case.

the accused persons on a

personal bond of Rs one

# 6 ECOLOGY

THE PERFECT VOICE **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024** MUMBAI

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# African elephant's welfare: Delhi zoo loses membership

and July 24.

New Delhi: A global alliance of zoos and aquariums on Monday suspended the membership of Delhi's National Zoological Park due to concerns over the treatment of an African elephant, Shankar, who was reportedly kept in chains. Delhi Zoo Director Sanjeet Kumar said the zoo will respond to the suspension.

Zimbabwe had gifted the elephant to the then President of India Shankar Daval Sharma in 1996. It was

brought to India and kept in the Delhi zoo. Shankar has been alone after his companion, another African elephant named Bambai, died in 2005. In a letter to Kumar and the Central Zoo Authority under the Union environment ministry, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) said it had previously requested information from them regarding the elephant's welfare and received replies on May 24

"Following a thorough review of this case, the WAZA Council has voted to immediately suspend the WAZA membership of the National Zoological Park, New Delhi," said the letter which was accessed by PTI. WAZA said that to lift the suspension, the zoo must create a plan within six months to either relocate Shankar to a new facility or comprehensively address all concerns regarding his

management and care. This plan must be approved by WAZA and show significant improvement in Shankar's welfare, it said. If relocation is chosen, Shankar should be trained for the move using positive reinforcement techniques to minimise stress and ensure a smooth transition, WAZA said.

The letter warned that the zoo's membership will be permanently terminated if it does not have a WA-

ZA-approved plan in place to relocate Shankar or address the concerns by April 7, 2025. During the suspension, the zoo will lose all WAZA membership rights and benefits, such as attending conferences and participating in committees.

The letter said that the zoo has the option to appeal this decision by writing to the WAZA president within 60 days.

coast still reeling in

Florida Governor Ron

DeSantis said on Sunday

that while it remains to be

seen just where Milton

will strike, it is clear that

Florida is going to be hit

hard -- "I do not think

there is any scenario

where we do not have ma-

jor impacts at this point."

centred about 815 miles

(1,310 kilometres) west-

southwest of Tampa on

Sunday afternoon, with

maximum sustained

winds of 80 mph (130 kmh),

the National Hurricane

Hurricane Milton was

Helene's aftermath





An employee at an animal rescue centre feeds deer seen during National Wildlife Week in Bikaner.

## Chennai deaths due to heat

Chennai: Five deaths that occurred after the Indian Air Force's air show on the Marina beach on Sunday were related to heat issues. They were all brought dead to the government facilities, Tamil Nadu Health Minister Ma Subramanian said on Monday and appealed to

the political parties and media not to politicise the issue. Of the nearly 100 people admitted to the government hospitals close to Marina beach, 7 were undergoing treatment, and 93 people were treated as out-patients.

The condition of those

## **Contamination in** Yamuna highest in September

Delhi : The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) report finds faecal contamination in Yamuna river at an all-time high in September. Levels of faecal coliform bacteria -- a key indicator of untreated sewage -- surged to 4.900.000 most probable number (MPN) per 100 millilitres, which is 1,960 times the standard of 2.500 units and 9,800 times the desired limit of 500 units, the report by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) said. Further, pollution indicators for faecal coliform remained "disturbingly" high, despite a significant boost in water flow from monsoon rains, which helped slightly improve dissolved oxygen (DO) and biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) levels, the report said. as the Yamuna moved further downstream to the ISBT bridge (Kashmere

#### Center said. "You have time to prepare -- all day today, all day -PTI Monday, probably all day

## **Hurricane Milton growing stronger By Freida Frisaro**

More than 800 people unable to return Florida: Hurricane Milton quickly intensified on Sunday and is on track to become a major hurricane with the Tampa Bay area in its sights, putting Florida on edge and triggering survivors. evacuation orders along a

> Tuesday to be sure your hurricane preparedness plan is in place," the governor said. "If you are on that west coast of Florida, barrier islands, just assume you will be asked to leave.

With Milton achieving hurricane status, this is the first time the Atlantic has had three simultaneous hurricanes after September, said Colorado State University hurricane scientist Phil Klotzbach. There have been four simultaneous hurricanes in August and September.

The St Petersburg-Tampa Bay area is still cleaning up extensive damage from Helene and its powerful storm surge. Twelve

home are staying in lodging provided through FEMA, and 22 shelters are still housing nearly 1,000 people as mobile feeding operations continue to help people perished as Helene

swamped the coast, with the worst damage along the narrow, 20-mile (32-kilometre) string of barrier islands that stretch from St Petersburg to Clearwater. DeSantis expanded his state of emergency declaration on Sunday to 51 counties, and said Floridians should prepare for more power outages and disruption, making sure they have a week's worth of food and water and are ready to hit the road.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, meanwhile, coordinated with the governor and briefed President Joe Biden on Sunday on how it has staged lifesaving resources.

The state has prepared emergency fuel sources and EV charging stations along evacuation routes, and "identified every possible location that can possibly house someone along those routes," Guthrie said. People who live in homes built after Florida strengthened its codes in 2004, who do not depend on constant electricity and who are not in evacuation zones, should probably avoid the roads, he said.

As many as 4,000 National Guard troops are helping state crews to remove debris, DeSantis said, and he directed that Florida crews dispatched to North Carolina in Helene's aftermath return to the state to prepare for Milton.

Milton could make landfall on Wednesday in the Tampa Bay area Milton to remain a hurricane as it moves across central Florida into the Atlantic Ocean.

## Space start-up XDLINX raises USD 7 million in seed fund

Dehradun/Pithoragarh : Wildlife experts have interpreted the sighting of a lowland bird like the peacock at a height of 6,500 feet in Uttarakhand as an

baffle wildlife experts. The peacock falls into

New Delhi: Space start-up the generalist species of XDLINX Space Labs on bird that is not so selective or choosy about its habitat. Monday announced the suc-Though, traditionally a cessful completion of a USD lowland bird, it has been seven million seed funding found at higher than norround which would help it mal elevations in neighbuild next-generation paybouring Himachal Pradesh loads for defence and comalso, Kumar said. One reamercial missions. The son may be that even the funding round was led by hill regions are no longer Ashish Kacholia of Lucky as cold as they used to be Investments with additional and the peacock finds the climate in higher altitudes conducive enough for habifamily office. tation, he said. "Increased human activity like farming and expanding human settlements in the higher reaches of the mountains have led to warmer conditions at higher altitudes which may have led to this altitudinal migration of the peacock. But it may be a seasonal shift too, "Kumar told PTI. "With the onset of winter, it will get colder in the hills and the lowland bird may retreat to its original habitat conditions," he turized space-grade E-band said. payload, on board SpaceX's -PTI Transporter-12 mission.

## membership of global animal welfare body New Delhi: A global alli- non-compliance with WAance of zoos and aquari- ZA's bylaws, placing the

**CZA** risks losing

# Pic: PT

undergoing treatment at the hospitals was stable. Apart from drafting 1,000 doctors, paramedical staff and stationing 40 ambulances, steps were taken to provide basic amenities including drinking water in association with other gov-Gate), faecal coliform levels ernment departments. -PTI shot up.

## Peacock sighting at 6,500 feet in Uttarakhand

ums on Monday warned that the membership of the Central Zoo Authority could be cancelled for not complying with its 2023 Animal Welfare Goals (AWG)

**CZA** Member Secretary Sanjay Shukla told PTI that it will comply with the WAZA welfare goal by the November 30 deadline. In a letter to Shukla, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) said that no more extensions will be given to the CZA to meet the deadline. "As of today 19 of WAZA's 21 association members have met the 23 AWG. The WAZA Council continues to closely monitor the progress of those who have yet to comply. We would like to emphasise that there will be no further extensions beyond the November 30 deadline.'

"Failure to meet this requirement will result in respective associations at significant risk of losing their WAZA membership. It is also important to note that the termination of an association's membership has broader implications,' the letter read.

The goal is for all WAZA members to develop and implement animal welfare evaluation programmes based on standards agreed upon by WAZA. WAZA President Karen Fifield wrote in the letter that this will also affect the nine facilities in India that are WAZA members through the CZA, as they will lose their membership too. "Candidates currently undergoing the WAZA membership application process will also be denied WAZA membership. Furthermore, other institutions under CZA will no longer be eligible to apply for WAZA institution membership," the -PTI letter read.



Students take part in a face painting competition during National Wildlife Week at Van Vihar National Park in Bhopal. Pic: PTI

## Assam to give 10 lakh Soil Health Cards

Guwahati: Assam Chief uted. The number of labo-Minister Himanta Biswa ratories to test soil quality Sarma on Monday kickhas been increased to 26 started distribution of Soil from five earlier in the Health Cards (SHC) to more state, Sarma said. than four lakh farmers Agricultural machinery

across the state. At an offitoo was handed over to cial function here, Sarma farmers and agriculture said the government will knowledge centres were indistribute around 10 lakh augurated by the chief min-SHC and four lakh of them ister in the presence of Agalready ready to be distribriculture minister Atul

Bora.

"We are establishing 816 village agriculture equipment banks. Earlier, we had only 80 such banks in the state." Sarma said in his speech further adding that the government will also be launching 96 agriculture knowledge centres and 93 agriculture development offices in the state. -PTI

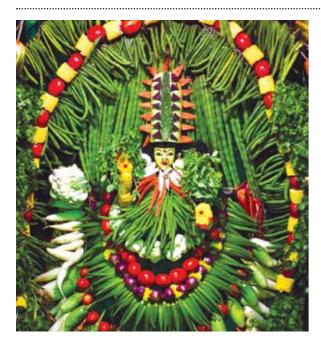
unusual development caused by ecological changes in the Himalayan region due to increased human activity.

The bird was spotted twice in the forests of Bageshwar district in the state. It was first seen in the Kafligair forest range in April and then in Kathayatbara forests on October 5. a senior official said.

"It is surprising that the peacock which is usually found at an elevation of 1,600 feet has been sighted at an altitude of 6,500 feet. It is due to ecological changes that have started affecting wildlife migration," Dhyan Singh Karayat, a forest official in Bageshwar forest division said on Monday.

Senior scientist of Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India (WII) Dr Suresh Kumar said though such sightings are not common they should not

backing from E2MC, Mana Ventures, and a prominent Rupesh Gandupalli, CEO & Co-Founder of XDLINX Space Labs, said the funding will help the company manufacturing of next-generation payloads for defence and commercial missions like E-band communications, Optical and RF intelligence to building space heritage, operationalisation of satellite bus platforms and expand in US and UK. The company is currently preparing for the launch of Elevation-1, which will feature the world's first minia-



Goddess Hatti Marramma decorated with vegetables during Navratri festival, Chikmagalur, Karnataka. Pic: PTI

# World's rivers faced driest year in three decades in 2023: UN weather agency

Geneva : The UN weather agency on Monday said that 2023 was the driest year in more than three decades for the world's rivers, as the record-hot year underpinned a drying up of water flows and contributed to prolonged droughts in some places.

The World Meteorological Organisation in a report also said glaciers that feed rivers in many countries suffered the largest loss of mass in the last five decades, warning that ice melt can threaten long-term water security for millions of

people globally. "Water is the canary in the coalmine of climate change. We receive distress signals in the form of increasingly extreme rainfall, floods and droughts which wreak a heavy toll on lives, ecosystems and economies," said WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo, releasing the report on Monday.

She said rising temperatures had in part led the hydrological cycle to become "more erratic and unpredictable" in ways that can produce "either too much or too little water"



through both droughts and floods. The weather agency, citing figures from UN Water, says some 3.6 billion

people face inadequate access to water for at least one month a year — and that figure is expected to rise to

5 billion by 2050. The world faced the hottest year on record in 2023, and the summer of this year was also the hottest summer ever – raising warning signs for a possible new annual record in 2024

"In the (last) 33 years of data, we had never such a large area around the world which was under such dry conditions," said Stefan Uhlenbrook, Director of Hydrology, Water and Cryosphere at WMO.

WMO called for improvements in data collection and sharing to help clear up the real picture for water resources and help countries and communities take action in response.

The report said the southern United States, Central America and South American countries Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay faced widespread drought conditions and "the lowest water levels ever observed in Amazon and in Lake Titicaca," on the border between Peru and Bolivia. WMO said half of the world faced drvriver-flow conditions last vear. -AP

**THE PERFECT VOICE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024** MUMBAI

# GLOBAL

# How Palestinian Authority is failing its people

#### **By Anas Igtait**

Canberra: As the world watches, and often turns away from the violence in Gaza, mass violence in the other occupied Palestinian territory, the West Bank, has brought life to a standstill for much of its population.

Violence from illegal Israeli settler communities, the dispossession of Palestinians from their homes and clashes between Pales-

42.000 - No of Palestinians killed in a vear

90 per cent – No of Gaza population displaced 1,200 – No of people killed in Hamas attack **250** – No of people abducted 100 – No of captives inside Gaza. A third of them are believed to be dead

tinians and Israeli forces continue to ratchet up as the death toll in Gaza climbs.

Sitting in partial control of the West Bank, along with Israel is the Palestinian Authority (PA), the remnants of a resistance movement turned political authority, that finds itself more marginalised than ever as Palestinians endure the deadliest and most destructive episode since the Nakba of 1948.

Israel's war on Gaza has resulted in the near-total destruction of the strip, the killing of at least 41,000 Palestinians, and the displacement of another 2 million. The West Bank has also experienced its bloodiest year since the 1967 occupation, with Israeli forces and settlers killing at least 600 Palestin-



Flames and smoke rise from an Israeli airstrike in Dahiyeh, Beirut, Lebanon on early Monday. PicAP/PT

of its people. Perhaps no

group understands the

limitations of the PA more

intimately than Palestini-

ans living in the West

Home to at least 3.5 mil-

lion Palestinians and an

ians, alongside widespread destruction and mass displacement. Fourteen Israeli settlers and soldiers have been killed in the West Bank in 2024

Despite these unprecedented events of the past year, PA President Mahmoud Abbas has yet to directly address the Palestinian public about the war, while the newly formed PA government, established in March 2024, has been conspicuously silent neither holding a press conference or appointing a government spokesperson.

#### Limited authority

Established under the 1993 Oslo Accords between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel, the Authority was initially conceived as an interim governing body, tasked with laying the foundation for an independent Palestinian state within five years. That was

estimated 700.000 Israeli 31 years ago. Now, the PA functions settlers (including in East

#### Palestinian militants fire four rockets into Israel

Jerusalem: Palestinian militants in Gaza fired four rockets into Israel on Monday as mourners marked the anniversary of the Oct 7 attack, without disrupting a nearby ceremony. Hamas also said it attacked Israeli forces in different parts of Gaza. The Israeli military said three rockets were intercepted and a fourth fell in an open area. There were no reports of casualties or damage.

The military said it launched a wave of artillery and airstrikes overnight and into Monday to thwart what it said was an imminent attack. It said it targeted Hamas launch posts and underground militant infrastructure.

Jerusalem), the West Bank primarily as an administrative entity with limited has become a fragmented authority over the fragand suffocating landscape, mented West Bank territopunctuated by a labyrinth of checkpoints, roadblocks ries — at best — and, at worst, as a colonial suband military gates that secontractor complicit in verely restrict movement. managing the occupation

Settlement municipal borders, which now encompass 40 percent of the West Bank, effectively strangle any possibility of economic or political autonomy for Palestinians.

In September 2023 and 2024, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu presented maps at the

#### Hundreds gather at Nova music festival site

Hundreds of families and friends of people killed at the Nova music festival gathered Monday at the site of the attack, where nearly 400 were gunned down during Hamas' October 7 assault.

Families gathered around photos of their loved ones, which were arranged in a semicircle around what was the DJ stage. Many lit candles and added mementos or photos, crying and embracing, Overhead, army helicopters circled and constant booms echoed across the area, causing many to flinch.

els, with 84 percent of Pal-

estinians calling for his

resignation and 66 percent

perceiving the PA as a bur-

den on the Palestinian

Among Palestinians.

particularly the younger

generation, the authority

is increasingly seen as lit-

tle more than a subcon-

tractor for the Israeli

It is also no longer capa-

ble of co-opting young Pal-

estinians through public

sector employment, with

international donors di-

verting funds away from

PA coffers and Israel regu-

larly suspending or pirat-

ing Palestinian tax

Since October 2023, Is-

rael has been withholding

\$75 million per month from

Palestinian tax revenues.

fragile governance.

people.

occupation.

revenues.

United Nations General Assembly that depicted Israel as a unified state, encompassing both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

In October 2023, Gideon Sa'ar. a former Israeli minister and a leading candidate for the role of Defence Minister. asserted. "Gaza must be smaller at the end of the war ... it's the price of loss that the Arabs understand.'

#### Silence a n d appeasement

In the face of this Israeli accelerated colonisation. the Palestinian Authority's strategy has been one of silence and appeasement. The PA has focused on

proving its worth to international donors rather than addressing the existential threats facing Palestinians.

In total, since 2019, Israel Last month, the newly has withheld or deducted appointed Palestinian over \$1.4 billion, citing various pretexts. The au-Prime Minister published an article in The Washingthority now teeters on the brink of financial collapse. ton Post, outlining the PA's "day after" plan for Gaza. Meanwhile, as the Israeli However, this plan clings military systematically to the same discredited obliterates public infraframework of the Oslo Acstructure in areas ostensicords, a strategy that has bly under PA control, it is methodically dismantling been rendered irrelevant by Israel's continued land one of the last pillars of the grabs and the PA's own PA's legitimacy further crumbling legitimacy. eroding the PA's already

Abbas' popularity has plummeted to dismal lev-

## Years needed to rebuild Gaza The devastation

Almost as many build-

ings have been destroyed

or damaged in Gaza as in

all of Ukraine after its

first two years of war

with Russia, according to Corey Scher and Jamon

Van Den Hoek, U.S.-based

researchers who use sat-

ellite radar to document

To put that into per-

spective: Gaza is less than

half the size of Ukraine's

capital, Kyiv.

the wars' devastation.

Jerusalem: There are hills of rubble where apartment blocks stood. and pools of sewagetainted water spreading disease. City streets have been churned into dirt canyons and, in many places, the air is filled with the stench of unrecovered corpses. Israel's yearlong offensive against Hamas, one of the deadliest and most destructive in recent history, has killed more than 41,000 people, a little over half of them women and children, according to local health officials. With no end in sight to the war and no plan for the day after, it is impossible to say when - or even if -

anything will be rebuilt. Experts say reconstruction could take decades. Israel blames the destruction on Hamas. Its Oct. 7 attack on Israel in which some 1,200 people were killed and The amount of de-

around 250 taken hostage — ignited the war. The fighting left 66% of structures, including more than 227,000 housing units, with some damage.

If there's a cease-fire, around half of all families "have nowhere to go back to," said Alison Elv. a Gaza-based coordinator with the Shelter Cluster. an international coalition of aid providers led by the Norwegian Refugee Council.

destruction in northern Gaza is even worse, he said. At the end of January, the World Bank estimated \$18.5 billion of damage nearly the combined economic output of the West Bank and Gaza in 2022. That was before some intensely destructive Israeli ground operations, including in the

southern border city of

Rafah.

struction in central and

southern Gaza alone. The

**Two Chinese killed near Karachi airport** 

Bank.

aratist group claimed re-

Organization, a security grouping founded by Chi-Pakistan's largest city. na and Russia to counter were also police officers Western alliances. Initially, Pakistani auwho were escorting the Chinese convoy when the attack happened. The spokesman for the separatist group, Junaid Baloch, said Monday that one of their suicide bomb-Pakistani news channels ers targeted the convoy of broadcast videos of flames Chinese engineers and inengulfing cars and a thick vestors as they left the column of smoke rising airport. The Baloch Liberation from the scene. Troops and Army is mainly based in police cordoned off the the restive southwestern

Karachi: A Pakistani sep- the Shanghai Cooperation investigating how the at- has also attacked foreigntacker reached Karachi. ers and security forces in



-AP

sponsibility for a late night bombing that targeted a convoy with Chinese nationals outside the country's largest airport, killing two workers from China and wounding eight people, officials and the insurgent group said Monday.

The attack by the Baloch Liberation Army outside the airport in the southern port city of Karachi was the latest deadly assault on Chinese in the country and came a week before Pakistan is to host a summit of

thorities gave conflicting details and indicated the explosion may have been from an oil tanker but police later confirmed it was a bomb attack.

area. On Monday, counterterrorism officials were

other parts of Pakistan in Among the wounded recent years.

The Chinese Embassy in Islamabad said Chinese staffers working at the Port Qasim Electric Power Company — a coal-powered power plant that's a joint China-Pakistan venture — were in the convoy when it came under attack around 11 p.m. Two Chinese nationals were killed and one was wounded, the embassy said and added there were also Pakistani casualties but did not elab-Balochistan province but it orate. -AP

Security officials examine the site of an explosion that caused injures and destroyed vehicles outside the Karachi airport in Pakistan on early Monday. Pic: AP/PTI

### **Prison sentence to American** for fighting in Ukraine

Moscow: A Russian court on Monday sentenced a 72-year-old American in a closed trial to nearly seven years in prison for allegedly fighting as a mercenary in Ukraine.

Prosecutors said Stephen Hubbard signed a contract with the Ukrainian military after Russia sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022 and he fought alongside them until being captured two months later.

He was sentenced to six years and 10 months in a general-security prison. Hubbard. from the state of Michigan, is the first American known to have been convicted on charges of fighting as a mercenary in the Ukrainian conflict.

US SC on abortion law Washington: The Supreme Court on Monday let stand a decision barring emergency abortions that violate the law in Texas, which

has one of the country's strictest abortion bans. Without detailing their

reasoning, the justices kept in place a lower court order that said hospitals cannot be required to provide pregnancy terminations that would violate Texas law.

#### **By Yoshita Singh** New York: A new book for children about Diwali by an Indian-American author aims to spread awareness about the festival's

cultural traditions, highlighting the message of inclusivity and diversity. "A Kids Book About Diwali" is authored by Chha-

"It took a long time before

quite rapidly was quite ex-

## **Book on Diwali to promote tradition in US**

vi Arya Bhargava, an Indian-American entrepreneur and former elementary school teacher.

In an interview with PTI, Bhargava underscored that she was inspired to write a book on Diwali as she wanted to "create something that every child, no matter what their background is,

could pick up and immediately connect with".

She describes the book with its core themes of beliefs, identity, joy, inclusivity and sharing, as a "guide to understanding how traditions can unite us -- light overcoming darkness, good triumphing over evil, knowledge over ignorance, justice over inequality --

these are universal messages".

She said she wants readers to "feel that connection to these values, no matter what cultural background they have. For those who celebrate Diwali, I wanted them to feel seen and to feel like they belong, and for those who do not, I wanted them to understand the



festival and how they could join in the celebration."

### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

My mission since the beginning has been to take my Carnatic musical roots and amplify them across the globe. Now, over a decade later, it's



clear to me that the world is not only ready for this perspective, but they need it.

> Sid Sriram. Music Director

#### Stockholm: The Nobel function".

Prize in physiology or medi-"Their groundbreaking cine was awarded Monday discovery revealed a completely new principle of to Americans Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun for gene regulation that turned their discovery of microRout to be essential for multicellular organisms, includ-NA, tiny pieces of genetic material that alter how ing humans," the assembly genes work at the cellular said in a statement explainlevel and could lead to new ing the importance of their ways of treating cancer. work

The Nobel Assembly at Perlmann said he spoke the Karolinska Institute, to Ruvkun by phone shortly which awarded the prize, before the announcement. said the duo's discovery is "proving to be fundamenhe came to the phone and tally important for how orsounded very tired, but he

ganisms develop and

Gary Ruvkun Victor Ambros

cited and happy, when he understood what it was all

about," Perlmann said. Ambros and Ruvkun, the assembly explained, were initially interested in genes that control the timing of different genetic developments, ensuring that cell

Ambros performed the research that led to his prize at Harvard University. He is currently a professor of natural science at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Ruvkun's research was performed at Massachusetts General Hospital and the Harvard Medical School, where he's a professor of genetics, said Thomas Perlmann, Secretary-General of the Nobel Committee.

time.

To do that, they studied two mutant strains of worms commonly used as research models in science. The two scientists set out to identify the mutated genes responsible in these worms

and what their role was. The types develop at the right

mechanism they ultimately identified — the regulation of genes by microRNA has allowed organisms to evolve for hundreds of millions of years. The Nobel committee

said Ambros and Ruvkun's

discovery ultimately "revealed a new dimension to gene regulation, essential for all complex life forms".

MicroRNA provide genetic instructions to tell cells to make new proteins and that the main areas where microRNA could be helpful: in developing drugs to treat diseases and in serving as biomarkers.

The prize carries a cash award of 11 million Swedish kronor (USD 1 million) from a bequest left by the prize's creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel. -AP

Nobel for discovery of microRNA

# **B** | **OPINION**

## EDITORIAL

## **Fatal Mismanagement**

A t least five lives were lost and around 100 people hospitalized following the Indian Air Force's (IAF) much-publicized air show in Chennai this Sunday. The event, which aimed to mobilize 1.5 million spectators in an attempt to enter the Limca Book of Records, was plagued by poor planning, extreme heat, and woeful crowd control. One man, suffering from sunstroke, even collapsed while riding his bike after being caught in gridlock for over an hour. The IAF's push for large numbers and the Chennai City Police's ineffective traffic management are now under scrutiny.

The Chennai tragedy is part of a disturbing pattern in India's handling of mass gatherings. Last year, a similar tragedy unfolded during the Maharashtra Bhushan Award ceremony in Navi Mumbai, where 13 people died from heatstroke while attending an outdoor function on a blistering April day. The event, which drew a crowd of 300,000, saw hundreds succumb to heat-related illnesses. Provisions for shade were limited to a select few dignitaries and VIPs, leaving the majority of attendees vulnerable to the scorching heat.

These incidents underscore a chronic failure in crowd management at India's mega events, where spectacle is prioritized over safety. Whether it is a religious gathering like the Kumbh Mela, a political rally, or a public celebration, the safety of attendees is often an afterthought. Organizers and authorities routinely underestimate the risks posed by overcrowding, extreme heat, and insufficient infrastructure.

India's fragmented governance structure exacerbates these risks. The responsibilities for crowd control are often split between various authorities, resulting in poor coordination and inadequate preparation. In the Chennai case, the IAF's push to break records clashed with the local police's inability to handle the influx of spectators. In Navi Mumbai, even the presence of high-ranking officials such as Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde did not translate into better planning or more robust safety measures.

The consequences of such negligence are often blamed on fate or uncontrollable forces, but the reality is mismanagement. Heatstroke, dehydration, and crowd crushes are preventable with the right measures in place. Simple provisions like adequate water stations, shaded areas, and clear evacuation routes could make the difference between life and death.

Countries like Saudi Arabia, which hosts millions for the Hajj pilgrimage each year, have invested in sophisticated crowd control systems that include real-time monitoring and emergency response plans. India, with its frequent large-scale events, must adopt similar strategies. Without proper planning and infrastructure, tragedies like those in Chennai and Navi Mumbai will continue to unfold, with innocent lives lost as a result.

Only by placing human lives above record-breaking ambitions can India hope to prevent these deadly disasters in the future.

# A March Towards the Viksit Bharat of 2047



Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar

🔵 eflecting on Bharatiya Science and Technology, I Rence and reconnectory the pioneering contributions of my friend, computer scientist Viiav Bhatkar, who played a crucial role in the late 1980s. He built the PARAM supercomputer against significant odds, showcasing the true strength of our science and technology. As we envision Science and Technology in Viksit Bharat 2047, we must embrace the spirit that drove the creation of the PARAM supercomputer.

As a member of Rajiv Gandhi's Science Advisory Council, I recall him asking, "We are a poor country, but rich in what?" The unanimous answer was 'intellect.' Our discussion shifted to how this intellect could benefit Bharat. With supercomputers in their early stages globally, we saw an opportunity for Bharat to build its own, especially after the USA denied us this technology—

fueling a strong sense of 'technonationalism.'

Technonationalism is often driven by technology denial. Yet, the denial regime itself eventually changes as technonationalism strengthens a country's technological foundation. Bharat's journey into high-performance supercomputing under Vijay Bhatkar's leadership is a re-

When the CRAY supercomputer was denied to Bharat by the USA in the mid-1980s, our response was to launch the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) in 1987. By 1991, we developed our first indigenous supercomputer, PAR-AM 8000. Two key facts about PARAM 8000 are noteworthy. It was built at a cost lower than the imported CRAY computer and in less time than it would have taken to import and install a large computer system in India at that time!

markable example of this.

But PARAM by C-DAC was not our only response to technology denial. We also had 'Flowsolver' by the National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), ANUPAM by Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), and ANURAG by Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO).

This long voyage into highperformance computing was fraught with difficulties: embargoes on critical components, architectural debates, make-versus-buy dilemmas, loss of key talent to multinationals, and bureaucratic hurdles. Yet, there is a direct correlation between India's forays into supercomputing and the technology denial we faced.

After C-DAC demonstrated the PARAM-8000 in 1990, a Los Alamos report concluded that supercomputers were unnecessary for nuclear weapons design, prompting the US to take a step back. By 1991–1992, C-DAC had exported PARAM supercomputers to Canada, Germany, and Russia, while NAL's FLOSOLVER Mk III and DRDO's PACE matched US-made mid-range workstations. In De-



cember 1992, the US Office of Naval Research assessed our supercomputing capabilities in Bangalore, and by 1993, the US authorized conditional exports of high-performance computers to several Indian institutions,

marking another retreat. In 1995, the US placed parallel processing supercomputing on its list of items requiring an Indian export license. But by October that year, the US began to relax export controls, taking a third back step. In 1998, C-DAC launched PARAM 10,000, demonstrating our capacity to build 100-gigaflop machines. In response, the US further relaxed its export controls, and CRAY, the very company that had denied us supercomputers in the 1980s, established a subsidiary in Bharat!

There's an old saying: "Strength respects strength." India's foray into supercomputers is a brilliant example of this. Once you demonstrate your strength and then extend your hand, others will be prepared to shake it. Dr. Bhatkar was one of the luminaries who demonstrated Bharat's strength to the world. I still remember a headline from the Washington Post that read, "Angry India does it!" It was about the building of the PARAM supercomputer. And I often wonder—why isn't India always

angry? As we march toward Viksit Bharat of 2047, we should hold onto this spirit of determination.

India's foray into high-performance supercomputing exemplifies 'denial-driven innovation,' a trend seen in various fields of Bharatiya science and technology, such as nuclear, space, and cryogenic technology, all of which were initially denied to us. In response, we developed these technologies independently, showcasing our scientific resilience when faced with challenges.

While 2020 is often seen as the year of the pandemic, I view it as the year of Bharatiya science. Faced with minimal diagnostic capabilities and no vaccines or therapeutics, our scientists rapidly delivered vital information to decision-makers and developed indigenous technologies. From diagnostics and ventilators to drugs and vaccines, their monumental efforts came from startups, large enterprises, universi-

ties, and national research labs,

showcasing a united front during the crisis.

I am particularly proud that Bharat didn't ask for help during the pandemic; instead, Bharat helped the world. Covaxin, our indigenous vaccine, is a shining example. Bharat Biotech rose to the challenge and produced it on its own, while Serum Institute in Pune manufactured Covishield on a large scale. We accomplished our goal of 200 crore vaccinations independently. I call this 'Atmanirbhar Bharat with Atmavishwas.'

That said, we must acknowledge the challenges we face: 70 percent of Bharat lives in villages, nearly 15 percent below the poverty line, every sixth urban resident lives in a slum, and 15 to 20 percent are illiterate. The pandemic highlighted the stark digital divide.

As Chair of the Mashelkar Committee on NEP 2020 implementation in Maharashtra, I proposed that digital access for the poor be recognized as a fundamental human right, arguing that the internet has become a basic need alongside food, clothing, and housing.

Through the 'Anjani Mashelkar Inclusive Innovation Award' I established in my mother's name, I stress that while it's easy to develop high technology for the wealthy or low technology for the poor, the real challenge lies in making high technology accessible to the poorest. This is what I define as "inclusive innovation" that ensures no one is left behind.

(The writer is former Director-General, Council of Scientific & Industrial Research. Views personal)

# Between Expediency and Indifference: The Arab States' Paradox with Palestinians



The conflict between Israel and Hamas has sparked an exodus of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees from Gaza since Israel's retaliation began following the Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023. Following Israel's ferocious and unrelenting pounding of Gaza amid much moral outrage, there has long been talk indicating that Israel's conservative government led by Benjamin Netanhayu are aiming for the wholescale expulsion of Gaza's Palestinian population.

What was striking in the immediate days and months following the October 7 attacks was the markedly muted reaction from the Arab states. While Saudi Arabia, a major U.S. ally in the

Despite their fiery rhetoric about Palestinian liberation and speeches condemning Israel's actions, Arab governments have repeatedly prioritized national interests, internal stability and geopolitical calculations over any sustained commitment to Palestinian statehood.



region, has left the door ajar for peace with Israel, and Morocco, Bahrain, and the UAE refrained from recalling their ambassadors, only Jordan, where Palestinians constitute a large portion of the population, has taken significant diplomatic steps.

This tepid response underscored a long-standing reality: the Palestinian cause, though emotionally resonant with the Arab public, rarely sways government policy in the Arab states who have largely been indifferent to the plight of the Palestinians.

This tension between Palestinians and their Arab hosts has had deep roots. The Nakba of 1948 (when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced by the creation of Israel) was a blow to the legitimacy of Arab regimes who had failed to stifle the nascent Jewish state in its cradle.

A pivotal moment in the relations between the Palestinians and the Arab States came in the wake of the resounding Israeli victory in the Six-Day war of 1967, which trounced the coalition of Egypt-led Arab states and saw a dramatic series of territorial changes.

The expansion of Israel was followed by a major expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 and led to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) emerging as an assertive, somewhat independent voice of the Palestinians. Before this, the Palestinian cause was largely subsumed under broader Arab military agendas.

But after 1967, Palestinians began asserting their independence, a shift that unsettled Arab leaders. Their fears were well-founded: the PLO's increasing autonomy in places like Lebanon led to unrest, culminating in conflicts such as the Israeli invasion of 1982, which dismantled PLO structures in Beirut.

In an insightful interview given to the American magazine Politico in January, former U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker observed that despite decades of vocal support for Palestinian rights, many Arab governments have long harboured feelings of "fear and loathing" toward the Palestinians - a sentiment particularly strong in Egypt, which continues to resist opening its borders to fleeing Gazans.

Arab governments, fearing internal instability, sought to contain Palestinian activism and the aftermath of the

1967 war solidified this policy shift: rather than confronting Israel, Arab states focused on controlling the Palestinian populations within their own borders, said Crocker. Crocker suggests

that Arab states' indifference to the Palestinians indicates that Netanyahu would need to offer only minimal concessions - vague promises of autonomy rather than substantive statehood to the Palestinians during negotiations.

The most dramatic example of this internal tussle between the PLO and the Arab states occurred during 'Black September' in 1970, when the PLO attempted to overthrow the Jordanian monarchy. Syrian forces, led by Hafez al-Assad, withheld support, allowing Jordan to crush the uprising. The irony here is while Arab states publicly supported Palestinian rights, they often took actions that undermined the Palestinian cause, as Assad's anti-PLO policies in Syria and Jordan's military response in 1970 illustrate.

Despite fiery rhetoric about Palestinian liberation, many Arab governments viewed the PLO and its secular nationalism as a threat to their own sovereignty. Even Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, Israel's most dogged adversary, once warned of the dangers posed by Palestinian militancy.

This would explain Egypt's vehement refusal to grant refuge to Gazans during the current conflict - a stance reinforced by the ideological divide

between Hamas, with its roots in the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Egyptian regime.

Despite strong public support for the Palestinian cause, Arab states often prioritized their national interests

over solidarity with the PLO. Financial pledges from Arab countries frequently went unfulfilled; for instance, a 1978 inter-Arab agreement promised substantial funding to the PLO, but only Saudi Arabia honoured its commitment. As military defeats and internal conflicts mounted, Arab states grew increasingly hesitant to confront Israel, leading to a shift from supporting the Palestinian struggle to s e e king individual peace agreements.

The late 20th century marked a turning point, particularly after Egypt's peace treaty with Israel in 1979, which isolated Cairo within the Arab League. The end of the Cold War further transformed the geopolitical landscape, diminishing the influence of radical regimes and prompting moderate Arab states to pursue closer ties with the United States. By the early 1990s, many Arab states began engaging in talks with Israel.

The June 1996 Arab summit underscored a strategic decision to recognize Israel, even amid lingering hostility from certain nations.

Perhaps the biggest irony today is in Shia Iran's support for the Sunni Hamas. Certainly, the two ideologically opposed entities have only their sworn enmity with Israel in common. But the past sheds light on a dark chapter, largely forgotten in the West and elsewhere today.

In the early days of the Lebanese Civil War, in 1975, the Tall al-Za'tar refugee camp in East Beirut was besieged by Lebanese militias and ultimately levelled to the ground. A decade later, in 1985, just three years after the infamous Shatila massacre, another horrific chapter unfolded in what became known as the "War of the Camps." Lebanese Shia militias, backed by Syria and Iran, laid siege to the Palestinian camps of Shatila and Bourj el-Barajneh, with the fighting and blockades lasting nearly three years. Untold numbers of Palestinians were killed or wounded during this brutal period.

The irony, of course, is in today's narrative. Iran, which is now seen as a major backer of Hamas and a purported supporter of the Palestinian cause, was very much part of the forces that once besieged these same Palestinians. Their relationship is less about ideological solidarity and more a marriage of convenience—another tool in Iran's broader strategy of projecting influence and power across the region through alliances with militias and proxies.

While the West and the rest of the World may not remember the "War of the Camps," both the Iranians and Palestinians do. Today, Tehran's support for the Palestinian cause is tactical, and not born out of any deepseated love for the Palestinian people or their struggle.

The tensions between Palestinians and their Arab hosts was starkly illustrated last month in Jordan's parliamentary elections when Jordan's Islamist opposition, the Islamic Action Front - the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood - captured a fifth of the seats in Jordan's 138-member parliament, channelling the growing fury over Israel's actions in Gaza into electoral gains.

While the Front is now the largest opposition bloc, its influence remains curtailed by the limitations of Jordan's legislative body, where pro-government factions still hold sway. But the gains made by the Islamists signal a deepening undercurrent of dissatisfaction driven by a sense of betrayal - both by Israel and by Arab governments - who, in the eyes of many, have failed to act decisively in defence of the Palestinians.

(Tomorrow, we look at Israel's long engagement in Lebanon, from its intervention in the Lebanese Civil War and 1982 occupation of the southern half of the country to its ongoing mortal combat with Hezbollah)

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#### THE PERFECT VOICE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024 MUMBAI

# REFLECTIONS









- 1. A worker makes an effigy of the evil King Ravan, Meghnad and Kumbhkaran in preparation for the upcoming Dussehra festival in Jammu on Monday.
- 2. Actor and BJP MP Hema Malini performs at Ma Durga Nritya Natika during Navratri festival in Mathura.
- 3. Workers paint a statue of Gautam Buddha in the backdrop of the Deekshabhoomi ahead of the 68th Dhammachakra Pravartan Diwas celebration in Nagpur on Monday.
- 4. Sadhus take part in a protest rally against the alleged rape and murder of a Kolkata based trainee doctor in Kolkata on Monday.
- 5. People dressed in traditional attire participate in the 'Abhivyakti Garba Mahostav' organised on the occasion of Navratri festival in Jaipur.

All Pictures PTI, AP



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## WORLD VIEW The Forgotten Legacy of Thailand's 'Death Railway'

## **READERS' CHOICE** Durgavati: The Queen Who Stood Against the Mughal Tide



In 1957, David Lean's Academy Award-winning film 'The Bridge on the River Kwai' captured global audiences. However, it left a bitter taste for the very men whose harrowing experiences inspired it those who laboured on the Burma Railway, colloquially dubbed the 'Death Railway.'

During World War II, as Imperial Japan expanded its empire across Southeast Asia—encompassing Malaya, Singapore, and the Philippines—a critical challenge emerged: Allied submarines were sinking Japanese supply ships faster than

Thailand, long celebrated for its picturesque beaches and vibrant culture, draws millions of tourists each year. Yet, just a few hours' drive from Bangkok lies a more sombre chapter of its history—a site where blood was spilled, but also where an extraordinary engineering feat emerged under unimaginable circumstances.

they could be replaced. This left the Japanese Army in Burma dangerously exposed. To address this vulnerability, the Japanese sought an overland route to supply their forces, and thus the 'Death Railway' was born.

Between December 1942 and October 1943, around 60,000 Allied POWs, alongside nearly 200,000 Tamil, Malay, and Burmese labourers, toiled under appalling conditions to construct the Bangkok-Rangoon railway. British engineers had previously deemed the project impossible due to the treacherous terrain of the disease-ridden tropical jungle. Yet, the Japanese possessed a seemingly inexhaustible supply of manpower, primarily drawn from the fall of Singapore and the Dutch East Indies.

The Japanese transported these 60,000 British, Australian, Dutch, and American servicemen to the Thai town of Kanchanaburi, where the railway's construction would begin. Simultaneously, POWs were dispatched to build the railway from the Burmese side, aiming to connect the two ends at the Three Pagodas Pass. In just 15 months, the 415-kilometer railway, complete with its bridges, was completed. What defies belief is that this colossal undertaking was executed by men who were often sick, malnourished, and brutalized. Under the Japanese ethos, any man who could stand was expected to work-malaria or dysentery were inconsequential to them.

The conditions faced by POWs and civilian labourers during the construction of the railway were horrific. Their diets consisted mostly of rice with little meat, while diseases like malaria, cholera, and dysentery spread rapidly. Medical care was almost non-existent. No Red Cross supplies arrived. Figures like Lt. Col. E.E. Dunlop, known as 'Weary Dunlop,' advocated tirelessly for better treatment despite overwhelming odds. Tragically, the plight of civilian workers was even worse, with around 100,000 perishing, and among the POWs, approximately 12,500 died in agonizing conditions, as the Japanese had not signed the Geneva Convention and regarded surrender as dishonourable.

Accounts from former POWs, such as John Coast's 'Railroad of Death,' reveal the grim reality they faced, while war artist Leo Rawlings's 'And the Dawn Came Out Like Thunder' poignantly captures their suffering through sketches.

The survivors' resentment stemmed from the film's portrayal of their experiences. Lt. Col. Philip Toosey, on whom Alec Guinness's Oscar-winning portrayal of Col. Nicholson in 'River Kwai' was based, was a distinguished officer captured during the fall of Singapore. Contrary to the film, Toosey actively tried to sabotage the railway project by infesting the wooden bridge with termites and consistently advocated for better treatment of his men, often enduring torture at the hands of his captors.

Toosey developed a complicated relationship with a Japanese Sergeant Major, Saito, who later testified in his defense during war crimes trials. When Lean's film was released in the 1950s, it sparked outrage among the POW community, who felt it misrepresented their suffering and bravery. Toosey's gentle nature did not allow him to publicly contest the portrayal, but his men insisted he address it, leading him to publish a letter clarifying the truth.

Julia Summers, Toosey's granddaughter, examines these grievances in her poignant work 'The Colonel of Tamarkan,' detailing her grandfather's struggles with memories of his captivity.

The Bangkok-Rangoon Railway stands as a testament to the human capacity for endurance and sacrifice, revealing a complex tapestry of cruelty, kindness, and resilience. It is a story that evokes profound emotions, and visiting the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Kanchanaburi—where many of these men lie buried—serves as a haunting reminder of their harrowing journey.

(The writer is a practising advocate at the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh and a military history enthusiast.)



ndia has long been a land of valiant kings and queens who defended their realm against invaders for over a millennium. From the British Empire to the Mughals, India faced numerous challenges, yet the resolute responses from various kingdoms significantly curtailed the advance of foreign aggressors. Throughout this illustrious history, countless sons and daughters of Bharat Mata emerged as inspiring figures, some sacrificing their lives in the ultimate act of patriotism. The janjati (tribal) kingdoms and their warriors have consistently been at the forefront of this struggle. The contributions of figures such as Bhagwan Birsa Munda, Raghoji Bhangare, Tantya Bheel and Siddh-Kanho from the janjati community are well-acknowledged. However, the remarkable contributions of janjati women in this resistance often go unrecognized, overshadowed by their male counterparts, largely due to the biases of historical narratives. Alongside Rani Durgavati, women like Rani Fulkavar, the Phulo-Jhano sisters, Jhalkaari Bai, and Rani Gaidenliu have played pivotal roles in India's freedom struggle.

On October 5, 1524, the birth of a princess in the Kalinjar fortress of the Mahoba kingdom brought joy to the realm. Named Durgavati by her father, the Rajput king Kirti Singh, she grew up witnessing his governance. Trained in military tactics and imbued with the instincts of leadership, Durgavati married Dalpat Shah, the eldest son of King Sangram Shah of the Garha-Mandla (Gondwana) kingdom, at the age of 20. In 1545, the couple celebrated the birth of their son, Vir Narayan.

However, this happiness was short-lived. King Dalpat Shah passed away in 1550, leaving young Vir Narayan, only five years old, under the guardianship of Queen Durgavati. Understanding the looming threat of Mughal invasion, she took decisive action to fortify her kingdom. Durgavati not only expanded her army but also forged alliances with neighbouring states to bolster her defenses. Her focus extended beyond military might; she actively promoted the welfare of her people, constructing numerous lakes to combat recurring water shortages for both irrigation and domestic use. She believed that a kingdom's prosperity was intrinsically linked to the happiness of its populace. During times of drought, she cancelled taxes and aided her subjects. Many of the lakes she established still exist today, a testament to her foresight and commitment. Fondly referred to as 'Mother' by her people, Durgavati's legacy of benevolence is chronicled by historian Abul Fazal.

Yet, the spectre of invasion loomed large, as foreign forces sought to dis-



mantle Hindu states and their beliefs. Envious of Gondwana's prosperity, Akbar sent an ultimatum to Rani Durgavati, demanding her surrender along with her chief minister, Aadhar Singh, and her prized white elephant. Unwilling to capitulate, she prepared for war. The Mughal forces, initially thwarted in two assaults, returned for a third, this time armed with artillery.

On June 24, 1564, Rani Durgavati sustained serious injuries from arrows shot by Asaf Khan, a commander in Akbar's army. Witnessing their queen fight valiantly against overwhelming odds, the morale of her soldiers began to wane as they saw her bleed. In a moment of despair, Durgavati commanded her trusted minister to end her life, stunning her warriors. Knowing capture would lead to enslavement, she took dagger and ended her life, sacrificing herself to protect her beloved Gondwana just three months shy of her 40th birthday.

This year marks the 500th anniversary of Rani Durgavati's birth, commemorating the life of this extraordinary daughter of Bharat and ruler of the Garha-Mandala Gondwana kingdom. Her commitment to the welfare of her subjects and the defense of her homeland is an enduring legacy. In a contemporary landscape marked by foreign-funded disruptions, her spirit exhorts us to defend our motherland. Today, this battle consists of countering the divisive narratives propagated by external forces. While our armed forces stand ready to guard our borders, it is incumbent upon us to be vigilant guardians of Bharat Mata within our communities. The unity of Bharat's people will be crucial in confronting these ongoing challenges.

Let us collectively pay tribute to Rani Durgavati and all the courageous janjati freedom fighters who valiantly defended the rich heritage and culture of our motherland.

> (The writer is an official of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram. Views personal.)

10 **SPORTS** 

#### THE PERFECT VOICE **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024** MUMBAI

After much thought

remember, and I am

highs, the lows, and

ing injuries and subsequent

She, however, came back

strongly by winning top po-

sition at the 2018 Artistic

Gymnastics World Cup in

Turkey, becoming the first

Indian gymnast to secure a

gold medal at a global event.

a bronze medal at the Artis-

tic Gymnastics World Cup

several career setbacks,

Dipa clinched a gold medal

at the Asian Gymnastics

Championships in Tash-

kent. "But my last victory

at the Asian Gymnastics

Championship in Tashkent

was a turning point. After

that win, I truly believed I

could push my body to

reach new heights again,"

Monil Soni claimed 3 for 32

runs. Later, the New Hindu batters faced little problems

before Ubale was run out

and they declared their

close to recording an out-

right win against Khar

Gymkhana. Muslims United

dismissed Khar Gymkhana

for 116 in 32.5 overs with

Mohd Mansoori (3/16) and

Shashikant Kadam (3/22)

picking wickets.

Muslims United CC came

innings

she said.

In 2021, despite facing

in Cottbus, Germany.

Later that year, she won

grateful for every

moment -- the

everything in

between.

surgery.

# It's time to rest

#### **PRODUNOVA QUEEN' DIPA KARMAKAR ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT**

New Delhi: Dipa Karmakar. who blazed a trail by becoming the first Indian woman gymnast to compete at the Olympics and finish a historic fourth, announced her retirement on Monday, ending a career in which she inspired awe for routinely performing the highly-difficult Produnova vault.

The diminutive 31-yearold from Tripura grabbed headlines with her fourthplace finish in the vault final of the 2016 Rio Games, losing an Olympic medal by just 0.15 points.

Dipa said she hopes to give back to the sport by becoming a coach at some point in her life or she might simply remain a "supporter of the next generation of gymnasts following their dreams".

Hailing from Agartala, Dipa is one of only five women in gymnastics history to have successfully executed the Produnova, which involves two somersaults before landing and is called the 'vault of death' owing to the high risk of injury it poses.

"When I look back, I feel an overwhelming sense of pride for everything I've achieved. Representing India on the world stage, winning medals, and most memorably, performing the Produnova vault at the Rio Olympics, will forever be cherished as the pinnacle of my career," she said.

"These moments were not just victories for me; they were victories for every young girl in India who dared to dream, who believed that with hard work



and determination, anything is possible."

Dipa was initiated to the sport when she was only six and was coached by Soma Nandi and Bishweshwar Nandi, who remained her mentor throughout her career, guiding her to several international medals and fame.

As a child, Dipa had flat feet, a physical condition which would have ended her dream of becoming a gymnast. But through extensive training, she was able to develop an arch in her foot.

"I remember the 5-yearold Dipa who was told would not be able to become a gymnast because of having flat feet," she wrote.

Add to this, she had to train at inadequatelynificant challenges, includ-

and reflection, I have decided to retire from competitive gymnastics. This is not an easy decision, but it feels like the right time. **Gymnastics has** been at the centre of my life for as long as I can

score of 552.

In the junior women's 50m pistol, Parisha Gupta won an individual silver with a score of 540. She could not get past Hungary's Miriam Jako's effort of 546, which was a junior

Sejal Kamble (529), Ketan (525) and Kanishka Dagar (513) also combined to win India a team silver in the event, finishing behind Azerbaijan. Divanshi, the fifth Indian in fray, shot 523 to finish eighth. Shardul Vihan and Sabeera Harris combined to give India a bronze in the junior mixed team trap competition, played over 75 targets each. Shardul (71) and Sabeera's (67) shot a total of 138. which was not enough to get past gold winners Czech Republic (141+8) and silver

-PTI i medallist Italy (141+7).

## India win Shooting gold New Delhi: The troika of

Deepak Dalal (545), Kamaljeet (543) and Raj Chandra (528) won the men's 50m pistol team gold medal on the concluding day of the Junior World Shooting Championship at the Peruvian capital of Lima.

Indian shooting team won the yellow metal with a combined tally of 1616 points beating Azerbaijan by a point. Armenia came third. In all, India's junior shooters finished the championship on top with a rich haul of 24 medals which included 13 gold, three silver and eight bronze. Italy finished second

with five gold and four silver and bronze medals each while Norway was third with four gold and a total of 10 medals. On Sunday, Mukesh Nelavalli also won an individual bronze in the event, his sixth medal of the competition, shooting a total of 548 over 60-shots. Azerbaijan's Imran Garayev won the gold with a

world record.

# **RISING STARS** A beacon of hope for rural athletes

HOW AKASH SHINDE TRANSFORMED FROM A SHY **VILLAGE BOY TO A PROMINENT KABADDI PLAYER** 

#### By correspondent

Mumbai: In the heart of Nashik's Adgaon village, a young boy Akash Shinde dared to dream big. Little did he know that his journey from playing in the muddy grounds of his town to becoming a PKL winner would inspire a generation of aspiring athletes.

"Initially, when I used to play, I would come home with bruises because Kabaddi was played in the mud," Akash recalls as he enters his fourth season with the Puneri Paltan. And despite his family's initial concerns, his passion for kabaddi burned bright, fuelled by the unwavering support of his early mentors Sagar Malwade and Vinod Labde.

His path to success was far from smooth. He faced numerous setbacks, failing to make the cut in his first attempts at various levels. "I fell short in my first attempts at all levels. I went for my senior camp for Maharashtra and fell short there too!"

But instead of letting these failures discourage him, Akash used them as stepping stones. "These setbacks kept me determined, and I knew I needed to try harder and with renewed energy to show the world what I could do and achieve."

His breakthrough came in 2019 at a seniors' trial in Nashik. This performance opened doors, leading him to play in the Junior Nationals and eventually catching the eye of Yuva Paltan, which is the Puneri Paltan's academy.

The turning point in Akash's career came when he represented his college in Beed, earning his first chance to play for Maharashtra. Under the guidance of Anil Jagdale and Kailas Jagdale, his skills flourished. His journey accelerated as he moved from Mahindra & Mahindra to Yuva Paltan, where mentors like Sangram and Ashok helped refine his game.

Akash's PKL debut with Puneri Paltan in Season 8 was a moment of immense pride, not just for him but for his entire village. "No player from the Nashik re-



gion had made it to PKL or even the Ma harashtra team, so it was a shock, a pleasant one, for everyone. The entire Nashik district was very happy. It felt really good," he reminisces.

But it was in Season 9 that he truly announced his arrival, becoming a formidable force on the mat. In the 22 matches that Akash played on the way to his first PKL final, he scored 139 raid points, averaging 6.32 raid point per match.

His performances caught the eye of the national selectors, earning him a spot on the Indian team for the Asian Games. "I received my Team India kit on the 27th of October. I still remember it," he says.

The crowning glory came in PKL Season 10 when Akash along with his Puneri Paltan teammates, lifted the coveted trophy. Albeit playing a diminished role, he managed an impressive 56 raid points in the 13 matches he played. "There was only one target then... we had made up our minds that we had to win the title this season, whatever it took," he shared, reflecting on the team's collective determination. Now, Akash stands as a beacon of hope for young athletes from rural India. His message to them is clear: "Keep believing in yourselves and your dedication and efforts." He emphasizes the importance of loyalty, urging young players to stay true to the clubs that nurture them.

As he prepares for PKL Season 11, his journey from the muddy grounds of Adgaon to the bright lights of Pro Kabaddi serves as a testament to the power of dreams, determination, and unwavering support.

## **Goa thrash** Himachal 7-0



**Alister strikes** four in St. Blaise's big win By correspondent

equipped gyms while grow-

ing up and her journey to

the Rio Games became an

inspiring tale for

glory began in 2008 when

she won the Junior Nation-

Dipa's quest for sporting

She first shot to limelight

when she won a vault

bronze at the 2014 Com-

monwealth Games in Glas-

gow, becoming the first In-

dian woman gymnast to

the Asian Championships

in 2015 and finished fifth at

the 2015 World Champion-

ships, both being firsts for

any Indian female

Olympics, Dipa faced sig-

Following the 2016 Rio

gymnast.

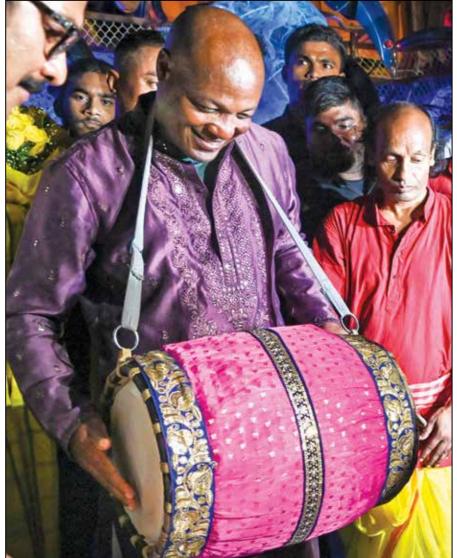
She also won a bronze at

win a medal in the event.

gymnasts.

als in Jalpaiguri.

Mumbai: Striker Alister



## Surya gives freedom: Mayank, Nitish

Gwalior: Mayank Yaday and Nitish Kumar Reddy were expectedly nervous



Palakkad (Kerala): Goa thrashed Himachal Pradesh 7-0 in a Group A match to secure their second consecutive win in the 29th Senior Women's National Football Championship here on Monday.

Goa pumped in five goals before the breather. Striker Pearl Fernandes was the wrecker-in-chief with three goals to her credit. Aniela Barretto, Pushpa Parab, Sushmit Jadhav and Swellen Mercia Fernandes were the other scorers.

Goa, who had earlier beaten former champions Tamil Nadu, now have six points from two matches. Himachal suffered their second straight defeat in the competition.

In the day's other match in Group A, Tamil Nadu beat Kerala 3-1 after leading 2-0 at half time. Both teams now have three points from two matches

Kaviya Pakkirisamy opened the scoring for Tamil Nadu in the 40th minute, followed by a goal scored by K Santhiya. In the second session. Manasa K pulled one back for Kerala, but an own goal by Anjitha M widened the lead for

Tamil Nadu.

D'Souza scored four goals in leading St. Blaise 'B', Amboli, to a fluent 5-0 win against Our Lady of Good Counsel, Sion in a men's open first round match of the 44th Willingdon Catholic Gymkhana Annual Rink Football Tournament 2024, played under floodlights at the WCG courts. Shreyas Zele struck the fifth goal.

**Results – Men's Open:** Don Bosco, Virar 4 (Dhiraj Ladd 2, Jake D'Mello, Ani-

ket Kanojia) beat Sacred Heart, Santacruz 0; St. Blaise, Amboli 5 (Alister D'Souza 4, Shreyas Zele)

beat Our Lady of Good Counsel 'A', Sion 0; Infant Jesus. Vasai 2 (Sriraj Nair, Ronith Jain) beat St. Anthony's 'C', Vakola 0; St. Joseph's 'D', Juhu 3 (Ralston Creado 2, Sujal Dabhole) beat Our Lady of Rosary, Mazagaon 2 (Kurt Baptista 2); St. Francis Xavier, Kanjurmarg 4 (Shoaib Baig 2, Pruthvi More, Atharva Nikam) beat Our Lady of Egypt 'A', Kalina 2 (Keegan Carvalho, Akshay -PTI Jadhav).

Former West Indies cricketer Brian Lara plays an instrument during his visit to a community puja pandal amid the 'Durga Puja' festivities at Suruchi Sangha in Kolkata on Sunday. Pic: PTI

ahead of their India debut in the first T20 International against Bangladesh here but the newcomers said skipper Suryakumar Yadav helped them stay calm with his comforting words.

Mayank, the 21-year-old pace sensation, made his debut here on Sunday after recovering from a recurring abdominal strain after playing only four matches in this year's IPL. He impressed in the first match returning with figures of 1/21 from his four overs. Nitish, also 21, also made instant impact by remaining unbeaten on 16 off 15 balls, to help India register a commanding seven-wicket win in the series-opener.

"He (Suryakumar) gives you freedom. When I was taking the run up, he was telling me 'do what you feel, what you feel best.' So that's very important for any fast bowler, especially when you making your debut," Mayank said. Nitish added: "He is very calm and cool. He is doing fabulous captaincy, not giving any pressure to us. We were debutants, obviously we will have nervousness and pressure. He gave that license to us. Any youngster would like to get it from the captain."

Taking about his debut after the long injury layoff, Mayank became emotional. "It's a great moment because I am coming from an injury. I was a bit nervous, like I was telling myself don't stress yourself. When I got to know I am going to play my first match, making my debut, complete flashback of last four months came in front of my eyes."

The speedster started his international career with a maiden over on Sunday and credited bowling coach Morne Morkel for shaping him. "I am with him (Morkel) for the last three years. It's very easy for me to work with him. He knows which things are better for me."



Harsh Ubale and Pranay Kapadia

# Ubale, Kapadia help New Hindu CC win

#### By correspondent

Mumbai: New Hindu CC opening batsmen Harsh Ubale cracked 92 runs (101 balls, 11x4,1x6), and Pranay Kapadia an unbeaten 54 runs (93 balls, 5x4) and the duo added 155 runs for the first wicket, helping the team take a 28-run first innings that ensured their win against Sind Sports Club in a 'B' Division match of the MCA Dr. H. D. Kanga Cricket League, played at the Parsee Gymkhana ground.

Sent in to bat, Sind SC Muslims United declared were dismissed for 127 in their innings at 166 for 8 in

#### 42.5 overs. Sai Chavan top-**KANGA LEAGUE 'B' DIVISION** scored with 35 runs while

22 overs. Mahamad Yaseen Saudagar 56 runs and Nadeem Shaikh 34 runs lifted the innings, while Abhishek Yadav (3/31) and Balvantisnh Sodha (3/38) were Khar

Gymkhana's stars. Having taken a 60 runs first innings lead, Muslims United were all fired up and rocked the Khar Gymkhana batter in the second innings and claimed six wickets from 36 runs by the 13th over. However, Khar Gymkhana captain Riday Khandke saved the day for his team with a

doughty 61 runs unbeaten knock. Sashikant Kadam (5/38) did the damage.

Islam Gymkhana and Regal CC also won on the first innings lead.

Brief scores – B Division: United Cricketers 131 all out, 37.5 overs (Suchit Devli 39, Jagdish Jadhav 35; Krushang Rathod 4/31) Vs Regal CC 134 for 9, 38,3 overs (Ashitosh Mali 24; Kaustubh Tathare 3/26, Ankit Vishwakarma 3/32). Regal CC won on 1st innings lead.

Goregaon Sports Club 73

all out, 25.3 overs (Yash Gadia 27; Hitesh Kadam 5/26) & 108 for 1, 17 overs (Jayesh Chandankar 54\*) VS Islam Gymkhana 85 for 6 decl. 31 overs (Rahul Kesari 30\*; Devendra Parida 3/26, Sagar Jadhay 3/28).

Young Comrade CC 226 for 5 decl, 40 overs (Yogesh Dongre 68, Mayuresh Tandel 60, Deepak Gaikwad 33, Manan Khakhar 30; Kunal Thorat 3/92) Vs Shivaji Park Youngsters SC 124 all out, 43.1 overs (Shubham Shinde 45. Sudhan Sundarraj 26; Taranjit Singh Dhillon 6/44, Manan Khakhar 4/16).

1st innings lead. Sind Sports Club 127 all out, 43.5 overs (Sai Chavan

Young Comrade CC won the

35; Monil Soni 3/32) vs New Hindu CC 155 for 1, 32.2 oves (Harsh Ubale 92, Pranay Kapadia 54\*). New Hindu CC won on 1st innings lead.

Khar Gymkhana 116 all out, 32.5 overs (Riday Khandke 31; Mohd Mansoori 3/16, Shashikant Kadam 3/22) & 68 for 8 23 overs (Riday Khandke 61: Sashikant Kadam 5/38) Vs Muslim United SC 166 for 8 decl, 22 overs (Mahamad Yaseen Saudagar 56, Nadeem Shaikh 34; Abhishek Yadav 3/31, Balvantisnh Sodha 3/38). Muslim United won on the 1st innings lead.