

THE PERFECT VOICE



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Doctors at AIIMS, RML end strike

New Delhi: In a huge relief to patients, doctors at major hospitals, including AIIMS, RML, LNJP and Maulana Azad Medical College in the national capital, ended their 11-day strike on Thursday soon after the Supreme Court made an impassioned appeal to the protesting medics to resume work and directed the Centre to provide safety measures to them.



leged, GTB Hospital and Indira Gandhi Hospital also announced their decision to call off the protest.

A tough-talking apex court termed "extremely disturbing" the Kolkata Police's delay in registering the unnatural death of the woman doctor raped and killed at the RG Kar Hospital.

The court, however, said judges and doctors cannot go on a strike since they deal with matters involving life and liberty.

Following the court's appeal and directions about safety of doctors, resident doctors' association (RDA) of several hospitals ended the strike that commenced on August 12.

The Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA), an umbrella body of doctors, RDAs of centre-run facilities such as AIIMS, RML and Lady Hardinge Medical College, and Delhi government-run LNJP, Maulana Azad Medical Col-

lege, GTB Hospital and Indira Gandhi Hospital also announced their decision to call off the protest.

In a post on X, the Federation of Resident Doctors Association (FORDA), a major body of RDAs across the country, announced its decision to call off the strike, saying the doctors will resume their duty.

"We are thankful to all RDAs, media personnel, various medical and non-medical associations and above all, our patients, for their support and understanding," it said.

The decision to call off the strike comes as a major relief to patients who were struggling to get regular medical care due to the closure of outpatient department (OPD) in government hospitals even as emergency services were functioning as usual.

"#FAIMA has decided to call off the strike following positive directions from the #Chief Justice of India. We

welcome the acceptance of our prayers for interim protections and the necessary steps to enhance security in hospitals. United, we will continue to fight legally," FAIMA said in a post on X.

The announcement by FAIMA came soon after several RDAs called off their strike over the Kolkata incident following an appeal from the Supreme Court.

The assault and murder of the junior doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital has sparked nationwide protests.

The doctors had several rounds of meetings with the Union health ministry and demanded a fast and transparent investigation by the CBI into the tragic incident, formation of a Central Protection Act and the implementation of safer conditions and security improvement measures in all institutes and medical colleges.

- PTI

Vaishnav cautions against addictive content

New Delhi: The government is encouraging the content creators' economy, which has huge potential to generate employment, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said on Thursday but cautioned against the creation of addictive content.

Vaishnav launched 25 Challenges covering a range of disciplines such as animation, filmmaking, gaming, music, and visual arts as part of the 'Create in India Challenge' ahead of the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES), scheduled to be held in November in Goa.

"We also have to ensure that we do not do anything that harms society. We have to guard ourselves against content that is addictive."



People walking along the seafront as the sun goes down on Marine Drive, in Mumbai on Thursday.

Pic: Bhusan Koyande

Arrested accused pervert, addicted to porn

Kolkata: The psychoanalytic profile of the arrested accused in the rape and murder of the woman doctor at the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, Sanjay Roy, indicated that he was a pervert and severely addicted to pornography, a CBI officer said on Thursday.

Quoting the doctors from New Delhi's Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), the officer also said

that the civic volunteer of the Kolkata Police has an "animal-like instinct".

The body of the post-graduate trainee was found in the seminar room of the hospital on August 9. The civic volunteer was arrested the next day in this connection.

"The man showed no repentance and narrated the entire episode giving every minute detail without hiccups. It appeared that he had

no remorse," the official of the central probe agency told PTI on Thursday.

Several pornographic contents were found in the mobile phone that Roy was using and later seized by the Kolkata Police before the investigation was handed over to the CBI on an order of the Calcutta High Court.

The CBI officer said that pieces of evidence, both technical and scientific, "very much support" that

the accused was present at the crime scene.

Referring to the CCTV footage collected from the hospital, he said, Roy could be seen near the chest department ward at around 11 am on August 8.

"Footage showed him entering the same building again at around 4 am on August 9. Certain technical and scientific evidence corroborated that," he said.

The officer did not want

to divulge anything about the DNA tests conducted on Roy.

He also refused to comment on the ongoing buzz that there was no gangrape in this case.

The CBI officers have visited Roy's residence in Bhowanipore, spoke to his family members, neighbours and also to his colleagues in the Kolkata Police force.

- PTI

Bahrain's track team sanctioned

Monaco: Bahrain's track team will have to pause its successful strategy of naturalizing athletes from Africa after accepting a package of sanctions related to doping.

World Athletics said Thursday that Bahrain had been restricted to a maximum of 10 athletes in the track and field events at the Paris Olympics — which wasn't announced at the time — and at next year's world championships in Tokyo.

Bahrain's team in Paris included Kenya-born Winfred Yavi, who won gold in Paris in the women's 3,000-meter steeplechase, and Nigeria-born sprinter Salwa Eid Naser, the silver medalist in the 400. Neither athlete was accused of any wrongdoing in the case announced Thursday.

The Bahrain Athletics Association admitted a charge of "conducting itself in relation to doping, negligently and/or recklessly and/or so as to prejudice the interests of World Athletics or bring the sport of athletics into disrepute," and another related to its employment of

staff to work with athletes, governing body World Athletics said.

That followed an investigation into allegations two athletes used blood transfusions at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and into the BAA having "engaged" a coach who was under a doping-related ban, World Athletics added.

Bahrain has agreed not to recruit any more foreign athletes until 2027, World Athletics said. The next Summer Olympics are in Los Angeles in 2028. Bahrain has also committed to fund a "talent academy" to develop local athletes and has set up a new national antidoping body.

It's not the first time Bahrain has faced scrutiny over doping, particularly among its roster of athletes who were naturalized.

Naser missed the Tokyo Olympics while serving a ban for not being available for drug testing. Kemi Adekoya, a former world indoor champion in the 400, got a four-year ban in 2019 in a steroid case.

- AP

Police officers virtually threatened us

The parents of the Badlapur victim narrate their ordeal to a Marathi news channel. Excerpts...

By Correspondent

On August 13, we went for a test at a private hospital. In this test, the doctor said that such (sexual abuse) incident happened with our daughter. Also, her report was positive. Meanwhile, a similar incident happened with the friend of the victim. So we waited for a day for her report. After that, we were shocked when the friend's report also came to light. Because a similar incident happened with both the girls.

We went to school. We also had a medical report. The incident was reported to the school principal and school teachers. The school administration denied the incident saying that it cannot happen in our school. The incident was said to have happened outside the school and not in the school. The principal claimed that it might have happened while riding a bicycle. But we have a medical report and we told them that this cannot happen while riding.

So even after informing the school immediately, they did nothing. Therefore, we the victim's family members demand that action should be taken against the principal and teachers of the school.

After this we directly reached the police station and tried to lodge a complaint. Also told the police that we have the medical report. However, the police did not even look at our medical report, instead they kept us sitting there. Also, the victim's family accused the police that they did pay heed to us. As the police did not listen to us, we called the local MNS leaders and sought their help. The MNS leaders came to the police station, but the police did not file an FIR. Later MNS people contacted senior police. Then a senior police officer came to the police station. After that our FIR was registered after almost 12 hours. But the victim's family accused the police that the police had made many changes in what we



- School said no such thing can happen
- Police did not look at the medical report
- Police made changes in the complaint
- No CCTV footage was provided
- Police threatened to book us for agitation

had said in that FIR.

The next day after filing the FIR, the police called us for a medical test. The time given was 9 am but the police had entered the hospital at 11.45 am. So both the

little girls had to stay in the hospital for several hours. The innocent girls had no idea what was happening to them. Then again at 4 pm they called us to the police station and kept us there.

We had to sit in the police station with the little girl and her pregnant mother. Also, some important documents were missing from the government hospital. It made us search for those documents. Later the same documents were found on the doctor's desk. The family members of the victim have alleged that they made us run from the police station to the hospital.

We had also demanded CCTV footage from the school. However, the school administration gave the reason that the CCTV was closed for 15 days. While we were in school, women police officers also entered. At that time we were made to sit outside and the lady police officer went into the room alone and discussed the school administration. After leaving the room, he told us, "No such incident happened, so don't spread false news." At this time, we also told him that we have medical evidence, but he didn't listen to anything. The vic-

tim's family alleged that the school has some connection with political leaders, so the lady officer tried to suppress our voice.

The doctor had asked the police to file an FIR. But the police filed an FIR only after 12 hours. The family of the victim also said that the accused was nowhere to be found after the incident, but we do not know how he was found suddenly on August 17.

The police threatened us during the agitation at Badlapur railway station. When the agitation started at Badlapur railway station, the police told us we should wait in the vicinity of the station. Strict action will be taken if found in agitation. Also, the victim's family alleged that the police threatened to file a case against us in the name of inciting the agitation in Badlapur.

During this entire period we were abused, threatened, female officers were missing for hours. Because of what happened to us, we have lost faith in the police.

India, Poland unveil 5-year 'Action Plan'

Warsaw: India and Poland on Thursday upgraded their ties to the level of a "strategic partnership" and inked a social security pact to promote the mobility of skilled workers following wide-ranging talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Polish counterpart Donald Tusk.

In the meeting, both sides vowed to significantly expand the bilateral defence and security ties with Tusk expressing Warsaw's eagerness to be a key partner in New Delhi's aim to boost domestic defence production and modernise its armed forces.

Modi arrived in this Pol-

ish capital on Wednesday, in the first visit by an Indian prime minister to Poland in nearly half a century. In the second leg of his two-nation trip, Modi will be in Kyiv for around seven hours on Friday.

The prime minister also held talks with Polish President Andrzej Duda.

Following the Modi-Tusk talks, the two sides unveiled a five-year "Action Plan" (2024-2028) for the India-Poland strategic partnership identifying a range of areas including defence, trade, agri-tech, energy, green technologies, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals and mining for cooperation.

"This year we celebrate 70 years of our diplomatic relations. On this occasion, we have decided to reshape our relation into a strategic partnership," Modi said in his media statement with Tusk by his side.

"Today we have identified several initiatives to give a new direction to our relations," he said.

The 'Action Plan' lists various priority areas for boosting engagement under different pillars including political and security cooperation, trade and investment, transport and connectivity, climate, energy, mining, science and technology and EU-India.

It specifically mentioned supporting the early conclusion of the ongoing India-EU trade and investment negotiations, the operationalisation of the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) and the implementation of the India-EU Connectivity partnership.

In his remarks, Modi said the social security agreement will promote the mobility of the workforce and ensure their welfare. The prime minister also thanked Poland for facilitating the evacuation of Indian students from Ukraine after the conflict began in 2022.

Tusk said Poland wants to expand its defence coopera-

tion with India. "We are ready to take part in the modernisation of military equipment."

A joint statement said both sides recognised the need to strengthen and deepen cooperation in the defence sector.

To this end, they agreed to fully utilise existing bilateral mechanisms, including the Joint Working Group for Defence Cooperation.

Modi said both sides identified several initiatives to give a new direction to the relations.

"Efforts will be made to connect the private sector to broaden economic cooperation," he said.

"Poland is among the world leaders in food processing. We want Polish companies to join the Mega Food Parks being built in India," Modi said.

The prime minister said rapid urbanisation in India is opening up new opportunities for our cooperation in areas such as water treatment, solid waste management, and urban infrastructure.

"Clean coal technology, green hydrogen, renewable energy, and artificial intelligence are also our common priorities. We invite Polish companies to join Make in India and Make for the World," he said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the President of Poland Andrzej Duda during a meeting, in Warsaw, Poland on Thursday.

Badlapur sexual abuse case

HC calls it "absolutely shocking"

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Thursday called the sexual assault on two minor girls at their school in Badlapur "absolutely shocking" and said that there cannot be any compromise on the safety and security of girls.

A division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan said that action ought to be taken against the school authorities for not reporting the incident despite being aware of it. It also blasted the police over the delay in registering the FIR.

The court had taken suo motu (on its own) cognisance of the incident where two four-year-old girls were sexually assaulted inside the school's washroom at Badlapur in Thane district by a male attendant on August 12 and 13.

The FIR in the case was lodged on August 16 and the accused was arrested on August 17, as per court documents.

The bench said the police machinery had not moved till the public hit the streets with a protest and outburst.

"Unless there is strong public outburst, machinery won't move. Won't the state move till public outbursts like this," the court asked.

The bench said it was appalled to note that the Badlapur police had not probed the case properly.

"Such serious matters where girls as young as three and four-year-olds have been sexually assaulted...how can the police take it so lightly,"



Shiv Sena (UBT) workers protest against the state government in Mumbai on Wednesday. Pic: Bhushan Koyande

the court questioned. "If schools are not a safe place what is a child supposed to do? What did a three and four-year-old child do? This is absolutely shocking," the court said.

The bench said it was not at all "happy" with the manner in which the Badlapur police handled the case.

"We are only interested in seeing that the victim girls get justice and this is exactly what the police should have also been interested in," HC said.

The bench directed the police to ensure all support is given to the victims and their families.

The victims should not be victimised further, it said. "In this case, the girls

complained, there might be so many cases which may have gone unnoticed," the bench said.

The court said the families of the girls ought to have been shown some support by the police but it was not done in this case.

"First thing, the police should have filed FIR. School authorities were silent. This discourages people from coming forward," the court said.

"People should not lose faith in the police system or the judicial system. If public had to come to the streets then think about the future," the HC said.

It also called for steps within the police machinery to sensitise cops.

The bench directed the Special Investigation Team (SIT) set up by the government to probe the case to file a report by August 27 stating what steps it has taken about the recording of girls' statements and their families.

The report will also have to state why there was a delay in registering the FIR by the Badlapur police and in recording the statement of the second victim, the court said.

"We are appalled that the Badlapur police has not taken any steps to take the statement of the second girl till date," HC said.

The court said if it comes to know that there has been an attempt to hush up the

case then it won't hesitate to take action against the police officer concerned.

"Also tell us what steps is the state government taking to ensure the safety and security of girls. There can be no compromise on this," HC said.

The bench further said that the school authorities were aware of the incident but kept silent and did not inform the police.

Under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, non-reporting of a sexual assault is also an offence, said the court.

"This should have been done even before SIT was constituted. It was incumbent on the police to take ac-

tion. Non-reporting of such incidents is also an offence," the court said.

Advocate General Birendra Saraf assured the court that action would be taken against the school authority concerned on Thursday itself.

"You will be taking action against school for not reporting. School authorities had not come forward. Whoever is responsible for the delay, action will be taken. No one will be spared," the court said.

Saraf informed the bench that the statement of one of the girls has been recorded before a magistrate and the statement of the second victim girl would be taken on Thursday.

The court sought to know why there was a delay in doing that.

The bench directed the SIT to also submit the original case diary maintained by the Badlapur police, a copy of the FIR and other papers related to the case.

Saraf informed the court that the errant police officials from the Badlapur police station have been suspended.

The bench said the suspension was not enough.

The alleged sexual assault on the two kindergarten students by a male attendant had sparked a massive protest in Badlapur on Tuesday.

The male attendant, who was arrested on August 17, allegedly assaulted the kids in the school's toilet. A local court on Wednesday extended his police custody till August 26.

Uddhav attacks CM over politically motivated remark

By Correspondent



Mumbai: Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday targeted Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, saying those who feel there is politics behind Badlapur protest over the alleged sexual assault on two minor girls are either abnormal or protectors of the culprits.

Thackeray was referring to CM Shinde's claim that the protest was politically motivated and most of the protesters had come from outside. CM Eknath Shinde on Wednesday said that the protests at Badlapur were politically motivated and most of the protesters were outsiders.

The MVA has called for a Maharashtra bandh on August 24 to protest against the alleged sexual assault on the two girls.

Accusing the government of behaving in a very insensitive way while handling the sexual assault case, Thackeray flayed the government over the delay in registering the FIR. He said the pregnant mother of one of the girls was made to wait for hours.

He also asked where CM Shinde was when the protests took place.

He said there is no political motive behind the bandh called by the opposition bloc Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) on August 24. The bandh is aimed at creating awareness that the security of women should be a priority and also awakening the government.

He said the protest was not like the much-publicised Mukhyamantri Mahi Ladki Bahin Yojana, which he claimed has been rolled out keeping the upcoming assembly polls in mind. It is the manifestation of anger, he said.

Thackeray wondered what the use of Ladki Bahin Yojana is when sisters in the state are not safe.

"Those who feel there is politics behind the Badlapur protest are either abnormal or protectors of the culprits," the Sena (UBT) chief said at a news conference. He also slammed the government for registering cases against the protesters.

A massive protest rocked Badlapur town in Thane district on Tuesday after thousands of people hit the streets and spilled onto railway tracks to protest the alleged sexual assault on two four-year-old girls by a male attendant on the premises of a local school.

Thane teen complains of rape

Thane: The Thane police have registered a case after a 14-year-old girl alleged that a man she had befriended on social media raped her, an official said on Thursday.

The girl was allegedly sexually assaulted when she met the man about three months ago in the Mumbai area, he said, citing the FIR.

The girl's social media friend also allegedly threatened to kill her family members if she spoke about the crime.

Her family recently shifted from Mumbai to the city's Kapurbawdi area where they approached the police, he said.

On their complaint, the Kapurbawdi police on Wednesday registered a case under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections 64 (rape) and 65 (rape in certain cases) and under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

A probe is underway to track down the accused, the official added.

Son falsely implicated, claim parents of accused

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The parents of Akshay Shinde, the accused in the Badlapur sexual assault case on Thursday claimed that their son was innocent and he had been framed.

Speaking to a Marathi news channel, the parents said there is no truth in the allegations against their son.

The accused, who worked as an attendant, has been arrested for allegedly sexually molesting two 4-year-old girl students inside the toilet of a school in Badlapur town in Maharashtra's Thane district. A local court on Wednesday sent him to police custody till August 26.

"Our son had been doing the job for the past 15 days. He used to go to the school by 11 am daily to clean the bathroom. He would then proceed to another place for similar work," his mother claimed.

The mother said they learnt on August 13 that such an incident had happened in the school. Their son was detained on August 17, she said.

"A woman working with

the school told me about the incident and about my son being taken to the police chowki (on August 17). I rushed there and saw police thrashing him. They also beat my younger son," said the mother.

At the police station, officials told them about the crime committed by him, she claimed.

The arrested attendant's mother said she and her husband also used to go to the Badlapur school every day to clean the premises. "We used to go to the school at 5.30 pm daily for the cleaning work and come out around 8.30 pm," she said.

The mother claimed that the accused had some medical issues in his childhood and was mentally weak. But he has taken medicines for that, she said.

"Some people came to our house on Tuesday and beat up all the family members and threw out our belongings," claimed the father of the accused.

"Our house was vandalised by the people. They did not allow us to utter a single word. They just told us not to stay in the village as he (accused) is our son," the father claimed.

Four booked for molestation



Thane: The Thane police have registered a case against four persons for molesting a woman and assaulting her two friends after a minor road accident, an official said on Thursday.

The incident took place around 12.30 am on Wednesday when the complainant was travelling in a car with her two male friends.

Their car accidentally brushed a passerby, after which his friends assaulted the two men in the vehicle. When the woman tried to intervene, they pulled her shirt and molested her, the official said, citing the FIR.

The four men have been booked under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for using criminal force to outrage a woman's modesty, voluntarily causing hurt and furtherance of common intention, the official said, adding that efforts were being made to track them down.

- PTI

Parents seek action against 'abusive' teacher

By Correspondent

Thane: Scores of parents stormed into a school in Thane on Thursday seeking action against a teacher who allegedly hit a student, resulting in injuries to his head.

As per parents, the woman teacher, who allegedly hit the student, routinely subjected students to abusive language over the last two years and would ask them to boycott some of their colleagues.

The parents, who entered the school along with local functionaries of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, claimed previous complaints to the management had yielded no results.

The management has taken a lethargic approach in the matter so far and the teacher must not be allowed



to be part of the school, Thane-Palghar MNS chief Avinash Jadhav said.

On Thursday, the school management said the teacher had been asked not to enter the premises, adding that it had written to the education department to suspend her and take further action. A copy of the letter written by the school management to the state

education department is with PTL.

"We will file a case against the teacher and school management at Nauda police station. Strict action must be taken," MNS leader Jadhav told reporters.

Videos showing irate parents and MNS activists entering the school went viral on social media soon after.

Two dead as car rams into tree

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Two persons died on Thursday after their car rams into a tree along Eastern Express Highway in Mumbai's Vikhroli area, a police official said.

The incident happened in the early hours of the day and the deceased have been identified as Siddharth Dhage (23) and Rohit Nikam (29), both residents of Kannamwar Nagar in Vikhroli East, he said.

"Dhage was driving the car allegedly in a rash and negligent manner and lost control of the vehicle. He crashed into a tree on the footpath along the arterial road near a hotel. Passers-by alerted police and the duo was rushed to a hospital," the official said.

"Dhage and Nikam were declared dead on arrival at the hospital. A case has been registered and further probe is underway," he added.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Eknath Shinde, Chief Minister

"There was a similar case of sexual assault (in the past). We expedited the trial in a fast-track court, and the culprit was given death penalty within two months after the crime was committed."

Survey finds bakeries using wood

Mumbai: An environmental non-profit has raised concerns over the alarming use of wood as fuel in Mumbai's bakeries, warning that it poses serious health risks to citizens and battling for the adoption of cleaner methods to combat air pollution.

The Bombay Environment Action Group (BEAG) surveyed 200 bakeries across the city over six months and found that about 47 per cent of these establishments rely on wood fuel, primarily scrap



sourced from furniture stores, for their operations.

This practice releases harmful volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and particulate matter (PM2.5) into the air, which leads to asth-

ing them particularly harmful to human health.

As per the study, the Byculla and Mumbai Central areas (E ward) have the highest concentration of bakeries, with 84 establishments, followed by Andheri (K West ward) with 53, and Mohammed Ali Road (B ward) with 39 bread-and-cake units.

The BEAG study also estimated that 72 of the surveyed bakeries emitted 80,381 kg of PM2.5, highlighting the severity of the

issue. Electricity is the second most common fuel source, used by 28 per cent of the bakeries, while about 21 per cent depend on a combination of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and electricity, the report said.

The environmental NGO said the study aims to raise awareness and call for prompt action to protect the health of Mumbai's health and the city's environment.

- PTI

BRIEF

FSSAI orders removal of A1, A2 claims

New Delhi: Food safety regulator FSSAI on Thursday directed food businesses, including e-commerce players, to remove claims of 'A1' and 'A2' types of milk and milk products from packaging, calling such labelling misleading. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said these claims do not conform with the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. In its latest order, FSSAI said it had examined the issue and found that A1 and A2 differentiation is linked to the structure of beta-casein protein in milk. However, current FSSAI regulations do not recognize this differentiation. "FBOs are instructed to remove such claims from their products," the regulator said, referring to food business operators. E-commerce platforms were also told to remove these claims from products and websites immediately. Companies have been given six months to exhaust pre-printed labels, with no further extensions to be granted.

A1 and A2 milk differ in their beta-casein protein composition, which varies based on cow breed. The regulator emphasized strict compliance with this directive. Welcoming the order, Parag Milk Foods Chairman Devendra Shah said the FSSAI order is a step in the right direction. "A1 and A2 is the category developed by marketing gimmick. ...It's essential that we eliminate misleading claims that can misinform consumers," he said in a separate statement. A1 or A2 milk product category never existed and globally also this trend is fading away, he said, and added that the FSSAI's clarification supports this broader understanding.

PhonePe launches "credit line on UPI" facility

Mumbai: On Thursday, the leading fintech company PhonePe launched credit line feature on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platform, nearly a year after NPCI, the National Payments Corporation of India, first introduced the same feature. Additionally, this feature gives merchants on PhonePe's Payment Gateway the ability to present customers with an extra payment choice during the checkout process. "This not only reduces friction but also lowers cart abandonment, resulting in increased sales," the company stated. This facility will provide small-value, high-volume retail loans. This progress comes after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) made a recent move to broaden the range of UPI services. This "Credit Line on UPI" feature enables users to obtain credit from banks and utilize it through UPI applications.

NITI Aayog report

Doubling MMR's GDP in five years

By Correspondent

Mumbai : A report prepared by the NITI Aayog on the development of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) aims to double the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the next five years, and make Mumbai and its satellite towns a global economic hub.

At present the region's GDP is Rs 12 lakh crore (USD 140 billion) and it should reach Rs 26 lakh crore (USD 300 billion) by 2030, the report submitted to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde by NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam said.

While there are one crore employment opportunities in the MMR at present, there is a need to create 30 lakh more opportunities, the report said.

Chief minister Shinde said infrastructure and communication facilities are the foundation for the state's development, and work was

underway in that direction.

The report said the Maharashtra government needed to focus on seven sectors: Developing Mumbai into a global services hub, facilitating affordable housing, transforming MMR into global tourism centre, integrated development of ports in MMR, creating an industrial and logistics hub, development of cities and sustainable, all-inclusive infrastructure facilities of

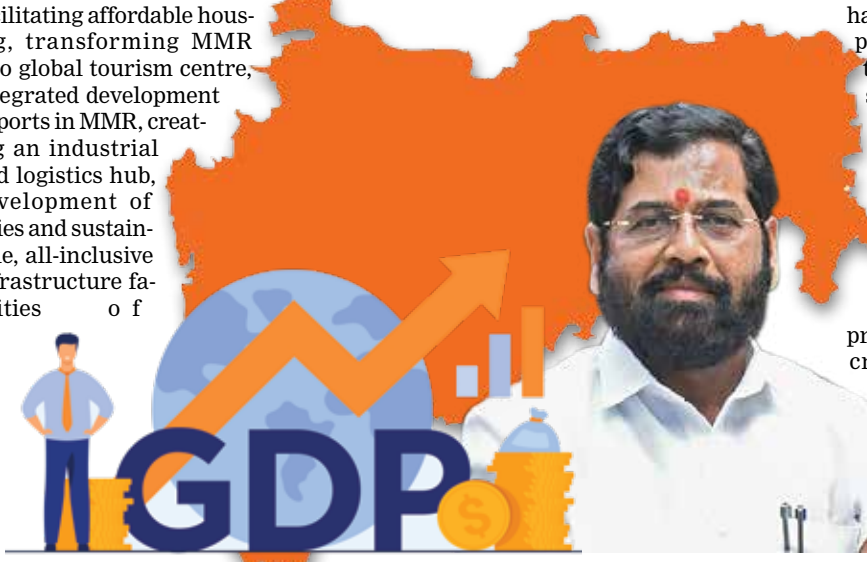
global standards.

In private sector, investment of about Rs 10 to 11 lakh crore was needed, and cities should be developed as growth engines, the

report said.

The MMR, which comprises Mumbai city, Mumbai suburbs, Palghar, Raigad and Thane districts, accounts for a third of Maharashtra's GDP, the report noted. Speaking on the occasion, Shinde said his government is working on affordable housing, employment generation, a data centre in Navi Mumbai and the Alibag m u l t i - m o d a l corridor.

Recently, investment projects worth Rs 80,000 crore have been sanctioned, and efforts are on to develop the 720 km-coastline of the state for tourism, the CM said.



Nokia joins moon spacesuits mission

New Delhi: Nokia has joined hands with Axiom Space to integrate advanced 4G/LTE communication capabilities into the next-generation spacesuits that will be used for the Artemis III mission, NASA's ambitious plans to land humans at the south pole of the moon.

The Artemis-III mission is likely to be launched in 2026 and Nokia plans to build the first cellular network on the moon, which would be in-built in the space suits used by astronauts.

Nokia and Axiom Space will incorporate high-speed cellular-network capabilities in the Axiom Extrave-

hicular Mobility Unit (AxEMU), supporting HD video, telemetry data and voice transmission over multiple kilometers on the Moon, a company statement said.

"Adding high-speed 4G/LTE network capability on the Moon will serve as a vital bridge linking astronauts to Earth, facilitating crucial data exchange, and enabling high-definition video communication over long distances," Russell Ralston, Axiom Space executive vice president of extravehicular activity, said in a statement.

This advancement will enable Ar-

temis III crew members to capture real-time video and communicate with mission controllers on Earth while they explore the lunar surface, it said.

An Indian astronaut, trained for ISRO's Gaganyaan project, is scheduled to fly to the International Space Station next year as part of a NASA Axiom Space - Ax-4.

Nokia plans to deploy the cellular network on the Moon as part of Intuitive Machines' IM-2 mission, which is scheduled to be delivered to the launch site later this year.

- PTI

TVS launches Jupiter 110

Mumbai : TVS Motor has launched TVS Jupiter 110 scooter at an ex-showroom price of Rs 73,700. The scooter offers 10% better mileage and improved pickup, dual helmet storage, front fuel filling, and a Bluetooth-enabled cluster, setting a new standard in commuting. It is available in 4 variants - Drum, Drum Alloy, Drum SXC and Disc SXC with a palette of exciting colours.

- PTI

No SC order on proceedings against Byju's

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to pass an interim order to ensure that the committee of creditors (CoC) does not hold any meeting in pursuance of the insolvency proceedings against embattled ed-tech firm Byju's.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, however, said it will accord the final hearing in the matter on August 27. The bench said the developments, which may take place in the meantime, can be negated if it finds there was no merit in the appeal of the US-

based creditor Glas Trust Company LLC against the judgment of the insolvency body -- National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT).

At the outset, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Byju's, and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), said the CoC has been constituted in the meantime and 98 per cent stakes are with the US firm.

Singhvi said the CoC has been set up at 7 pm on August 21 and this is quite unfair and will make the case irreversible.

Not against e-commerce firms: Goyal

Mumbai: Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said that India is not against e-commerce companies but wants them to be fair and honest.

In remarks that came a day after he flagged concerns about e-commerce firms, Goyal said online businesses need to ensure a "fair chance" of competing. Goyal on Wednesday voiced concerns about predatory pricing by e-commerce firms and feared about the impact their operations have on small retailers in the country.

JN Port to have container handling capacity of over 10 mn TEUs

Mumbai: Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal on Thursday said that the container handling facility at Jawaharlal Nehru Port is being scaled up to 10 million TEUs.

Speaking with reporters after reviewing various infrastructure and development projects at the port, the minister also said that the upcoming Vadhvan Port in the Palghar district of Maharashtra would generate 10 lakh jobs in the region.

To be built as an all-weather port, the greenfield deep draft mega port will come up at an investment of



Rs 76,200 crore.

The minister said JNPA soon will have a container handling capacity of around 10 million TEUs. A senior JNPA official said that the container handling capacity currently stands at 7.4 million TEUs, which will go up to 10.4 million TEUs by April

next year. Sonowal said that Jawaharlal Nehru Port has become the first 100 per cent landlord port in the country, adding that, "accordingly we are aiming for bigger and bigger ships at this facility." He also said that the port has developed quality infrastructure and is going to become an eco-friendly Port.

A landlord port acts as a landlord and regulatory body while private companies handle port operations. JNPA also announced the signing of two MoUs -- one between the JNPA, Vadhvan Port, and REC for the disbursement of loans to support various infrastructure

projects.

While the other one is between JNPA and Gateway Terminals India (GTI) for the implementation of shore power supply for vessels. Both the MoUs were inked in the presence of the Minister. The minister also launched a Whatsapp chatbot for the Vadhvan skilling programme developed by INPAT to empower the local community and enhance workforce development. This tool is designed to facilitate access to skilling programs, provide information about Vadhvan Port among others.

- PTI

MNCs Indian arm listing recommended

By Correspondent

Mumbai : Multinational companies with Indian subsidiaries should consider listing their subsidiaries on the stock exchanges and improve the valuation of the parent company, said a report by ICICI Securities.

"We note that Hyundai Motors and Coca-Cola ap-

pear to be exploring such an opportunity," the report said. The report points out that it is in the interest of the parent company to look at its valuation on SoTP (sum of the parts) basis.

Looking at the parent ex-India implies a far lower valuation multiple. However, for this to make a meaningful difference, the Indian

subsidiary's contribution to profit should increase beyond the current mid single digit levels. Case in point being HUL-Unilever, where Unilever's 18x 2-year forward P/E reduces to 14x ex-India business given HUL stock trades at 51x P/E, the report said.

Higher the P/E (price-to earning multiple, expensive

is the valuation and lower the P/E, attractive or cheaper is the company. The above example indicates that the parent company is under-valued compared to its Indian subsidiary.

"Several global consumer companies (Mondelez, L'Oreal, Nivea, Reckitt Benckiser, Carlsberg) have

significant Indian operations. As per the above SoTP valuation methodology of MNC parent companies, we believe that listing of such companies in India may improve the valuation of their parent stock -- or even rerate it." Although revenue and profit contribution of most Indian consumer MNCs to their par-

ents have increased over the past couple of years, they still remain in low-to-mid-single digit (barring HUL and Kansai Nerolac). ICICI Securities believes that Nestle India is likely to increase its contribution to its parent company Nestle SA given India's outperformance.

Indian consumer MNCs'

stocks have largely outperformed their parents' over 2-5-10-20 years periods and their valuation multiple has expanded over the past few years driven by (1) earnings outperformance (Colgate, HUL, Nestle, USL) and (2) expectations of volume growth acceleration (Akzo Nobel India, Kansai Nerolac), the report said.

BSE SENSEX		TOP GAINERS	
August 22, 2024		August 22, 2024	
%	POINTS	%	POINTS
+1.51	1486.25	-1.52	1068.60
+1.45	154.10	-1.32	2733.65
+1.38	1190.90	-1.27	403.50
+1.23	3603.40	-1.14	4499.95
+1.07	3184.90	-0.86	333.90
+0.93	11307.25	-0.76	1750.35
+0.91	933.95	-0.70	1492.40
+0.67	12297.65	-0.48	1169.80
+0.53	820.15	-0.22	2545.00
+0.43	1626.25	-0.14	504.60

BSE SENSEX		TOP LOSERS	
August 22, 2024		August 22, 2024	
%	POINTS	%	POINTS
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+1.45	154.10	-1.32	2733.65
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+0.67	12297.65	-0.48	1169.80
+0.53	820.15	-0.22	2545.00
+0.43	1626.25	-0.14	504.60

GAIL, Petron sign pact for bio-ethylene plant

New Delhi: State-owned gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd on Thursday said it has signed an agreement with US biofuel producer Petron Scientech Inc to jointly explore setting up of a 500 kilo tonnes per annum bio-ethylene plant in India.

The memorandum of understanding provides for the two firms looking at setting up the plant based on bioethanol in a 50:50 joint venture, GAIL said in

a statement.

While GAIL is India's largest natural gas transportation and marketing company, Petron specializes in setting up biomass and grain processing bio-refinery projects to produce ethanol, bio-ethylene, bio-chemicals (ethylene oxide / mono ethylene glycol, Methanol) and various bio-fuel projects worldwide.

- PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Balbir Singh Dhillon, Head, Audi India

"There is no science behind this, it's just a gut feeling that maybe by the time we reach 50 per cent penetration in the luxury (electric) space, we need that support (lower GST) and thereafter it is driven by itself."

Doctor Rape and Murder

'Extremely disturbing': SC on delay in registering death

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday termed "extremely disturbing" the Kolkata Police's delay in registering the unnatural death of the woman doctor who was raped and murdered at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. It also asked protesting doctors to resume work and assured them that no adverse action would be taken after they rejoin.

Questioning the sequence and timing of legal formalities conducted by police, a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said it was very surprising that the postmortem of the deceased was

conducted on August 9 between 6.10 pm to 7.10 pm before the registration of case as unnatural death.

"How was it that the post-mortem was conducted at 6.10 pm on August 9 and yet the unnatural death information is sent to Tala police station at 11.30 pm on August 9. This is extremely disturbing," the bench, also comprising Justice J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said.

It directed the Kolkata Police officer, who registered the first entry about the rape-murder that has shocked the country, to appear in the next hearing and disclose the time of the entry.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBI, told the top court that the most shocking fact is that the FIR was registered at 11.45 pm after the postgraduate medic was cremated.

"State police told parents it was suicide, then they said it was murder. Victim's friend suspected cover up and insisted on videography," Mehta told the bench.

As the hearing commenced, the top court asked protesting doctors to resume work, and assured them that no adverse action will be taken against them after they rejoin.

The apex court was told

by the counsel for resident doctors at AIIMS Nagpur that they are being victimised for protesting over the Kolkata rape-murder case.

"Once they get back to duty, we will prevail upon authorities to not take adverse action. How will public health infrastructure run if the doctors do not work?" the bench asked.

"If there is difficulty after that, come to us... but let them first report to work," it said.

The top court said its heart goes out to all patients visiting public hospitals.

It assured doctors' associations that the Na-

tional Task Force will hear all stakeholders.

The brutal assault and murder of the junior doctor has sparked nationwide protests. Her body was found with severe injury marks inside the seminar hall of the state-run hospital's chest department. A civic volunteer was arrested by the Kolkata Police in connection with the case the following day on August 10.

On August 13, the Calcutta High Court ordered the transfer of the probe from the Kolkata Police to the CBI, which started its investigation on August 14.



Former cricketer Sourav Ganguly's wife and dancer Dona Ganguly along with others light candles to pay tribute and protest against the alleged sexual assault and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor, in Kolkata on Wednesday.

-PTI

Body found in dam, search on for missing aircraft

Jamshedpur: A team of the Indian Navy was set to join the search for the trainer aircraft that went missing with a pilot and a trainee shortly after it took off from an aerodrome in Jharkhand's Jamshedpur, officials said on Thursday.

As the search continued in the reservoir of the Chandil dam, where it was suspected to have crashed on Tuesday, a body was found floating this morning, they said.

The 19-member Navy team along with equipment reached Ranchi around 12.50 am.

"The Navy team from Visakhapatnam landed in Ranchi to extend help for the search operation.

Taxi operators protest in Goa

Panaji: Hundreds of tourist taxi operators and those owning shacks and water sports facilities held a protest in Pernem in Goa on Thursday alleging their rights had been ignored despite giving land for the Manohar International Airport in Mopa.

They walked to Pernem police station demanding that Chief Minister Pramod Sawant arrive there and speak to them.

"People of Pernem sacrificed their lands for Manohar International Airport but they have not got their due share after the facility was commissioned. The airport management is taking unilateral decisions without

taking the CM into confidence, which is inconveniencing citizens," former Mandrem panchayat sarpanch Amit Sawant said.

"The Manohar International Airport must have a special tourist taxi counter for operators from Pernem. Parking fee must be capped as well," another protester told reporters.

The protesters were urged to withdraw their strike by Deputy Superintendent of Police Jivba Dalvi and local MLA Jit Arolkar, who said he had spoken to the CM and a meeting had been arranged on Friday at Porvorim.

Arolkar said the CM was in Delhi for an important meeting.

Aid, advice to Guv for prosecution of Kumaraswamy

Bengaluru: The Karnataka Cabinet on Thursday decided to give "aid and advice" to Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot to act on requests seeking sanction for prosecution against JD(S) leader and Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy and three former BJP Ministers including mining baron G Janardhan Reddy. The Congress government's move comes within a week of the Governor granting sanction for prosecution of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam' on August 16.

"To take decisions in the pending cases at the earliest and to smoothen the judi-

cial process, under article 163 of the Constitution the Cabinet can give aid and advice to the Governor. Using it, the Cabinet has given its approval to give the Governor aid and advice," Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H K Patil said.

Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, he said: "the advice will be sent to the Governor."

"Out of the four cases that are pending regarding which we have given aid and advice, in two of these cases (Janardhan Reddy and Kumaraswamy) the charge sheet has been filed..." he added.

Asked whether the Governor can reject the Cabinet's aid and advice, Patil said: "According to us, he is bound by our advice; his discretion

is limited. I am sure he shall use his discretion very judiciously."

The Governor on August 16 accorded sanction against Siddaramaiah, under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 for the commission of the alleged offences as mentioned in the petitions of Pradeep Kumar S P, T J Abraham and Snehamayi Krishna.

Patil said several petitions seeking his sanction for prosecution are pending before the Governor, including those submitted by the investigating agencies under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988; in some of these cases charge sheets have been filed.

HC asks state to submit report

Kochi: The Kerala High Court on Thursday asked the state government to submit to it in a sealed cover the Hema Committee report on atrocities against women in the Malayalam film industry.

The state government said it has all the names mentioned in the uncensored original report which was a confidential document.

It said the committee was entrusted to study and report the situation of women in the movie industry but the government has limitations in registering cases as the statements were recorded by the committee upon ensuring confidentiality.

It is not possible to register a case against that confidentiality statement, the government said.

Hema Committee

A division bench comprising Acting Chief Justice A Muhamed Mustaque and Justice S Manu, while considering a PIL filed by Thiruvananthapuram resident Navas, said the report contains serious allegations.

The high court admitted the writ petition and directed the government to file its counter affidavit.

The court asked the government its next course of

'Kejriwal Aayenge' campaign in Delhi

New Delhi: AAP on Thursday launched a campaign called 'Kejriwal Aayenge' in the run up to the assembly polls in Delhi next year.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is lodged in Tihar jail in connection with a corruption case linked to the alleged excise policy scam being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

"The party has launched the 'Kejriwal Aayenge' campaign. Hoardings of Kejriwal with the tagline 'Kejriwal Aayenge' have been put up in the national capital. The party's new slogan is 'Sisodia aa gaye hai, Kejriwal aayenge,'" an AAP functionary said.

Kejriwal's former deputy Manish Sisodia was recently granted bail in the excise policy case after 17 months in jail. AAP leaders have expressed hope that Kejriwal would also be granted bail soon.

Members raise questions on provisions of Waqf bill

New Delhi: The Joint Committee of Parliament on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill held its marathon first meeting on Thursday amid objections by opposition MPs over a host of provisions in the proposed law as the Union minority affairs ministry made a presentation.

Heated words were exchanged at times during the meeting but members from various parties sat through several hours, recording their views on the provisions of the Bill, offering suggestions and seeking clarifications.

The Trinamool Congress' Kalyan Banerjee, Sanjay Singh of AAP, Asaduddin Owaisi of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) and A Raja of the DMK were joined by some other opposition members in raising questions over the need for several clauses, including the move to give more powers to the collector and have non-Muslim members on Waqf boards.

There was a view among the members, some of them said, that the ministry was not "adequately prepared" to address the queries raised in the meeting.



The next meeting of the committee will be held on August 30, a member said.

Committee Chairperson Jagdambika Pal assured the members that the panel would speak to all stakeholders, including various Muslim bodies.

The 31-member committee has been tasked by the Lok Sabha to scrutinise the contentious Bill, which has drawn protests from the opposition parties and Muslim organisations.

The representatives from the minority affairs ministry were expected to brief the committee on the "amendments proposed on the Bill", the Lok Sabha Secretary said.

The committee will discuss the Bill threadbare and also the concerns over it, Pal said ahead of the meeting, adding that voices of different stakeholders would be heard.

Bill to abolish Muslim marriages, divorce act

Guwahati: The Assam government on Thursday introduced a bill to repeal a law to register marriages and divorces of Muslims, stating that it had scope to allow marriages of minors from the community.

Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Jogen Mohan tabled The Assam Repealing Bill, 2024 in the Assam Moslem Marriages and Divorces Registration Act, 1935 and the Assam Repealing Ordinance 2024.

"There remains a scope of registering marriages of intended person below 21 years (in case of male) and 18 years (in case of female)," he said. It hardly had any provisions for monitoring the implementation of the Act throughout the state and it attracted huge amounts of litigation in the court, he added. "There is a scope of misuse by both authorised licensee (Muslim marriage Registrars) as well as by citizens for underage/minor marriages and forcefully arranged marriages without the consent of the parties."

Actor-politician Vijay unveils party flag

Chennai: Popular Tamil film actor-turned-politician Vijay unveiled the flag of his political party - Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam - on Thursday and hoisted it at his party headquarters in Panaiyur near here.

The two-coloured flag with maroon on top and bottom, has yellow in the middle with a motif of two fighting tuskars on either side of the Vaagai flower.

The unveiling of the flag and also official launch of the party anthem heralds a new chapter in Tamil Nadu politics marked by the entry of the Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK), which is gearing up to face the 2026 Assembly elections in the state.

Though Vijay announced the launch of his political outfit in February, he chose not to contest the 2024 Lok Sabha elections nor did it support any party during the polls.

While unveiling the TVK flag, the top actor took a pledge along with



Actor-turned-politician and Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam President Vijay addresses supporters during the unveiling of party's flag at party headquarters, on the outskirts of Chennai on Thursday.

his party workers.

"We will always appreciate the fighters who fought and sacrificed their lives for the liberation of our country, and countless soldiers who

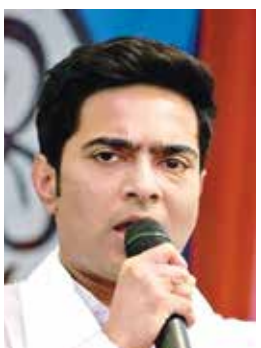
fought tirelessly for the rights of our people from Tamil soil," the pledge read.

The party took a vow to remove the differences in the name of caste, reli-

gion, gender, place of birth and also to create awareness among the people and strive for equal opportunities and equal rights for all.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Abhishek Banerjee,
Member of
Parliament, TMC

"With 90 rapes reported daily, 4 every hour and 1 every 15 minutes - the urgency for a decisive action is clear. We need strong laws that mandate trials and convictions within 50 days, followed by the severest punishments, not just empty promises. State governments must act and urgently push the Union for a comprehensive anti-rape law that ensures swift and strict justice."

Bill to abolish Muslim marriages, divorce act

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pealing Ordinance 2024.

"There remains a scope of registering marriages of intended person below 21 years (in case of male) and 18 years (in case of female)," he said in the Statement of Object and Reasons of the Repealing Bill.

It hardly had any provisions for monitoring the implementation of the Act throughout the state and it attracted huge amounts of litigation in the court, he added.

Solvent leak could have triggered fire

Atchutapuram: A suspected solvent leakage could have triggered a blaze in a pharma unit here that has killed 17 persons, a senior official said on Thursday.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu visited the injured persons at a hospital in Visakhapatnam and announced ex-gratia of Rs one crore to the kin of victims. He also assured necessary precautions to prevent such incidents in future.

Anakapalli district Collector Vijaya Krishnan told PTI there was no rise in the death toll which stood at 17

following the accident on Wednesday.

"The actual cause is yet to be ascertained," she said, adding preliminary assessment pointed to solvent leakage from a pipe which fell on an electric panel, leading to the fire accident.

17 killed in AP pharma unit

Vijaya Krishnan observed that a suspected solvent leakage could have triggered the blaze in the plant of Escientia Advanced Sciences Pvt Ltd here, leading to the death of 17 per-

sons and injuries to 33.

The Anakapalli district Collector told PTI that there was no rise in the death toll which stood at 17 following the accident on Wednesday.

"The actual cause is yet to be ascertained," she said, adding preliminary assessment pointed to solvent leakage from a pipe which fell on an electricity panel, leading to the fire accident.

The Chief Minister, who met the injured persons undergoing treatment at a hospital, said Rs 50 lakh would be given to severely injured workers and Rs 25 lakh to the injured persons.

Chandrayaan-3 data Moon's surface once an ocean of magma

New Delhi: Data from ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 mission supports the theory that the Moon was once covered in an ocean of magma, or a 'magma ocean', an analysis, published in the journal Nature, has suggested.

The analysis pertained to measurements of the lunar soil, recorded by the Pragyan rover and taken at multiple points along a 100-metre track on the surface.

The rover was deployed by the Vikram lander, which made a soft landing near the south pole of the Moon on August 23, 2023. Chandrayaan-3, consisting of the lander and rover, was launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Bengaluru.

The study's authors, including those from the Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, said that previous missions, such as NASA's Apollo and the Soviet Union's Luna, have mainly relied on samples of soil taken from equatorial and mid-latitude regions of the Moon, respectively.

Analysing Pragyan's data, which came from the Moon's south pole, the researchers found that the samples suggested that the lunar soil was uniformly composed of a single rock type - ferroan anorthosite, or FAN.

The authors said that their results were similar to those from analysis of samples taken from the equatorial and mid-latitude regions.

Further, the similar composition of samples taken



from geographically distant locations supports the lunar magma ocean hypothesis, a widely accepted scenario for Moon's early evolution, they said.

The hypothesis provides one of the possible explanations of how the Moon's crust, mantle, and core formed.

According to the hypothesis, Moon was formed as a result of collision between two protoplanets (stage preceding planet formation). While the bigger planet became the Earth, the smaller became the Moon.

As a result, the Moon became very hot, thereby, melting its entire mantle into a 'magma ocean,' the theory suggests.

It further states that as the Moon cooled while it was forming, less dense FAN floated to the surface, whereas heavier minerals sank to form the mantle, which lies underneath the crust. Therefore, the theory posits that the Moon's crust is largely made of

FAN. However, the analysis also revealed that Pragyan detected magnesium in the lunar soil, which the researchers said could not be explained by the lunar magma ocean, or LMO, hypothesis.

They added that the hypothesis has been questioned by some studies based on recent re-analysis of many samples procured during Apollo's mission.

"Although alternative scenarios exist, the APXS-measured composition, its uniformity over regional scales and the geological context support the LMO hypothesis," the authors wrote.

An Alpha Particle X-ray Spectrometer, or APXS, aboard the Pragyan rover was used to collect information about elements in the soil in the vicinity of the Chandrayaan-3 landing site, which was named the 'Shiv Shakti Point' on August 26, 2023.

-PTI

NGT fines Kanpur DM

New Delhi: The NGT has imposed a fine of Rs 25,000 on the district magistrate of Kanpur Nagar in Uttar Pradesh for not following the tribunal's directions to apprise it personally about a report on people getting affected by exposure to toxic metals, including chromium.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) was hearing the matter regarding the discharge of chromium or untreated industrial effluents by tanneries and improper functioning of the common effluent treatment plant at Jajmau village in Kanpur Nagar district, besides the issue of disposal or dumping of chromium at some places across Kanpur Dehat and Kanpur Nagar districts.

In an order passed on August 14, a bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava said the tribunal had earlier directed the DMs of Kanpur Nagar and Kanpur Dehat to file a report about the status of people



affected by exposure to the toxic metals and the health facilities provided to them.

The bench, also comprising judicial member Justice AFRun Kumar Tyagi and expert member A Senthil Vel, underscored that the tribunal's directions dated May 13, 2024, had specified that if any DM wished to file a report directly before the tribunal, the officer had to personally appear before it.



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

Pic: PTI

Delhi to revise 2019 Climate Action Plan

New Delhi: The rapid environmental degradation over the last few years has prompted the Delhi government to revise the 2019 Climate Action Plan and a draft policy on it will be submitted to the Centre in the next two weeks, Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Wednesday.

Addressing a press conference here, Rai said climate change is no longer an abstract concept but is directly impacting human lives.

"The rapid environmental degradation we have witnessed over the past few years prompted

us to initiate a review of the 2019 policy. A stakeholder group was formed and meetings were held to discuss the necessary updates," Rai said.

He emphasised the severe impact of recent extreme weather events, including unprecedented heatwaves and record-breaking rainfall.

"The reckless exploitation of nature in the name of development has led to consequences that are now being directly felt by people," Rai said, highlighting the urgent need to address climate change.



"Given the seriousness of the matter, we have drafted a new policy which will be submitted to the central government," he added.

The revised plan will focus on seven key areas -- energy, urban planning, water, forests, transport, agriculture, and health, Rai said.

Second food forensic unit in Himachal

Shimla: Checking adulteration in food items and detecting causes of food-borne illnesses would no longer be a tedious exercise in Himachal Pradesh as the state government has given the nod to set up a food forensic unit in the state.

Once established, it would be the second food forensic unit in the country after the one in Gujarat.

"Quality food products are the need of the hour and the forensic unit would check the sugar content, pesticides and insecticides present. Samples of ration being distributed through public distribution system will also be tested in the long run," Director, state forensic services, Meenakshi Mahajan told PTI on Thursday.

"Once established, this would be the second food forensic unit in the country after Gujarat. The lab could be set up in the state forensic science laboratory at Junga near Shimla or at regional laboratories in Mandi or Dharamshala," she said and added that the department would also give a proposal to set up a self-sufficient unit where industrial samples



could also be tested.

Presiding over the HP Forensic Sciences Development Board meeting at Shimla on Tuesday, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu had said forensic behavioral analysis unit, food forensic units and other new units would be established in the department for effective functioning.

Forensic chemistry employs chemical methodologies to assist investigative organisations and law enforcement while food forensics is an academic discipline that examines explicitly and investigates any unlawful activities associated with food items or their use within a particular region.

"There have been cases

where people have died due to food poisoning and two infants were killed in Mandi few months back after consuming baby feed. A family of lawyers died due to food poisoning in Dharamshala and another instance was death of two girl students of a government college after taking food in Kangra district," Mahajan said.

Besides, the forensic food units would help in identifying pesticides amount, chemicals sugar and other elements injurious to health in food items and in case of deaths the guilty could be booked with evidence.

In addition, blending of steroids in food items could also be detected, the director said.

-PTI

President gives away first-ever Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday conferred the first-ever Vigyan Ratna Puraskar -- India's top most science award -- on noted biochemist and former director of the Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Science Govindraj Padmanabhan.

The team of scientists and engineers who worked on the Chandrayaan-3 mission were honoured with the Vigyan Team award, which was received by project director of the mission P Veeramuthuvel.

All the awardees received a medal and a citation for their outstanding achievements in their respective fields.

Annapurni Subramaniam, director of Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Astrophysics and, Anandharamakrishnan C, director of Thiruvananthapuram-based National Institute of Interdisciplinary Science and Technology; Avesh Kumar Tyagi, director of the chemistry group at the Bhabha Atomic Research Institute; Prof Syed Wajih Ahmad Naqvi of Lucknow-based CSIR-National Bio-

tanical Research Institute were among the 13 recipients of the Vigyan Shri awards.

Biologist Umesh Varshney from Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Science; Prof Jayant Bhalchandra Udgaonkar of the Pune-based Indian Institute of Science Education and Research; Prof Bhim Singh, Emeritus Professor of IIT-Delhi; Sanjay Behari, director of the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences and Technology; Prof Adimurthi Adi of IIT-Kanpur, Rahul Mukherjee of IIM-Kolkata also received the Vigyan Shri awards.

Physicists Naba Kumar Mondal of Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics and Lakshmanan Muthuswamy of the Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli; Prof Rohit Srivastava, IIT Bombay also received the Vigyan Shri awards.

The Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarnam Bhatnagar awards were given to climate scientist Roxy Mathew Koll of the Pune-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology; Prof Vivek Polshettiwar of Tata Institute of Fundamen-

tal Research and Prof Vishal Rai of IISER-Bhopal; Krishna Murthy S L of Indian Institute of Rice Research and Swarnam Kumar Parida of National Institute of Plant Genome Research.

Prof Radhakrishnan Mahalakshmi of IISER-Bhopal, Aravind Penmasta of IISc, Bengaluru; Abhilash of the CSIR-National Metallurgical Laboratory, Jamshedpur; Radha Krishna Ganti of IIT-Madras; Purbi Saikia of Central University of Jharkhand; Bappi Paul of the National Forensic Sciences University, Gandhinagar were among the Vigyan Yuva awards.

Pragya Dhruv Yadav of the Pune-based ICMR-National Institute of Virology, who played a key role in development and evaluation of Covid-19 vaccines; Prof Jitendra Kumar Sahu of Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh; Mahesh Ramesh Kakde of IISc, Bengaluru were among the recipients of the Vigyan Yuva awards.

Urbasi Sinha of the Raman Research Institute, Bangalore; Digendranath



Swain of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thiruvananthapuram; Prashant Kumar of the Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad; and Prof Prabhu Rajagopal of IIT-Madras also received the Vigyan Yuva awards.

Paris Agreement on climate change at stake



By Gaurav Saini

New Delhi: The Paris Agreement is at risk if countries fail to deliver a meaningful new climate finance goal to help developing nations combat and adapt to climate change, the spokesperson for the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) has warned.

LMDC is a bloc of around 25 developing nations that advocates for shared positions in international climate negotiations. This group includes India, China, Pakistan, Argentina, Iran, and Egypt, and

represents more than 50 per cent of the world's population.

In a virtual interview with PTI, Diego Pacheco, the spokesperson for LMDC and the lead negotiator for Bolivia, said developed countries are attempting to dilute their responsibility to provide climate finance by creating a complex New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) framework with multiple layers.

NCQG refers to the new, larger amount that developed nations must mobilize each year, starting in 2025, to sup-

port climate action in developing countries.

Countries are expected to finalize NCQG at this year's UN climate conference COP29 in Azerbaijan's Baku in November.

Pacheco said developing countries are implementing their national climate plans to achieve Paris Agreement goals or nationally determined contributions (NDCs) without "any support at all" from developed countries that have historically benefited from industrialization and contributed the most to greenhouse gas emissions.

"Developing countries cannot move forward with more commitments without the necessary financial support. After 10 years since the approval of the Paris Agreement, it is time to discuss the key issue for the implementation of the pact."

"If we cannot succeed in achieving a meaningful NCQG, all the agreements made in Paris are at stake," he told PTI.

The LMDC spokesperson added the Global South has been calling for greater cooperation to tackle the climate crisis

-PTI

Red Sea Opertion

French destroyer rescues 29 mariners



Dubai: A French destroyer rescued 29 mariners from an oil tanker that came under repeated attack in the Red Sea, officials said Thursday, while also destroying a bomb-carrying drone boat in the area.

Yemen's Houthi rebels are suspected to have carried out the assault on the Sounion. The attack, the most serious in the Red Sea in weeks, comes during a monthlong campaign by Houthi targeting ships over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip that has disrupted a trade route through which \$1 trillion in cargo typically passes each year.

The Sounion is now at anchor in the Red Sea and no longer drifting, the European Union's Operation Aspidos said. However, it wasn't clear if the vessel

was still ablaze. The vessel had been staffed by a crew of Filipinos and Russians. Military officials did not name the French destroyer involved in the rescue.

In the attack Wednesday, men on small boats first opened fire with small arms about 140 km (90 miles) west of the rebel-held Yemeni port city of Hodeida, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre said. Four projectiles also hit the ship, it added. It wasn't immediately clear if that meant drones or missiles.

The Houthis did not immediately claim responsibility for the attacks, though it can take them hours or even days before they acknowledge their assaults. However, they did acknowledge US airstrikes in Hodeida that the Ameri-

can military's Central Command said destroyed a Houthi surface-to-air missile and radar system.

The Houthis have targeted more than 80 vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started in October. They seized one vessel and sank two in the campaign that also killed four sailors. Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by a US-led coalition in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets.

The rebels maintain that they target ships linked to Israel, the United States or the UK to force an end to Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the conflict, including some bound for Iran.

As Iran threatens to re-

taliat against Israel over the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, the US military told the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier strike group to sail more quickly to the area. Early Thursday, the US military's Central Command said the Lincoln had reached the Mideast's waters, without elaborating.

America also has ordered the USS Georgia-guided missile submarine into the Mideast, while the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier strike group was in the Gulf of Oman. Additional F-22 fighter jets have flown into the region and the USS Wasp, a large amphibious assault ship carrying F-35 fighter jets, is in the Mediterranean Sea.

- AP

Imran's party postpones power show

By Sajjad Hussain
Islamabad: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party on Thursday postponed its planned rally in the capital here until next month on the direction of its founder and jailed former premier Imran Khan after the government refused to permit the demonstration.

Party leader Azam Swati said while talking to the media outside the Adiala Jail Rawalpindi where he along with party leader Gohar Khan met Khan.

"The rally has been rescheduled and now will be held on September 8 as directed by Imran Khan," Swati made the announcement, adding that the government also agreed to the new date.

He also quoted Khan as saying that the party workers, who were already out on the road to reach the venue, should go back.

The announcement comes as the capital city was tense due to the threat by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) leaders to go ahead with its plan to hold the rally in Islamabad despite the government's refusal to give permission.

The government closed all schools in Islamabad and also blocked all main entries to the city by placing shipping containers on roads to stop the movement of the PTI workers. There were reports of traffic jams and long queues of vehicles on the inter-city roads which were still open.

PTI had sought to hold a power show after months of political wrangling over the cases against its party chief Khan and other leaders.

- AP

Bangladesh violence

UN team to arrive on fact-finding mission

Dhaka: A team of UN experts is set to arrive in Dhaka on Thursday to set a framework for the fact-finding mission that will investigate the killings of at least 650 protesters ahead of and in the aftermath of Sheikh Hasina's resignation as the prime minister earlier this month.

"This is the primary UN team of experts before the UN fact-finding mission comes and investigates (the atrocities). We are expecting to sign an agreement of framework for the probe," The Daily Star newspaper quoted a UN official based in Dhaka as saying on Wednesday.

The UN team is expected to discuss detailed terms and conditions for investigating all the human rights violations that took place between July 1 and August 15, the official said.

The delegation will stay here for at least a week and meet the civil society groups, victims of human rights violations, students and government officials and any other actors concerned, the official added.

Foreign ministry officials also confirmed the arrival of the three-member UN team.

Bangladesh descended into chaos after Hasina's government collapsed and she fled to India on August 5 amid violent protests over quota reforms for government jobs, while the Army stepped in to fill the power vacuum on August 5. Before that, the anti-government protests had killed more



than 500 people since mid-July. Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus took oath as the Chief Adviser of the interim government on August 8.

According to a primary report of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights published on August 16, between July 16 and August 11, as many as 650 people were killed in Bangladesh during the student-led protests and after the fall of the Awami League regime. Of these, nearly 400 deaths were reported from July 16 to August 4, while around 250 people were reportedly killed following the ouster of the Awami League-led government on August 5 and 6.

The reported death toll is likely an underestimation, as information collection has been hindered by restrictions on movement due to the curfew and the internet shutdown, the OHCHR said. The UN human rights body further says that the number of reported killings in revenge attacks since August 5 remains to be determined. Those killed include protesters, bystanders,

journalists covering the events and several members of the security forces.

Thousands of protesters and bystanders have been injured, with hospitals overwhelmed by the influx of patients. The majority of deaths and injuries have been attributed to the security forces and the student wing affiliated with the Awami League.

This will be the first time the UN is sending a fact-finding mission to Bangladesh since its independence in 1971 to investigate widespread human rights abuses in the country, the Chief Adviser of the Government of Bangladesh said in a post on X last week, the handle for which is run by Yunus' office. UN human rights chief Volker Turk last week assured his support and said an inclusive, human rights-centred approach will ensure the transition in Bangladesh succeeds. Turk had underlined the need for accountability for all those responsible for human rights violations and violence, including against religious minorities, in Bangladesh.

- PTI

Day three of Democratic National Convention begins with Vedic prayer

By Lalit K Jha

Chicago: The third day of the Democratic National Convention on Wednesday kicked off with a first-of-its-kind Vedic prayer where the priest sought blessings for a united country.

"Even if we have differences, when it comes to the nation, we have to be united and it moves us towards justice for all," said Indian-American priest Rakesh Bhatt as he formally started the third days' proceedings of the Democratic National Convention (DNC) in Chicago.

"We should be in unison. Let our minds think together.

er. Let our hearts beat as one. All for the betterment of society. May this make us powerful so we can unite and make our nation proud," the senior Hindu priest said.

A priest at the Sri Siva Vishnu Temple in Maryland, Bhatt hails from Bengaluru. He is a Madhva priest trained in Rig Veda and Tantrasaara (Maadhva) Agama, under his guru, Pejavar Swamiji of Udipi Ashta Matha.

"We are one universal family. Truth is our foundation and always prevails. Lead us from unreal to real. From darkness to the light, and from death to immor-

ality. Om Shanti Shanti Shanti," Bhatt said.

Bhatt, who is fluent in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi, English, Tulu and Sanskrit, has a Bachelors and Masters degree in three languages: Sanskrit, English and Kannada. He obtained his English and Kannada degrees from Osteen College, Bengaluru and the Sanskrit degree from Jaychamarajendra College.

After working in Udipi Ashta Matha for a few years, he worked for a short period in Badrinath and Raghavendra Swami Koil, Salem and joined Sri Sri Vishnu Temple in July 2013.

- PTI

Zelensky visits border area

Kyiv: President Volodymyr Zelensky toured the northeastern Ukrainian region of Sumy on Thursday in his first visit to the border area since his forces entered Russian territory more than two weeks ago.

During a meeting with Ukraine's military commander, Zelensky said Ukrainian forces have claimed control of another settlement in the Russian region of Kursk and taken more Russian prisoners of war whom he hopes to exchange for captured Ukrainians.

The Russian Defence Ministry announced Thursday that its military has claimed control of the village of Mezbove.

- AP



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with artists after their performance upon his arrival at a hotel, in Warsaw, Poland on Wednesday. Pic: PTI

PM Modi voices 'deep concern' over Ukraine, West Asia

Warsaw: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday voiced "deep concern" over the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia, saying India firmly believes that no problem can be solved in the battlefield and it supports dialogue and diplomacy for the early restoration of peace and stability.

He made the remarks in a joint press statement after his meeting with Polish counterpart Donald

Tusk during which they discussed ways to strengthen bilateral ties and decided to elevate the bilateral relationship into a Strategic Partnership.

"The ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia are a matter of deep concern for all of us. India firmly believes that no problem can be solved in the battlefield," Modi said.

Modi, who will travel to Ukraine tonight at the invitation of Presi-

dent Volodymyr Zelensky, said that the loss of lives of innocent people in any crisis has become the biggest challenge for the entire humanity.

"We support dialogue and diplomacy for the early restoration of peace and stability. For this, India, along with its friendly countries, is ready to provide all possible support," he added. Modi thanked Prime Minister Tusk for his invaluable

efforts to strengthen the India-Poland friendship, saying they are "truly commendable".

He also thanked him for playing an important role in facilitating the evacuation of Indian students from war-torn Ukraine in 2022. Prime Minister Modi said that India and Poland have also been moving forward in close coordination on the international stage.

- PTI

Indonesians at parliament

Jakarta: Thousands of protesters attempted to storm Indonesia's parliament Thursday and throwing stones at police, and forcing the legislature to delay a vote on controversial changes to election laws that could further enhance political influence of outgoing President Joko Widodo.

- PTI

US reaffirms commitment to Tibetans

Washington: A top US government official met with the Dalai Lama and, on behalf of President Joe Biden, reaffirmed the US' "commitment" to advancing the human rights of Tibetans and supporting efforts to preserve their distinct historical, linguistic, cultural, and

religious heritage. The Dalai Lama, 89, is recuperating in New York since he underwent a successful knee replacement surgery on June 28. The meeting comes months after President Biden signed into law a bill which enhances US support for Tibet.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Bill Clinton, Former President, US

"We've got a pretty clear choice it seems to me. Kamala Harris, for the people. And the other guy who has proved, even more than the first go-around, that he's about me, myself and I."

In Texas: 90-foot-tall Hanuman statue



By Seema Hakhu Kachru

Houston: A 90-foot-tall bronze murti of Lord Hanuman, unveiled near here, symbolising "a new milestone in the cultural and spiritual landscape of America," has become the latest landmark in Texas visible from miles away, and the third tallest sculpture in the US.

The Statue of Union, as it has been named, is one of the tallest statues in the world and holds several other distinctions: it is the tallest Ha-

numan murti outside India, the tallest in Texas, and the third tallest statue in the United States, surpassed only by the Statue of Liberty in New York (151 feet) and the Pegasus and Dragon in Hallandale Beach, Florida (110 feet), organisers said.

The 'Statue of Union' Hanuman murti, which was unveiled at the Sri Ashtalakshmi Temple in Sugar Land, about 35-odd km from here, during a grand Prana Prathishta Mahotsavam ceremony from August 15 to 18, symbolises "selflessness, devotion,

and unity," the organisers said, adding, the murti is named so to "honour Hanuman's pivotal role in reuniting Lord Ram and Sita."

"This awe-inspiring structure is the result of the visionary efforts of His Holiness Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji, a Padma Bhushan awardee, and a renowned Vedic scholar, who envisioned the project as a spiritual epicentre for North America," the organiser said in a statement.

The festivities commenced on August 15, coinciding with

India's Independence Day and the core of the celebrations unfolded on August 18, with the grand Prana Prathishta ceremony. "The rituals, led by Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji and overseen by a multitude of Vedic priests and scholars, were a powerful display of devotion and spirituality."

The ceremony featured a helicopter showering flowers upon the murti, sprinkling of sacred water, and placing of a 72-foot-long garland around statue's neck.

- PTI

EDITORIAL

The Malaise of
Mollywood

The recent publication of the Justice Hema Committee report has laid bare the disturbing underbelly of the Malayalam film industry, revealing a culture rife with exploitation, discrimination, and abuse.

What emerges from the report is not just a picture of individual misconduct but a systemic failure. The Malayalam film industry, long celebrated for its artistic excellence, now stands accused of perpetuating a culture of misogyny and abuse.

The 235-page report, which languished in bureaucratic limbo for five years before its release, paints a grim picture of an industry dominated by a few powerful men—producers, directors, and actors—who operate with impunity, treating female colleagues as commodities in a system that resembles a feudal fiefdom more than a modern workplace. It exposes a litany of horrors that have long been whispered about but rarely confronted. Sexual exploitation is rampant. Women entering the industry are subjected to demands for sexual favours in exchange for roles, often from well-known figures who wield significant influence. The report notes chilling accounts of actresses being coerced, harassed, and even assaulted, with some incidents occurring just before these women were expected to perform alongside their abusers on set.

The power dynamics at play are stark and unforgiving. The industry's 'mafia', as one actor described it, exerts control through an informal but effective system of bans, and operates through a law of 'omerta' (silence).

The Women in Cinema Collective (WCC), which played a crucial role in bringing these issues to light, has itself been targeted by these shadowy forces, with members facing professional blacklisting for daring to challenge the status quo. Beyond sexual predation, the report also highlights a myriad of other abuses like unsafe working conditions and inadequate facilities on sets for women.

The junior artists, who are the most vulnerable in this ecosystem, are often treated worse than slaves, subjected to gruelling hours and denied basic rights. The absence of legal protections compounds these problems. The Malayalam film industry operates in a legal vacuum where contracts are frequently informal, leaving actors and technicians at the mercy of unscrupulous producers and directors. The Kerala government, too, must shoulder its share of the blame. That the report remained unpublished for five years is a damning indictment of its commitment to addressing these issues. The authorities must now act decisively, ensuring that the perpetrators are held accountable and that comprehensive reforms are implemented to protect those working in the industry.

As for the future of Malayalam cinema, it is at a crossroads. The industry can either continue to be defined by the toxic practices detailed in the Hema Committee report or it can seize this moment to cleanse itself. Only then can it hope to reclaim its reputation and truly be a beacon of cinematic excellence.



By
Shoumojit Banerjee

The weight of a complex history accompanies Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his first visit to Ukraine—the first Indian PM to visit the war-torn country in 30 years.

With Ukraine embroiled in a protracted and brutal conflict with Vladimir Putin's Russia since February 2022, Modi's visit signals a nuanced shift in India's foreign policy, a diplomatic quadrille shaped by both ancient alliances and modern geopolitical realities.

It certainly is a performance of balance, reflecting India's intricate and, at times, contradictory stance on the Russo-Ukrainian war. (His meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy comes barely a month after he met with Putin in Moscow.) Modi's visit comes at a time when the world is increasingly polarized between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian factions.

The Russo-Ukrainian war has complicated India's historical friendship with Russia. Modi's visit to Ukraine is reflective of India's broader strategy of multi-alignment, where it seeks to engage with all major powers without becoming entangled in their conflicts.

AGE OF EXTREMES

In the Shadow of War



British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had famously described Russia as "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma" during a radio broadcast on October 1, 1939, shortly after the outbreak of World War II. Churchill's now iconic and oft-quoted observation was a recognition of the complex, often opaque nature of Russian foreign policy and a cautionary note about the challenges of predicting Russia's moves on the international stage.

While this statement encapsulates the West's frustration and bewilderment in dealing with the Soviet Union and Russia during the Cold War and post-Cold War era, India has had less reason to regard Russia as a riddle or an enigma. India's historical ties with Russia are deep and enduring, dating back to the Cold War era when Moscow was one of New Delhi's most reliable allies. Yet, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine presents India with a diplomatic conundrum: how to maintain its strategic partnership with Russia without alienating the West or appearing indifferent to the sovereignty of a Ukraine under siege.

Officially, Modi's visit framed as an effort to discuss humanitarian aid and reconstruction efforts in Ukraine, but the subtext is far more complex. India has abstained from UN resolutions condemning Russia's actions, a stance that has been

criticized by Western powers as tacit support for Moscow. Yet, Modi's presence in Kyiv suggests an attempt to recalibrate this perception, to position India as a neutral powerbroker rather than a passive observer. To understand India's cautious diplomacy, one must delve into the historical context that has shaped its relationship with Russia. During the Cold War, non-aligned India found itself at odds with both the United States and China. It was the Soviet Union that provided military and economic support to India, a lifeline during moments of crisis such as the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, where Moscow's backing was crucial in countering American and Chinese pressure.

This legacy of support forged a bond that has persisted long after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Even today, Russia remains a key supplier of defense equipment to India, accounting for a significant portion of India's military arsenal. And yet, the situation in Ukraine presents both risks and opportunities for India to diversify its defence partnerships.

One area ripe for collaboration is aerospace technology. Ukraine has expertise in missile technology, particularly in areas like radar systems, anti-tank guided missiles, and aircraft engines. India, with its ambitious defence modernization

plans, could benefit from accessing this technology, especially as it seeks to reduce its reliance on Russian arms. There are already precedents for this: Ukraine has supplied India with gas turbine engines for its naval vessels and has been involved in the overhaul of India's fleet of An-32 transport aircraft.

Another potential area of cooperation lies in the realm of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and drones. Ukraine has made significant strides in drone technology, which has proven critical in its current conflict. India, which has been rapidly expanding its drone capabilities, could look to Ukraine for advanced UAV systems that are battle-tested and could be integrated into its military arsenal. The possible joint development and production of military equipment also offer a promising avenue. India's emphasis on 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) in defence aligns with Ukraine's need to bolster its defence production capabilities in the face of ongoing conflict. By engaging with Kyiv, India is signalling that it is not indifferent to the plight of Ukraine, even as it refrains from outrightly condemning Russia. It is a diplomatic tightrope walk, reflecting India's broader strategy of multi-alignment, where it seeks to engage with all major powers without becoming entangled in their conflicts.

MY EXPERIENCE

How did I unmask Puja Khedkar



By
Vijay Kumbhar



The Indian Administrative Service (IAS) is widely regarded as the backbone of India's administrative machinery, a bastion of neutrality, integrity, and dedication to public service. Yet, the recent controversy surrounding 32-year-old Puja Khedkar has cast a long shadow over this esteemed institution, shaking its very foundations. Khedkar, an alleged IAS officer, became the center of a storm when her extravagant lifestyle, including the ownership of a luxury Audi car, sparked an investigation that unravelled a web of deceit.

My involvement in exposing Khedkar's fraud was born out of a simple curiosity. A photo of her car, complete with a beacon—a symbol of authority—surfaced on social media. As someone deeply invested in transparency and good governance, I found myself questioning whether such a lifestyle was consistent with the modesty expected of

The Puja Khedkar case is not just about an individual but speaks to systemic issues within the IAS and broader public services, writes noted RTI activist Vijay Kumbhar who was instrumental in bringing the case in the public domain

public servants. What began as a casual inquiry soon morphed into a full-fledged investigation.

A few keystrokes on Google revealed a treasure trove of information about Khedkar, including details of her caste certificate and disability claims. This information, readily available on UPSC websites, painted a picture that did not quite fit the narrative expected of a public servant. Further scrutiny raised uncomfortable questions about her personal integrity and the broader ethical standards that should guide public officials in India. The IAS, known for its role in implementing government policies and ensuring social justice, operates on principles of neutrality and integrity. However, political interference and corruption can erode its effectiveness, making it all the more crucial to preserve its integrity.

The revelations surrounding Khedkar, fuelled by the leak of UPSC files, have highlighted the need for greater scrutiny within the system. Khedkar's opulent lifestyle, particularly her ownership of an Audi that was actually owned by a private limited company (Thermoverita) ignited outrage on social media. The ostentatious display of wealth raised immediate doubts about the source of her riches and whether her conduct aligned with the standards expected of an IAS officer.

As more sensitive information, such as her caste and disability certificates, came to light, suspicions of

systemic manipulation began to mount. I began to put out these revelations on social media platforms like 'X' thereby playing a small part in ensuring the pressure was on the administration to probe Khedkar.

One of the most damning pieces of evidence was her father's recent election affidavit, revealing assets worth Rs. 40 crores. This staggering wealth starkly contradicted her eligibility for non-creamy layer benefits, a key factor in her selection for the IAS. Despite her claims of mental illness and multiple disabilities, Khedkar repeatedly evaded medical examinations—a fact that only deepened the suspicion of foul play.

The family's significant assets, including 110 acres of agricultural land, shops, flats, gold, and multiple vehicles, not only violate regulatory frameworks but also cast serious doubt on the authenticity of her non-creamy layer certificate. Khedkar herself owns property valued at Rs. 17 crores, further complicating the narrative of her purported financial and social status.

This case underscores systemic issues within the IAS and broader public services. It highlights the urgent need for stricter scrutiny of public officials' wealth and lifestyle to prevent abuses of power. It calls for greater transparency in the verification of caste and disability certificates, ensuring that benefits are reserved for those who genuinely need them.

(The writer is an RTI activist based in Pune. Views personal)

BY INVITATION

Why are Party Workers Leaving?



By
Mamta Sen



Manohar has been a long-time supporter of a prominent Maharashtra minister, handling everything from organising funds and putting up banners to identifying candidates for local elections and recruiting grassroots workers. When his minister defected twice, once from the Nationalist Congress Party to the then-undivided Shiv Sena and later to the Eknath Shinde faction, Manohar accompanied him. Interestingly, Manohar now wants to 'retire' claiming he is uncomfortable with the state of politics today, pointing out his minister is preoccupied with maintaining his reputation and image and neglecting his constituency. Additionally, he points out that his boss seems unaware of his actual superiors! This messy alliance of three parties, the BJP, NCP, and Shiv Sena, has made it difficult to get work done," he says, adding that for the last year, he has been slowly distancing himself from

Political parties in Maharashtra are witnessing an attrition rate of the worst kind. With the State elections around the corner, established and local leaders are struggling to retain their pool of grassroots political workers.

the Minister and spending time focusing on personal pursuits he had neglected for years.

Similarly, Ritesh, a long-time BJP worker from the Konkan, had relocated to Assam for a white-collar job. The 33-year-old farmer began his career with the Akhil Bharatiya Vid-yarthi Parishad, the party's youth wing, and was responsible for expanding the party's footprint in the interiors of Sindhudurg district. When his requests to accommodate himself and the people he had cultivated over the years in the party's local elections were ignored, Ritesh decided it was time to move on.

In Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party, 65-year-old Ramanand Parab (name changed) regrets his decision to leave senior Pawar for junior Pawar. He is now looking to hang up his boots. The merger of the trinity—the BJP, NCP, and Shiv Sena has left a considerable trail of destruction at the grassroots level. While their leaders have smoothly defected to the other side and joined hands for power, many foot soldiers of these parties are struggling to make the transition.

Long-term grassroots workers are retiring, while younger ones prefer freelancing over committing to a single political party. Many workers have been vocal about not being reimbursed for recent Lok Sabha election work. Additionally, sharing of office space with workers from the newly created factions of Shiv Sena and NCP has led to clashes. Faced

with these challenges, senior leaders and political parties are now turning to social media platforms and job sites, including LinkedIn, to find candidates or outsource campaign work. Political success in India depends on its ability to win elections, with grassroots workers playing a crucial role in this process. Running a political party requires dedication, support, and skills of people from diverse backgrounds. While not everyone is destined to be a leader, each has a role in advancing their party's leadership.

Party workers play an important role in laying the foundation for the party's growth and leadership. These men and women are instrumental in running the show, yet they remain in the background, often invisible or made to feel unimportant. Despite doing their jobs effortlessly, many are kept away from positions within the hierarchy of the party. Dedicated foot soldiers leave no stone unturned to see their masters excel and achieve great heights. Ironically, these same foot soldiers can be the downfall of their masters as well.

As political alliances shift and grassroots workers grapple with uncertainty, the real question remains: Can the foundations of a party, built by the very individuals now disillusioned, withstand the upheaval, and redefine their role in the new political landscape?

(The writer is a journalist. Views personal)



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KALEIDOSCOPE

1. Boatmen clean the Dal Lake on a cloudy day, in Srinagar on Wednesday.
2. Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with people during his visit to pay tribute at the Monument to the Battle of Monte Cassino and Kolhapur Memorial, in Warsaw, Poland on Wednesday.
3. Commuters outside New Delhi Railway Station during a 2-day strike called by auto and taxi driver unions to protest against the app-based cab services, in New Delhi on Thursday.
4. Indian Coast Guard personnel with the seized 450 kg of endangered Sea Cucumber which was being smuggled in waters near Mandapam on Wednesday.
5. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with Kashmiri people at a restaurant in Srinagar on Wednesday night.



5

All Picture PTI AP

READERS' VOICE

Cricket Icon's Lasting Legacy



By
Krishna Hegde

His is a unique name that resonates far beyond the cricketing world, even inspiring Bollywood blockbusters. The man behind this legendary name had a distinctive appearance, sporting curly locks, a unique batting style, exceptional footwork, and wristy strokes. Additionally, he was a classy left-hander, the epitome of grace and elegance, with a huge amount of runs to his credit—an enviable average of close to 45 runs per inning.

He distinguished himself in a team brimming with world-class legendary talent, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with formidable batsmen like Sir Vivian Richards, Sir Gordon Greenidge, Sir Clive Lloyd, Desmond Haynes, and a huge battery of world-class pace bowlers.

Alvin Kalicharan has his name etched in the annals of cricketing history. A legend in his own right, he faced the unfortunate consequence of losing several of his prime cricketing years due to his decision to play in South Africa during the height of apartheid—a time when such actions were fraught with political and moral implications.

By choosing to play in South Africa, Kalicharan went against the prevailing norms and expectations. He not only defied the directives of

his cricket board but also challenged the stance of his country on the issue. This bold decision led to severe repercussions, resulting in a lifetime ban from international cricket. This ban forced Kalicharan to forge a new path for himself.

I had the pleasure of meeting this cricketing superstar at a book inauguration organised by the Cricket Club of India. My introduction to him was made by another Indian left-handed hero, Karsan Ghavri. He is not only like an elder brother to me but also a great friend of Alvin Kalicharan. He was grace personified, as was his batting, and his simplicity and humbleness impressed me.

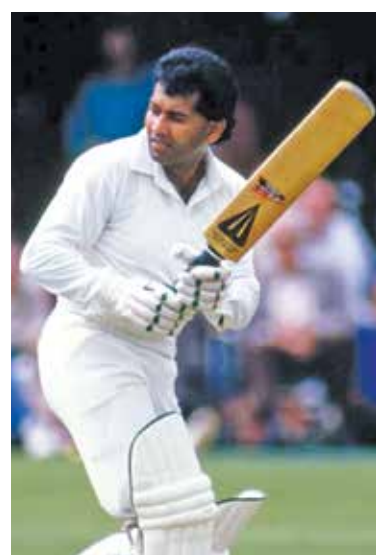
The three of us spent almost an hour chatting and exchanging notes. As a fan of his batting, it was an occasion to remember, for sure! His energy was infectious; and his arms were moving like those of a boxer in training. I wondered how, at his age, he could still be so full of life and energy, and what his fitness level and footwork must have been like when he was a young cricketer taking on the world's best bowlers. He still seemed good enough to give the new-age bowlers a hell of a time.

His behaviour reminded me of another gentleman, the Indian batting star Gundappa Vishwanath, one of the best batsmen India ever produced. Both legends were similarly built, small in stature, but with big exploits on the cricketing field. Getting their prized wickets would be a dream for any bowler at that time. Both are true gentlemen.

No wonder they called Cricket a gentlemen's game then. At 75 years not out, Alvin Kalicharan who resides in the United States with his wife, continues to impart his cricketing knowledge to scores of youngsters, and we hope he will score yet another well-deserved century."

I wish him luck, love, and a long and healthy life!!!

(The writer is a spokesperson for Shiv Sena. The views expressed are personal.)



A legendary cricketer known for his unique batting style, exceptional footwork, and elegance faced significant challenges in his career due to a controversial decision to play in apartheid-era South Africa. Despite a lifetime ban from international cricket, he remains active at 75, sharing his expertise with young players. Read on to find out who he is.

EXPLAINER

What is the link between Kolhapur and Poland?



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's historic two-day visit to the Central European country of Poland marked the first visit by an Indian PM to the nation in 45 years. In the Polish capital of Warsaw, Modi paid tribute to the Jam Saheb, the 'Good Maharajah' of Gujarat, and honoured the memory of Indian soldiers who fought in the 1944 Battle of Monte Cassino. He also paid homage to the Kolhapur Memorial.

Historical background

Poland was dismembered as part of the 1939 infamous pact signed between Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany and Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union. The result of this pact or 'the Devil's Alliance' (as stated by historian Roger Moorhouse), saw the cream of Poland's officer corps, which included several members of the country's intelligentsia, being massacred by the dreaded Soviet NKVD in the Katyn Forest in 1940.

The refugees, who were deported and lodged in Stalin's camps and fi-



nally made it to India, were the fortunate ones to flee Europe's bloodlands after Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941.

With Poland thus trapped between the two dictatorship and the Second World War in full swing, a stream of refugees made their way to Valivade village in Kolhapur district, 235 km from Pune.

Here, they tasted freedom after having endured the living hell of Soviet camps following their deportation by the dreaded NKVD or the Soviet secret police.

They made their harrowing jour-

ney through Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan from the Soviet camps in Siberia and the Urals before reaching India.

They first reached Jamnagar in Gujarat, where the ruler, Jam Saheb Digvijayasinghji Jadeja, in a noble gesture, took the refugees under his wing. From there, some of the migrants proceeded to Kolhapur, where the noble Chhatrapati Rajaram III opened his doors to the Polish migrants.

The camp established at Valivade, Kolhapur, provided shelter to Polish people during the war. This settlement housed approximately 5,000 Polish refugees, including women and children.

The Good Maharaja Square and the memorial dedicated to the royal family Kolhapur in Warsaw are testimony to these humanitarian actions.

In September 2019, a commemorative pillar in memory of these Polish families and individuals who lived in Valivade between 1942 and 1948 was unveiled at Kolhapur as well.

Zaheer likely to leave Mumbai

New Delhi: Former India pacer Zaheer Khan is in contention to assume the mentorship role of Lucknow Super Giants ahead of the next season of the Indian Premier League.

The 45-year-old was head of global development at Mumbai Indians (MI) and before that held the position of director of cricket for the franchise from 2018-2022.

As a player, Zaheer has featured in 100 IPL games as part of three franchises -- MI, Royal Challengers Bangalore and Delhi Daredevils across 10 seasons, claiming 102 wickets at an economy of 7.59.

"Zaheer Khan is in talks with Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) for a mentorship role with the franchise keen on bringing in a top former India player well-versed with T20 cricket to have a strong presence within their coaching setup following the departure of Gautam Gambhir," a report in ESPNcricinfo said.

"Apart from the role of mentor,

LSG are also keen on giving Zaheer a wider profile that will mean involvement with the scouting and player-development programmes during the off season."

LSG under Gambhir's mentorship had reached the play-offs twice in 2022 and 2023. The former India opener then left for Kolkata Knight Riders in late 2023 and went on to play a pivotal role in KKR winning the IPL title this year. He then took up the role of India's head coach.

LSG are also without Morne Morkel, who was LSG's bowling coach. The former South Africa pacer has joined Gambhir's support staff in the India men's team in the same role.

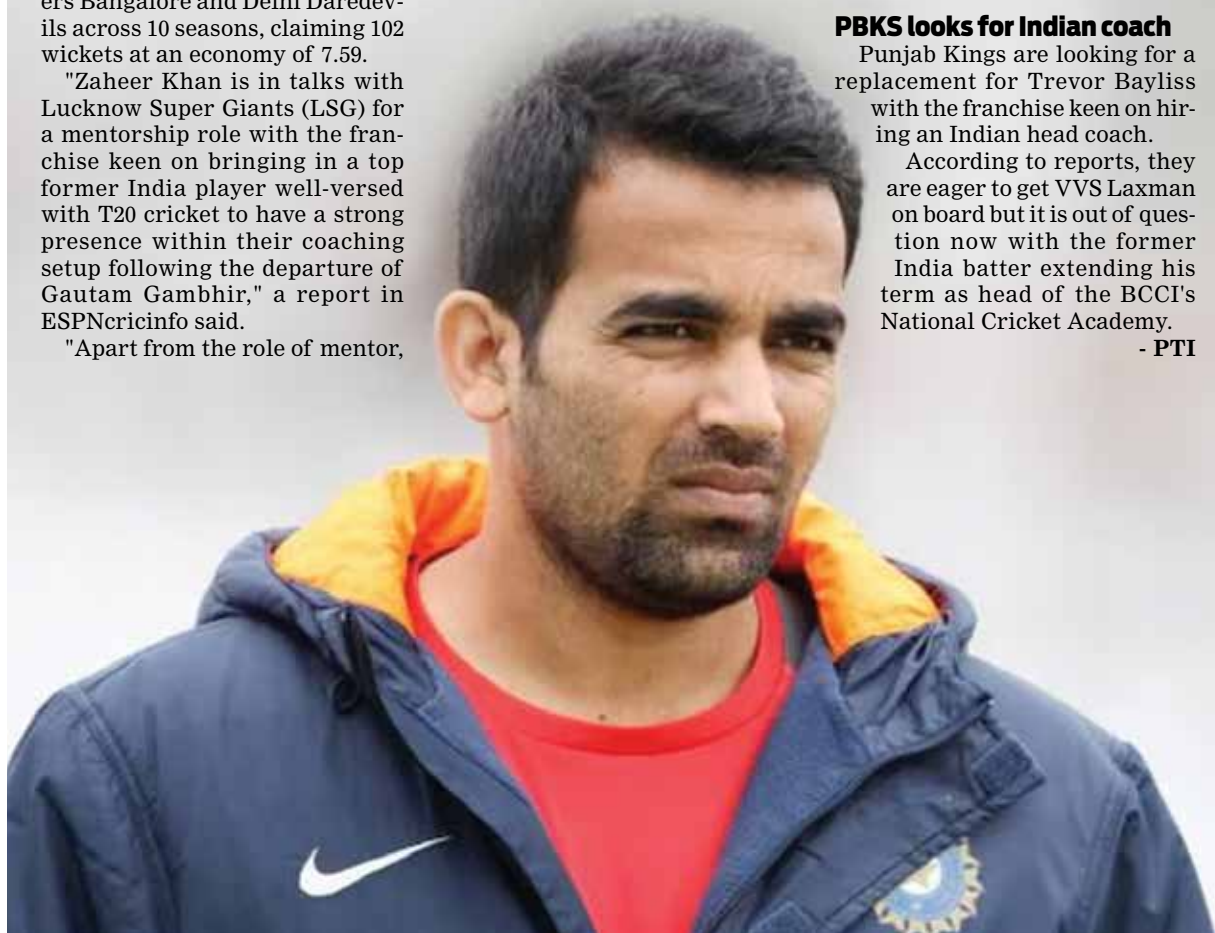
Zaheer, who had retired from all forms of cricket after the 2017 season, is also in the list for two other franchises, who too are keen on bringing him on board ahead of the IPL mega auction, for which the retention rules will be announced by early September.

PBKS looks for Indian coach

Punjab Kings are looking for a replacement for Trevor Bayliss with the franchise keen on hiring an Indian head coach.

According to reports, they are eager to get VVS Laxman on board but it is out of question now with the former India batter extending his term as head of the BCCI's National Cricket Academy.

- PTI



RPG Group Chairman Harsh Goenka and BCCI Secretary Jay Shah present the CEAT Men's International Cricketer of the Year award to cricketer Rohit Sharma during an award function, in Mumbai on Wednesday.

Ashwin calls Gambhir hero

By Kushan Sarkar

New Delhi: Ravichandran Ashwin doesn't like "latching on to people" and that's one reason why he has never warmed up to the idea of banking on coaches in the traditional sense as he believes that such dependence makes players dogmatic.

In his 14-year international cricket career, spanning 281 games and 744 wickets across formats, Ashwin's sense of agency and his ability to time and again rediscover himself, have helped him survive the grind.

"A lot of players are heavily dependent on coaches or mentors, or one person which I think is a very dangerous trend because latching on to people and over-dependency can cause you

to not be able to open to new ideas," the 37-year-old off-spinner told PTI in a telephone interview recently.

It is not that Ashwin never had a sounding board. His first state team coach WV Raman, one of the respected names in Indian cricket, and Tamil Nadu legend and former India batter S Badrinath, have been guiding forces for him.

But his equation with them never turned into the kind of dependence that would take away his own ability to search for solutions.

"See very often the challenge of a coach is to be able to offer you several solutions. This is because what works for one (particular player) might not work for the other," he explained.

"One modern-day coach-

ing philosophy which I totally disagree with is the fact that they try to copy-paste the same technique (solution) that's worked for another cricketer," Ashwin, who recently made his debut as an author with 'I Have The Streets: A Kutti Cricket Story', added.

While he is completely aware that some players get results by surrendering to the vision of their coaches, he also feels that such dependence can lead to a closed mind.

"Because as a cricketer, you constantly are thrown up with new challenges, so you must be able to find your own answers," the tweaker, who is behind only the legendary Anil Kumble in the list of India's highest Test wicket-takers, pointed out.

To Ashwin, Raman has been that catalyst, who helped him focus his intuitive mind.

"People can give you a helping hand. But they cannot guide you through in your career, you will have to be open to fresh ideas.

"For me, WV allowed me the freedom to express, and, you know, try new

things. He also taught me how and on what path I need to travel, but he never said, 'This is the path you need to travel upon'.

"So in a way, in my early days, guidance from WV ensured that I was never really over-reliant on anybody."

Ashwin said getting a second opinion is never a bad idea but cricket primarily is a self-taught sport.

- PTI

Women T20 World Cup

Deepti prepared for changed venue

By Ananya Gupta

Mumbai: Star India all-rounder Deepti Sharma is focusing on delivering the best for her team in the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup and feels the sudden change of venue won't impact her side's preparations.

The ICC on Tuesday moved the T20 World Cup from Bangladesh to the UAE following unrest in the South Asian nation.

The event, scheduled to take place from October 3 to 20, will now be staged in Dubai and Sharjah with Bangladesh retaining the hosting rights, ensuring that it receives its share of revenue.

"It doesn't matter whether the World Cup is happening, I just focus on how



as an all-rounder I can contribute to the team's success.

"I just want to give it my all and the last 4-5 months have been fruitful for us, let's hope we continue the good work and end the trophy wait this time. We have a little idea about how the wickets will play in UAE," Deepti told PTI videos in an exclusive interview on the side-

lines of CEAT Cricket Rating Awards.

The all-rounder has delivered some stellar performances with both bat and ball in the recent months and is enjoying her cricket at the moment.

"I am enjoying my cricket at the moment and this has enabled me to shrug the pressure off my shoulders. I have learnt from the other international cricketers that when you start enjoying the game, you do better on the field.

"I don't let pressure get the better of me. I have developed this habit since I played the first game in the Women's Super League back in 2018. I have developed this habit and made it a part of my game," she added.

- PTI

Sinquefield Cup

Gukesh survives against Praggnanandhaa

Saint Louis (USA): World Championship challenger D Gukesh survived by the skin of his teeth against compatriot R Praggnanandhaa, drawing a lost endgame in the third round of the Sinquefield Cup – the final leg of the Grand Chess Tour.

On a day when things finally lived up, tour leader Alireza Firouzja of France got lucky against his French teammate Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, drawing in a clear worse position via repetition of moves.

Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan also pushed for quite some time. But, a blunder cost him dearly as Fabiano Caruana was able to turn the tables and score his first victory of the tournament.

- PTI

TABLE TENNIS

Sharath eyes admin role

By Ayush Gupta

Chennai: Achanta Sharath Kamal might have appeared in his last Olympics, but the veteran Indian table-tennis player wants to stay connected to the sport as an administrator and said he will soon have a sit-down with powers that be to chalk out a "roadmap."

Sharath Kamal suffered a shocking opening round exit in the men's singles at the Paris Games, losing to Deni Kozul of Slovenia 2-4. In the team event Sharath, alongside Harmeet Desai and Manav Thakkar, went down 0-3 against China in the pre-quarterfinals.

"Still haven't decided clearly what will be my roadmap ahead. But, I'll sit down and have a talk with the federation and decide with my family as well about what exactly has

to be done ahead," Kamal told PTI on the sidelines of the Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) launch here on Wednesday.

"But, I'll be staying around with the game and probably taking up positions in the federation or the SAI and trying to help the sport," he added.

Talking about his Olympics outing, Sharath said he gave it his all in

the showpiece, and there are no "regrets."

"The only difference was the mindset since I knew it was going to be my last Olympics. I put in everything that I had in Paris," said Kamal.

"Preparation-wise, I did everything possible, and there are no regrets. Overall, really happy with the way I played."

The UTT gets underway here on

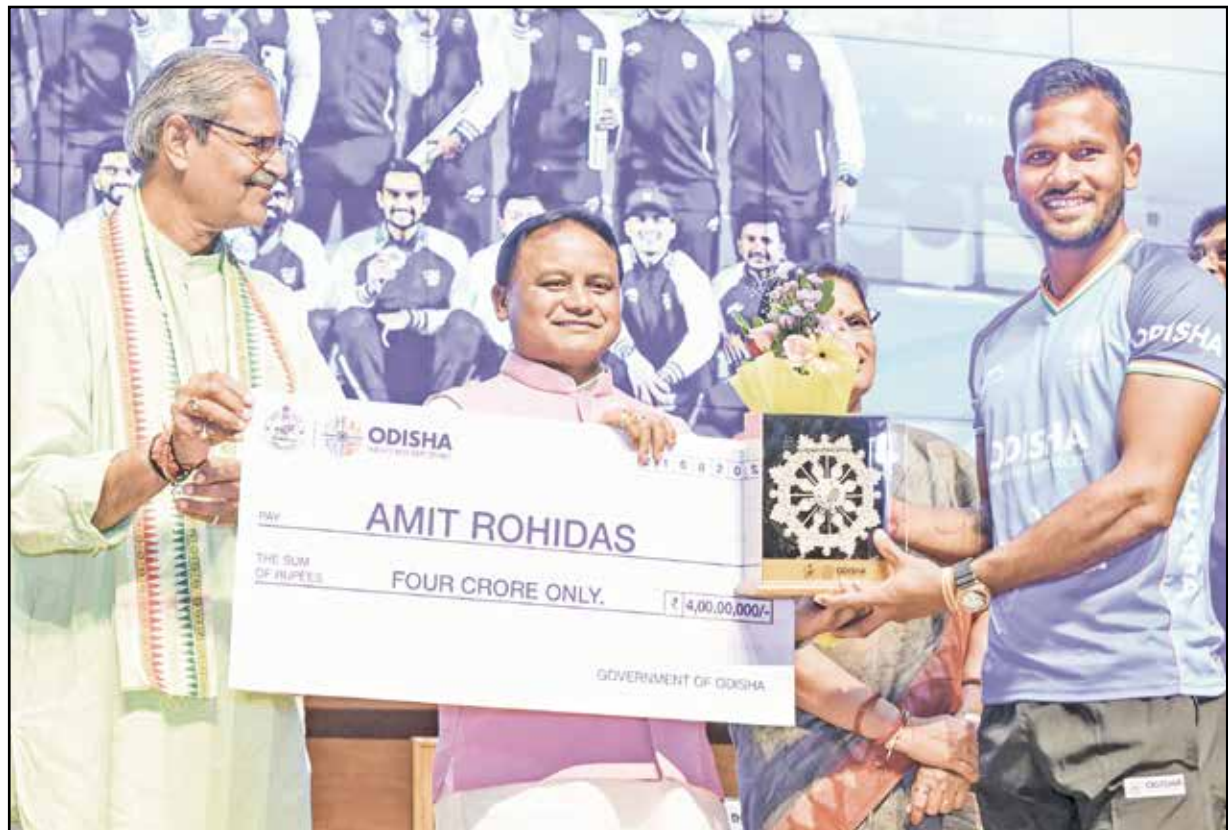
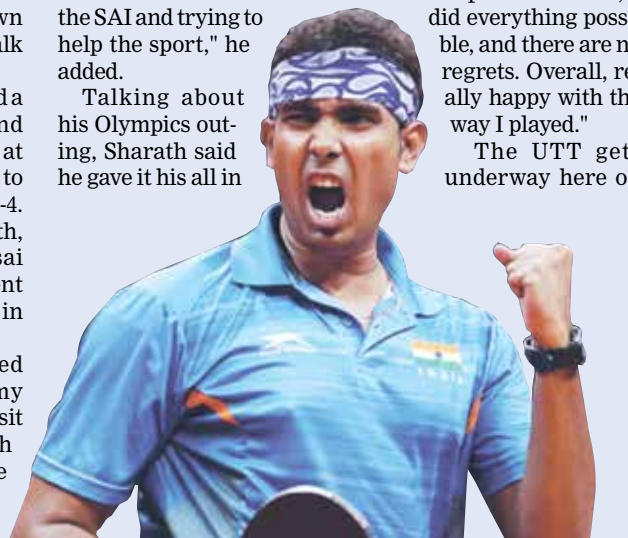
Thursday and Sharath credited the event for helping upcoming Indian players showcase their talent.

"These leagues give us the right platform, especially the youngsters, to stand up against the best competition in the world, train with and against them and try to beat them," Sharath, who will be representing Chennai Lions, said.

"Playing at home does not allow you to get intimidated, and that attitude helps you grow at the international level. So, after every season, we have identified great talents. We hope it (UTT) is the next big thing."

The 42-year-old advised aspiring players to pursue any sport as a hobby first before taking it up competitively.

"My advice to them would be to play sports first by picking up any sport. - PTI



Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi felicitates Paris Olympics bronze medallist men's hockey team member Amit Rohidas during a ceremony, in Bhubaneswar.

Manika sees growth

Chennai: Indian table tennis is headed in the right direction thanks to the advent of the UTT tournament which attracts top players from across the world, feels Manika Batra, who is the most prominent face of the women's game in the country.

Manika and Sreeja Akula recently made history by becoming the first Indian table tennis players to reach the Olympics singles pre-quarterfinals in Paris.

Next, the 29-year-old Manika will represent Bengaluru Smashers in the eight-team Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) competition, which gets underway here on Thursday.

"Personally, it has helped me because the players come for UTT from different countries, and we play against them, we play with

them," Manika told reporters here on Wednesday.

"It's really fun, and we enjoy this. I can see the growth that's happening, especially in women's table tennis in India, how we all are performing internationally. We have improved a lot from UTT."

Manika lost to Miu Hirano of Japan 0-3 in the women's singles pre-quarterfinals in Paris. In the team event, India, who were represented by Manika, Sreeja and Archana Kamath, lost to Germany 1-3 in the quarterfinals.

In the UTT, one of Manika's most anticipated contests will be against world No. 13, Bernadette Szocs of Romania, who will play for Ahmedabad SG Pipers.

The two players also clashed during the pre-quarterfinals of the team



event in Paris Olympics, with India winning the tie 3-2.

Bernadette said, "I love to play here; I love all the fans who are very big supporters of table tennis. And, of course, always when I come here, everything is perfect with good organisation."

Veteran Sharath Kamal, who will lead Chennai Lions in UTT, feels the perfor-

mance graph of Indian players is going up gradually.

"This is the first time both Indian teams, men and women, qualified for the Olympic Games in the team event. The girls went further; they went on to play in the quarterfinals in the team event, and especially Manika and Sreeja got into the last 16 in the individual event."