## THE PERFECT VOICE



**Contenders race for** Congress ticket, surge in applications



When a river is rejuvenated...

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... pg 10

## Meltdown in Ladakh

### The Union territory gets five new districts

By Press Trust of India

Leh/New Delhi: In a concrete step towards melting down the agitation for autonomy to Ladakh the Union government on Monday announced to create five new districts raising their number to seven in the union territory. The locals have welcomed the decision as fulfilment of their longpending demand

The new districts are: Zanskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra, and Changthang.

However, the Leh Apex Body, which along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) is fighting for their four major demands



including granting of statehood and extension of sixth schedule of the Constitution, said they will continue their peaceful struggle.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced the decision through a post on X. At present, Leh and Kargil are the only two districts in Ladakh, the larg-

est union territory in terms of area but the second least populous. It has an expanse of 86,904 square

kilometers bordering Chi-

na and Pakistan, with a

population of 2.74 lakh ac-

cording to the 2011 census. Ladakh was carved out of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and declared a UT after the

state was divided into two UTs on August 5, 2019.

Former BJP MP Jamy ang Tsering Namgyal termed the centre's announcement a 'Janmashtami' gift for the people of Ladakh. "In 2018, the BJP granted Ladakh a separate division and also fulfilled the demand for UT next year besides enhancing the budget to Rs 6,000 crore. We welcome the decision which is in accordance with the aspirations of the people," he said.

Sonam Wangchuk, a climate activist and a member of the Leh Apex Body, also welcomed the decision with a caution.

"We have to see whether these are just administrative districts or democratic units wherein they have autonomous district councils like Leh and Kargil".

> - Sonam Wanhchuk. climate activist

### Wall collapses in Kalbadevi, two dead



By Correspondent

Mumbai: Two persons died and a voungster was injured when a compound wall collapsed at Kalbadevi in south Mumbai on Monday evening, civic officials

The 30 feet long compound wall having 5 to 7 feet height collapsed in the passage between two structures at Gandhi building at around 5.20 pm, they said.

Three persons were injured in the incident and rushed to nearby GT Hospital, where doctors declared two of them, both aged 30, as "brought dead", said the officials.

The third victim, aged 19, was undergoing treatment at the hospital and his condition was listed as stable, they said.

A search and rescue operation was on at the site with the help of Mumbai Fire Brigade personnel to find out if anyone was trapped under the debris, the officials added.

**ULI on the lines of UPI** 

## Interface for loans soon

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Borrowing loans for Indians is set to undergo a dramatic change with the nation-wide launch of Unified Lending Interface (ULI) shortly on the lines of Unified Payment Interface (UPI), Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Monday.

"This (proposed ULI) platform facilitates seamless and consent based flow of digital information, including even land records of various states, from multiple data service providers to lenders. This cuts down the time taken for credit appraisal, especially for smaller and rural borrowers," said Governor

He was delivering the inaugural address at a global conference on Digital Public Infrastructure and Emerging Technologies held in Bengaluru.

In August last year, RBI had launched the pilot of a technology platform to enable frictionless credit to usher in an efficient lending process by cutting costs and quick disbursement.

"From now on, we propose to call it (pilot platform) the Unified Lending Interface (ULI)," Governor Das said. India's Digital Public In-



**RBI** governor Shaktikanta Das

frastructure (DPI) has been carefully crafted on digital identity, bank accounts and processing infrastructure and the trinity of Jan Dhan Accounts, Aadhar and Mobile Phones, popularly known as the JAM trinity, has provided the base DPI infrastructure which is being leveraged for multiple value added services, the Governor

Overall, the ULI initiative will enable borrowers to get the benefit of seamless delivery of credit, quicker turnaround time without requiring extensive documentation. In sum, by digitising access to customer's financial and non-financial data that otherwise resided in disparate silos, ULI is expected to cater to large unmet demand for credit across various sectors, particularly for agricultural and MSME borrowers, Gov-

ernor Das said.

#### NC, Cong finalise seat-sharing

NC – 51, Congress – 32, Friendly fight - 5

Srinagar: Following hectic negotiations, the National Conference (NC) and the Congress Monday agreed on a seat-sharing formula for the assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir, with the parties set to contest 51 and 32 seats respectively.

The alliance partners also allotted one seat each

to the CPI(M) and the Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party (JKNPP), they announced at a joint press conference at NC president Farooq Abdullah's residence here after day-long negotiations.

According to their seatsharing formula, the NC will contest 51 seats in Jammu and Kashmir and the Congress 32, the leaders of the two parties said.

They also announced

that a "friendly contest" would be held on five seats of the Union territory.

However, J and K Congress president Tariq Hamid Qarra said the contest would take place in a cordial and disciplined

The leaders said the list of seats each party will be contesting, as well as the names of the candidates, will be issued in due



AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal with National Conference Chief Farooq Abdullah during a joint press conference in Srinagar on Monday.

#### Mahadev betting app scam

## CBI probe recommended

Raipur: The Chhattisgarh government has decided to transfer cases related to the alleged Mahadev betting app scam to the Central Bureau of investigation, Depu ty Chief Minister Vijay Sharma said on Monday.

The government issued a notification approving the CBI probe last week, he said. Notably, the Enforcement

Directorate has been probing money laundering cases linked to the Mahadev app scam, which came to light when the Baghel-led Congress government was in power, for more than a year.

"70 cases related to the alleged Mahadev app scam were lodged at different police stations in Chhhattisgarh and one case is with the Economic Offences Wing (EOW). We have de-



Baghel is one of the accused

cided to hand over all these cases to the CBI and a notification has been issued." Sharma told reporters.

This issue (Mahadev betting app scam) is a multistate matter and not restricted to Chhattisgarh, he said, adding that some kingpins are based in foreign countries. The CBI will seriously investigate this

"No leniency will be shown and strict action will be taken. 1 beneve (accused persons) based abroad will be brought back," he said. The notification issued by

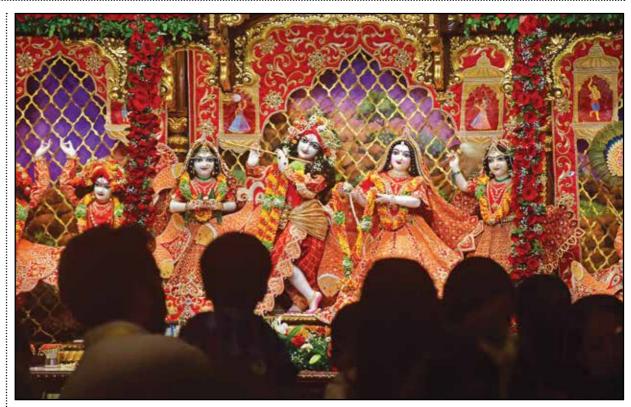
the Chhattisgarh's Home Department dated August 22 mentioned the government's consent to the extension of powers and jurisdiction for the entire state to Delhi Special Police Establishment members to investigate and inquire into offences registered against perpetrators who operate and indulge with Mahadev online gambling platforms and other associated

platforms. After the BJP assumed power in Chhhattisgarh by defeating Congress in elections, the EOW (Economic Offences Wing) registered an FIR under Indian Penal Code sections 120b (criminai conspiracy), 420 (cneat ing) and the Prevention of Corruption Act in March, based on a report submitted by the ED.

The ED arrested 11 persons so far in the "scam" with the projected proceeds of crime estimated at Rs

Prominent accused named in the EOW's FIR include former Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Bhupesh Baghel, promoters of the app-Ravi Uppal, Saurabh Chandrakar, Shubham Soni, and Anil Kumar Agrawal, and 14 others.

Baghel had called the FIR "politically motivated."



On the occasion of Janmashtami, devotees participated in the pre-Janmashtami celebrations by offering prayer to Lord Krishna and Radha at Radha Gopinath Temple in ISKCON Girgaon Chowpatty, in Mumbai on Monday.

Pic: Bhushan Kovande

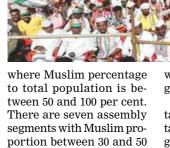
## Ex Congress MP earmarks 24 seats for Muslims

By Abhijit Mulye

Mumbai: Even though there is a clear split on announcement of Chief Ministerial candidate and the seat sharing agreement between the MVA constituents is yet to be finalised, the Congress is said to have demanded 24 seats for Muslim candidates for the forthcoming assembly elections in Maharashtra.

Former Congress MP Hussain Dalwai has prepared a report on "Muslim Representation In Politics" and has demanded that if the Muslims are to get a proportionate representation in the legislature, at least 24 seats will have to be given to Muslim candidates

The report states that under Mumbai Regional Congress Committee (MRCC) there are at least two and under Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) there are at least three constituencies



cent Muslim proportion

and at least thre winnable

assembly segments where

proportion of Muslims is

between 10 to 20 per cent.

The report thus calculates

the 24 assembly segments

where the Muslims need to get a chance to contest. percent, nine assembly segments between 20 to 30 per-

Though attempts to contact Dalwai failed, the details of his report show the gleam picture of Muslim representation in Indian politics while making a case for greater representation for Muslims in the Maharashtra elections.

"The current Lok Sabha

has the highest deprivation

of Muslim representation

ever in the history of the

lims constitute 14.62 per cent of the population. Considering proportional representation, we should have had 79 Muslim MPs. But we have one of the lowest ever number of Muslim MPs i.e. 24 out of 543 members which is merely 4.42 per cent. This means Muslim suffer 69.77 per cent deprivation in the new Lok Sabha, the highest ever,"

the report states.

independent India. Mus-

#### Assembly segments between 30 and 50 per cent Muslims proportion

Amarawati (46.5), Akola West (41.6), Aurangabad Central (38.5), Aurangabad East (37.5), Mumbra Kalwa (43.7), Byculla (41.5), Varsova (33.5) and Bandra East (33.1). Apart from these 13 assembly constituencies, the SC reserved constituency of Kurla (SC) has 30.7 per cent Muslim population and 13.77 per cent SC population, the report highlights.

#### **Assembly segments** with less than 30 per cent Muslims proportion

Parbhani (25.2), Solapur City (24.8), Belapur (23.8), Nanded South (23.5), Nanded North (23.5), Nagpur Central (22.1), Dhule City (21.7), Raver (20.6), Latur City (20.4), Beed (20), Anushakti Nagar (28.8), Malad West (27.7), Chandivali (27.6), Bandra West (25.3) and Kalina (24.4). Washim (SC) constituency has 20.5 per cent Muslims and 21. 28 per cent SC population.

#### Central (78.4). Assembly segments with less than 20 per cent Muslims proportion

**Assembly segments** 

with more than 50

per cent Muslims

Mankhurd Shivaji Nagar

(53), Bhiwandi West (49.5),

Bhiwandi East (51), Malegaon

proportion

Mumbadevi (50.9),

Nashik central (19.4), Mira Bhyander (17.1), Jogeshwari East (14.4), Andheri East (13.6), Wadala (12.4), Achalpur (18.8), Solapur South (15.8), Jalgaon City (15.1), Ahmednagar City (14.9), Kasba Peth (14.8), Srivardhan (13.3). Sangli (12.7), Akkalkot (12.2), Ahmedpur (12.2), Osmanabad (12), Dapoli (11.7), Nagpur West (11.4), Digras (10.8), Hingoli (10.1). In Aurangabad West (SC), Miraj (SC) and Udgir (SC) constituencies the Muslim proportion is 17.2 per cent, 13.9 per cent and 13.4 per cent while the SC population is 23.57 per cent, 18.2 per cent and 24.2 per cent respectively.

(Source: Hussain Dalwai report)

## Baloch gunmen massacre 40

By Sajjad Hussain

Karachi: Heavily-armed Baloch gunmen killed at least 40 people in two separate attacks in Pakistan's Balochistan province on Monday, as insurgent attacks spiked in the restive region bordering Afghanistan.

In the first incident, at least 23 people from Pakistan's Punjab province were killed in a targeted attack in Balochistan's Musakhel district after gunmen offloaded them from buses and checked their identities.

According to Musakhail Assistant Commissioner Najeeb Kakar, around 10 armed men blocked the inter-provincial highway in the Rarasham area of the district and offloaded passengers from several

buses. "The dead are reportedly from Punjab," he said.

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# Contenders race for Congress ticket, surge in applications

Party gets over 1450 applications for 288 seats despite seat sharing among allies still to be announced



By Anand Mishra

Mumbai: Following a strong performance in the recent Lok Sabha elections, the Congress party in Maharashtra is witnessing an unprecedented surge in enthusiasm among its members. The party, which called for applications from potential candidates for the upcoming state assembly elections, has received an overwhelming response, with over 1,450 applications submitted for 288 seats. This includes 225 applications from Mumbai alone, reflecting the renewed vigor among Congress workers and leaders. Senior Congress leaders are interpreting this surge as a

sign of growing popularity

and confidence in the party's

This is the sign of increasing enthusiasm among the party workers and voters and I am very much confident that this is the crystalclear signal of Congress-led govt going to form the government in a few months. Nobody can stop us," former Chief Minister and senior congress leader Prithviraj Chavan told "The Perfect Voice". He said, "See the level of confidence and faith of the probable contenders that they are applying for even those seats, which may go for our alliance partners

#### Renewed confidence

The influx of applications is seen as a direct result of the

party's recent successes in the Lok Sabha elections, where Congress significantly improved its standing by securing 13 seats, up from just one in 2019. In response

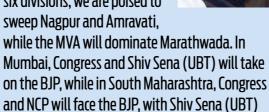
to this momentum, the party opened the application process on July 20, 2024, and in just one month, it received over 1,450 applications. Party insiders report that the response has been particularly strong among educated youth and women, reflecting the party's appeal across diverse sections of society.

#### **Dharavi in High Demand** While the Maharashtra Vi-

kas Aghadi (MVA) coalition has yet to finalize a seatsharing formula, Congress's move to invite applications

#### **Will Repeat Our Success**

We are confident of replicating our Lok Sabha success in the assembly elections, and a Congress-led MVA government will come to power. Out of the six divisions, we are poised to sweep Nagpur and Amravati,



and NCP jointly challenging our rivals." - Prithviraj Chavan, Former CM and Senior Congress Leader

is being seen as a tactical effort to mobilize party leaders. The Dharavi assembly seat has emerged as one of the most coveted, with at least 20 contenders vying for the ticket. Notable among the aspirants is Jyoti Giri, sister of Varsha Gaikwad, the current MP. However, party insiders warn of potential unrest if Giri is granted the ticket.

Interestingly, some applicants have not only put forth their own candidacies but have also expressed concerns about potential rivals within the party, urging the leadership not to grant tickets to specific individuals in their constituencies. Vice President of Mumbai Congress, Advocate Sandesh Kondvilkar, is also in the race for the Dharavi seat, alongside other top state leaders such as Naseem Khan, Suresh Shetty, Aslam Sheikh, and Bhai Jagtap. The process of shortlisting candidates is currently underway, with interviews set to commence soon under the supervision of Maharashtra Congress in-charge Ramesh Chennithala, state Congress President Nana Patole, and other senior leaders

To ensure financial accessibility, the party has set the application fee at ₹20,000 for general category candidates and a reduced fee of ₹10,000 for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes (SC-ST), and all women applicants.

## NCP (SP) eyes three seats

Gondia: NCP (SP) leader Anil Deshmukh on Monday said the Sharad Pawarled party will stake claim to Tirora, Arjuni Morgaon assembly seats in Gondia and Tumsar in Bhandara.

The Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi, of which NCP (SP) is a part along with the Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT), will fight the upcoming assembly elections together and unseat the Eknath Shinde government, he asserted.

"We will claim these three seats as we have sitting MLAs there," said the former state home minister, who was here to take part in a meeting of NCP (SP) workers

He also claimed Bhagyashree Atram, daughter of state minister Dharamrao Atram, had met Sharad Pawar and Javant Patil and was desirous of contesting against her father from Aheri.

Deshmukh refused to give a direct answer when asked if he would contest against Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis from Nagpur South West, only saying he would fight from whichever seat his party tells him to.

Deshmukh slammed the Shinde government for rise in crimes against women and alleged law and order had collapsed in the state.

He said the Ladki Bahin Yojana was an election gimmick, but added the scheme would not be closed if the MVA comes to power.

The financial aid for women under the scheme will be raised from Rs 1,500 to Rs 3000 if the MVA comes to power, he added.

#### Women can lodge harassment complaints online



By Correspondent

Pune: The Maharashtra cabinet discussed PM Modi's instruction about online registration of women harassment cases and decided to adopt a different approach to prevent such incidents, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said on Monday.

During a programme organised for "Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana" in Jalgaon on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi termed crimes against women an unpardonable sin and said the safety of women should be a priority.

His strong remarks came against the backdrop of protests against the brutal rape and murder of a 31-year-old trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Hospital and the sexual abuse of two four-year-old school girls in Badlapur near

Modi pointed out that an entire chapter is dedicated to crimes against women and children in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and if a woman cannot reach the police station, she can file an e-FIR, and no one can make any changes at the police station level.

Talking to reporters here, Pawar said, "PM Modi has instructed about filing

complaints regarding such incidents online, and we have decided to implement it immediately. Several such cases are coming to the fore. We have decided to take a different approach to prevent such crimes, and the issue was discussed in the cabinet meeting vesterday."

The deputy chief minister called for the "strictest of strict" action against perpetrators of such crimes.

He said, "Perpetrators should get capital punishment in these cases and the trial should be held in the fast-track court.'

Pawar further rubbished Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan's allegations that people close to the state government were shielded in the Pune Porsche car crash case, in which a juvenile ran over and killed two IT professionals.

Terming them an "utter lie", he said if someone has any proof, they can submit it as no one will be shielded.

Asked about talks between the Mahayuti constituents (BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP) about the post of chief minister, he said the dispensation will decided once it returns to power after the upcoming state assembly elections.

## Shivaji Maharaj statue collapses in Sindhudurg

PM Modi had unveiled the statue on December 4 last year

By Correspondent

Mumbai: A statue of Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaii Maharai, unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a fort in Sindhudurg district, collapsed on Monday, an official said.

Following the incident, the opposition parties have slammed the state government, alleging it had paid little attention to the quality of work.

A 35-foot statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj collapsed around 1 pm at Rajkot Fort in Malvan, the official said.

Experts will ascertain the

exact cause of the collapse, but the district has witnessed heavy rains and gusty winds in the last two to three days, he said. Senior officials of the po-

lice and district administration reached the site to take stock of the situation, and the damage is being examined, he said. PM Modi unveiled the

statue on December 4 last vear on the occasion of Navy Day. He also partici-



the fort.

NCP (SP) state president and former minister Jayant Patil said, "The state government is responsible for the collapse, as it did not take proper care. The government paid little attention to the quality of work. It only focused on conducting an event where Prime Minister Narendra Modi was invited to unveil the statue. This Maharashtra government

only issues new tenders, ac cepts commissions and gives contracts accordingly.'

Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Vaibhav Naik also criticised the state government for the alleged poor quality of the work.

"The state government may try to evade responsibility. People responsible for the construction and erection of the statue must be probed thoroughly," he said.

Maharashtra Minister Deepak Kesarkar said, "I don't have all the details about the incident. However, it's important to note that PWD Minister Ravindra Chavan, also the guardian minister of Sindhudurg district, has said a thorough investigation will be con-

ducted in the matter.' "We are committed to erecting a new statue at the same location. This statue, unveiled by PM Modi, pays tribute to Shivaji Maharaj's visionary efforts in building a sea fort. We will take all necessary steps to address this matter promptly and effectively," he said.

- With PTI

#### Congress **MP Vasant** Chavan dies

Nanded: Congress MP Vasant Chavan passed away on Monday at a private hospital in Hyderabad after proiongea iliness, party sources said.

Chavan (69) breathed his last at the hospital around 4 am, the sources said. He was undergoing treatment for renal issues there since last week.

The Congress veteran had won the Nanded Lok Sabha seat this year despite ill health and big desertions, including that of former CM Ashok Chavan, who joined

BJP ahead of the polls. Soon after the Lok Sabha election results were out, Vasant Chavan had thanked Ashok Chavan for defecting

In the Lok Sabha election, Vasant Chavan defeated sitting BJP MP Pratap Patil Chikhalikar by 59,442 votes, overcoming issues like a weakened party after Ashok Chavan defected to BJP just before the elections and his own personal health problems.

Born in Naigaon in Nanded district, Vasant Chavan was a gram panchayat member for a long time and later became a zilla parishad member in 1990 and 2002.

By Correspondent

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar: A violent scuffle broke out between Shiv Sena (UBT) and BJP workers in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar on Mon day during Aaditya Thackeray's visit to the Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar. The protest by BJP workers turned violent which created tension in

Thackeray was on the tour of Chatrapati Sambhajinagar. The confrontation took place between the two parties when BJP members started shouting slogans against Thackeray. Suddenly a fight broke out between the supporters of BJP and Shiv Sena (UBT) in front of the Rama Hotel where Thacker-

ay was staying. As the both sides became aggressive, the police swung into action and intervened. After sometime they used the force and made mild lathi charge to bring the situation under control. The mob was dispersed after some time and normalcy was restored. The Sena (UBT) leader was on a 2-day tour in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar district. He has already started campaigning in some parts of

The political atmosphere in the state has started heat-

## Aaditya faces heat of BJP workers

the vicinity of the city.



ing up after the clash between BJP and Shiv Sena (UBT) workers. The Thackeray supporters protested against Prime Minister Modi on Sunday. The BJP workers replied in the same form and took to the street. They vociferously oppose the tour of Thackeray. Thackeray told reporters,

'The protest we did on Sunday was to protest and bring the things to the notice of the Prime Minister. They protested against me, but today I don't have any position. So there was no reason to protest against me. Today we have nothing, we are in opposition".

"We will show what the fear of the law is if the government is given in our hands. We have shown the power law. Basically, this is an election time, not a battle or war. Therefore, the opposite parties should keep this in mind, when we protested against the Prime Minister, there was no violation of law and order anywhere. Everyone has the right to protest, but political parties should be aware of how that protest

Meanwhile, the police have registered cases against BJP and Sena (UBT) workers. So far no arrests are being made.

#### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**



Pa Ranjith, Film Director

"The caste problem is everywhere in India. I was affected by the system. I understood the problem in my childhood and what **Babasaheb Ambedkar** wanted to tell about modern India. I followed him and I got to learn a lot from him. I wanted to discuss this through my art."

### NCP (SP) workers stage protest

By Correspondent

Pune: In the wake of the attack on a policeman with a sickle in Pune, the NCP (SP) staged a protest on Monday demanding the resignation of state Home Minister Devendra Fadnavis, claiming that the law and order situation in the city has deteriorated.

Assistant police inspector Ratnakar Gaikwad sustained a severe head injury after being attacked with a 'koyta' (sickle) in the Hadap-

sar area on Sunday after he tried to break up an argument between a man and some other persons.

Workers and local leaders of The NCP (SP) Pune city unit staged a protest outside the district  $\bar{\text{collectorate}}$ .

"We demand that Fadnavis resign as home minister. Whenever he is the Home Minister or Chief Minister, crimes increase. In cities like Pune," city unit chief Prashant Jagtap

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

NOTICE is hereby given that my client M/s Galaxy Realtors, a Proprietorship being aggrieved by an Order dated 2/8/2023 passed by Talathi Saza Vile Parle have filed an Appeal bearing SANKIRN/SR-25/2024 before Hon'ble Sub Divisional Officer. Mumbai Suburban District, Bandra, 9 floor, New Administrative Building, Near Chetana College, Bandra East, Mumbai 400051 wherein following party are Respondents in the above-said Appeal:-

· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			
Respondent No.2	Mrs Misquitta, Flossie Luis House No.90, Old Police Station Road, Vile Parle West, Mumbai 400056		Mrs. Willma Angelo Quinny House No.90, Old Police Station Road, Vile Parle West, Mumbai 400056,
Respondent No.4	House No.90, Old Police station Road, Vile Parle West, Mumbai 400056		Mr. Shelon Angelo Quinny House No.90, Old Police station Road, Vile Parle West, Mumbai 400056.
Respondent No.6	Ms. Andrea Angelo Quinni House No.90. Old Police station Road, Vile Parle West, Mumbai 400056	Respondent No.7	Mr. Angelo Quinny House No.90, Old Police station Road, Vile Parle West, Mumbai 400056.
Respondent No.8	Mr. Oswald Peter Misquitta House No.90. Old Police station Road, Vile Parle station Road, Vile Pane West, Mumbai 400056		Mrs. Elle Oswald Misquitta House No. 90. Old Police Road. Vile Parle station Road, West, Mumbai 400056
Respondent No.10	Mr. Jerome Oswald Misquitta House No.90, Old Police station Road, Vile Parle		Ms. Tulip Brian Miranda House No.90, Old Police Station Road, Vile Parle West, Mumbai 400056.

Therefore, you all are hereby informed that the above-said matter is listed for hearing on 9 October, 2024 at 11 a.m. wherein you may remain present if you so desire, filing which Hon'ble Authority may go ahead with the merit of the matter.

Place: Mumbai

West, Mumbai 400056

Adv. Milind B. Nar

Advocate 407, B Wing, 4" floor, Classic Apartment, Shivshakti Society, partment Laxman Nagar Santoshi Mata Road, Kurar, Malad East, Mumbai 400055 Emall milindnarglc@gmail.com

## Dahi Handi with politicalaim

By Naresh Kamath

Mumbai: In the backdrop of the high profile Maharashtra Assembly election due in next few months, politicos across party lines are spending huge amount to celebrate Dahi Handi festival.

They have now organised huge events complete with celebrities in attendence, DJ music, artificial rains and gifts which include cash prizes worth lakhs of rupees for the winners.

The Dahi Handi event which till decades was a sober event where volunteers of various mandals formed human pyramids to break the pot filled with yogurt has now turned both commercial and political event with politicos pouring huge amount to derive political capital of the same. The BJP MLA from Ghatkopar (W) Ram Kadam is spending a staggering amount of more than Rs 2 crore on this one-



Ram Kadam

day event. Kadam unapologetically claims that he was responsible for commercialisation of the fest. "What's wrong if politicians organise such huge grand events. Our aim is to connect to the citizens and also spread some jov." said Kadam.

At Jamboree Maidan, Worli there will be a highprofile event organised by former state minister Sachin Ahir who is currently in the Shiv Sena (UBT). The winner is slated to get Rs 3,33,333 as prize amount.

The Sankalp Pratisthan



**Ravindra Phatak** 

at Thane headed by Shiv Sena legislator Ravindra Phatak. He has announced a prize money of Rs 21 lakh to anyone who cracks the world record. In addition. the mandal which first climbs up nine levels will get Rs 11 lakh as prize money and other winners will also be rewarded with lakhs of rupees as prize money. Even the females who form pyramids will be feted.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has already announced insurance cover for the event and will be touring



across Mumbai and Thane visiting the mandals organising the event. Shinde will continue with the Tembi Naka Dahi Handi fest which was started by his late mentor Anand Dighe. Similarly this time Deputy Chief Minsiter Ajit Pawar has also jumped in the fray by organising Dahi Handi fest at Kalwa while his counterpart Devendra Fadnavis will be visiting BJP organised ones across the city.

The Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) and the Sena (UBT) are not behind and are concentrating on local level festivals. "The MNS has always been spending Hindu festivals with lot of fervour and this will continue even this year," said MNS spokesperson Sandeep Deshpande.

Political analyst Hemant Desai says that it is imperative for politicos to spend this year given the kind of stakes in the forthcoming elections. "The current scenario is such that one needs to be visible and these festivas provide the much-needed opportunity to the politicos to make their presence felt. In addition, these mandals and youths are very important especially when the elections are soon due," said

Arun Patil who heads the Maharashtra Govinda Mandal organisation agreed that this year is witnessing huge competition among the politicos and greater spend that usual.

Badlapur sexual abuse case

#### Accused sent in Police to probe how 14-day judicial **CCTV** footage went custody missing

By Correspondent

Mumbai: School Educa-

tion Minister Deepak Kes-

arkar on Monday said

CCTV footage of  $15\,\mathrm{days}$  of

the Badlapur school, where

two girls were sexually as-

saulted, triggering nation-

wide outrage, is missing

and police have been told to

department had sought a

report over the incident.

We found that the CCTV

footage of 15 days is miss-

ing. We have told the police

to investigate how it went

missing. Since the crime

was committed near the

washroom, we sought

CCTC footage and then the

"The school education

probe the matter.

By Correspondent

Thane: A court in Thane district on Monday remanded Akshay Shinde, arrested for allegedly sexually abusing two minor girls at a school in Badlapur, to 14-day judicial custody, a police officer

Shinde, an attendant at the private school, was produced before a magistrate's court at Kalyan amid elaborate security arrangements after the expiry of his police custody.

The court remanded him to 14-day judicial custody and sent him to jail, said the officer.

In a related development, some members of the school management have been made accused in the case, another police officer said without divulging further details.

The accused, who was employed as an attendant at the school where the incident took place earlier this month, was arrested on August 17.

committee was told it had gone missing," Kesarkar told reporters.

The state government has given Rs 10 lakh and Rs 3 lakh to the parents of the victims and will also support their education till graduation, the school edu-

cation minister said. "There are two cases. One is of rape. The victim's parents have been given Rs 10 lakh. The other case is of sexual assault. Here the state government has given Rs 3 lakh," he informed.

Kesarkar said the school education department would provide a separate desk to deal with such

### Two fake cops loot old man

Thane: Two unidentified individuals posed as crime branch officials and tricked a 70-year-old man into removing his gold ornaments worth Rs 70,000 in Thane district, police said on Monday.

The incident occurred on August 24 at around 11:15 a.m., when the victim, Damodar Patil, was travelling in a car on the Nashik-Mumbai highway near Lodha Dham. The suspects stopped Patil's car under the pretext of security checking and instructed him to remove his gold ornaments, wrap them in paper, and place them in the car's dashboard drawer.

While engaging Patil in con-

versation, the duo switched

the wrapped ornaments with

a package containing stones.

## **970** cr for

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government on Monday granted approval of Rs 970 crore for the conversion and maintenance of 5000 diesel-run MSRTC buses to Liquified Natural Gas as part of the state-run undertaking's green transport

#### By Correspondent

Mumbai: A technical glitch in the engine of CSMT-bound Latur Express near Kalwa station in Thane district on Monday morning affected local train services towards Mumbai on the main line, officials said

Local trains headed to-

utes at around 8.30 am bewards CSMT were delayed by at least 15-20 minutes during the morning rush station.

Central Railway's Chief Public Relations Officer, Swapnil Nila, said Latur Express was detained at Kalwa station due to brake "pressure trouble" in its engine for around 20 min-

hour on the first day of the

fore it was moved to Thane

Train engine glitch delays local services

The Nagpur-CSMT Duranto Express trailing Latur Express was detained behind for approximately about 20 minutes.Commuter activists have raised questions about Central Railway's operational decisions.

ly criticised Central Railway for operating CSMTbound mail/express trains on the fast corridor via Kalwa station, despite the availability of the 5th

The activists specifical-

stations. They argued that using the additional tracks

and 6th tracks between

Kalyan and Thane

could help alleviate congestion and reduce delays for long-distance trains.

Notably, commuters faced hardships on August 20 when local train services on the Ambernath-Karjat section of the main line remained suspended for 10 hours due to protests at Badlapur railway station in Thane district.

## Mumbai-Goa Highway Shinde reviews pending repair work



#### By Correspondent

Mumbai: Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Monday visited sites in Raigad district to review the pending work on the Mumbai-Goa Highway ahead of the Ganesh Chaturthi

The visit has come a week after Shiv Sena leader Ramdas Kadam called BJP leader and Maharashtra PWD Minister Ravindra Chavan a "useless minister" over the poor state of the highway.

Talking to reporters,

Shinde said, "We have used four types of advanced technology to repair potholes and damaged stretches of the highway. This will minimise inconvenience for people travelling to their villages in the coastal districts for the Ganesh Chaturthi festival." Officials of the NHAI, MSRDC, and PWD, among others, have conducted an in-depth study of the issues on this highway and

he said. Shinde said, "Union Minister for Highways

devised effective solutions,

Gadkari took a keen interest in the highway and gave loans to contractors, but some of them ignored the work, and due to their lethargy, we have to face this precarious situation."

Contractors who have constructed substandard roads will face action, he said. While the section of the highway from Ratnagiri to Goa is completed and operational, some stretches in Raigad still need to be constructed

"The Ganpati festival is in a couple of weeks, and

the road conditions are substandard. Despite an annual review by a minister, there has been hardly any improvement. People continue to suffer," said a Dapoli resident who visits his ancestral home during the festival.

Several people from cities travel to their ancestral homes in Konkan during the 10-day Ganesh Chaturthi festival. The substandard road conditions remain a concern for travellers and bus operators in the Mumbai-Goa

### Three held for trafficking drugs

**By Correspondent** 

Thane: The Anti-Narcotics Cell of Navi Mumbai Police arrested three persons, including a woman, involved in drug trafficking and seized 100 grams of heroin valued at Rs 20 lakh, an official said on Monday.

Acting on a tip-off, the ANC officials raided a flat in a residential locality at Turbhe, where they arrested two brothers, Iktharul Irshad Sheikh (25) and Sattarul Irshad Sheikh (22).

During interrogation, the accused disclosed that they had procured the drugs from Firozabi Hasim Shaikh (38), who was later traced and arrested by the police.

An FIR was registered against the accused under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

The police are now investigating the source of the contraband and identifying potential buyers involved in the

#### Seven months of Atal Setu

### **Over 50 Lakh Vehicles Traveled**

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Atal Setu, the longest sea bridge of tne country has achieved a milestone. Since its inauguration in January 2024, in the last seven months over 50 lakh vehicles have used the bridge.

The Atal Setu, inaugurated by Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on January 12, 2024, and opened for traffic on January 13, has quickly become a pivotal element in Mumbai's transportation infrastructure. As India's longest bridge and the longest bridge over water, the Atal Setu has not only transformed traffic flow but also reached a significant

milestone. This extraordinary usage highlights the bridge's critical role in easing congestion and reducing travel time between South Mumbai and key destinations such as Panvel, Pune, and Navi Mumbai. The Atal Setu has consistently shaved off at least one hour from travel times, benefitting millions of commuters. From January 13, 2024, to August 25, 2024, a total of 50,04,350 vehicles, including BEST, NMMT, MSRTC's



Shivneri buses, and various private and commercial vehicles, have traversed this vital link.

The Atal Setu's impact extends beyond mere traffic management. It has significantly improved connectivity between South Mumbai and other major regions, including the upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport. This enhanced connectivity will facilitate smoother and quicker airport transfers, especially between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport and Navi Mumbai International Airport, thus benefiting both business travellers and the general public.

In addition, the Atal Setu is set to further enhance its utility with the completion of ongoing infrastructure

projects. The Worli-Sewri elevated road, now 75 percent complete, will soon provide a rapid 5 to 10-minute connection from Worli Sea Face to the bridge. Concurrently, the development of an elevated road between the Chirle Interchange and the Mumbai-Pune Expressway promises even faster commutes between South Mumbai, the western suburbs. Navi Mumbai, Panvel, Pune, and the Mumbai-Goa Highway.

The CM Eknath Shinde said that the Atal Setu has revolutionized traffic in the Mumbai metropolitan area, benefiting millions of people. Dr. Sanjay Mukherjee, Metropolitan Commissioner, said that the successful implementation of the Atal Setu has led to a marked improvement in Mumbai's traffic system.

#### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**



**Parvathy** Thiruvothu, actor

"There is a 'keeda' in all the industries and we will have to clean it up ourselves... But I do believe that things are changing now. When we speak up for ourselves, we stand for everyone else. We need allies."

## Schoolgirl attacked by girls

By Correspondent

Mumbai: A video has surfaced online showing a school-going girl being assaulted by a group of minor girls in Mumbai's Versova area following an argument over some issue, prompting police to counsel the attackers, the victim and their parents.

A Versova police station official on Monday said the incident took place around two weeks and they took cognisance of it after a video of the assault surfaced on the Internet.

The disturbing video shows a schoolgirl being mercilessly beaten up by a group of girls in the Yari Road locality. The attackers can be seen punching and kicking the minor girl, who was in her school dress, even as she falls on the ground.

The local police counselled all the girls seen in the video -- all of them minors -- along with their parents for two days after the clip went viral, the official said, adding "We are investigating who circulated the video."

In a series of message on X, the police said, "Taking cognisance of a viral video of the attack on a girl in Versova, Nirbhaya squad (special cell to prevent crime against women/ children) conducted an investigation. During the investigation, it was revealed all the girls visible in the video are minors and belong to the same locality.

An argument over a small issue led to a fight between

Counselling of all the girls and their parents was done by Versova police officials and the Sneha Foundation, an NGO, with the help of local child welfare committee members, they

The Nirbhaya squad is keeping a close eye on the matter and patrolling has been increased at the location, said the police.

#### Man booked for filming woman

Thane: A man has been

booked for allegedly filming a woman employee of a jewellery shop in a dressing room in Thane, police said on Monday. The incident occurred on August 23 night after the woman completed her duty at the shop situated in Chitalsar area. She realised that someone was watching her and noticed a man filming her on his mobile phone through a peehole of the dressing room.

#### **FSSAI** withdraws advisory on milk

on Monday withdrew its recent advisory wherein food businesses were directed to remove claims of 'A1' and 'A2' types of milk and milk products from packaging. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FS-SAI) said the advisory has been withdrawn to carry out further consultations with stakeholders. It would imply that food business operators (FBOs) can continue to sell and market their products with claims of 'A1' and "A2' types of milk. A1 and A2 milk differ in their beta-casein protein composition, which varies based on cow breed.In a fresh advisory issued on Monday, the regulator said, "the advisory dated August 21, 2024...stands withdrawn for further consultation and engagement with the stakeholders"

#### Products in US market recalled

Drug makers Aurobindo Pharma, Glenmark and FDC are recalling products in the US due to manufacturing issues, as per the US Food and Drug Administration (USF-DA). Aurobindo Pharma USA Inc -- a unit of Hyderabad-based drug major -- is recalling 240 bottles of pain-relieving medication Healthy Living Acetaminophen, Aspirin (NSAID) and caffeine tablets. As per the latest enforcement report of USFDA, the company is recalling the affected lot due to "Missing Label". Some bottles are missing the manufacturer's label that includes the drug facts information, the US health regulator said. The New Jerseybased Aurobindo Pharma USA Inc initiated the Class 1 recall on July 11, it said.

#### 12 new industrial cities likely

The Union cabinet is expected to approve this week 12 new industrial cities in different states on the lines of Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, and Dholera in Gujarat to boost domestic manufacturing. Out of the 12 industrial cities, two are coming up in Andhra Pradesh and one in Bihar, the official said. The government in the Budget has announced the development of 'plug and play' industrial parks in or near 100 cities.

## MMR unsold inventory remains at 400,000 units

Mumbai: Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) continues to hold an unsold inventory of 400,000 housing units during the April-June quarter the same as it was in the preceding quarter of Jan-Mar, as per a joint report by industry body Credai, and investment advisory firms Colliers and Liases

"As of Q2 2024, there was an availability of over 10 lakh housing units across the primary market of eight major cities, with MMR alone having about 40% share in unsold inventory levels," said the report that covered the eight Indian cities of Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi NCR, Hyderabad, Kolkata, MMR and Pune.

Excluding MMR, unsold inventory levels have declined by up to 5 per cent on a quarterly basis across all cities under review. While MMR witnessed healthy sales in residential units during Q2 2024, significant surge in new launches led to a marginal rise in unsold units, the report said.

The agency's report in

CMD Nirmal Singh

Bhangoo, who was an ac-

cused in an alleged multi-

crore chit fund scam and

lodged in Tihar jail, passed

away here during treat-

ment at west Delhi's Deen

Dayal Upadhyay Hospital

on Monday, officials said.

Bhangoo, 68, was suffer-



the preceding quarter had also maintained MMRs unsold inventory at 400,000 houses out of the 10,00,000 unsold houses in the eight cities across the country.

On an annual basis with a 13 percent year-on-year drop, Pune particularly witnessed the highest annual decline in unsold units. Annual decline in unsold inventory levels have been significant in Ahmedabad. Chennai and Kolkata too with 6-8 percent drop, the

Jailed Pearls Group CMD dies at hospital

and recently underwent a

kidney transplant surgery,

officials said, adding he

was lodged in Tihar jail

since 2016 after being ar-

rested by the Central Bu-

reau of Investigation (CBI).

pital after he complained

of uneasiness on Sunday at

He was taken to the hos-

Average prices in MMR per square feet during the Apr-June quarter was marginally down at Rs 20,275 from Rs 20,361, but up six per cent at Rs 19,111 from the same quarter last year.

"Average housing prices for spacious dwelling units, particularly 3-4BHK configurations in these cities have increased up-to 30% on an annual basis. Additionally, the government's recent partial rollback pertaining to long term capital gains arising out of sale of

6.25 pm, according to Tihar

jail number 8-9 and he was

first taken to the jail's dis-

pensary from where he

was referred to the DDU

Hospital, where he died

during treatment at about

12.30 am, an official source

Bhangoo was lodged in

iail sources.

land and buildings retrospectively is expected to boost investors and homeowners' sentiment and thus, the real estate sector at large," said Vimal Nadar, Senior Director and Head of Research, Colliers India.

Interestingly, seven out of eight Indian cities except Mumbai under review witnessed annual price appreciation, with Delhi NCR witnessing the highest price rise at 30 percent year-onyear closely followed by Bengaluru.

#### **Warburg Pincus** exits MedPlus

New Delhi: Private equity major Warburg Pincus on Monday exited MedPlus Health Services by selling its entire 11.35 per cent stake in the pharmacy chain for Rs 836 crore through an open market

## **SEBI show** cause notice to Sharma

Mumbai: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) issued showcause notices to Vijay Shekhar Sharma, founder of One 97 Communications Ltd (Paytm parent company), and board members who served during its initial public offering in November 2021 for alleged misrepresentation of facts, it was reported.

The notices pertain to Vijay Shekhar Sharma's alleged non-compliance with promoter classification norms. The Reserve Bank of India gave inputs for the probe, the report added.

A source said, "SEBI is taking the view that Shar-



ma should have been classified as a promoter, and it was also the fiduciary duty of board members of the company to verify the accuracy of the claims made by the founder and attest the

"Although SEBI has gone after directors of a company in the past, they have been mostly cases of financial fraud. This is one of the rare cases where SEBI is trying to hold the directors responsible for a potential compliance lapse, which was also not pointed out either by bankers or statutory auditors.'

## **HC restrains Pune** eatery from using "Burger King"



Mumbai: In an interim relief to US giant Burger King in a trademark infringement suit, the Bombay High Court on Monday restrained a Pune-based eatery from using the brand name till September 6.

The company moved the high court last week, challenging an order passed by a Pune court dismissing its suit alleging trademark infringement against a namesake eatery in Pune.

A division bench of Justices A S Chandurkar and Rajesh Patil on Monday said that it would first hear the company's application seeking interim injunction against the eatery on September 6.Until then, the adinterim order granted by the Pune court in January 2012 restraining the eatery from using the name "Burger King" shall be extended, the high court said.

The fast-food company, in its suit, sought an injunction against the eatery from using the name "Burger King", as it was causing the company huge loss, damage and harm to its goodwill, business and reputation.

A Pune court had dismissed the 2011 suit filed by Burger King Corporation, noting that the city-based eatery had been operating since 1992, which was even before the US burger joint opened shop in India.

**Burger King Corporation** also filed an application in the high court seeking an interim injunction against the eatery owners from using the name pending the hearing and final disposal of its appeal. The company's advocate, Hiren Kamod, on Monday submitted to the court that until their plea or application seeking an interim injunction is heard, the ad-interim order passed in 2012 by the Pune court shall be extended.

Advocate Abhijit Sarwate, appearing for the eatery owners, Anahita Irani and Shapoor Irani, submitted to the court that they have started using the name 'Burger King' online since two days. "The eatery owned by the defendants (Iranis) is famous in Pune since the 1990s. In fact, the plaintiff company is usurping our goodwill in Pune. Why is a giant company like the plaintiff (Burger King Corporation) fearing us?" Sarwate argued.

Kamod submitted to the high court that the Pune court had erred in holding that the eatery was using the name 'Burger King' in India much before the US company opened its first fast food joint here. - PTI

## New rule for GST taxpayers

New Delhi: GST taxpavers who do not furnish bank account details to GST authorities will be barred from filing outward supply return GSTR-1 from September 1, GST Network (GSTN) has said in an advisory

As per GST Rule 10A, a taxpayer is required to furnish details of a valid bank account within a period of 30 days from the date of grant of registration, or before furnishing the details of outward supplies of goods or

ficient fertilizer spraying to

significantly boost agricul-

types of centers or stores --

'mini and major' stores to

meet the farmers' needs of

which the Mini stores will

provide only the basic drone

store facilities while the ma-

jor stores will provide the

farming community with

extensive service options

with qualified drone pilots.

This program also aims to

create over 1000 entrepre-

neurs in the states of Andhra

Pradesh and Telangana.

There will be two different

tural output.

services or both in Form GSTR-1or using Invoice Furnishing Facility (IFF), whichever is earlier. "From 1st September, 2024

this rule is being enforced. Therefore, for the tax period August-2024 onwards, the taxpayer will not be able furnish GSTR-01/IFF as the case may be, without furnishing the details of a valid bank account in their registration details on GST portal," GSTN said in an advisory dated August 23.

The GST Council in its meeting in July last year, had approved amendment to Rule 10A to strengthen the registration process and to effectively deal with the menace of fake and frauduient registrations in goods and services tax (GST).

As per the amendment, a registered taxpayer was required to furnish the details of bank account having his name and PAN within 30 days of grant of registration or before filing of statement

of outwards supply in Form GSTR-1/IFF, whichever is earlier. In the advisory, the GSTN asked all the taxpayers who have not yet furnished the details of a valid bank accounts to add their bank account information in their registration details by visiting the GST portal. "...in absence of a valid bank account details in GST registration, you will not be able to file GSTR-1 or IFF as the

case may be from August

- PTI

2024 return period."

## **Maharashtra's MSME** sector to get push

Mumbai: The MSME sector in Maharashtra is all set ing trainings in 13 States for a digital boost through a and over 55 industrial novel initiative by the Confederation of Indian Industry. CII's Digital Saksham program is working to bridge the gap between digital technologies and micro enterprises with its pioneering Project Digital Saksham supported by Master

Card. The project is provid-

Digital Saksham, an ambitious project of CII in partnership with Master Card Centre for Inclusive Growth, is playing a transformative role in Maharashtra to equip entrepreneurs across the state with

essential digital tools and skill sets, fostering growth, sustainability, and global competitiveness.

Sameer Gupta, Chairman, CII National MSME Council and Chairman and Managing Director, Jakson Group, said, "The impact of Digital Saksham in Maharashtra has been substantial.'

#### Raminfo to offer drone-as-a-service

#### By Correspondent

Mumbai: Raminfo Ltd plans to offer drone-as-a-service by launching 100 centres in the next two years across five states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, the company said in its filing with stock exchange.

The drone service launched through its subsidiary will enhance farming practices and productivity and will be deployed across agricultural fields, enabling precise field mapping and ef-

#### Apps must comply with rules

New Delhi: Telecom operators expect internet calling and messaging apps like WhatsApp, Google Meet, and Telegram to comply with rules in the same manner as all service providers do, industry body COAI said on

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) -whose members include Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, among others -- said it is misleading to demand to exclude over-the-top (OTT) communication apps from the Telecommunications Act 2023 as they are sub-

## India adds record 15 GW solar capacity in Jan-Jun

velopers raced" to complete delayed projects, a report by

ject to other regulations.

#### New Delhi: India has registered record solar installations of about 15 GW during the first half of 2024 as "de-

Mercom Capital said. The country added 3.89 GW of solar capacity during January-June 2023, the USbased research firm said in its latest report.

"In the first half, solar installations in India reached 15 GW, surpassing all previous years records, posting an increase of 282 per cent compared to 1H 2023," the report titled 'India Solar Market Update' said.

The record installations were registered as developers raced to commission the previously delayed projects, it said.

As of June 2024, India's cumulative installed solar capacity stood at 87.2 GW, of which the utility-scale projects accounted for nearly 87 per cent, and rooftop solar over 13 per cent.

Solar energy accounted for 19.5 per cent of India's installed power capacity and over 44 per cent of the total installed renewable energy capacity.

The average cost of largescale solar projects was down by almost 26 per cent year-on-year and 2 per cent quarter-on-quarter.

The year "2024 is shaping up to be a breakout year for India's solar industry, with an impressive first half. "However, to ensure that



the strong pipeline of projects and ramped-up tender activity translate into timely installations, it is critical that we tackle the component supply and grid connectivity challenges with

urgency so we can meet the 280 GW target by 2030," Raj Prabhu, CEO of Mercom Capital Group, said.In 1H 2024, a total of 41.4 GW of tenders were announced.

#### TOP GAINERS SENSEX August 26, 2024 POINTS +3.47 HCL Tech NTPC 414.75 Bajaj Finserv **Tech Mahindra JSW Steel** Titan M&M LT Tata Steel **HDFC Bank**



#### PhonePe declares profit

Mumbai: On Monday, PhonePe Group, a leading Fintech company, announced a remarkable recovery. achieving a profit after tax of Rs 197 crore for the fiscal year 2024 (FY24) following a deficit of Rs 738 crore in the previous fiscal year (FY23). This marks the first time the company has reported a profit on its consolidated figures.

The firm, which is owned by Walmart, saw a 74 per cent increase in its earnings for FY24, reaching Rs 5,064 crore, a significant rise from the previous year's revenue of Rs 2,914 crore. The company attributed this growth to its strategic focus on enhancing operational efficiencv through automation and cost reduction measures. In the past year, PhonePe

traded funds).

expanded its services by venturing into the stock broking sector through its Share. Market app, which enables users to engage in stock trading, mutual fund investments, and ETFs (exchange-

#### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**



Tom Owen, Director, Cargo, Cathay Cargo

"If we are allowed to, under the open skies framework, to co-terminate aircraft. What that could mean is that we could fly into, say, Mumbai and then take our flight to Kolkata and have three places to serve. So, the Kolkata market could uplift cargo. Same thing goes with Bengaluru, Ahmedabad."

#### Another allegation of sexual abuse

# Malayalam film industry in turmoil

Thiruvananthapuram: A female actor in Malayalam cinema levelled sexual abuse allegations against four prominent male actors, including M. Mukesh, on Monday, causing further upheaval in the film industry already reeling from the Justice K. Hema Committee's explosive findings of harassment and abuse of women professionals

In a post on Facebook, the actor Minu Muneer claimed that four actors -- Mukesh, Maniyanpilla Raju, Idavela Babu and Jayasurya -- had physically and verbally abused her on the sets of a 2013 movie.

Hours after the actress levelled the allegations against Mukesh, a CPI(M) MLA, in interviews with news channels, workers from Yuva Morcha and Mahila Congress organised separate marches towards his residence in Kollam, demand-



ing that a case be registered against him and that he resign as a

The Kollam MLA has not responded to the allegations. The female actor also levelled sexual abuse allegations against three other prominent actors in the Malayalam film industry. Meanwhile, actor Maniyanpilla Raju has called for an investigation into the allegations surfacing in the Malayalam



film industry. He told reporters that many more revelations will come out, and there will be multiple interests behind them.

"Some people will try to capitalise on the situation. Among those accused, there will be both innocent and guilty parties. Therefore, a comprehensive investigation is necessary," Raju said.

This development comes a day after director Ranjith and actor Sid-

dique stepped down from their leadership roles in a state-run film academy and the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA), respectively, following sexual abuse allegations against them.

Amid mounting pressure on the government to take action against alleged predators in the film industry, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan held a high-level meeting with senior police officials on Sunday and announced the establishment of a seven-member special team to investigate the atrocities faced by women actors. The report by the Justice Hema Committee, constituted by the Kerala government post the 2017 actress assault case, has revealed instances of harassment and exploitation of women in the Malayalam cinema industry.

New Delhi: The BJP on Monday expressed disagreement with its MP Kangana Ranaut's controversial remarks on the farmers' protest and said she has been directed to not make such remarks in future.

This came after Ranaut stoked a controversy by suggesting that the farmers' protests could have led to a Bangladesh-like situation in the country if the top leadership was not strong

In a video shared by the Mandi MP on X, she alleged that "bodies were hanging and rapes were taking place" during the farmers' protest against the now-repealed three farm laws.

"The statement made by BJP MP Kangana Ranaut in the context of the farmers' movement is not the opinion of the party. The Bharativa Janata Party expresses its disagreement with the statement made by Kangana Ranaut," the BJP said in a statement.

## BJP disagrees TN minister with Kangana offers alive offers olive branch to Rajini

Rajinikanth vs Duraimurugan

"The DMK has C "Actors who have many old students grown old, with who refuse to leave the falling teeth, classrooms even after and sporting beards securing a rank in exams. in their end stages There is Duraimurugan are continuing to act, who could even make denying opportunity to life difficult for Kalaignar young actors." (late Chief Minister M Duraimurugan





Chennai: DMK senior Minister Duraimurugan, who had reacted strongly to Tamil film superstar Rajinikanth's "old timers" in DMK remark, held out an olive branch on Monday saying both of them will remain friends forever.

Playing down the sudden repartee between the two. the film star said he had no regrets over Duraimurugan's remark that "old actors" were denying opportunity to youngsters. "He (Duraimurugan) is

my long-time friend. I like him very much. I have no regrets over what Duraimurugan has said. Our friendship will continue," Rajinikanth told reporters at the airport on Monday when his comments were sought.

On Sunday, DMK General Secretary Duraimurugan, who holds the Water Resources portfolio as minister in the M K Stalin cabinet, said, "Actors who have grown old, with falling teeth,

and sporting beards in their end stages are continuing to act, denying opportunity to young actors.

The minister made the remarks aimed at the top actor when reporters in Vellore drew his attention to Rajinikanth's earlier comment likening the DMK seniors to old students refusing to leave the classroom even after securing a rank in the exams

While speaking at the release of the book 'Kalaignar Ennum Thaai', authored by Public Works Minister E.V. Velu here on Saturday, Rajini who received the first copy from Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, compared the DMK senior ministers to old students making it difficult for the class teacher to handle them. Bringing the sudden controversy to a close, Duraimurugn told reporters here on Monday, "Let's not convert humour into hostility. We will forever remain

as friends."

#### Jammu and Kashmir polls

## BJP trims first list amid internal rumblings

New Delhi/Jammu: The BJP on Monday named 16 candidates for the first phase of elections to the 90-member Jammu and Kashmir Assembly to be held on September 18.

The party had earlier released its first list of 44 candidates but put out a revised one a few hours later, withdrawing names for the second and third phases, amid disgruntlement among a section of party cadre over a few names in the original list.

While Jammu and Kashmir BJP president Ravinder Raina

downplayed the resentment over the initial list, a group of party workers held a protest at its headquarters in Jammu and claimed "parachute candidates" were picked over hardworking workers

The list of 16 candidates for the first phase includes three former MLAs and a woman candidate, Shagun Parihar, whose father Ajeet Parihar and uncle Anil Parihar were gunned down by terrorists in Kishtwar district in November 2018

The Parihar brothers were af-

The initial list covered 36 segments in the Jammu region and eight in the Kashmir Valley. It included nearly a dozen prominent leaders, including several former ministers who have joined the party in the last five

Ten former MLAs, including ex-deputy chief minister Nirmal Singh and ex-Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief Sat Paul Sharma, have been dropped.

Sharing the revised list of candidates, the BJP said the names for the second and third phases should be considered withdrawn

Some angry BJP workers from different assembly constituencies staged a protest at the party headquarters over the leadership "ignoring" hardworking workers and giving the mandate to "parachute candidates".

"I have been associated with the party for the last 18 years and have worked day and night to strengthen it but the mandate was given to a person who joined

the party only a few days back, said BJP Scheduled Caste Morcha president Jagdish Bhagat.

Welcoming the withdrawal of the initial list, he said, "We hope that party leaders would be given the mandate instead of those who have done nothing for the

"If they ignore us, there will be serious consequences. We will not allow any wrongdoing and will protest against this injustice within the party," Bhagat

## **CBI names Sandip Ghosh** in corruption FIR

reau of Investigation (CBI) has named Sandip Ghosh, tormer principal of RG Kai Medical College and Hospital, in the FIR the agency has filed in connection with its probe into the alleged financial irregularities at the institution during his tenure.

The agency has slapped Section 120B of IPC (criminal conspiracy) read with Section 420 IPC (cheating and dishonesty) and Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (amended in 2018) which covers unlawful acceptance of gratification by a public

The cases read together account for cognisable offences and are non-bailable in nature, a senior Calcutta High Court lawyer said.

Besides Ghosh, the CBI has also registered cases against one M/s Ma Tara Traders of Madhya Jorehat, Banipur, Howrah, M/s Eshan Cafe of 4/1, H/1, JK Ghosh Road, Belgachhia, Kolkata and one M/s Khama Louha.The FIR was lodged on the basis of a written complaint lodged

#### Durga Puja committees reject honorarium

- As calls for justice for the RG Kar victim intensify, several Durga Puja committees in West Bengal have rejected the Rs 85,000 honorarium offered by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee saying they cannot accept help from the government when women have taken to the streets demanding security. • Rina Das, president of Bhadrakali Bouthan Sangha in Hooghly, explained, "We
- have decided to boycott this grant this year to honour the sentiments of our members who are deeply upset over the brutal attack on the postgraduate trainee doctor at her workplace. We had received this grant for several years in the past." Prasenjit Bhattacharya from Uttarpara Shakti Sangha echoed similar sentiments,
- saying, "This is a symbolic protest. We will not accept the money until those involved in this heinous crime are apprehended and brought to justice.'

by Debal Kumar Ghosh, special secretary to the state health department.

The FIR was lodged on Saturday after the CBI took over the probe from a stateconstituted Special Investigation Team (SIT) following directions of the Calcutta High Court which the West Bengal government had initially formed following the alleged rape and murder of a woman

medic on August 9. The order was issued on a petition by former deputy superintendent of RG Kar Hospital, Akhtar Ali, who requested a probe by the **Enforcement Directorate** (ED) into alleged financial misconduct at the

institution. Ali had moved the high

court after fervent speculations in the public domain on whether the alleged rampant corruption at the institution was in any way connected to the medic's death with possibilities of the victim remaining privy to those and threatening exposure.Ali had also alleged that his complaints before the state vigilance commission and anti-corruption bureau filed a year ago against Ghosh yielded little results and, instead, led to his own transfer from the institution.

In his plea before the high court, Ali accused Ghosh of illegal sale of un-

claimed corpses, trafficking of biomedical waste and passing tenders against the commission paid by medicine and medical equipment suppliers.

Ali also alleged that students were pressured to pay amounts ranging between Rs 5 and 8 lakh to pass exams.

Ghosh served as principal of RG Kar Hospital from February 2021 to September 2023. He was transferred from the medical establishment in October that year but inexplicably returned to that position within a month. He held his position at the hospital till the day the doctor was found murdered.



RG Kar Medical College and Hospital junior doctors during their sit-in protest against the alleged rape and murder of a trainee doctor, in Kolkata on Monday,

### Chhattisgarh: 25 Naxalites surrender

Bijapur: Twenty-five Naxalites, five of them carrying a cumulative bounty of Rs 28 lakh on their heads, surrendered in Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh on Monday, a senior police offi-

The 25 ultras, who were active in Gangloor and Bhairamgarh area committees of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist), include two women, the official added.

"The two women, Shambati Madkam (23) and Jyoti Punem (27), and Mahesh Telam were active in company no. 2 of the Maoists and carried rewards of Rs 8 lakh each on their heads. Madkam was active in the movement since 2012 and was allegedly involved in the 2020 Minpa ambush in Sukma in which 17 personnel

lost their lives. She was also involved in the Tekalgudem (Bijapur) attack in which 22 security personnel were killed in 2021," said Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Kumar

"Punem and Telam were allegedly involved in an encounter in Pidia village in Bijapur in May this year in which 12 Naxalites were gunned down.

#### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**



Mayawati, President, Bahujan Samaj Party

"There is no question of my retirement from active politics. Ever since the party has put forward Akash Anand as the successor of BSP in my absence or in dire ill health, the casteist media has been propagating such fake news that people should be cautious."

### Idol defaced, houses set on fire

Agartala: At least 12 houses and a few vehicles were set on fire by unidentified persons after an idol was found defaced at a temple in Ranirbazar area in West Tripura, police said on Monday.

Heavy security deployment has been made in the area to defuse tension.

"Around 12 dwelling houses were set on fire at Ranirbazar by miscreants late on Sunday after an idol of Goddess Kali was found disfigured in Kaiturbari. A few motorcycles and pick-up vans were also gutted in the blaze," Assistant Inspector General (Law and Order) Ananta Das told PTI.

No human casualties

were reported in the incident. Eyewitnesses said that

the residents fled their dwellings upon seeing the raging mob

Das said heavy deployment of security forces have been made to defuse tension and Director General of Police, Intelligence, Anurag Dhankar and West Tripura Superintendent of Police Kiran Kumar have visited the

"Police will register a suo moto case once the assessment of loss of properties is completed. The situation is under control," he said.

Tipra Motha supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma on Monday expressed concern over the incident and appealed to everyone to maintain law and order.

"Last night incident in Ranirbazar Kaiturbari area is a worrying sign with reports of communal



clashes. I appeal to those who are responsible for maintaining law and or-

der to follow the rule of law," he wrote on Facebook.

## When a river is rejuvenated...

Kota (Rajasthan): Environmentalist Bitthal Sanadhva was roaming near the Labhakho and Peepalda areas of the Dabi forest range in Rajasthan's Bundi district when he was told by a forest ranger that the place was a river buried by debris from illegal mining

Stunned by the revelation, Bundi Jal Biradari president Sanadhya -- who draws inspiration from Ramon Magsaysay Award winner Rajendra Singh -- was driven to revive the river, a tributary of the Chambal known locally as the Aeru. Armed with GPS images of the illegal mining sites and the buried river, he approached Rajasthan High Court in 2018 and filed a PIL to revive the Aeru in the region.An eight-kilometre stretch of the Aeru, which covers 40 kilometres through the Bhilwara and Bundi districts before merging into the Chambal, had been buried under debris from illegal mines.

The Aeru originates from Tilaswa Mahadev in Bhilwara and passes through six villages before entering Bundi at Lamakhoh. For years, suspected mining mafia illegally mined stones and slabs in the Aeru, turning the river into a dump yard.

"The ranger's response when he said it was part of the Aeru river buried under mining dump stunned me," Sanadhya said. "Since then, I devoted myself to bringing the river back to life," he added. Following a five-year battle, the high court last year ordered the Department of Mines & Geology to prepare an action plan for the removal of the mining waste from the river and allocate funds for its implementation.

Complying with the order, Bundi collector Akshay Godara allocated Rs 10 crore from the District Mining Foundation Trust for removing the waste earlier this year. Work on the river revival project, beginning with the removal of the mining debris, started in June and it has already begun to pay dividends.

Crystal-clear water now flows over a more than twokilometre stretch, with the hope that the Aeru will once again enrich the riverbanks as it had previously done.

At least 15 earthmovers and 25 dumpers have been deployed to remove the mining waste and 40 per cent of the work has already been completed, said Ajay Singh Gurjar -- a junior engineer of the water resources department, which is executing the cleanup drive. The work is now stopped for the monsoon but it will be completed by November, he added.

Research scholar Suman Sharma, who is pursuing a PhD on the water crisis in the Kota-Bundi region, said it was a rare example of a "buried river" being revived by an environmentalist's



NDRF personnel evacuate people from a flood-affected area following heavy monsoon rainfall, at Adhaynagar village, on the outskirts of Agartala on Thursday

## LG nods tree felling, AAP wants resignation

New Delhi: The Aam Admi Party (AAP) on Monday demanded Lt Governor V.K. Saxena's resignation for allegedly approving the felling of 1,100 trees in Delhi's Ridge area.

There was no immediate  $% \label{eq:continuous} % \la$ reaction from the Lt Governor's Office.

Addressing a press conference, Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said the affidavit filed by the contractor involved in the project showed that the permission to fell the trees was issued by the lieutenant governor.

"The affidavit filed by the contractor says that in an email received from the DDA (Delhi Development Authority), he was told that permission to remove the trees that obstructed the right of way had been granted by the lieutenant governor," he claimed.

Bharadwaj said the email had "exposed" the lieutenant governor. "He should immediately tender his resignation. I challenge him to come clean," the minister added.

The Supreme Court initiated suo motu (on its own) contempt proceedings against the DDA vicechairman over the alleged felling of 1,100 trees in the ridge forest for a road-widening project.

AAP leader Sanjay Singh, on the other hand, alleged that the BJP and the lieutenant governor were "ruining" Delhi. Holding up some purported documents during a press conference, he said, "The company that felled the trees has given an affidavit in court, saying the lieutenant governor is responsible



Saurabh Bharadwaj addresses a press conference at the party office, in New Delhi on Monday.

He said that according to the original plan, the land of nearby farmhouses was

to be acquired for the road. But 1,100 trees were felled to save the farmhouses.

## Ice cave collapse in Iceland kills one

Berlin: At least one person has died and two others are still missing after an ice cave partially collapsed as a group of tourists was visiting the Breidamerkurjokull glacier in southern Iceland.

Local police say first responders received a call shortly before 3 p.m. on Sunday as a group of about 25 foreign tourists from several nationalities were exploring ice caves when four people were hit by ice.

Two people were seriously injured, one dying from their injuries at the scene of the accident.

## Surge in elephant deaths

#### Odisha overhauls squad deployment

Bhubaneswar: Under scrutiny for the death of over 40 elephants so far this fiscal, the Odisha forest department has reassigned protection squads from forest divisions to circle levels for more effective wildlife protection.

In a recent letter to all Regional Chief Conservators of Forests (RCCFs), the office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) and Chief Wildlife Warden said despite having 397 squads deployed in different forest divisions for protection and conservation of wildlife, more than 40 elephant deaths have been reported during the current financial year.

The letter stated that while the services of these squads are crucial, the leadership necessary for their effective utilisation and the standard operating procedures for field operations.



Smoke from wildfires fills the air near above the Mario Donega highway in Ribeirao Preto, Sao Paulo state, Brazil on Sunday

## DMRC tweaks plans to save 69 trees

New Delhi: The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has redesigned its Phase-4 construction plan to save 69 trees on the Janakpuri West-RK Ashram Marg Corridor, officials said on Monday.

They said that permission was received for felling overall 15,508 trees across Delhi for this phase. and approval was awaited for cutting 71 more on the Majlis Park-Maujpur Corridor.

"The DMRC has redesigned its construction plans to avoid felling of 69 trees on the Janakpuri West to RK Ashram Marg corridor. Earlier, permission was sought for these trees as well.

"For Phase-4 works overall, permission has been received for the cutting of 15,508 trees across Delhi. Out of these, 5,003 trees have been cut and over 7,000 have been transplanted," the official stated.

The DMRC makes provi-



sions for the plantation of 10 trees for each tree cut or transplanted for construction. All efforts are made to either avoid areas with trees while planning the alignment or transplantation, they said.

However, delays in receiving tree felling permissions have also led to delays on all the three priority corridors of Phase-4, they added. The work in this phase began in December 2019 and was hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The DMRC is undertaking construction work on 65.2 km spanning 45 stations under the project's three priority corridors: Janakpuri West-RK Ashram Marg (28.92 km), Majlis Park-Maujpur (12.55 km), which are extensions

of the already operational Magenta Line and Pink Line; and the Aerocity-Tughlakabad (23.62 km) Corndor that is being built as 'Silver Line', connecting the operational Violet Line and Airport Line from the respective ends.

According to government figures, the DMRC cut down 13,858 trees and transplanted 3,584 during the construction of Phase 1, which commenced in 1998 and concluded in 2005. The 65-kilometre-long rail network comprised 59 stations.In Phase 2, carried out between 2005 and 2011, the DMRC axed 17.997 trees and transplanted 3,052 trees. The Phase 2 had 89 stations across 125 km.

In Phase 3, which took nine years to complete from 2011, the DMRC cut down 11,872 trees and transplanted 506. Phase 3 involved the development of a 160-km-long rail network comprising 109

#### Dam collapses in Sudan, dozens missing

Cairo: A dam collapsed in Sudan's eastern Red Sea state, sending water flooding over nearby homes, the country's health ministry said. Local media said dozens of people are missing.

In a statement late Sunday, the ministry said that the Arbaat dam had collapsed and that resources had been deployed to the area to help the people who had been stranded.

The statement said at least four people had died in the floodwaters but did not give an estimate of how many were missing. However, a local official told the Sudanese news site Al-Tagheer that he believed there to be at least 60 dead. Amr Eissa Taher, the head water resources official for the Red Sea state, said the damage was extensive.

The Sudanese news outlet Medameek, citing the country's air force, reported more than 100 people were missing, and that many other villagers had climbed to hilltops to avoid the rising waters.

The dam is 40 kilometres north of the city of Port Sudan.

### PM assures full support

Agartala: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Monday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to him about the flood situation in the state and assured him of full support to the people to tide over the crisis.

At least 26 persons have died and 1.17 lakh people have been rendered homeless in Tripura due to devastating floods since August 19.

"Spoke to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji spelling out all the details of the flood situation in the state. He assured of full support to the people of Tripura.'

## **Revitalisation of Okhla Bird Sanctuary** Bisleri partners with UP govt

By Correspondent

Noida (UP): Bisleri International on Monday organized a mega cleaning drive and installed display boards depicting bird history in collaboration with UP Forest Department at the Okhla Bird Sanctuary, a vital ecological haven located at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh state border. The initiative is a part of a larger commitment aimed towards the improvement and conservation of the sanctuary's infrastructure.

The restoration program included critical improvements like updating and

repairing bird information display boards, installing new signage to improve the overall visitor experience, benefiting both the sanctuary and its visitors. The sanctuary is roughly foursquare kilometers in size and houses more than 300 species of waterbirds. The most prominent feature of the sanctuary is the large lake created by damming the river, which lies between Okhla village to the west and Gautam Budh Nagar to the east. The sanctuary draws over 70 thousand visitors each year.

P.K. Srivastava, IFS, District Forest Officer (DFO), Gautam Buddha Nagar, said, "The Okhla Bird Sanctuary is a critical haven for a diverse array of bird species and an important site for conservation and education. This cleaning drive is a significant contribution to preserving and improving this vital ecological resource. By updating facilities and enhancing visitor experiences, these efforts will help sustain the sanctuary's role as an essential refuge for wildlife and an inspiring destination for nature enthusiasts.'

Earlier this year, Bisleri International successfully restored and rededicated a



lake at Madras Christian College, enhancing its water-holding capacity to 20 million liters.

This project, supported by Mega Foundations and the Scrub Society, involved widening the lake's boundan island to attract bird species, restoring the check dam, planting over 100 native species, and installing an IoT-enabled floating duck for real-time water quality monitoring.

@my\_perfectvoice

#### **Economists say ending the war would help**

## Israel's economy is struggling

**Jerusalem:** In Jerusalem's Old City, nearly all souvenir shops are closed. In Haifa's flea market, forlorn merchants polish their wares on empty streets. Airlines are canceling flights, businesses are failing and luxury hotels are half empty.

Nearly 11 months into the war with Hamas, Israel's economy is struggling as the country's leaders grind ahead with an offensive in Gaza that shows no signs of ending and threatens to escalate into a wider conflict.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has tried to allay concerns by saying the economic damage is only temporary. But the bloodiest, most destructive war ever between Israel and Hamas has hurt thousands of small businesses and compromised international trust in an economy once thought of as an entrepreneurial dynamo. Some leading economists say a ceasefire is the best way to stop the damage.

"The economy right now is under huge uncertainty, and it's related to the security situation — how long the war will go on, what the intensity will be and the question of whether there will be further escalation," said Karnit Flug, Israel's former central bank chief who is now the vice president of research at the Israel Democracy Institute, a Jerusalem think tank.

The war has inflicted a far heavier toll on Gaza's already broken economy, displacing 90% of the population and leaving the vast majority of the workforce unemployed. All banks in the territory have shut. The fighting has killed more than 40,000 people, according to Palestinian health of-



ficials in the Hamas-run territory. Their count does not distinguish between civilians and combatants.

The fighting in Gaza and daily attacks from Hezbollah militants in Lebanon have also driven tens of thousands of people from their homes along Israel's northern and southern borders and caused large-scale damage

The Israeli economy has recovered from previous shocks, including shorter

wars with Hamas. But this longer conflict has created a bigger strain, including the cost of rebuilding, compensating families of victims and reserve soldiers, and vast military

#### **NUMBERS SPEAK**

Israelis killed in Hamas attack

16 per cent Drop at Israeli ports \$120 billion Israel's cost of the war

**20 per cent** Cost of war equal to GDP

**1.5 per cent** Projection of growth of GDP

in 2024

8 per cent **Budget deficit** 

**4.8 per cent** Unemployment rate

46,000 Businesses closed down since start of war

The drawn-out nature of the fighting and the threat of further escalation with Iran and its Lebanese proxy, Hezbollah, have an especially harsh impact on tourism. Though tourism is not a major driver of the economy, the damage has hurt thousands of workers and small businesses

Jacob, 45, returned in April from six months of duty as a reserve soldier to find out that business had dried up. He was forced to

shutter the tourism company he spent two decades developing. His only income is aid from the government, which pays him half his prewar salary every few months.

Meir Sabag, a Haifa antiques dealer whose shop sat empty, said business is worse now than during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On a recent weekday, the formerly bustling port of Haifa, a major hub of Israeli import-export where massive container ships would often stop, was still.

With Yemen's Houthi rebel group endangering ships passing through Egypt's Suez Canal, many long-haul ships have stopped using Israeli ports as hubs, said a port official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was sharing internal information.

- AP

## China patrols near Myanmar border

Beijing: China's military is carrying out armed patrols near the Myanmar border this week, where the government is concerned about potential fallout from fierce fighting in a civil war on the other side.

Troops were deployed to Yunnan province in southwestern China on Monday to test their ability to maintain security in border areas, the military's Southern Theater Command said.

An alliance of ethnic militias has dealt a series of setbacks to Myanmar's military in the country's



northeast, which is near China. Five people were injured on the Chinese side in January by a stray artillery

Live-fire drills will be

held from Tuesday to Thursday in four locations including two in Ruili city, the Yunnan government

The units will carry out

armed patrols and joint airground patrols to test their ability to mobilize quickly, block and control and strike together, the southern command said in a statement.

The military previously held live-fire drills near the Myanmar border in November.

China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, said earlier this month that his country "opposes chaos and war in Myanmar," according to Chinese state media.

Beijing helped broker a cease-fire in January, but

that fell apart in June when one member of the Three Brotherhood Alliance launched new attacks.

Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the leader of the military government, alleged recently that foreign countries were backing the ethnic militias, a likely reference to China, which has long ties to the groups.

Wang, who was on a visit to Myanmar, told Min Aung Hlaing that China opposes the attacks in Shan state, according to Myanmar state television.

#### Malaysian naval ship sinks

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian authorities were working Monday to salvage a 45-year-old fast attack naval ship that sank after it struck an unknown underwater object

The navy said in a statement that a leak was first detected in the engine room of the KD Pendekar on Sunday, which quickly flooded the vessel. The crew failed to fix the hole and the 260-ton ship sank underwater hours later off the coast of southern Johor state, it said. All 39 crew members were evacuated safely, with no injuries.

### Drone attack kills 21 civilians

Bamako (Mali): Airstrikes on a village in northern Mali near the Algerian border Sunday killed 21 civilians, including 11 children, a spokesman for a coalition of Tuareg-majority pro-independence groups said.

If confirmed, the attack on the village of Tinzaouatine would mark the largest number of civilians killed by drones since the breakdown of a peace agreement between the country's ruling military iunta and armed pro-inde-

pendence groups in northern Mali last year.

The Strategic Framework for the Defense of the People of Azawad is a coalition of Tuareg-majority groups fighting for the independence of northern Mali, which they call Azawad.

The strikes Sunday targeted a pharmacy, then other strikes followed that targeted people gathering in the vicinity of the initial damage, the coalition said



Sounion in the Red Sea on Sunday. The EU mission said Monday that there were no signs of an oil spill.

## Russia unleashes massive attack

massive drone and missile barrage throughout Ukraine on Monday that appeared to target energy infrastructure. At least three people were reported killed.

The barrage began around midnight and continued beyond daybreak in what appeared to be Russia's biggest attack against Ukraine in weeks.

air force, there were multiple groups of Russian drones moving toward eastern, northern, southern, and central regions of Ukraine, followed by multiple cruise and ballistic

Explosions were heard in the capital, Kyiv. Power and water supplies in the city have been disrupted by the

missiles.

Klitschko said. In the wake of the bar-

rage, the city administration announced plans to open "points of invincibility" — shelter-type places where people can charge their devices and get refreshments during energy blackouts. Such points were first opened in Ukraine in the fall of 2022, when Russia

ergy infrastructure with weekly barrages.

Ihor Polishchuk, mayor of Ukraine's western city of Lutsk, said a multistory residential building and an unspecified infrastructure object were hit and one person was killed.

Another person was killed in the central Dnipropetrovsk region.

## Long-range missiles designed to reach US mainland Kim supervises 'suicide drones'

**By Kim Tong-Hyung** 

**Seoul:** North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised a demonstration of new "suicide drones" and pledged to spur the development of such weapons to boost his military's war readiness, state media said Monday.

Kim has been flaunting his growing military capabilities amid tensions with Washington and Seoul. North Korean photos of the test showed a white drone with X-shaped tails and wings supposedly crashing into and destroying a target resembling South Korea's K-2 main battle tank. Most combat drones stand off from targets and attack with missiles.

The test, which state media said took place Saturday, came as the U.S. and South Korean militaries are conducting a large-scale exercise aimed at enhancing their combined capabilities to defend against growing North Korean nuclear threats.

The allies said the drills, which continue through Thursday, are focused on enhancing their readiness



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, its leader Kim Jong Un inspects a demonstration of what it says a drone crashing into a target at an undisclosed location in North Korea on Saturday.

against various North Korean threats and would also reflect lessons learned from recent armed conflicts.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said Saturday's test involved various types of drones built to fly different ranges to attack enemy targets on land and sea. It said the drones flew along various routes before accurately hitting test targets. Kim said that global trends

in military technologies and modern combat show the importance of drones in war and that the North's military should be equipped with advanced drones "as early as possible."

He called for accelerated development and production of various systems, including "suicide drones'

fantry and special operations units, reconnaissance and multi-purpose attack drones, and underwater suicide attack drones, KCNA Animosity on the Korean

that can be used by the in-

Peninsula is high as Kim uses Russia's war against Ukraine as a distraction while he strengthens his nuclear-armed military and issues verbal threats of conflict toward Washington and Seoul.

While most of the international attention has been focused on his long-range missiles designed to reach the US mainland, Kim has also been expanding weapons targeting rival South Korea, most notably shortrange missiles and artillery systems the North has described as nuclear-capable.

Earlier this month. Kim staged a huge ceremony in North Korea's capital, Pyongyang, to mark the delivery of 250 nuclear-capable missile launchers to frontline military units and called for a ceaseless expansion of the military's nuclear program.

#### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**



Jenna Ortega, **Actor** 

"I hate A.I... Did I like being 14 and making a Twitter account because I was supposed to and seeing dirty edited content of me as a child? No. It's terrifying. It's corrupt. It's wrong."

## India, Singapore to enhance co-operation

Singapore: India and Singapore on Monday pledged to further enhance co-operation in the emerging and futuristic areas.

The Indian delegation led by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman deliberated upon six pillars identified under India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR). Deputy Prime Minister Gan Kim Yong led the delegation of Singapore during the second ISMR.

"During the meeting, the leaders emphasised on ways of further enhancing co-op-



Piyush Goyal and Ashwini Vaishnaw and others during a meeting with the President of Singapore Tharman Shanmugaratnam, in Singapore.

eration between India and Singapore in emerging and futuristic areas. Both sides



deliberated upon six pillars identified under ISMR, which include Digitalisa-

tion, Skill Development, Sustainability, Healthcare & Medicine, and Advanced Manufacturing and Connectivity," the finance ministry said in post on X.

The leaders also discussed plans for commemorating the 60th Anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Singapore, alongside regional and global cooperation, including ASEAN & G20 developments, it said.

The leaders noted that the discussions in the first round of ISMR have result-

sion of MoUs on healthcare, education & skill development, digital cooperation and semiconductor ecosystem cooperation, it said. Along with Sitharaman,

ed in the successful conclu-

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw were present for the meeting. ISMR is a unique mecha-

nism established to set a new agenda for India-Singapore bilateral relations.

#### **EDITORIAL**

## A Calculated Gamble

A s Jammu and Kashmir gears up for its first Assembly election since the revocation of its special status in 2019, the Congress and the National Conference (NC) find themselves entering an alliance fraught with both promise and peril. For the two parties, this partnership is less a marriage of ideals and more a pragmatic arrangement aimed at countering the formidable challenge posed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The alliance is not without its internal frictions. While there is broad consensus on the distribution of the 90 Assembly seats in Jammu & Kashmir, disagreements persist over several key constituencies, particularly in the Kashmir Valley. The Congress, which has historically struggled to make significant electoral inroads in the Valley, is pushing for a substantial share of the 47 seats up for grabs there. The NC, which regards the Valley as its stronghold, is understandably reluctant to concede too many seats to its junior partner.

This tension is most evident in the Congress's demands for seats in south and central Kashmir, including Tral and Srinagar, areas where the party's past performance has been less than stellar. The NC's hesitation is justified as these are regions where it has traditionally dominated, and any compromise could weaken its hold. The Congress's insistence is driven by the belief that its recent resurgence, bolstered by Rahul Gandhi's efforts to reinvigorate the party in Jammu and Kashmir, could translate into electoral gains.

The alliance's success hinges on a delicate balancing act. The NC understands that without Congress's support in Jammu, the prospect of a stable, anti-BJP government remains elusive.

Rahul Gandhi's revitalization of the Congress in Jammu & Kashmir has injected new energy into the party, particularly in the BJP-dominated Jammu region.

Meanwhile, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), once a formidable player in the region, finds itself sidelined. Excluded from the Congress-NC alliance, the PDP is struggling to recover from its ill-fated partnership with the BJP, which led to a sharp decline in its political fortunes.

As Jammu and Kashmir prepares for a three-phase election starting on September 18, the Congress-NC alliance represents a calculated gamble. It also risks being viewed as a mere opportunistic ploy, lacking a coherent vision for the future of Jammu & Kashmir.

The BJP, for its part, is likely to exploit these contradictions to the fullest. Having positioned itself as the architect of Jammu & Kashmir's new political order, the BJP will cast the Congress-NC alliance as a return to the politics of appeasement and separatism while projecting itself as the guardian of national unity and development - a message that resonates particularly well in the Jammu region.

For the BJP, the challenge lies in retaining its foothold in the Valley, where it remains deeply unpopular.

#### **NATIONAL INTEREST**

## Cold war between Uddhav Thackeray and the Congress



Kiran D. Tare

he Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA), an alliance born out of political necessity rather than ideological congruence after the 2019 Assembly election, now finds itself at something of a crossroads despite its remarkable win in the recently concluded Lok Sabha election.

The unilateral move Uddhav Thackeray, leader of the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), to project himself as the chief ministerial candidate for the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly elections has sparked a political cold war within the coalition, particularly with the Congress. Thackeray's move, ostensibly aimed at consolidating his base within the Sena and projecting an image of leadership after his ousting as chief minister in 2022, has ruffled feathers within the

Uddhav Thackeray wants the MVA to project him as their CM face for the upcoming Assembly elections. True to its nature, the Congress has given him a cold response. This is beginning of a new conflict. Congress

Thackeray's demands for a clear stance on the CM face seems to reflect his frustration with the MVA coalition's current dynamics. In recent meetings with Congress and NCP leaders, he has pressed for a clear decision on who will lead the government if the MVA wins.

When the MVA was formed with the sole consideration of keeping the BJP at bay, the Congress was the third partner in the coalition, having lesser MLAs as compared to the undivided Shiv Sena and the NCP. However, vertical splits within the Shiv Sena and the NCP in 2022 and 2023 respectively, followed by the Congress' stunning revival in Maharashtra - which saw the party win 13 of the 17 Lok Sabha seats it contested on to emerge as the single-largest in the State – have changed equations within the coalition.

The party's leadership, wary of being reduced to a mere junior partner, has voiced its displeasure, reminding Thackeray that such decisions ought to be made collectively within the MVA, not dictated unilaterally by any one leader.

Furthermore, Thackeray's growing support among Muslims could potentially strain his relationship with the Congress. The Congress, traditionally seen as the primary representative of Muslim interests within the alliance, view Thackeray's inroads into this voter base as an encroachment on its electoral turf. This could lead to heightening of tensions between the two parties as they jostle for dominance within the coalition, particularly in constituencies where minority voters play a decisive role. The Congress has historically relied on minority support as a cornerstone of its electoral strategy in Maharashtra

However, after the split within the Sena following Eknath Shinde's revolt, the minorities, electorally jaded after supporting parties like the Congress and the AIMIM in the past, now see Thackeray as an attractive alternative given that he has been aggressively taken on



the BJP and PM Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Uddhav's increasing appeal to these demographics challenges the Congress's position, potentially leading to a reconfiguration of political dynamics within the MVA as both parties seek to consolidate their influence ahead of the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly election. Thackeray has been insistent that the coalition agree on a Chief Ministerial candidate prior to the elections, even if the name remains undisclosed to the public.

At a recent press conference, he made clear on the need to avoid the discord that he had experienced when in alliance with the BJP, where a lack of clear leadership and seat-sharing agreements had led the collapse of the long-standing Sena-BJP alliance. The Congress has remained resistant to Thackeray's push. Congress leaders have even criticized Thackeray's performance in the Lok Sabha election, pointing to his party's 'poor' showing and the Sena (UBT)'s inability to transfer votes effectively to Congress-NCP undermines his position.

Of the three MVA parties, Thackeray's Sena (UBT), despite contesting on the largest number of seats (21), had managed to secure only nine while Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP) had the best strike rate – winning eight of the ten seats it con-

tested on.

Tensions within the opposition coalition were rife even before the Lok Sabha. The claim over the Sangli seat, which saw the Congress and the Sena (UBT) nearly coming to blows, was microcosmic of the inherent schism within the MVA. The Thackeray group had unilaterally claimed the Sangli seat for itself despite it being a Congress bastion for 50 years, provoking intense resentment among the Congress cadre throughout western Maharashtra. Ultimately, Congress rebel Vishal Patil won the seat by trouncing political neophyte Chandrahar Patil, a wrestler fielded by the Sena (UBT).

Amid this brewing discord between Thackeray and the Congress, the 83-year-old Sharad Pawar, the architect of the MVA, has adopted a cautious stance. Known for his political acumen and ability to navigate Maharashtra's complex political terrain, Pawar has refrained from openly endorsing Thackeray's move. Instead, he has called for unity within the alliance, urging all parties to focus on their common goal of defeating the BJP in the upcoming election.

Thackeray's insistence on a pre-election leadership decision and the Congress's resistance appears to underscore the fragile nature of the MVA coalition as it gears up for the upcoming election.

#### **GLOBAL WATCH**

## Musk's space ascendancy vs Boeing's stumbling space odyssey

f all proceeds as planned, the Polaris Dawn mission is set to Llaunch on August 27, marking a significant milestone in space exploration. Elon Musk's SpaceX is poised to achieve the historic first commercial spacewalk, a feat that underscores the company's growing dominance in the aerospace sector. Simultaneously, NASA is relying on SpaceX's Crew-9 mission to address a critical issue: the rescue of astronauts Sunita Williams and Barry E. "Butch" Wilmore, who have been stranded in space for over two months.

Williams and Wilmore embarked on their mission aboard Boeing's Starliner spacecraft on June 5, originally intended for an eight-day stay at the International Space Station (ISS). However, technical issues with Starliner have prolonged their time in orbit to more than 80 days, prompting NASA to seek alternative solutions for their return.

Meanwhile, over the course of five days, Polaris Dawn will embark on one of SpaceX's most audacious ventures to date. The mission will test the limits of human spaceflight with its use of slim spacesuits and a cabin lacking an airlock, elevating the risk involved. On the third day, the crew is set to conduct a 20-minute spacewalk at an altitude of 434 miles (700 km) above Earth—marking the furthest any human has ventured into space.

At first, NASA, wary of the seemingly improbable low bid offered by SpaceX, had preferred Boeing, trusting that the aerospace giant's established pedigree would ensure success.



This dangerous mission will see four crew members orbiting the Earth for five days aboard a Crew Dragon capsule, with two of them undertaking the first private spacewalk—a venture that will expose them to a radiation belt. The mission will be commanded by Jared Isaacman, a billionaire entrepreneur and experienced aviator, with retired U.S. Air Force Lt Col Scott "Kid Poteet" serving as the pilot. The team also includes SpaceX's Sarah Gills and Anna Menon.

This new SpaceX endeavour comes amidst ongoing challenges for Boeing's Starliner program. Despite Boeing's assurances earlier this month regarding the spacecraft's readiness to return Williams and Wilmore to Earth, NASA had opted to delay their return until February, using the Crew-9 mission instead.

This decision follows persistent technical issues with Starliner, including thruster malfunctions and balium leaks

In the competitive realm of space travel, Boeing's early status as NA-SA's favoured contractor for transporting astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS) once seemed a foregone conclusion.

However, Boeing's journey has been one of mounting expenses and repeated setbacks. The company has faced delays and technical issues at almost every turn, undermining its early promise.

When Boeing's CST-100 Starliner spacecraft carried astronauts Wilmore and Williams on its inaugural crewed flight in June, there was a palpable sense of optimism. NASA and Boeing executives projected an image of triumph. For a moment, it seemed as though Boeing was on track to close the gap with SpaceX and regain its footing in the race to the ISS.

Yet this optimism has since evaporated. Boeing's once-prominent presence at press conferences has dwindled to near invisibility.

As the ISS nears its planned decommissioning in 2030, Boeing's role in ferrying astronauts could be severely curtailed in future. NA-SA's securing of SpaceX's services for the ISS's final descent suggests a broader trend of increasingly favouring private innovators over traditional giants.

#### **STATES WATCH**

## AAP's New Vanguard in Delhi's Electoral Arena



In the wake of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's arrest, his former Deputy CM, Manish Sisodia, has emerged as the pivotal force in rejuvenating the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and reinvigorating its political momentum in Delhi.

The Supreme Court's recent decision to grant bail to Sisodia after a protracted 17-month incarceration marked a moment of respite for the AAP. Emerging from Tihar Jail on August 9, Sisodia is confronted with the daunting task of steering his party through the turbulence created by Kejriwal's absence. The Delhi Assembly elections, set for February 2025, loom large on the horizon, making Sisodia's role not just pivotal, but emblematic of the party's resilience.

From the moment he stepped out of prison, Sisodia launched a series of 'padyatras' foot marches through the streets of Delhi designed to rekindle public connection and sympathy for his beleaguered party. The strategy is to cover all 70 Assembly constituencies. The walks are obviously much more than mere public relations exercises, being emblematic of a concerted effort to remind voters of the achievements of Kejriwal's administration and to galvanize grassroots support for the AAP.

Under Sisodia's stewardship, the AAP's campaign is keenly focused on its core achievements-education, healthcare, and governance reforms. His emphasis on continuing Kejriwal's legacy of making quality education accessible and reducing private school fees is both a reaffirmation of the party's foundational promises and a strategic move to fortify its position as a reformist force in Delhi. His assurance that the initiatives such as reduced electricity bills, which have been implemented in Delhi and Punjab, will soon become a national norm, reflects an ambitious vision for the party's future.

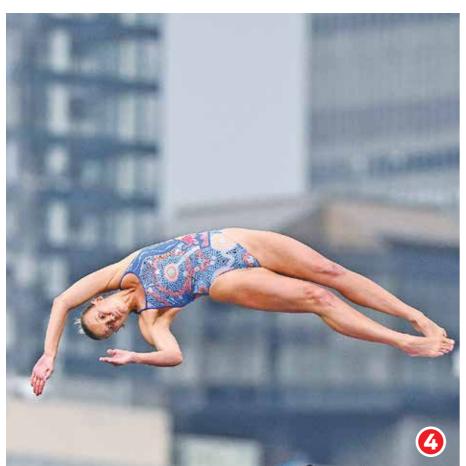
His extensive experience in governance, particularly in the education sector, lends him an aura of credibility that is vital for the party's outreach efforts. The challenge for Sisodia and the AAP brass at the moment, however, lies in translating this credibility into electoral success in the absence of Kejriwal's charismatic leadership. Moreover, Sisodia has been keenly aware of the need to counter opposition attacks with a well-defined counter-narrative. By focusing on issues of governance and development, he will be aiming to keep the political discourse centred around the AAP's core strengths rather than getting mired in legal controversies. His hectic itinerary includes visits to schools and community interactions, underscoring a hands-on approach to politics.

In parallel, AAP has initiated a series of worker conferences where local MLAs present progress reports on their activities over the past four and a half years. Sandeep Pathak, the party's National General Secretary and Rajya Sabha MP, revealed that these conferences have already been conducted in 18 constituencies, with plans to expand this outreach further. Pathak emphasized that the leadership's direct engagement with the public and meticulous booth mapping efforts are central to the campaign strategy.

Gopal Rai, AAP's Delhi convenor, has launched the 'Auto Samvad' campaign, led by a 14-member committee, to rally support among auto-rickshaw drivers and counter the BJP by warning of higher costs for essential services if the Kejriwal government is ousted. As the AAP navigates this challenging period, Sisodia's leadership and the party's intensified campaign efforts represent a bid to reclaim the initiative and solidify their electoral prospects ahead of the 2025 election.









- 1 Food supplies being distributed through an Indian Air Force (IAF) helicopter at a flood-affected area of Tripura.
- 2 A Scottish steam locomotive runs during an exhibition at Ypacarai, Paraguay on Sunday.
- 3 Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath offers prayers at Shri Krishna Janmasthan Temple on the occasion of the 'Janamshtami' festival in Mathura on Monday.
- 4 Rhiannan Iffland, from Australia, dives during the final of the women's Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series in Montreal on Sunday.
- 5 Journalists from Telangana protest at Jantar Mantar, in New Delhi on Monday.





#### **GUEST VOICE**

## A Wake-up Call for Security in Our Public Institution!



By

hindered access to the public insti-

tutes and executed their heinous

activities undetected.

Praveen Dixit

Who we determine the rape and murder of a resident doctor at R.G. Kar public hospital in Kolkata have shocked the country. In both cases, the perpetrators had un-

Two major incidents have exposed vulnerabilities in public institutions: child sexual assaults in Badlapur and a doctor's murder in Kolkata. **Both crimes occurred** in unmonitored areas. Perpetrators exploited isolated areas in public institutions. In Badlapur, delayed medical and police responses hindered justice. Improved security and prompt reporting are critical to preventing such incidents.

In Badlapur, the young children only disclosed the assault after fifteen days. In R.G. Kar Hospital, the culprit murdered the victim after the assault, preventing her from reporting the crime.

The investigation of the Badlapur incident is being conducted by the Special Investigation Team (SIT), while the R.G.Kar case is being investigated by the CBI. In both incidents, the culprits chose isolated areas without CCTV coverage, avoiding detection and lacking witnesses despite being in public institutions.

In the school incident, the child's genital pain complaint went unexamined by private doctors, missing potential evidence for legal action. The headmistress hid the information from the school authorities for three days. The school authorities also failed to report it to the police immediately, as required under the POCSO Act. The complaint was only registered after a delay of twelve hours following police involvement and a subsequent medical examination.

The suspect, a casual contract sweeper, was hired without verification two weeks prior and was allowed unrestricted access without an identity card.

The Bombay High Court ordered the police to charge the school authorities for failing to report the incident and stressed the need for better police sensitivity to child offenses. In offences against women and children, police may serve as the first responders, investigators, or officers responsible for registering F.I.R. It is their primary duty to inform victims about their legal rights. This approach is crucial for preventing, detecting, and investigating such

Many women are unaware of grievance procedures and reluctant to file a complaint due to the shame and stigma associated with such crimes. Although training provides knowledge and skills for investigation, it must also expand its focus to include attitudinal transformation as a key component. When a com-

plainant approaches the police, officers' behavior affects their cooperation. Training should focus on changing these attitudes.

To ensure fairness, police must

- follow these precautions:
   Who first receives the complaint at
- How long does it take to record the complaint?

the police station?

- complaint?

   Is the complaint documented as
- stated by the complainant, or is it downplayed?
- Is the complaint recorded in the complainant's own words and language?
- Is an audio-visual recording made of the complainant?
- Was there any demand for illegal

For every complaint involving a woman or a girl child, the DCP should verify these details and maintain a record. Additionally, awareness should be raised about the e-FIR facility under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, which enables filing complaints online.

Educational authorities must assess the security requirements during their visits to schools. They need to emphasise immediate reporting of every incident against a child to the police, even if it may be embarrassing to the institution. Similarly, the policy of using contractual labour for housekeeping services must be reviewed. While it may save costs for the institute, the effect of such contractual workers' behaviour is more damaging to the institute.

damaging to the institute.

My experience reviewing the security requirements of medical colleges and hospitals in Maharashtra provides valuable insights. My recommendations included having personnel from the Maharashtra Security Force (MSF) deployed for surveillance, monitoring, and rapid response. They were equipped with CCTV facilities and weapons. This system has been effective for the past seven years and should be considered for implementation in other states across India.

(The writer is a former DGP, Maharashtra. Views personal.)

#### **LEGALLY SPEAKING**

## Call for Women's Safety



Mangala Waghe

ne week after the Badlapur protest over the sexual abuse of two minor girls, tension persists. Senior police officer Aarti Singh is investigating, with new information emerging daily. Meanwhile, protest-related arrests are reigniting anger.

The police used the protest photos to arrest people at their offices and homes. Ten to twelve bank employees who happened to be at Badlapur station during the protests were arrested. In another incident, a taxi driver who had come to drop off a passenger was also arrested. Police arrested a bank employee for allegedly commenting on the sexual harassment case and around 800 people. Many of these people were not involved in stone-pelting or protest-

After protests over the sexual abuse of two minors in Badlapur, police arrested many bystanders, sparking public anger. Delays in justice and rights violations by authorities further fueled tension. Calls for stronger women's safety measures intensify across Maharashtra.



ing; they were simply bystanders.

The bank employees arrested on Saturday were only presented in court on Monday, violating their rights. Police failed to present them within 24 hours as required, increasing discontent in Badlapur.

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression for all. Protesting in a democracy, and speaking out against injustice is part of this freedom of expression. If the police arrest people for reacting to injustice, it would be a violation of their freedom of expression under Article 19(1)(a)(b) of the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech and expression; and peaceful assembly without arms.

While the government can impose restrictions, it appears to have curtailed freedom of expression and the right to protest in this case.

For the first time in Maharashtra's history, people have spontaneously protested for nearly 10 hours against sexual harassment. The police's slow response contributed to the protest, and if they had acted promptly, the protest might not have occurred. Both the police and Badlapur residents share responsibility for the unrest.

The POCSO Act mandates action against delays, yet no case has been filed against the police for their delay, suggesting government support for the police and suppression of protest voices. This undermines democracy and may lead to electoral backlash in the upcoming assembly elections.

Chief Minister, please address the widespread anger and acknowledge

the ongoing safety issues for women in Maharashtra. Sexual abuse of minors continues in various institutions. Implement the Supreme Court's Vishakha guidelines in schools and workplaces. Last year's suppression of a woman officer's molestation case highlights systemic injustice.

Chief Minister, while the "Ladki Bahin" scheme is a positive step, a "Safe Sister" scheme is also needed. Police stations lack women officers to address complaints, and women often face the system alone. Take decisive action to ensure women can move freely without fear at all times in Maharashtra.

The physical wounds of the two girls will heal, but their psychological scars will persist. The "Manodhairya" scheme alone cannot compensate for these injuries. Work to create a situation where such schemes are unnecessary. Set a three-month deadline for fast-track case disposal and ensure severe punishment for the accused. The "Ladaki Bahin" Scheme will only be effective if women can live with dignity.

Chief Minister, to achieve this, you must have control over the administration and the police. Just as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj used to cut off the hands and feet of those who tortured women in his state, those who committed such crimes in Maharashtra must be stopped. If women continue to face such atrocities, they may be forced to take matters into their own hands.

(The writer is a practicing lawyer. Views personal.)

#### WWW.THEPERFECTVOICE.IN

## Carrom Craze

Maharashtra leads the way in South Asia's growing passion for the game. From today, The Perfect Voice representative **Anand Mishra** is going to introduce several star carrom players who has created a space for themselves.

layed on a wooden board with a smooth surface coated with powder, using a striker to flick small discs into any of the four corner pockets, has been gaining momentum in not only Indian homes and courts, but in South Asia, including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal. The mastery in hand-eye coordination, quick reflexes, tactical awareness, calmness under pressure, concentration and striking accuracy were fairly visible in the recently held

Rapido Carrom Super Six Tournament 2024 in Dadar wherein hundreds of carrom legends as well as rising stars across Maharashtra took on by displaying their sportsmanship. Notably, Maharashtra has been a dominant force in the Indian as well as world of carrom for many years as this state has produced world class players, who have excelled in various international tournaments. Maharashtra Carrom Association, the pioneering body of promoting this wonderful

game, organised this 3-day-long tournament to observe its 70th year of existence and glory. Arun Kedar, the honorary secretary of the association, informed that 236 male and 44 female carrom players from Maharashtra participated in this three-day tournament with little tweakedrules to make games more challenging and thrilling. The Perfect Voice representative spoke to a few champions of this wonderful game and peeked into their excellence.

eeta Chandorkar

#### THE QUEEN OF CARROM:

🗬 angeeta Jagannath Chandorkar's name is synonymous with Oexcellence in carrom, a sport where she has not only carved out a place for herself but also shattered the notion that only men dominate the field. Hailing from Mumbai, Sangeeta has made her mark on both the national and international carrom scenes. Her journey is a story of re lentless dedication, skill, and an unwavering pursuit of perfection, making her an icon in the sport.

Born and raised in a modest family in Dadar, Sangeeta's passion for carrom started playing in a small room and during these days, her guru Dashrath Yelve saw her and honed her talent. An avid carrom enthusiast Sangeeta's pastime soon turned into a serious pursuit as her talent radiated. Her keen sense of angles, precision in striking, and strategic thinking helped her bagging Sub Junior championship, Junior championship, Senior National championship, 1st World Cup, 1st USA Open, All India Bank Olympiad, All India bank Olympiad, Indo-Maldives series with Gold medals.

#### **Defining Moment**

Sangeeta's career-defining moment came when she was selected



as an extra player among senior competitors. Despite being a reserve, her exceptional performance earned her a spot in the main draw, leading to her breakthrough victory at her first national title at the age of 19. This victory marked the beginning of her ascent to the top. In 1991, she participated in her first World Cup and secured a silver medal, a testament to her growing prowess on the global stage. Over the years, Sangeeta has amassed numerous titles, including multiple National and World Championships, consistently proving her ability to stay calm under pressure and maintain

unparalleled concentration.

#### **Unyielding passion**

Beyond her personal achievements, Sangeeta is deeply committed to promoting carrom and mentoring young players. She actively shares her expertise with the next generation, driven by a passion to elevate the status of carrom in India and ensure it receives the recognition it deserves. Sangeeta Chandorkar's journey is an inspiration, not only to aspiring carrom players but to anyone striving for greatness. Her story is a testament to hard work, perseverance, and an unyielding passion for one's goal. As she continues to compete and mentor, Sangeeta remains a beacon of hope and inspiration, truly earning her title as the Queen of Carrom.

#### Sinquefield Cup Praggnanandhaa holds Liren

St Louis (USA): Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa navigated his match against the reigning world champion Ding Liren with remarkable ease, holding him to a draw in the sixth round of the Sinquefield Cup, the final leg of the Grand Chess Tour.

World championship challenger D. Gukesh also played out another enterprising draw with France's Maxime Vachier-Lagrave while Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi suffered a shocking loss, going down to Fabiano Caruana of United States in just 25

The sixth round saw no other surprises as the games between Anish Giri of Holland and Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan and Alireza Firouzja of France versus local star Welsey So ended draws.

With just three rounds remaining, Caruana seems determined to give Firouzja a run for his money even though the former still leads the fray on 4

Caruana and Wesley So are on 3.5 points each.

Praggnanandhaa, Gukesh, Vachier-Lagrave and Liren share the fourth spot on three points each with Nepomniachtchi and Abdusattorov following them a half point behind. Anish Giri stands last

3,50,000 prize money tournament. Gukesh has been trying hard in almost every game

but so far the lady luck has

on two points in the USD

not smiled on him. Playing white against Vachier-Lagrave, he went for the King pawn opening and faced the tried and tested Najdorf Sicilian.

## **Pushing Boundaries**

Sukant Kadam's fascinating journey to Paralympics

By Amit Kumar Das

New Delhi: Aged 10, Sukant Kadam fell on a cricket field and it altered the course of his life. A severe knee injury, followed by multiple surgeries, left him severely disabled and kept him away from sports for nearly a decade.

More than two decades later, the mechanical engineer-turned-para shuttler is poised to make his debut at the Paris Paralympics, determined to bring home a medal for India.

"I didn't understand the gravity of the situation then," Kadam, who competes in the SL4 category for athletes with standing/low mobility impairments, told PTI during an interview.

"I focused on my studies and earned a mechanical engineering degree. It was during college that I got exposed to so many sports, and that's when badminton caught my attention."

The sport gave him a new direction in life, and after completing his education, the 31-year-old dedicated himself fully to building a career in para-badminton.

"My dream was just to have India written on my Tshirt," he said.

"I could never have imagined coming this far. Now, my focus is on returning with a medal from the

Reflecting on his early years, Kadam shared how he quickly adapted to his new reality.

"Because I was 10, it was easy to accept and adapt in day-to-day life. I didn't understand that this was a major setback; I wasn't thinking about it that much," he

Kadam's journey was not without challenges, including facing discrimination. "It's difficult to say no to

that," he admitted. "But growing up in a small town, I didn't take it personally. Today, I might understand the emotions, but back then, I didn't let it affect me. If I had, it would have led to self-doubt and

hindered my preparation for

The turning point in Kadam's career came in 2012, when he watched Saina Nehwal win bronze at the London Olympics and Girisha Nagarajegowda claim silver in high jump (F42) at the Paralympics. These achieve-

new possibilities. In July 2015, Kadam joined the Nikhil Kanetkar Badminton Academy as an assistant coach. The role allowed him to sustain himself financially while mastering the nuances of the sport.

ments opened up his mind to

Kadam's dedication paid off. He has since secured four bronze medals at the World Championships (2019, 2022, 2024) and three at the Asian Para Games (2018, 2022).

As he prepares for his Paralympics debut, Kadam has placed a strong emphasis on mental training. "A lot of athletes think

Chinese players are not invincible, says

about the medal and the podium, and then they mess up right at the start," he said.

"It's crucial to stay in the present. Mental strength is about 60-70% of the game at this level. If someone is stronger than you physically, you need to outlast them mentally. I've worked hard

This time, Kadam has also had the luxury of time to

"This is the first time I've had a full three months to prepare, and I've made the most of it," he said.

"My team and I have focused on strength, technique, and endurance." Despite his impressive

track record, a gold medal has so far eluded him. But Kadam is determined to change that in Paris "We've taken past failures

as learning experiences," he "There are opponents I

need to push myself harder against because they are stronger on the circuit." Yet, Kadam remains con-

fident in his preparation and abilities.

"With the experience I have, I'm confident in myself. I just need to push a little further to change the colour of the medal," he

#### Paris Paralympic Social media makes buzz

Paris: The message is clear: Paralympians are not participating. They are competing.

A number of athletes oreparing for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games have proclaimed that on their social feeds over the past few days, reminding the world that Olympians are not the only athletes coming to Paris looking for gold.

The games will be underway next week with the opening ceremony on Wednesday. Athletes and the games' own social and creative teams have been taking a more aggressive approach to their messaging, leaning into disabilities and being willing to risk discomfiting their audience to introduce athletes and their personalities, not just their disabilities.

The International Paralympic Committee has released several YouTube videos to show the edgier side of its competitors, including: "Paris 2024: What Really Matters" and "Paris 2024: 100 Days to Go - Welcome to the Paralympics." The tagline for both: "This



is the Paralympics... they're not playing games."

A Guy With No Arms'If you didn't know the characters, the "What Really Matters" series opens on a jarring note. A genial 5-foot-6-inch man grasps a car's steering wheel with his foot. He leans over to his passenger and says with a sideways smile, "Is this your first time riding in a car with a guy without arms?"

The guy with no arms is Paralympic silver medalist Matt Stutzman, who has built up a brand as the "Armless Archer." He maneuvers the car with his feet: left foot on the pedals, right foot on the steering

wheel. Stutzman's passenger is Chuck Aoki, a wheelchair rugby player joining Stutzman on Team USA. In the YouTube series, Stutzman hosts Aoki and para track and field athlete Scout Bassett telling their stories from a different point of view with humor thrown

"There's that connection; it's like an unspoken bond," said Stutzman, who earned a silver medal in the men's individual compound open at the London games in 2012. "I might not know who Bassett is, but we both know that we both had to go through something specific to even get to the level where we're at in

#### **Edgy takes**

The IPC has received criticism for leaning into the disabilities of their athletes, but spokesman Craig Spence said the irreverent approach was necessary.

"If you speak to Paralympians, they've got a great sense of humor. They're not wrapped up in cotton wool and protected from society," Spence said in an interview earlier this

"They like to laugh about themselves," he said. "Like we all do, and that's why we've tried to be really edgy on the Paralympic TikTok account.

#### para table tennis star Bhavina Patel By Ankit Shrestha

New Delhi: Tokyo Paralympics silver medallist in table tennis Bhavina Patel is determined to do one better against her Chinese opponents at Paris Paralympics starting on August 28, saying they are not invincible.

The first Indian paddler to clinch a medal at Tokyo in Class 4 event, Bhavina said on departure for this vear's edition that she would look to defy Chinese domination in table tennis as they are "humans" too.

Bhavina told PTI Videos on Sunday, "Chinese players are humans and so are we. China does not matter to me, even during the Tokyo edition I had beaten a Chinese player so there's no pressure on me to face them."

"I have changed my tactics according to them so I will deploy my best plans against them on the day," she said.

The table tennis player

from Mehsana, Gujarat, who is also a Common-





wealth Games Champion and Asian Games medallist, said her only focus will be to give her best

"There is no nervousness. I just have to give my best. I believe that when we think about giving our best, nothing else comes to mind," she said.

Her doubles partner Sonalben Patel said, "Bhavina and I have put in a double amount of effort in our training as partners and we will try our utmost to return home with a medal.'

Tokyo Paralympics gold

medal winner in men's singles badminton SH6 event. Krishna Nagar said he will aim to replicate his performance.

"I hope that everything will be fine in Paris and I will try to win gold for India again. I will give it my all to defend my gold from Tokyo. Preparations went well, I feel positive and will look to play safe," he

Making his debut appearance at the Para Games, shot putter Sachin Khilari said that he is at least expecting a gold med-

ment in me, my prepara tions were going on for 1.5 years for the Paralympics, performed well at the World Championship and I expect a gold medal out of myself because I have worked hard to earn it," he said.

On how he is going to handle the pressure of competing against the best athletes in the world, Khilari quipped, "The pressure is on them to compete against me as I consider myself to be the best."

Debutant Sakshi Kasana, a discus throw athlete said, "I have worked tirelessly hard for this moment to come true as representing your nation at the Paralympics is the biggest thing for any athlete so I hope my four years of hard work pays PCI President and leg-

endary para javelin thrower Devendra Jhajharia claimed that India will finish among the top nations

"I have 20 years of expe-"There is a lot of excite-rience in para sports. I have taken 3 medals. know each player and their performances individually. The kind of support that we got from PM Modi, 50 players from the TOPS scheme are going, he said. "Many players got help

> will be winning more than 25 medals. India will be in the top 20 in the medal tally." He is also confident of

under CSR activity. We

seeing Sumit Antil defending his gold medal and hoisting the national flag.

'Sumit will definitely defend his gold medal Sumit is fit and is not under any kind of injury and has a high level of confidence in himself, the national anthem will definitely be played and Sumit will gold," Jhajharia said.

India have sent an 84-member team — the largest ever for Paralympics — to be held from August 28 to September 8 in Paris.

## Coach Deepali's hard work behind Swapnil's Olympic glory

#### By Ajai Masand

New Delhi: Shooter Swapnil Kusale isn't really superstitious but when fellow mates Akhil Sheoran and Shrivanka Sadangi gifted him a small key chain to ward off evil eye, he readily accepted it before boarding the flight to Paris for the

Swapnil has found himself being defeated by fate in several top-notch competitions, including the Asian Games in 2023 and the 2022 World Championships in Cairo, where just one shot -and a few decimal points --

pushed him to fourth place. But in Paris, the 29-yearold set the record straight, becoming the first Indian ever to win a bronze medal in 50m rifle 3-positions event at the Olympics.

While Akhil and Shriyanka, both 50m rifle 3-positions shooters, had secured Olympic quota places for the country, they could not make the cut for the Games following the Olympic Selection Trials conducted by the National Rifle Associa-

tion of India "Just before I was to travel to Paris, My best friends Akhil and Shriyanka came

to meet me and gifted a key chain to guard me against the evil eye. They said, 'bhai ieet ke aana hai' (return a winner). That, and the learnings

imparted by personal coach Deepali Deshpande and 'elder sister' Tejaswini Sawant, says Swapnil, played a huge role in his Olympic success. 'The three of us -- me,

Akhil and Shriyanka -- have been together for years and they take care of me whenever I am in Delhi. We share a very strong bond. Akhil is like my brother and Shrivanka my sister. We are a family whenever we are in



camp or competition... so many years we have spent together since our junior days." Swapnil told PTI on Saturday

Swapnil, who hails from Kolhapur in Maharashtra, says that it's the hard work put in by former international rifle shooter Deepali

#### **Asian Games traumatized me** Swapnil added that one bad shot of 7.6, which cost him

a medal at the Hangzhou Asian Games, had left him disturbed but the intervention of his mental trainer put him back on track. "During the Asian Games when I finished fourth, I was in trauma. But my psychologist handled it very well and prepared me on how to ignore the Hangzhou debacle. "He asked me not to think about that poor score and just focus on the shots that were really good, visualise them, how did you do that. So, once I started doing that, I started getting better scores in the finals. He told me, 'If there is a poor shot just erase it from your memory and concentrate on the remaining shots'."

that has helped him achieve success in his maiden

"Deepali ma'am is like my second mother. She has seen me shoot since 2012. She knows what I require, when I tend to get emotional or what makes me feel sad... what makes me happy. So,

ship goes back to my early days of shooting. She has intricately gone into every aspect of my shooting," says Swapnil, who missed a medal at the Hangzhou Asian Games last year only because of just one rank bad shot.

that mother-son relation-

When in Pune, he prefers to train with another shooting stalwart and former world champion in 50m rifle prone Tejaswini.

my elder sister. She is an Olympian and a very experienced shooter.

"Teju di (Tejaswini) is like