

THE PERFECT VOICE



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Teenager gang raped for months, videos circulated

TWO MEN ARRESTED, TWO MINORS DETAINED. UNKNOWN TO EACH OTHER THEY ALL MET THE GIRL ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Pune: Two men aged between 20 and 22 years were arrested and two minors detained on charges of raping a 16-year-old girl studying in a prestigious college, whom they befriended on social media, police have said. Om Gholap and Swapnil Deokar have been arrested.

The four accused had met the girl on social media but they do not know each other personally, according to the police.

The accused allegedly sexually assaulted the teenager separately at different places in the city between April and September, they said on Thursday.

The incident came to light during a session on sexual offences against children organised in the college.

During the discussion, a



girl student looked depressed and when she was taken into confidence, she told counsellors about the 16-year-old survivor, who is her friend, and the ordeal she was going through. "Later, an investigation revealed the victim had met the four individuals, who

are not known to each other, on social media platforms and she was allegedly raped by them on separate occasions," said a woman police officer. She said videos were also made of the minor, and hence the IT Act has been invoked in the case.

"We have registered a case against the four accused – among whom two are minors (age not disclosed), who have been detained. The other accused (aged 20 to 22 years) have been placed under arrest and further probe was on," the officer added.

Congress MLA from Kasba constituency Ravindra Dangekar highlighted the case in social media. He alleged that after the information came to light, the father of the victim approached the trustees of the college first who tried to suppress the matter.

He alleged that some of the alleged rapists are children of the elite and that one of them is the son of a Sub-District Officer who has illicit financial interests with the trustees of the institution.



Top angle view of dense clouds shrouding of Mumbai on Friday.

Pic: PTI

Debroy steps down as Chancellor

By Correspondent

Gokhale Institute

Pune: Noted economist Bibek Debroy on Friday resigned as Chancellor of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE), a day after the Bombay High Court extended interim relief to Vice-Chancellor Ajit Ranade, who was removed from his post.

Debroy, who is also chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime

Minister (EAC-PM), was appointed as Chancellor of GIPE, a deemed to be university, in July this year.

In an email addressed to Ranade, who is also an eminent economist, Debroy said he is standing down from his post with immediate effect.

Millind Deshmukh, secretary of the Servants of India Society (SSI), confirmed Debroy has rendered his resig-

nation as chancellor of the institution.

Earlier this month, Ranade was removed from the position of GIPE vice-chancellor after a fact-finding committee set up by Debroy found that his appointment violated UGC norms.

Ranade approached the High Court challenging his termination order and got interim relief till September 23.

"You asserted in your writ petition that I had not applied my mind and the stay order vindicates your position," Debroy stated in the email. Under these circumstances, Debroy noted, he has no moral right to continue in his post. "I am standing down with immediate effect," he stated in the communication.

Debroy will not be present for the convocation on October 5.

Why officials not transferred, asks EC

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Sending out a stern message, the Election Commission on Friday sought an explanation from the Maharashtra chief secretary and the state's police chief for failing to fully implement its orders on the transfer of officials ahead of assembly polls.

Maharashtra Chief Secretary Sujata Saunik told PTI in the evening that a compliance report would be submitted by Monday. In a strongly-worded letter, the poll body said despite a directive issued on July 31 to relocate officials who had served in their home districts or current posting for over three years, the state administration had not completed the process. The compliance report was due by August 31. While the additional director general of police submitted a partial report, the chief secretary was yet to provide a full response, the EC said. Sources noted that more than 100 inspector-level officers in Mumbai and reve-



nue officials, many holding key positions in the state, had not been transferred as required. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar expressed his displeasure over the state administration's non-compliance, stating that the delay undermined efforts to ensure a free and fair electoral process. The EC has made it clear that further inaction would not be tolerated. "We would be sending the compliance report regarding transfers and postings by Monday," state chief secretary Saunik told PTI when contacted. The term of the current Maharashtra Assembly ends on November 26.

Israel struck Hezbollah HQ

Beirut: The Israeli military said Friday it carried out an airstrike on the central headquarters of Hezbollah in Beirut, where a massive explosion levelled buildings in a southern district, sending clouds of orange and black smoke billowing in the skies.

The strike in the Beirut suburb of Dahiyeh came shortly after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the UN, vowing that Israel's campaign against Hezbollah would continue. Not long before the explosion, thousands were massed in the suburb for the funeral of three Hezbollah members, including a senior commander, killed in earlier strikes.

There was no immediate word on casualties in the strike. The Israeli army spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said it targeted the main Hezbollah headquarters, located beneath residential buildings. Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV said four buildings were reduced to rubble in the blast.



Bengaluru/Mysuru: Lokayukta police on Friday registered a First Information Report (FIR) against Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and others in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment

case, following the court order.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, meanwhile, came to Siddaramaiah's defence, stating that the party is standing with him and will support him.

FIR against Siddaramaiah

Siddaramaiah, who began his three-day visit to his home district of Mysuru, claimed that he was being targeted in the MUDA issue as the opposition is "scared" of him and said it's the first such "political case" against him.

He also reiterated that he won't resign following the court ordering a probe against him in the case as he has done no wrong and asserted that he would fight the case legally.

While Siddaramaiah is accused number one (A1) in the case, his wife B M

Parvathi (A2), brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy (A3), Devaraju (A4) -- from whom Mallikarjuna Swamy purchased land and gifted it to Parvathi -- and others are named in the FIR registered by Lokayukta police in Mysuru.

A Special Court in Bengaluru on Wednesday ordered a Lokayukta police probe against Siddaramaiah in the case, setting the stage for filing an FIR against him.

The order of the Special Court Judge, Santhosh Gaganan Bhat, came a day af-

ter the High Court upheld the sanction granted by the Governor Thaaarchand Gehlot to conduct an investigation against Siddaramaiah on the allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife by the MUDA.

The Special Court exclusively to deal with criminal cases related to former and elected MPs/MLAs issued the order directing the Lokayukta police in Mysuru to initiate an investigation on the complaint filed by RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna.

Never followed 'India Out' agenda: Muizzu

Male: Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has denied having an "India Out" agenda, asserting that the island nation had a "serious problem" with the presence of foreign military on its soil.

Muizzu, who is in the US to attend the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, made the remarks on Thursday while responding to a question at

Princeton University's "Dean's Leadership Series".

"We have never been against any one country at any point. It's not India Out. Maldives faced a serious problem with foreign military presence on this soil," Maldivian news portal adhadhu.com quoted him as saying.

"The people of Maldives do not want a single foreign

soldier in the country," Muizzu said.

The ties between India and the Maldives came under severe strain since November last year when Muizzu, known for his pro-China leanings, took charge as Maldivian president.

Muizzu had asked India to withdraw nearly 90 Indian military personnel operating three aviation platforms gifted by the

country. India withdrew its military personnel by May 10 and replaced them with civilian personnel to operate a Dornier aircraft and two helicopters.

Muizzu further stressed he had taken action against deputy ministers for insulting Prime Minister Narendra Modi on social media.

"No one should say such a thing. I took action against it." -PTI

Finally, Trump, Zelenskyy meet

New York: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Friday met Donald Trump over Ukraine's defence against Russia's invasion. "I think we have a common view that the war in Ukraine has to be stopped and Putin can't win," Zelenskyy said referring to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Belgian PM, King blast Pope for Church's sex abuse cover-up

Brussels: Belgium's Prime Minister blasted Pope Francis for the Catholic Church's horrific legacy of clerical sex abuse and cover-ups here, demanding "concrete steps" to come clean with the past and put victims' interests ahead of those of the institution in a blistering welcome at the start of Francis' visit on Friday.

The speech by Prime Minister Alexander De Croo was one of the most pointed ever directed at the pope during a foreign trip, where the genteel dictates of diplomatic protocol usually keeps outrage out of the public remarks. But even King Philippe had strong words for Francis,

demanding the church work "incessantly" to atone for the crimes and help victims heal.

Their tone underscored just how raw the abuse scandal still is in Belgium, where two decades of revelations of abuse and systematic cover-ups have devastated the hierarchy's credibility and contributed to an overall decline in Catholicism and the influence of the once-powerful Catholic Church.

Francis applauded at the end of De Croo's speech and was expected to meet with victims in private later Friday. "This is our shame and humiliation," he said in an improvised response.

"Today, words alone do not suffice. We also need concrete steps," De Croo told Francis and an audience of royals, church officials, diplomats and politicians at Laeken Castle, the residence of Belgium's royal family.

Revelations of Belgium's horrific abuse scandal have dribbled out in bits over a quarter century, punctuated by a bombshell in 2010, when the country's longest-serving bishop, Bruges Bishop Roger Vangheluwe, was allowed to resign without punishing after admitting he had sexually abused his nephew for 13 years.

Francis only defrocked Vangheluwe earlier this



year, in a move clearly designed to remove a lingering source of outrage among Belgians before his visit.

Two months after Vangheluwe resigned, Belgian

police staged what were then unprecedented raids on Belgian church offices, the home of recently retired Archbishop Godfried Danneels, and even the crypt of a prelate — a vio-

lution the Vatican decried as "deplorable." Danneels was then caught on tape trying to persuade Vangheluwe's nephew to keep quiet until the bishop retired. Finally, in September 2010 the church released a 200-page report that said 507 people had come forward with stories of being molested by priests, including when they were as young as 2. It identified at least 13 suicides by victims and attempts by six more. Victims and advocates say those findings were just the tip of the iceberg and that the true scope of the scandal is far greater. Police eventually returned the documentation that

was seized in the 2010 raids to the church, scuttling hopes for criminal investigations.

Despite everything that was known and already in the public domain, the scandal reared its head in a shocking new way last year, when a four-episode Flemish documentary, "Godvergeten" (Godforsaken) aired on public broadcaster VRT.

For the first time, Belgian victims told their stories on camera one after another, showing Flemish viewers the scope of the scandal in their community, the depravity of the crimes and their systematic cover-up by the Catholic hierarchy. -AP

Victims need to be heard. They need to be at the centre. They have a right to truth. Misdeeds need to be recognized. When something goes wrong we cannot accept cover-ups. To be able to look into the future, the church needs to come clean on its past.
Alexander De Croo, Prime Minister, Belgium

Cong opposes polling stations in housing societies

BJP WANTS VOTING ON WORKDAY, SENA, NCP PITCH FOR SINGLE PHASE POLLS

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Election Commission of India led by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Friday met representatives of political parties to seek their suggestions for the upcoming Maharashtra polls.

Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly is likely to be held in November.

The BJP suggested voting be held on a working day, while the Congress objected to having polling stations in housing societies.

The Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party told the ECI they want single-phase polls.

It was a one-on-one meeting with each party.

The Congress delegation was led by Munaf Hakim and Gajanan Desai.

Hakim told PTI his party is opposed to the decision to set up polling stations in housing societies.

He said the Congress also demanded that constables and senior cops posted in a police station for longer durations be shifted.

Mihir Kotecha and Ashish Shelar represented the BJP.

Shelar said voters who have relocated elsewhere due to metro rail works and

Patole seeks removal of DGP
Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole has written to the Election Commission seeking immediate removal of Director General of Police Rashmi Shukla, saying such a step is necessary to ensure the ensuing assembly polls are conducted in a fair and free manner.

In a letter to the EC dated September 24, he alleged the 1988-batch IPS officer has been given illegal extension to the top post by the Shiv Sena-BJP-NCP-led Mahayuti government.



(SP), AAP and BSP also conveyed their suggestions and demands.

CEC Rajiv Kumar along with ECs Gyanesh Kumar and Dr Sukhbir Singh Sandhu reviewed poll preparations with the state's chief secretary, director general of police and other administrative secretaries.

It also met representatives of 23 Central and state enforcement agencies with the aim of conducting free and fair polls in the state.

EC warns of action
The Election Commission on Friday expressed "dissatisfaction" over inconvenience to voters at polling stations in Mumbai city during Lok Sabha polls, and top officials were told to ensure better facilities in the forthcoming assembly polls, sources said.

At a review meeting with the state chief secretary and director general of police here, officials were told to ensure all assured minimum facilities at polling stations, including benches, fans, drinking water and shed.

The Commission said it will act strictly on any complaints of voter inconvenience on poll day. Officials were told to ensure proper queue management at polling stations, the sources said.

Representatives of NCP

other projects should be allowed to cast their vote.

According to Kotecha, BJP told the top EC officials that there should not be more than 1,000 voters in each booth, which is now between 1,500 and 1,600 voters. The party also wants polling to be held on a working day and that long weekends should be avoided, he said.

The BJP urged the EC to avoid delays and long queues at polling booths, Kotecha said, adding his party sought better facilities for senior citizens and suggested voters should get to exercise their franchise with minimal delay once they enter a booth.

Subhash Desai of Shiv Sena (UBT) told PTI his party suggested that the comfort of voters, particularly senior citizens, should



Police personnel detain members of Tribal Gond Gowari community during a protest by them demanding reservation under the Schedule Tribe (ST) category in Nagpur on Friday. Pic: PTI

MVA passing through rough waters

By Suyash Padate

Mumbai: The Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) is passing through rough waters and still the leaders are optimistic of forging the alliance within a week's time.

MVA is close to finalising the seat-sharing pact between its three alliance partners. The opposition alliance in Maharashtra, has so far reached an initial seat-sharing consensus for around 170 constituencies for the upcoming election to the 288-member assembly. The alliance leaders Sanjay Raut and Anil Desai from UBT Sena, Nana Patole, Vijay Wadetiwar, and Balasheb Thorat from Congress, and Jayant Patil, Jitendra Awhad, and Anil Deshmukh from NCP-SP -- completed the second round of discussions in Mumbai. The

sources have claimed that all three constituents, Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress and the NCP (SP) have reached an agreement for the Assembly polls, expected to be held in mid-November.

After much claims and counterclaims, the first round was started on last Saturday in which a deal for Mumbai's 36 seats was 99 per cent finalised. Sena (UBT) insisted for more seats as they want Mumbai in the hands of Marathi-speaking people. However, a senior leader on a condition of anonymity said, "there is still friction over the division of Mumbai's 36 seats. Former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) wants 16-20 seats and the Congress at least 15. The third MVA partner Sharad Pawar's NCP wants seven to eight seats".

As per the discussion and the agreement reached thereafter, the majority of the seats won by each party in the 2019 Assembly elections will be contested by the same parties. However, changes will be made for around 25 to 30 seats. Both the prolonged meetings discussed each constituency in Mumbai-Konkan, Marathwada, Western Maharashtra, and North Maharashtra in detail, the leader added further.

It has also been decided to appoint a team to test the pulse of workers and gauge the mood which party has the strongest candidate in disputed seats. In the next meeting, likely to take place during Navratri, 62 seats in Vidarbha will also be discussed, and the final seat distribution will be announced immediately after

this meeting, the sources have pointed out.

When contacted, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Anil Desai said, "there are no differences among the opposition bloc allies. However, the winnability factor will be a key criterion for seat-sharing which has been agreed upon by all three parties. There is no deadlock among the MVA partners. Everything is moving ahead as per the schedule and seat-sharing pact will be announced soon".

Significantly, the bone of contention in the MVA is the Chief Ministerial candidate. There are also disagreements over this sensitive point. The Congress and NCP are reluctant to make any declaration at this stage, while the Sena is pushing for a consensus figure.

CRIME WATCH

FIR against 11 persons over child marriage

Thane: The Thane city police have registered an FIR against 11 persons, including a 31-year-old woman from Pune, over the illegal marriage of her minor daughter, an official said on Friday.

The 13-year-old girl was married to a man from Mumbai near Thane on August 8 despite objections from the teenager's father, the official said.

The girl's father first approached the Child Welfare Officer and the FIR was registered on September 25 on his directions.

The 11 individuals, including the man who married the minor and his relatives, have been booked under the Prevention of Child Marriage Act, the official added.

75-year-old man, sons held for killing

Thane: A 75-year-old man and his three sons have been arrested for allegedly killing a 20-year-old Thane resident after he alleged involvement of one of the accused in a mobile theft case, an officer said on Friday.

The accused, identified as Ashok Sawant (34), Kishore Sawant (37), Sachin Sawant (29) and their father Nandu Sawant allegedly fatally stabbed victim Subham Arvind Pawar in the city's Azad Nagar locality in the intervening night of September 24-25.

One of the accused also hit a woman and abused her when she tried to intervene.

Man sentenced for raping stepdaughter

Thane: A special POCSCO court in Maharashtra's Thane district has sentenced a 50-year-old carpenter to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment for raping his teenage stepdaughter, making her pregnant and forcibly aborting the fetus.

In his order on Thursday, Judge D.S. Deshmukh of the special court, dealing with cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, also fined the convict Rs 5,000.

During the trial, Special Public Prosecutor Sandhya H Mhatre told the court that the carpenter repeatedly raped his stepdaughter, then 17, in March 2016 while they were staying at a construction site in the Kashmiria area.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Politics does not face the problem of differences of opinion. The meaning of politics is 'samajkaran, rashtrakaran and vikaskaran' (social service, nation-building and development). But now, the definition of politics has changed to 'sattakaran' (power politics) only."



Nitin Gadkari,
Union Minister for Highway



An artisan gives finishing touches to an idol of Goddess Durga ahead of Navratri festival, in Karad on Friday. Pic: PTI

Senior Congress leader Rohidas Patil dies

Mumbai: Senior Congress leader Rohidas Patil died of a brief illness at his residence in Maharashtra's Dhule on Friday, party sources said.

The 84-year-old leader breathed his last around 11 am. The last rites will take place on Saturday, they

said. Patil survived by his sons MLA Kunal Patil, Vinay Patil, and daughter Smita.

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi met Patil during his recent visit to the state and inquired about his health.

Patil served as a cabinet minister in several Congress governments. He represented the Dhule Rural assembly seat for a long time, and his son Kunal is a legislator from the constituency.

Patil strengthened the Congress in Dhule.

More judges to be appointed in Bombay HC, says CJI

New Delhi: Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud on Friday said some more judges would soon be appointed in the Bombay High Court.

The observation was made by the Chief Justice, who was heading a bench comprising Justice Manoj Misra, during a hearing of an appeal arising against a Bombay High Court order.

"The petitions are listed (for hearing) only after they are mentioned before the bench," a lawyer said.

Referring to the high court's workload, the Chief Justice asked the lawyer to "tell the government to appoint more judges" and then they would have enough members and the time to hear cases.

"Wait for a few more days, you will get some judges to the Bombay

HC," he said, adding that the apex court collegium made certain recommendations for appointment of judges in the high court and they were pending with the government.

The high court has a sanctioned strength of 94 judges, with the current strength being 66 sitting judges. Consequently, there are 28 vacancies.

On September 24, the apex court collegium comprising the Chief Justice, Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice B.R. Gavai recommended names of nine advocates -- Rajesh Datar, Sachin Deshmukh, Gautam Ankhad, Mahendra Nerlik, Nivedita Prakash Mehta, Prafulla Khubalkar, Ash-

win Bhobe, Rohit Joshi, and Advait Sethna for appointment as judges of Bombay High Court.

-PTI

Public Notice

Notice is HEREBY given on behalf of my client Mr. Ranjeet Lalbahadur Patel & Mrs. Rekha Ranjeet Patel, the present owners of Flat No. 301, 3rd Floor, "Gaurav Naman No.1" of Society "Ravi Naman 1 & 2 Co-op. Hsg. Soc. Ltd." Gaurav Sankalp Phase-II, Near GCC Club, Mira Road (E), Tal. & Dist. Thane-401107. The Original Agreement of first owner dated 31/12/2001 between the Builder M/s. Ravi Developments AND Shri. Satish Ganga Chaurasia & Smt. Asha S. Chaurasia has been lost/misplaced and the same could not be traceable inspite of best efforts done by my client. The missing complaint is filed at Miraroad Kashmiria Police Station under Lost Report Ref No.: 31067-2024 dated 27/09/2024. The above said owners have not created any lien or mortgage or any other third party right of any nature. Any person/s claiming any right, title and interest of the said Flat should intimate the same in writing to me at my following address: Office No. 138, 1st Floor, Ostwal Ormate, Building No. 2/A, Near Jain Mandir, Jessal Park, Bhayandar East, Dist. Thane - 401101, or to my clients directly, along with documentary proof within 14 days from the date of publish this notice failing which they shall be deemed to have given up such claim or claims if any, and I shall issue no claim certificate in respect of loss agreement, as requested by my client.
Dated: 28.09.2024
SD/-
Advocate Rajat K Singh

Shree Krishna Co. Op. Housing Society

Cheda Nagar, Nalasopara (West)
This is to inform you that Shri Abhijit Vithoba Chougule is our member of Krishna Jyot B/302 in our above complex since last 15 years. He lost his Share Certificate if anyone find the same please inform to society within 15 days.
Contact: 7058333830

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to the public at large that, under the instructions of our client, we are investigating the right, title and interest of RAHUL ASHOK PARULEKAR and MINOTHI ASHOK PARULEKAR ("Owners") to the PREMISES DESCRIBED in the First Schedule hereunder written ("Premises").

We have been informed that the Owner has inadvertently lost / misplaced the original agreements ("Original Agreements") as more particularly described in the Second Schedule hereunder written and the same are not traceable.

Any person including any entity or bank or financial institution having custody or possession of the original agreements for any reason whatsoever are hereby required to make the same known in writing along with supporting documents to the undersigned at Office No. T2, 3rd Floor, Machinery House, B. Bharucha Marg, Kalaghoda, Fort, Mumbai-400 023 within a period of 14 (Fourteen) days from the date of publication hereof.

FIRST SCHEDULE HEREINABOVE REFERRED TO

(Description of the Premises)
Flat No. 1, measuring 444 square feet carpet area on the ground floor, in the building known as "Ferenia" standing on land bearing Cadastral Survey No. 517 of Colaba Division, situated at Land Mill Estate, Colaba, Mumbai - 400 005

SECOND SCHEDULE HEREINABOVE REFERRED TO

(Details of Original Agreements)
(i) Articles of Agreement dated 25 February 1970 executed between M/s Reliable Builders and Mr. Tehmi N. Erane and Mrs. Khurshed S. Erane
(ii) Articles of Agreement dated 30 December 1970, executed between Mr. Tehmi N Erane and Mrs. Khurshed S. Erane as Vendor and Paramount India Pvt. Ltd. as Purchaser
(iii) Articles of Agreement dated 30 April 1974, executed between M/s. Paramount India Pvt. Ltd. as Vendor and Mr. Nalinbhai B. Munshaw as Purchaser
(iv) Articles of Agreement executed between Mr. Nalinbhai B. Munshaw as Vendor and Dr Sheila Tharoomal Panjabi as Purchaser
Dated this 28 day of September 2024.

SD/-
Parisha Shah
(Advocate)

'Caste panchayat' members booked for social boycott

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: A case has been registered against nine members of a 'caste panchayat' for ordering social boycott of a woman and her family as her father-in-law married a woman he was in love with in Maharashtra's Beed, police said.

The order to ostracise the family "for seven generations" was given by the panchayat of Nandiwale (Tirmali) community, a nomadic tribe, a few days back. Before passing the boycott order, it also threatened to kill the woman's family members if they contacted the police in this matter, they said on Friday.

A caste panchayat, known as 'jat panchayat' in

Marathi, is a form of internal dispute mechanism of different communities. These panchayats operate as extra-judicial bodies that govern respective tribes or communities.

The case against the nine panchayat members was registered at the Ashti police station in Beed based on the complaint lodged by the woman, a labourer, a police officer said.

The complainant, 32-year-old Malan Fulmali, lives with her husband Shivaji and their children in Kada Karkhana area of Beed district. She and her family members were asked to appear before the panchayat at Doithan village on 21 September. Accordingly, they went there,

where nine 'panch' (juries) and around 800 people from their community were present, he said.

As per the FIR, they were again called the next day. The panchayat members then told her that her father-in-law, Narsu Fulmali, had a love marriage without the consent of the panchayat. He was asked to pay Rs 2.5 lakh as fine for his act, he said.

But as he failed to pay the amount, the panchayat asked Malan and her family to pay the fine. The panchayat members also threatened to kill the family if they contacted the police. But when Malan expressed the family's inability to pay Rs 2.5 lakh, the panchayat ordered a social

boycott of the family from the community for seven generations, it said.

Following this order, the woman approached the police and lodged a complaint, the official said.

Based on her complaint, the case was registered against Gangadhar Palwe, Uttam Fulmali, Ganga Fulmali, Chinnu Fulmali, Subhash Fulmali, Baburao Fulmali, Shetiba Kakde, Sayaji Fulmali and Gulab Palwe under sections of the Maharashtra Protection of People from Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2016 and also under sections pertaining to unlawful assembly and criminal intimidation of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Woman vandalises Fadnavis' name plate

By Correspondent

Mumbai: A woman has vandalised the name plate of Maharashtra deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis outside his office at Mantralaya.

The incident which took place on Thursday evening raised questions about the security at the state government's headquarters. Fadnavis, a former chief minister who currently handles the home portfolio, was not in his sixth-floor office at the time, officials said.

The woman, a resident of central Mumbai, appeared to be "mentally disturbed", Deputy Commissioner of Police Pravin Munde told reporters. She had committed a similar act at the state BJP office earlier, police sources said.

A police team went to her house on Friday to offer her counselling, an official said, adding that they were also probing if she suffered from mental ailments.

The incident took place after 6.30 pm on Thursday.

The woman removed the name plate and banged it on the floor before leaving, the official said, adding that she also tried to vandalise flower pots placed outside Fadnavis's cabin.

"She walked into the Mantralaya without an entry pass through the 'secretary gate'. Investigation revealed that she told the security personnel that she had forgotten her bag inside and merely wanted to collect it," the police official said.

After vandalising the name plate, she exited the



Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis greets Mahant Swami Maharaj during the latter's 91st birthday celebrations at NESCO in Mumbai. Pic: PTI

premises through the same gate, he added.

Police were probing how she was allowed to enter when entry is prohibited for visitors from the secretary gate which is reserved for senior officials, the official said.

Statements of the police personnel posted at the entry gate were being recorded and action would be taken if any lapses are found, he said.

As the incident came to light, videos of the same woman purportedly committing similar acts of vandalism at other places, including on the premises of her own residential building, circulated on social media.

No police complaint has been filed in Thursday's incident.

When asked about the incident, Fadnavis, who was visiting Shirdi on Friday for a program about the

If our sister is angry, we will try to understand what was the problem, and will also check whether she was sent (by someone) deliberately.

-Devendra Fadnavis, deputy CM

government's flagship 'Ladki Bahin' (Beloved Sister) scheme -- under which women receive Rs 1,500 per month -- said officials will find out if the woman had any grievance.

Asked about Opposition leaders taking digs at the government over the incident, Fadnavis said they had run out of issues.

Vijay Wadettiwar, Con-

gress leader and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, took swipes at the Shiv Sena-BJP-NCP government.

"You can see how angry is the 'Ladki Bahin' and how much anger she has towards the government...it was seen on the sixth floor. My sister has shown that you are not fit to be in power," he said.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Anil Desai said the incident showed how bad the law-and-order situation was. "People are angry and waiting for the polls," Desai added.

BJP MP Anil Bonde said the incident showed how the success of the Ladki Bahin scheme had rattled the Opposition. It should be probed whether the woman was ferried by any opposition leader in his car, he demanded.

Bharat Gogavale, MLA of the ruling Shiv Sena, also demanded a probe.

Oppn trying to demoralise police, says Fadnavis

By Correspondent

Pune: Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday accused the opposition parties of having double standards and trying to demoralise the police over the death of the Badlapur sexual assault case accused.

The accused, Akshay Shinde, 24, was shot to death in a retaliatory firing by the police when he was being escorted to Badlapur in Thane district from the Taloja jail in Navi Mumbai earlier this week. Shinde was accused of sexually assaulting two minor girls at a school in Badlapur and was arrested last month.

Shinde's death in police shootout drew condemnation from the opposition parties, who questioned the chain of events and also asked if it was a move to destroy evidence in a case that had triggered national outrage.

Speaking to reporters in the temple town of Shirdi in Ahmednagar district on the sidelines of the state government's 'Ladki Bahin' scheme event, Fadnavis hit out at the opposition.

"These people (opposition parties) have double standards. They write editorials in support of the encounter (of a rape and murder accused) in Telangana, but raise questions over the action by the police, who had to open open fire in retaliation. It seems that there is an attempt to demoralise the police," he said in response to a query.

He said the police are capable to handle situation.

Identify secluded spot to bury body of Akshay Shinde, says HC

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Friday directed the police to identify a secluded spot for the burial of the body of Akshay Shinde, accused in the Badlapur sexual assault case, who was killed in a police shootout.

A division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and M M Sathaye said once the spot is identified, the police shall inform Shinde's family members about it so that the burial can be done.

The HC rejected the contention of the prosecution that there is no custom of burying bodies in Shinde's community, calling it his parents' choice.

Shinde's father on Friday moved an urgent application seeking a burial spot for his son.

The father claimed that they were unable to find a burial ground for Shinde.

Public Prosecutor Hiten Venegaonkar told the court that all burial grounds in Badlapur and neighbouring areas have refused and opposed the burial of Shinde.

The police would take steps to identify a secluded spot for the burial, Venegaonkar told the court.

He added that the police will also ensure that no untoward incident occurs.

"The family will be informed about the same. But they need not make an event out of it. Let them do it silently. The family members will be taken (to burial spot) with police staff," Venegaonkar said.

The bench accepted this statement and posted the matter for hearing on September 30.

Venegaonkar further



"Our enquiry has found that there is no such custom of burial. The family's lawyer made a comment that they are burying only so that there is the option of exhumation in future. All senior members of their community themselves have said there is no such custom," Venegaonkar said.

claimed that police enquired and found out that there was no such custom of burying in Shinde's community.

The bench, however, said the community will not decide what the parents want. "Nobody has the right to decide. It is the parents' choice," HC said.

The father's advocate Amit Katarnaware told the court that on Thursday the family had identified a spot and had also sought permission from the Ambernath Municipal Council.

"The CEO of the Ambernath Municipal Council, however, did not grant permission and was sitting on the file till late evening (on Thursday)," Katarnaware said. He further alleged that the family was facing threats.

The court said they could lodge a complaint with the police which would look into the same.

Venegaonkar said the police was keeping watch on the family and their residence and would ensure that no law and order situation is caused or no untoward incident occurs.

Shinde, 24, was arrested of last month for allegedly

sexually assaulting two minor girls at a school in Badlapur town, Thane district.

Earlier this week, he was being escorted to Badlapur from Taloja jail in connection with a case registered against him on a complaint by his second wife when the shootout occurred, resulting in his death.

The incident took place near the Mumbra Bypass in Thane on Monday evening after Shinde allegedly snatched the gun of a policeman. He was killed in retaliatory firing by the police. Shinde's father had filed a petition in the high court claiming that his son was killed in a fake encounter and sought an HC-monitored probe into his death.

On Wednesday, the bench headed by Justice Dere had raised several questions over the incident. Emphasising the need for a fair and impartial probe, it noted that the incident could have been avoided.

On Thursday, the family claimed that Shinde had in the past expressed his desire to be buried instead of cremated. Shinde's body has been kept at the mortuary of a civic hospital in Kalwa.

No nod to Indrani Mukerjea to travel abroad

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Friday quashed an order passed by a special court granting permission to former media executive Indrani Mukerjea, accused of killing her daughter Sheena Bora, to travel abroad.

A single bench of Justice Shyam Chandak allowed a



petition by the CBI against the special court order on the grounds that Mukerjea was facing trial for a serious offence and that there was a possibility of her fleeing the country.

"The petition is allowed. The impugned order is set aside," the court said.

A special CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) court had on July 19 allowed Mukerjea to travel once to Europe (Spain and UK) for ten days between intermittent periods over

the next three months.

Mukerjea had sought permission to travel abroad claiming that she needed to change certain bank-related documents and other ancillary work after her divorce with former media honcho Peter Mukerjea.

Justice Chandak said that if Indrani Mukerjea wants to carry out the work from India then the statutory authority concern shall help her.

The bench clarified that it has not made any remark on the merits of the case but has only noted that the special court order was not reasonable, and hence unsustainable.

While granting permission, the special court had also laid down certain conditions for Indrani Mukerjea.

During her foreign travel, she would attend the office of the Indian Embassy or its allied diplomatic mission offices at least once during her visit and obtain an attendance certificate, the court had said.

The court also directed her to furnish a security deposit of Rs 2 lakh.

Indrani Mukerjea was arrested in August 2015 after the murder of Sheena Bora came to light.



The Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar with Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu in Mumbai on Friday.

Police conduct mock drills

Mumbai: The Mumbai police on Friday conducted security mock drills at various locations in the city and its suburbs to check its security preparedness, officials said.

Teams of police officials conducted these exercises in Bhaucha Dhakka and Barkat Ali Road areas, an official said.

The mock drill was also conducted in the Zaveri Bazar area. "Another such drill was conducted this evening at the ISKCON temple in Juhu."

Yuva Sena sweeps MU Senate polls

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Shiv Sena (UBT) affiliated Yuva Sena has swept the Mumbai University's Senate election for which results were announced on Friday. The Yuva Sena had won all 10 seats.

The other main contender for the seats is the Akhil Bhartiya Vidhyarti Parishad.

Sheetal Devrukhkar, (SC), Shashikant Zore,

Awhad's wife faces flak for comparing Kalam to Osama

Mumbai: Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) leader Jitendra Awhad's wife Ruta has drawn criticism after drawing parallels between terrorist Osama bin Laden and former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam.

She made the controversial remarks while addressing a gathering of children on Thursday in Thane, advising them to read Laden's biography to understand how he became a terrorist.

"You must read the biography of Osama bin Laden. How APJ Abdul Kalam became the president is similar to the way Osama bin Laden became a terrorist. But why did he become a terrorist? It was society that forced him to become that way," she said.

Former MP Anand Paranjpe of the Ajit Pawar-led NCP on Friday sought action against Ruta Awhad for "glorifying" Laden and his Al Qaeda terror network.

Referring to Ruta Awhad's remarks, BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said, "All the parties of the INDI alliance have a soft corner towards terrorists."

Suggestions quite unreasonable

Says Kangana on 'Emergency' cuts

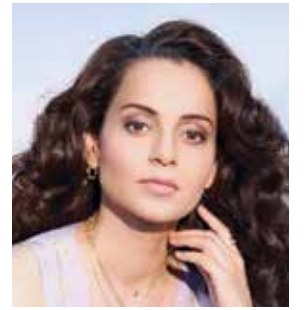
By Correspondent

Mumbai: Actor-filmmaker Kangana Ranaut on Friday said she has received requests from the censor board for cuts in her directorial "Emergency" but the suggestions "seem quite unreasonable" and her team is ready to stand its ground.

In a statement following reports in a section of the media that the Central Board for Film Certification (CBFC) has asked for 13 cuts in the film, Ranaut said the team is "resolute in maintaining the film's authenticity".

The actor and BJP MP has directed, co-produced and acted in the film, playing the lead role of the late Indira Gandhi. She has earlier accused the censor board of stalling certification to delay the release of the film. It was earlier supposed to release on September 6.

Several media reports said the censor board's revising committee ordered 13 cuts to the film and issued it a U/A certificate. These reportedly include adding a disclaimer, deleting some dialogues and



scenes and providing facts to back historical references in the film.

"We've received requests for cuts, but while feedback is always welcome, some of the suggestions seem quite unreasonable... On the brighter side, most historians and members of the review committee who've seen it have praised it as the most faithful depiction of a leader," Ranaut said.

"They've especially appreciated our unwavering commitment to the truth, without compromising even the smallest detail. Their endorsement is encouraging, affirming that we've honored the story as it deserves. Nevertheless, we are ready to stand our ground and protect the film's integrity, ensuring its essence remains intact," she added.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I feel quite at peace. I'm also okay with nothing looking over my shoulder at what someone else is doing and comparing to that. And I think a lot of Instagram also is about comparing."



Saif Ali Khan, Actor

A forceful attempt to highlight Hindutva

By Abhijit Mulye

Mumbai: Dharmaveer -2, the sequel of biopic about CM Eknath Shinde's mentor late Shiv Sena leader Anand Dighe, is a forceful attempt to highlight Hindutva as the base for the grand split within Shiv Sena.

Shinde led the vertical split within Shiv Sena in June 2022, bringing down the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) under Uddhav Thackeray. While doing so, he had blamed bad governance of Uddhav Thackeray and wrong policies he pursued under the pressure from alliance partners.

However, after 2.5 years, just ahead of the state assembly elections, the movie, that hit the screens across the state on Friday, seeks to blame it on Uddhav Thackeray's lackluster attitude in pursuing Hindutva principles while he was chief minister.

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, along with several of his cabinet colleagues and party leaders attended the special premier show of the movie Dharmaveer-2 Makkam Post Thane in Mumbai on Thursday night. While praising the movie and felicitating the actors and makers of the film, he said that he hopes



Dharmaveer 2

yet another sequel of the movie too shall hit the theatres soon.

While focusing on the theme that how Dighe would have reacted to some of the incidents in the recent past, the movie highlights Uddhav Thackeray's insistence on aligning with the Congress and the NCP and his inability to work on Hindutva

agenda. It begins with the incident in Palghar district where two sardus were lynched to death by local tribal mob and tries to portray how the incident led to adverse reactions against their own government among Shiv Sena MLAs and ministers.

The movie also highlights the power dynamics within the MVA alliance and the Shiv Sena after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's derogatory remarks about Swatantraveer Savarkar. Shiv Sena under Thackeray had shirked away from reacting to the Congress stand even though it had always advocated Bharat Ratna

award for Savarkar. The movie links such incidents in the recent past to similar incidents in the life of Anand Dighe and tries to show similarity between reactions of Dighe and CM Shinde.

The movie also tries to highlight Dighe and Shinde's role in the Ram Jannabhoomi agitation at Ayodhya, the Jai Malang agitation at Kalyan, denial of Z plus security to Shinde during Thackeray regime and an earlier attempt on him and his family's life. The timing of the release of the movie and contents are clearly aimed at portraying Shinde as the saviour of Hindutva.

Ramping up hiring in India, says Accenture CEO

New Delhi: IT services and consulting firm Accenture is ramping up its hiring efforts in India, with a continued focus on freshers, company CEO Julie Sweet has said.

Sweet, Accenture Chair and Chief Operating Officer, during an investor call, emphasised the company's commitment to recruiting new college graduates and refreshing its workforce pyramid.

She said a majority of these new hires will be concentrated in India, which is seen as a significant growth driver for the company as it heads into fiscal year 2025.

The company operates on a September-August fiscal calendar.

"We hire all over the world, and in technology, which is a big driver of the growth that we're seeing now, and going into FY2025, that is a lot of hiring in India," Sweet said.

The IT major is steadily betting on GenAI and "reinventing" its services, she said, adding that Accenture's FY2024 growth was driven by its clients seeking to reinvent using tech, data, AI and new ways of working.

"We have continued to steadily increase our data and AI workforce reaching approximately 57,000 practitioners against our goal of 80,000 by the end of FY 2026.

We invested in our



We are hiring primarily in India... a lot of that hiring is technology in India, and of course it also addresses refreshing our pyramid at this time, so you've got kind of the new college graduates coming in, so there's really no change in our talent strategy.

Julie Sweet, CEO, Accenture

people to continue to develop their marketable skills and to help us reinvent our services

National Agricultural Code to promote quality

New Delhi: The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) on Friday said it is developing a National Agricultural Code (NAC) to promote quality and best practices in the agriculture sector.

NAC will incorporate emerging agricultural technologies, novel farming practices, and varying regional conditions across India. In developing this code, areas which are lacking standardization will be identified and standards will be developed for them, it said.

This is in line with the other successful codes developed by BIS like National Building Code (NBC), and National Electrical Code (NEC) for construction and electricity.

Addressing a workshop to expedite development of NAC, BIS Director General Pramod Kumar Tiwari said,

"While standards exist for agricultural machinery, equipment and inputs, NAC would act as an enabler of quality culture in Indian agriculture by providing the required reference to policy makers and guidance to the farming community."

Key considerations for development of NAC would include its approach, structure, various methods for engagement, institutional readiness, and the importance of demonstrations.

"By addressing the challenges faced by farmers and promoting efficient and sustainable agricultural practices, the NAC can significantly improve the livelihoods of millions of people in rural India," he noted. Representatives from ICAR institutions, state agricultural universities, and industry associations participated in the workshop.

-PTI



Ashwin Fernandes, Executive Director (AMESA), QS Quacquarelli Symonds with BJP leader Sudhanshu Trivedi and QS Quacquarelli Symonds CEO Jessica Turner during the launch of a book 'Modialogue: Conversations for a Viksit Bharat' in New Delhi on Friday. Pic: PTI

Gold hits another record for third day

New Delhi: Gold prices advanced to yet another record high -- for the third straight day on Friday -- rising Rs 50 in the national capital on the back of continued buying by jewellers.

Traders said increased buying by local jewellers to meet festive and wedding season demand and a firm trend in the overseas markets mainly lifted gold prices to this year's highest level. Further, the US Federal Reserve's optimism that they will maintain an aggressive pace of interest rate cuts this year also boosted the bullion prices, they added.

Meanwhile, in the futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for October delivery, declined Rs 181, or 0.24 per cent, to Rs 75,206 per 10 grams.

Demand from the world's top two consumers, China and India, is likely to improve after China's recent stimulus, while retail demand in India is expected to improve ahead of festival season, which also improved market sentiment and lifted the gold prices higher.

Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities, HDFC Securities

Rs 78,300 – Gold price per 10 grams
Rs 94,500 – Silver price per kg

Silver contracts for December delivery fell Rs 142, or 0.15 per cent, to trade at Rs 92,522 per kilogram on the bourses.

"Gold price, which touched a high on MCX October futures contract yesterday (Thursday), attracted some sellers on the last

day of the week retreating further from the all-time peak," Maneesh Sharma, AVP - Commodities & Currencies, Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers, said. The downturn was due to emergence of buying interest in dollar index, which tends to undermine demand for the commodity, Sharma added.

In the international markets, Comex gold is trading 0.29 per cent lower at USD 2,687.20 per ounce. -PTI

Forex reserves to new high

Mumbai: India's forex reserves jumped by USD 2.838 billion to a new all-time high of USD 692.296 billion for the week ended September 20, the RBI said on Friday.

The overall kitty had increased by USD 223 million to a new high of USD 689.458 billion for the previous reporting week.

For the week ended September 20, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by USD 2.057 billion to USD 605.686 billion, the data on Friday showed.

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

Gold reserves increased by USD 726 million to USD 63.613 billion during the week, the RBI said.

TIGA gets clearance to acquire stake in Dream11

New Delhi: The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has granted nod to Singapore-based TIGA Investments' proposal to acquire a stake in Dream11's parent company Dream Sports Inc.

The deal was cleared by CCI under the green channel route. The transaction pertains to the purchase by



Tiga Acquisition Corp III (Tiga) of certain preferred stock of Dream Sports Inc (DSI), along with certain rights, from an existing shareholder of DSI, the regulator said in a notice on September 23.

However, the fair trade regulator CCI did not reveal the name of the existing shareholder. The US-based Dream Sports conducts its operations through its subsidiary in India, Sporta Technologies Pvt Ltd. DSI, a sports tech company, owns a portfolio of leading brands like Dream11 and FanCode. Sporta is primarily in-

involved in the provision of online gaming and allied digital engagement services in India. TIGA Investments (TIGA) focuses on making long-term investments in differentiated businesses with strong management teams.

Tiga is also the sponsor of TIGA Acquisition Corp, an NYSE-listed special purpose acquisition company. It provides private debt and equity investment across the Asia Pacific. "The parties and their respective group entities and affiliates do not have any horizontal overlaps, existing or potential vertical linkages and existing or potential complementary business activities in India.

"...proposed transaction is unlikely to cause any appreciable adverse effect on competition in India," CCI said. Accordingly, the transaction is being notified to the Commission under the green channel route. Under this route, a transaction that does not raise any risk of an appreciable adverse effect on competition is deemed to be approved on being intimated to the fair-trade regulator. -PTI



British luxury car maker Rolls-Royce showcases its latest sports utility vehicle the new Cullinan Series II in Chennai on Friday. Pic: PTI

Plans to increase airports to 350

New Delhi: Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu on Friday said as India strides towards becoming a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047, the ministry is seeking to increase the number of airports in the country to 350 and boost tourism.

In his address at an event held to mark the World Tourism Day at Vigyan Bhawan here, he also said his ministry is working on connecting more hinterlands locations which are close to un-

explored sites. Naidu emphasised the government's vision of boosting domestic connectivity and providing better facilities and warm hospitality at airports to welcome foreign tourists, as airports are "gateways to a country".

"Today, we have 157 airports but in the next 20-25 years, when we are going to see the real Viksit Bharat in 2047, we want to increase the number of airports which is 157 today to the tune of 350," he said

at the event hosted by the Tourism Ministry.

"4.6 crore travellers landed in India in 2014, and now that we have increased the number of airports from 74 to a staggering 157... we are seeing almost 7 crore people landing in the country today.

And, within these numbers, more than 35 per cent people are arriving for holidays and recreation only," the civil aviation minister said. -PTI

Zomato co-founder Akriti Chopra resigns

New Delhi: Online food ordering and delivery platform Zomato on Friday said its co-founder and Chief People Officer Akriti Chopra has resigned to pursue other interests.

Designated as senior management personnel, Chopra has tendered her resignation, with effect from September 27, 2024, Zomato said in a regulatory filing.

She has been with the company for 13 years and played a key role in setting up and scaling Zomato's legal and finance teams in her previous role as CFO.

Before joining Zomato, she worked with PwC for three years in the tax and regulatory practice.

In January last year, another Zomato co-founder and its then chief technology officer Gunjan Patidar resigned after over a decade stint in the company.

Before that in November 2022, another co-founder Mohit Gupta had resigned. Gupta was elevated to co-founder level in 2020 from the position of CEO of its food delivery business. -PTI

SJVN to set up storage projects in Maharashtra

By Correspondent

Mumbai: India's state-run Navratna hydro-power major SJVN will develop five pumped storage projects (PSPs) with a total capacity of 8100 MW (megawatt) and 505 MW floating solar project in Maharashtra as per the two pacts signed with the state government.

The total estimated investment on these projects will be to the tune of Rs 48,000 crores and will generate approximately 8400 direct and indirect employment opportunities.

Pumped storage hydro-power (PSH) is a type of hydroelectric energy storage, which is a configuration of two water reservoirs at different elevations that can generate power as water moves down from one to the other (discharge), passing through a turbine. In other words, it has the ability to use the same water over and over again.

The five pumped projects include 800 MW Koldandapada, 1500 MW Sidgarh, 2000 MW Chornai, 1800 MW Baitarni and 2000 MW Jalvara pumped storage projects while the sec-

ond pact pertains to the development of 505 MW floating solar project at Lower Wardha Dam in Vidarbha.

The First Phase of the floating solar project will be of 100 MW and Second Phase will be of 405 MW. The phased development will ensure optimal use of existing power evacuation infrastructure and will provide a sustainable and reliable energy source for the region.

This memorandum of understanding will facilitate SJVN to undertake Survey & Investigation, preparation of detailed project report and establish these projects in Maharashtra in a time bound manner as per the prevailing policies of the Government.

The PSPs will play a critical role in energy storage, grid stabilization and meeting the peak electricity demand, ensuring reliable and clean energy for the state of Maharashtra.

The MoUs were signed in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis. He extended full support of the state government for ensuring timely execution.

Track quality checks, fast-tracking Kavach: Vaishnav

New Delhi: Allaying concerns over rail safety, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav has asserted that implementation of the 'Kavach' automatic train protection system was being carried out on a war footing alongside rigorous quality checks for tracks and signals.

From ultrasound tests to installation of fog safety devices, the latest technology tools and solutions are being used across the network, while special training is also being imparted

to drivers and other personnel for the Kavach system, the minister told reporters.

The comments assume significance in the wake of a spate of derailment cases reported in the recent past, which the opposition parties have used to attack the government.

Kavach is an indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system and a highly technology-intensive system that requires safety certification of the highest



order.

Among other things, Kavach aids the loco pilot in train running within specified speed limits by automatic application of brakes in case the driver fails to do so and also helps the train run safely during inclem-

ent weather.

The Kavach system implementation involves an elaborate setup comprising telecom towers and laying of optical fibre along the rail network, installation of RFID tags throughout the track length, data centres at stations, devices fitted to tracks, onto the trains and even below engines. With the designing and testing phases over, including through trials and pilots, the government is aiming to cover the entire network.

The first field trials of Kavach on passenger trains were started in February 2016 and, based on the experience and independent safety assessment of the system by a third party, three firms were approved in 2018-19 for the supply of Kavach. Indian Railways had introduced an Anti-Collision Device system in 2006 but it was abandoned in 2012 after being found to be faulty.

Earlier this week, Ashwini Vaishnav reviewed a trial of the Kavach system between Sawai Madhopur and Indargarh stations in the West Central Railway zone. He travelled in the engine of a Kavach-fitted train, which, while speeding at 130 kilometres per hour, stopped 50 metres before a red signal on its own without any manual interference with the braking function by the loco pilot.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Fulfilling our aspirations of Biswa Bangla, the semiconductor facility may emerge to be a great multi-material fab for national security. A latest tweet by the Government of India yesterday also corroborates this."

Mamata Banerjee, Chief Minister, West Bengal



Police search for rape accused Sidhique

Thiruvananthapuram: With the whereabouts unknown of Malayalam actor Sidhique, who was denied anticipatory bail by the Kerala High Court in a rape case, the police have intensified their search for him by publishing a lookout notice in newspapers seeking information about him.

The lookout notice in the newspapers states that 65-year-old Sidhique is an accused in a rape-cum-criminal intimidation case and anyone with information about him should contact the Commissioner of Police of Thiruvananthapuram city or the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Thiruvanan-



thapuram Range.

Besides them, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Narcotic cell, Thiruvananthapuram or the Museum police station can also be contacted, the notice said.

The notice, which carries a photo of the actor, also contains his physical description -- 5.7 feet tall

and well-built.

Sidhique has moved the Supreme Court seeking anticipatory bail in the rape case after the Kerala High Court on Tuesday, had denied him relief.

The High Court had said that in view of the seriousness of the accusations he was facing, his custodial interrogation was inevitable for proper investigation of the crime.

It had further said that since Sidhique's defence was "a total denial of the incident", his potency test was yet to be conducted and there being a "reasonable apprehension" that he may intimidate witnesses and tamper with evidence, "it was not a fit case to ex-

ercise the discretionary powers of the court" to grant him the relief.

Sidhique, who was booked for offences under sections 376 (rape) and 506 (criminal intimidation), had claimed in his plea that the complainant female actor, had subjected him to a "prolonged campaign of harassment and false accusations since 2019".

Multiple FIRs have been registered against many high-profile Malayalam film personalities following allegations of sexual harassment against various directors and actors in the wake of revelations in the Justice K Hema Committee report. -PTI



Members of Akhila Bharatha Gau Seva Foundation and Team Kashmir Renaissance during an awareness programme on 'Save Cow Save Earth' at Lal Chowk in Srinagar on Friday. Pic:PTI

Pilgrims rescued

Bhavnagar: In an overnight operation, 29 persons, including 27 pilgrims from Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, were rescued from a bus that was stranded on a flooded causeway in Gujarat's Bhavnagar district, officials said on Friday.

The bus got stuck on the raised path on a stream near Koliyak village on Thursday evening, said District Collector RK Mehta, who was at the spot to supervise the rescue operation that went on for nearly eight hours.

"The pilgrims were headed towards Bhavnagar city after visiting Nishkalank Mahadev temple near the village. -PTI

Nine-member SIT to probe laddu adulteration

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh government has appointed a nine-member special investigation team (SIT) to probe the alleged issue of adulterating Tirupati laddus (consecrated sweet) with animal fats.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu alleged during a recent NDA legislative party meeting that the erstwhile YSRCP government did not even spare Sri Venkateswara temple and used substandard ingredients and animal fats for making laddus.

The allegations sparked a massive controversy across the country, hurting the sentiments of crores of

Hindus.

"The government of Andhra Pradesh, in accordance with its commitment to protecting the sanctity of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), have (has) considered it necessary to constitute an SIT for detailed and comprehensive investigation of the entire issue," said Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad in a late night order on Thursday.

TTD is the official custodian of Lord Venkateswara temple in Tirupati.

On September 22, the CM announced at his Undavalli residence that an SIT will probe the alleged

sacrilege of adulterating the laddus.

The SIT is headed by Guntur range Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sarvashresth Tripathi and other police officials.

However, YSRCP leaders said that probing the allegations by an agency reporting to the CM is insufficient and called for a Supreme Court-monitored probe.

Earlier, P Sudhakar Reddy, former additional advocate general, noted that the truth in the laddu allegations should not emanate from an investigation agency working under Naidu. -PTI

Another Mpox case in Kerala confirmed

Thiruvananthapuram: The Kerala health department on Friday said another Mpox case was reported in the state and urged those who have symptoms to seek treatment.

The southern state had reported the country's first confirmed case of the new strain earlier this week. A high-level evaluation meeting was held on Friday to evaluate the situation, the health department said.

Health Minister Veena George said the contact list of the patient has been prepared and the preventive measures have been taken. On Monday, the department had announced plans to release revised guidelines for the prevention and treatment of Mpox. -PTI

IFS officer, husband booked for fraud

Lucknow: An Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer and her husband have been booked here for allegedly duping a doctor of over Rs 64 lakh on the pretext of investment, police said on Friday.

SHO Rajesh Kumar Tripathi told PTI that an FIR in the matter was lodged on Thursday at the Gomti Nagar police station on orders of a court.

In her complaint, Dr. Mridula Agarwal alleged fraud amounting to Rs 64,63,250 against the IFS officer Niharika Singh, her husband Ajit Gupta and their associated companies



in Lucknow.

A police official said the IFS officer is currently posted in Indonesia. PTI could not immediately contact her for a response.

The FIR has been lodged under IPC sections 406 (criminal breach of trust) and 420 (cheating) for the offence that took place between February 2 and 29,

2020.

Those booked include Ajit Gupta, his wife Niharika Singh, Ani Bullion Traders and Eye Visions India Credit Cooperative Society Limited, according to the FIR. In her complaint, Agarwal, a 54-year-old resident of Gomti Nagar, stated that she became acquainted with the couple in 2016 when they brought their daughter for treatment at her clinic. She claims that they persuaded her to invest in their company, Ani Bullion Traders assuring her of better returns compared to other investment options. -PTI

SC calls HC's bail direction unwarranted, extraneous

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday termed as "unwarranted and extraneous" the Madras High Court directive to YouTuber Felix Jerald to close down his channel as one of the bail conditions.

The top court also confirmed its September 6 order granting bail to Jerald sans the condition asking him to close down his YouTube channel "RedPix 24x7".

"The bail order of September 6 is hereby confirmed," a bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Manoj Misra said after taking note of the submissions of senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for the YouTuber. The bench noted that following its earlier order Jerald has been already released on bail.

"One of the bail conditions (imposed by the high court) asking him to close down his YouTube channel was unwarranted and extraneous and we accordingly set aside that condition," the bench said, adding the other bail conditions will remain operational.

Jerald was arrested for hosting an "objectionable" interview of another You-

tuber Savukku Shankar on his YouTube channel. Shankar was also arrested.

In the interview, Shankar made certain comments against Madras High Court judges and women police officers of the state. The high court, which granted bail to both YouTubers, had asked Jerald to close down his channel as one of the conditions.

Earlier, the bench had issued a notice to the state government and stayed the particular direction on closure of the channel.

It, however, had asked him to comply with other bail conditions.

"You are making scurrilous allegations against the judiciary and all women IPS officers. Why do you host such interviews?" the CJ had asked.

Sankaranarayanan had said such an interview should not have been shown. The senior lawyer, however, said the channel has 2.4 million subscribers and the direction for its closure is harsh.

On September 25, the top court ordered "forthwith" release of co-accused and YouTuber Shankar who was detained just after his release under the Tamil Nadu Goondas Act. -PTI



Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel wears black ribbon during a protest rally by BJP against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in Ahmedabad on Friday. Pic: PTI

Marathi morcha formed in Delhi

New Delhi: The Delhi unit of the BJP has recently formed the BJP Marathi Morcha to woo the Marathi community in the national capital and its vicinity.

According to Santosh Gangan, the coordinator of BJP Marathi Morcha, in Delhi there are around 4.5 to 5 lakh Marathi population spread across seven constituencies of Delhi

state. About 40 organisations, run by Marathi speaking people, are working in various fields like social, educational, religious, spiritual in different parts of Delhi.

"Due to the formation of the Marathi Morcha, the Marathi community in Delhi has got a rightful place in the BJP Delhi region office," Gangan said.

Delhi Region Executive Member Nitin Sardare has been given the responsibility of convenor of this Morcha. Mahendra Ladda is in-charge of this front. Mahendra Ladda is originally from Latur. He founded a Ganesh Mandal in the capital. This Ganapati is known as 'Delhi Ka Maharaja', organised by Ganesh Seva Mandal headed by Ladda.

Two arrested for heckling Bihar youths

Kolkata: Two persons have been arrested for allegedly threatening and heckling two CISF job aspirants from Bihar in West Bengal's Siliguri, police said on Friday.

The incident triggered a political storm, with NDA leaders in Bihar denouncing the incident and demanding immediate action, and the TMC asserting that West Bengal believes in democratic rights of every citizen of the country and will never allow harassment of anyone.

Two persons, identified as Rajat Bhattacharya and Giridhari Roy, were arrested on Thursday night on the charge of harassment, intimidation and assault on two persons from Bihar, an official of the Siliguri Police Commissionerate said.

The two arrested persons are residents of Siliguri and are linked to a regional outfit, he said, adding further investigation is underway.

A purported video of the incident showed two youths from Bihar being heckled by a group of people. -PTI

HC expresses displeasure over Jama Masjid case

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court expressed its displeasure on Friday over the failure of authorities to produce before it a file containing the decision of then prime minister Manmohan Singh that the historic Mughal-era Jama Masjid in the national capital should not be declared a protected monument.

A bench headed by Justice Prathiba M Singh observed that in spite of an earlier order, "loose sheets" and other documents were tendered to it instead of the record pertaining to the mosque's status as a monument, its current occupants etc.

Granting a final opportunity, the court sought an affidavit in the matter from a competent officer of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) as well as the original file on the next date of hearing in October.

It also asked the ASI director general to directly supervise the matter and hold a meeting with the central government's counsel -- lawyers Anil Soni and Manish Mohan -- to ensure that a comprehensive affidavit is filed.

The high court was hearing PILs that have sought

directions to authorities to declare the Jama Masjid a protected monument and remove all encroachments in and around it.

On August 28, it had directed the Union Ministry of Culture and ASI to positively produce before it a file containing Singh's decision that the Jama Masjid should not be declared a protected monument.

During Friday's hearing, the bench questioned the ASI official present in the court over his failure to comply with the order and said, "Who is not giving the file? We will call the secretary. There are clear instructions."

The court asked the ASI director general to depute a competent official who is aware of the facts.

The public interest litigation (PIL) matters, filed by Suhail Ahmed Khan and Ajay Gautam in 2014, have objected to the use of the title "Shahi Imam" by the Jama Masjid's imam, Maulana Syed Ahmed Bukhari, and the appointment of his son as the naib (deputy) imam.

The pleas have also questioned why the mosque is not under the ASI's management. -PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"People are traveling by Metro, watching TV, eating out at restaurants and going to offices. Everyone is carrying on with their normal activities. Has life stopped?"

Swastika Mukherjee, Actor, on life after R.G. Kar case



Web page with summaries of landmark judgments

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has launched a new web page to provide summaries of its important judgments.

The web page - 'Landmark Judgment Summaries' -- makes it easier for "citizens to understand the court's important decisions in line with the court's broader goal of ensuring an informed citizenry, promoting legal awareness, and enhancing public engagement with the law," a statement said.

It said the decisions of the Supreme Court of India impact diverse areas of public life nationwide.

"The Court therefore recognises the importance of making its judgments accessible to all citizens. However, complex legal language and the length of judgements can serve as a barrier to citizens understanding the work and decisions of the Court, and may even lead to misconceptions about important judgements," it said.

To overcome this barrier and to ensure that all persons can easily understand its significant decisions, the new web page provides accurate summaries of important decisions in simple and clear lan-

guage, the apex court said in the statement.

The page features a year-wise curated list of significant verdicts that are of public interest, it added.

The web page also offers direct links to view the full judgment along with video recordings of the hearings and oral transcripts of the arguments, if available, the statement said.

As the apex court celebrates its 75th year, the launch of the web page aims to enhance public engagement with the court, it said. -PTI

'12th Fail' screened at SC

A special screening of filmmaker Vidhu Vinod Chopra's "12th Fail" was held for chief justice D Y Chandrachud and other judges at the Supreme Court.

The film's screening on Wednesday was attended by the CJJ, Judges and over 600 officials of the Supreme Court and their families.

It was followed by an interaction between Justice Chandrachud and Chopra, along with the film's lead cast Vikrant Massey and Medha Shankar.

Besides the film's team, IPS officer Manoj Kumar Sharma, whose life inspired the Hindi movie, and his wife, IRS Officer Shraddha Joshi, were also part of the interaction.

"I believe every member of our staff family will be truly inspired to encourage their sons, daughters, friends, and mentors them to lead the nation to new heights. Such films enable and inspire us to do something better every day of our lives for people around us," Chandrachud said during the interaction.

"12th Fail" was released in theatres in October 2023 and was praised for its storytelling as well as performances by actors. It is based on Anurag Pathak's bestselling novel of the same name. The chief justice praised Chopra for the way he transformed the real-life story on the screen.

Indonesia landslide: 15 killed in gold mine

Padang: A landslide triggered by torrential rains struck an unauthorised gold mining operation on Indonesia's Sumatra island, killing at least 15 people, officials said Friday. Dozens others were reported missing.



Villagers were digging Thursday for grains of gold in the remote Solok district of West Sumatra province when mud plunged down the surrounding hills and buried them, said Irwan Effendi, head of the local disaster mitigation agency office.

He said at least 25 people were still buried, and that three people were pulled out alive with injuries by rescuers.

Search efforts in the worst-affected area, near

Nagari Sungai Abu village, were hampered by mudslides that covered much of the area, blackouts and lack of telecommunications.

"The devastated mining area can only be reached by walking for four hours from the nearest settlement," said Ilham Wahab, the agency's

spokesperson.

Informal mining operations are common in Indonesia, providing a tenuous livelihood to thousands who labour in conditions with a high risk of serious injury or death.

Landslides, flooding and collapses of tunnels are just some of the hazards facing miners. Much of

gold ore processing involves highly toxic mercury and cyanide and workers frequently use little or no protection.

The country's last major mining-related accident occurred in July when a landslide crashed onto an illegal traditional gold mine in Gorontalo province on Sulawesi island, killing at least 23 people.

In April 2022 a landslide hit another gold mine in North Sumatra's Mandailing Natal district, killing 12 women.

In February 2019, a makeshift wooden structure in an illegal gold mine in North Sulawesi province collapsed partly due to shifting soil. More than 40 people were buried. -AP

Jal Shakti Ministry prioritises water conservation

New Delhi: The Jal Shakti Ministry on Thursday held a high-level meeting to accelerate the implementation of artificial recharge structures for rainwater harvesting with community participation under the Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari initiative.

The meeting emphasized the need for a unified cross-ministry approach to make water conservation a national priority, aligning with the 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain 2024' campaign, according to a statement.

Key ministries were urged to collaborate closely, using existing schemes and resources, to construct recharge systems like borewell replenishment structures and shafts to boost groundwater levels, it said.

Secretary of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Debashree Mukherjee stressed the importance of inter-sectoral efforts to scale up community participation in water conservation activities.

She noted that the JSJB

initiative was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier in Surat.

The meeting discussed various action points, including the need for ministries to create mission-mode action plans for enhancing existing rainwater harvesting structures, with a focus on groundwater replenishment.

Mukherjee also highlighted the role of community engagement through ministries, such as education and youth affairs, to raise awareness.

Climate negotiators urge tougher targets

United Nations: A trio of leaders of international climate negotiations on Thursday urged colleagues to step up efforts to fight global warming, but outside groups and endangered nations told those leaders to look in the mirror, take their own advice — and stop pumping out fossil fuels.

At the United Nations, the troika of the current and next two presidents of UN climate conferences told other leaders to make their required climate-fighting targets — due next February — much more ambitious.



Students holding placards form a human chain to observe Global Climate Strike 2024 in Kolkata on Friday. Pic: PTI

Ramesh leaves environment chair

New Delhi: Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Friday said goodbye to the post of chairperson of the Standing Committee on Science & Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change even as he took a swipe at the incoming chair Bhubaneswar Kalita with a 2019 remind-

er of his crossing over to the BJP.

Ramesh chaired the Science & Technology Standing Committee during September 2019-June 2022 and September 2022-June 2024. He is now a member of the panel which was reconstituted on Thursday.

"After four annual

terms as Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Science & Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change, it was time to step down. I am still, however, a member of this Committee that covers a very large span of subjects," he said in a post on X.

"I look forward to working with the new Chairperson Bhubaneswar Kalita of the BJP, who was my colleague in the Congress till 11AM of Aug 5, 2019. But that is another story altogether which is unique in our Parliament's history," he said. -PTI

WASTE TO BEST

How do I manage my household Waste?



By
Dr. Sanjay Joshi

The domestic waste, generally regarded as the Municipal Solid Waste, is generated at the household level through various human activities which have already been discussed in the previous articles in this column.

Now, we will try to understand the impact of mismanagement of this waste on the environmental, social and economical and what should we do at the individual level and at the community level.

We generate 'heterogeneous' kind of waste at the domestic level as it is usually a mixture of wet waste and dry waste which is eventually disposed off only to get accumulated in the by-lanes and roadsides.

Let us assume that in a particular area or neighborhood of a city, there are about 20000 houses, each house generating approximately 2 kg of 'mixed' waste everyday amounting to total 40000 kg of waste.

Now this 40000 kgs of waste will be first dumped openly alongside of some road or by-lane in that neighborhood. It will be left

there at least for a day or so till the local cleaning staff, appointed by the urban local body, arrives there at a stipulated time to fetch that load of garbage which will be dumped in a truck. That truck will then move to another such location where more or less same volume of garbage will have piled up. Finally, when that truck is filled to its capacity, it will travel some distance to reach its destination, that is a dumping yard.

A dumping yard is a piece of open land reserved for dumping the city garbage. Before moving ahead, let us visit a garbage heap amounting to 40000 kgs lying along the roadside.


Look there, can you see some animal activity there? Yes. There are crows, there are dogs, there are rats scurrying around and then there are house flies and other insects along with the humans labelled Rag Pickers. And oh my god!

We can see a few cows searching through that heap of garbage. What are the cows doing here? No wonder. People like you and me in the neighborhood have stored and packed their left over stale food and other eatables in a plastic bag which has ended up eventually into this garbage.

Poor cows get attracted towards such bags containing food very carelessly thrown by the people and in an attempt to consume the food inside that bag, they end up in swallowing the plastic bag itself. The cow gets terribly sick and eventually die most of the times as plastic is very much unnatural 'food' for her.

The irony here is that we consider cows as our Holy Mother and treat her with utmost respect in our culture. Killing a cow for beef is not acceptable to us. It is beyond our tolerance limits. If that is the case, then we should think a hundred times before exposing our Holy Mother to such heinous act of disposing the food waste packed in plastic bags!

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



Delhi zoo initiates international animal exchange programmes

New Delhi: In a first, the Delhi Zoo has approached its international counterparts in Dubai, Israel, Africa and Europe for animal exchange programmes, a move aimed at boosting the diversity of species at the National Zoological Park in the national capital.

The officials here said that they have shared a list of animals the Delhi Zoo can offer in exchange and is awaiting response with the zoo in these countries.

"We are in talks with international zoos in Dubai, Israel, Africa, and Europe. At the same time, we are also coordinating with various state zoos across the country, including those in Gujarat, Lucknow, Ludhiana and the northeast," an official told PTI.

Speaking about the exotic species collection, the zoo official said, "Currently, we have a single jaguar, a single African elephant, ostriches, Sika deer, hippopotamus and various exotic bird species." According to the zoo officials, the focus is not on acquiring exotic species, as no one is willing to send their exotic animals.

E-bus for tourists at Ajanta Caves

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: The Maharashtra tourism department has launched a fleet of 20 electric buses for hassle-free transport of tourists to the Ajanta Caves, an official said on Friday.

The first bus was commissioned on Friday to mark World Tourism Day. The buses will transport visitors from the parking lot to the cave complex.

Talking to PTI, assistant director of the state tourism department, Vijay Jadhav, said, "A fleet of 20 electric buses will cater to domestic and foreign tourists visiting the world heritage site.

Earlier, a conventional diesel bus was being operated, and tourists had to wait a long time for the vehicle to get full."

With the new fleet of buses, there will be no waiting time, and visitors can experience pollution-free travel, he said.

"The fleet of 20 buses, both air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned, have a carrying capacity of 14 and 22 passengers. We expect that the entire fleet will be operational by October 20. A film on the



2,58,619 – No of tourists visited Ajanta between January and August, 2024
7,000 – No of foreigner visitors
36 – No of complexes with viharas (worship halls) and monasteries with paintings depicting the life of Lord Buddha

Ajanta Caves will be shown en route to give visitors an idea about the site," he said.

He further said a tourist-friendly booking system will also be launched.

"The bus service will employ 32 people. The plan is to ensure the service is available every two minutes," he said. The Ajanta Caves, located around 100

km from Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar city.

The Ajanta caves is facing problems related with pollution because of rampant use of petrol and diesel based vehicles. The caves are protected monument. The Maharashtra government has been promoting the caves as a tourist destination since a decade.

Germany uses beer to teach effects of climate change

Munich: The keys to combating the climate change that's wreaking havoc on Germany's beer industry could lie inside a plant nursery — nicknamed "our kindergarten" — at the Society of Hop Research north of Munich.

The 7,000 seedlings there are a mix of new varieties that sprouted from research, education and centuries-old German traditions in hops farming and beer brewing. The hope is that the plants will grow to be seven to eight metres (23 to 26 feet) tall and strong enough to withstand a multitude of diseases and

disasters thrown at them — like rising temperatures, drought and the dreaded powdery mildew that can wipe out entire crops.

At every stage, the plants will be incorporated into education in university and vocational school classrooms, breweries and farms across Germany. Generations of professional farmers and brewers, as well as the students who seek to join their ranks, will learn much from the growing plants: Which new varieties should be added to decrease the risk of a bad year wiping out a

farm's entire harvest, whether the latest breeds offer a new taste for the market, and if a specific type is particularly resistant to disease.

The seedlings' successes — or failures — could determine the fate of the country's famed Hallertau region, the world's largest hops-growing area where most of the farms' crops will end up in beer.

If the hops stay alive and thrive, the vines will graduate next year to trellises in trial fields in the heart of Bavaria. Researchers hope the specially bred hops will grow to become



climate change-resistant and commercially viable varieties that will ultimately be brewed into beers served around the world — and at future Oktoberfests, celebrated an hour's drive south of the research society.

"The new varieties give our farmers the chance to have income, to have a liv-

ing for the next generation," Walter Konig, the society's managing director, told The Associated Press last week from the small farming town of Hull. "It gives our brewers the varieties that they need now and in the future."

Human-caused climate change has made the world hotter, and increased the likelihood of both long droughts and intense bursts of rainfall. It has affected farmers and their practices worldwide, including in this beer-making region of Bavaria — where the art and craft of hops-farming and beer-

brewing dates back more than a thousand years. The history is honoured at every Oktoberfest, which began Saturday for the 189th time.

Education and research are crucial components of Germany's beer industry, from the Society of Hop Research to apprenticeships, a hops-cultivation vocational programme and the vaulted Master Brewer diploma.

Konig, for example, gives lectures to brewers and farmers around Germany and inside the research centre's dedicated classroom, spreading the

society's latest knowledge into drought-tolerant farming techniques, pesticide reduction and efforts to enhance plant biodiversity. The society in recent years has bred hops varieties for farmers that take climate change into account: The new plants need less water and have deeper roots to withstand the drier weather.

Experts say this education and information-sharing is becoming ever more important to maintaining the traditional tastes of your favorite German lagers and ales. -AP

Claim By US Defence Official

Chinese nuclear submarine sank during construction

Washington: Satellite imagery showed that China's newest nuclear-powered attack submarine sank alongside a pier while under construction, a senior US defence official said Thursday.

The sinking of China's first Zhou-class submarine represents a setback for Beijing as it continues to build out the world's largest navy. Beijing has become increasingly assertive in pursuing its claim to virtually the entire South China Sea, which is crucial to international trade.

Meanwhile, China faces longtime territorial disputes involving others in the region including Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. The United States has sought to strengthen ties to its allies in the region and regularly sails through those waters in operations it says maintains the freedom of navigation for vessels there, angering Beijing.

The submarine likely sank between May and June, when satellite images showed cranes that would be necessary to lift it off the bottom of the river, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to provide details about the submarine loss.

China has been building up its naval fleet at a breakneck pace, and the US considers China's rise one of its main future security



Satellite imagery shows cranes at the Wuchang shipyard in China

concerns. The Chinese Embassy in Washington on Thursday said it was "not familiar with the situation" and it did not have information to provide.

The US official said it was "not surprising" that China's navy would conceal it. The submarine's current status is unknown.

The identification of the sunken nuclear submarine was first reported by The Wall Street Journal. Thomas Shugart, a former US Navy submariner and an analyst at the Center for a New American Security, first noticed the incident involving the submarine in July, though it wasn't publicly known at the time that it involved the new Zhou-class vessel.

Satellite images from Planet Labs PBC analyzed by The Associated Press

show what appears to be a submarine docked at the Shuangliu shipyard on the Yangtze River before the incident.

An image taken June 15 appears to show the submarine either fully or partially submerged just under the river's surface, with rescue equipment and cranes surrounding it. Booms surround it to prevent any oil or other leaks from the vessel.

A satellite image taken August 25 shows a submarine back at the same dock as the submerged vessel. It's not clear if it was the same one.

It remains unclear if the affected submarine had been loaded with nuclear fuel or if its reactor was operating at the time of the incident. However, there has been no reported release of radiation in the area in the time since.

Lanka orders audit of Indian firms' contract

Colombo: The new Sri Lanka government headed by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake has ordered a forensic audit into the visa outsourcing contract with Indian firms alongside a Dubai-based firm allegedly involved in a scandal on arrival visa system for tourists.

A forensic audit has been ordered on Indian firms GBS Technology and IVS Global FZCO along with VFS Global which were in April awarded the multi-million-dollar contract as a technology partner to process the visa applications of foreigners, Vijitha Herath, Public Security Minister said.

"We have initiated an immediate forensic audit to investigate irregularities," Herath said.

This comes after the Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered to remand Controller of Immigration and Emigration Harsha Ilukpitiya for contempt of court charges for his failure to implement an apex court order on the ongoing disputed system on the issue of on-arrival electronic tourist visas to the country.

Herath said the airport immigration from Thursday night onwards reverted to using the previous system which existed before mid-April.

"The visa facility provided by VFS Global had caused significant difficulties for many," Herath added.

Under the outsourcing agreement, any foreigner entering Sri Lanka was required to pay USD 25 to have their application processed -- even citizens of countries that had visa-free travel arrangements with Sri Lanka.



India and Oman soldiers at the closing ceremony of the 5th edition of Exercise Al Najah 2024 at Rabkoot Training Area, Salalah, Oman on Thursday. Pic: PTI

President held court each morning, retiring

Mexico City: Every day at 7 am, President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador strolls onto a stage in Mexico's National Palace, clad in a smart suit and tie, and peers out at a room of bleary-eyed reporters and social media personalities. "Buenos dias, look alive!" the 70-year-old leader calls out in a gravelly voice.

And the show begins. Throughout his nearly six-year term in office, Lopez Obrador's morning media briefings, known as "las mananeras", have provided him with a powerful tool: a direct line to his political base, broadcast live on government and local news channels, and streaming online.

Without pausing to take bathroom breaks or even a sip of water, the president stands at the podium talking for sometimes more than three hours, often in long, roundabout musings or rambling diatribes, all in

simple language that anyone tuning in can understand.

Before he leaves office Monday, the daily briefings, beloved by many supporters and criticised by opponents as full of falsehoods

decades. It's a model that his successor and protege, President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum, will be hard-pressed to emulate.

When Lopez Obrador won the presidency in a landslide in 2018, he pitched



Families take part in a demonstration marking the 10-year anniversary of the disappearance of 43 students from an Ayotzinapa rural teacher's college in Mexico City on Thursday. Pic: AP/PTI

and personal attacks, are emblematic of the particular brand of folksy populism that Lopez Obrador wielded to become one of the most powerful political forces Mexico has seen in

himself as a fighter for poor, working-class and rural Mexicans long neglected by the political elite. He started holding the briefings right after taking office that December, and has

continued to do so every workday almost without fail for the duration of his time in office.

They're popular with his base: One older adult couple in Mexico City, for example, tune in religiously on a small TV wedged between bags of seeds and nuts at their stall in a food market. Elsewhere, a magazine vendor records the broadcast to watch at night after work. Still another fan of AMLO, as the president is popularly known, streams it on social media.

Lopez Obrador often uses the space to provide updates on key projects and take questions from a cluster of journalists and government-friendly social media influencers, some of whom have gained a platform from their participation in the briefings — such as Carlos Pozos Soto, an eccentric, bow-tied, effusively pro-AMLO figure better known as Lord Molecule.

After coins, now come Trump watches

By Meg Kinnard

Washington: He's sold Bibles, sneakers, photo books and cryptocurrency during his third campaign for president. Now, Donald Trump is launching a new business venture: diamond-encrusted watches.

Trump has hawked a series of branded products since he launched his 2024

agreement". That's the same mechanism that allowed Trump, well before he entered politics, to profit for years from sales of everything from water, vodka and steaks.

Earlier this week, he announced the sale of USD 100 silver coins bearing his face. In March, ahead of Easter, Trump released a video on Truth Social urg-

Trump unveiled the "Official Trump Watch Collection" on Thursday. The most expensive, listed as including 122 diamonds on its bezel and available in three 18-karat gold styles, costs USD 100,000. Another "Fight Fight Fight" model is listed at USD 499.

White House campaign, following his long tradition of melding his political and business interests. Thursday's launch, coming 40 days before Election Day, could open him up to criticism about monetising his campaign, particularly as he makes an argument that VP Kamala Harris is out of touch with Americans' economic struggles.

While websites for the various products note that proceeds from their sales do not directly benefit Trump or his campaign, they also note that each is subject to a "paid license

ing his supporters to spend USD 59.99 for a "God Bless the USA Bible", inspired by country singer Lee Greenwood's patriotic ballad. Trump takes the stage to the song at each of his rallies and has appeared with Greenwood at events.

Trump has also dabbled in NFTs, or nonfungible tokens, and last year reported earning between USD 100,000 and USD 1 million from a series of digital trading cards that portrayed him in cartoon-like images, including as an astronaut, a cowboy and a superhero.

-AP



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attends the BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting in New York, USA. Pic: PTI

Defence expert Ishiba new Japan PM

By Mari Yamaguchi

Tokyo: Japan's ruling party on Friday picked former defence minister Shigeru Ishiba as leader, setting him up to become prime minister next week.

The party leadership win is a ticket to the top job because the Liberal Democratic Party's ruling coalition currently controls the parliament.

Considered a defense policy expert, Ishiba has proposed an Asian version of the NATO military alliance and a more equal Ja-

pan-US security alliance. Ishiba is a supporter of Taiwan's democracy. He calls for an establishment of a disaster management agency in one of the world's most disaster-prone countries.

Ishiba beat out Economic Security Minister Sanae Takaichi, a staunch conservative who was running to become the country's first female PM.

A record nine lawmakers, including two women, ran in a vote decided by LDP members of parliament and about 1 million

dues-paying party members. That's only 1 per cent of the eligible voters.

Outgoing Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has been dogged by party corruption scandals, and the LDP wanted a fresh leader in hopes of regaining public trust before a likely general election.

Some experts believe that party turmoil could mean that Japan will return to an era similar to the early 2000s, which saw "revolving door" leadership changes and political instability.

Titan Implosion Witnesses point towards profits over safety

By David Sharp

Washington: Witnesses testified that the company that operated an experimental deep-water submersible that imploded, killing five people, put profits over safety and ignored warning signs before the disaster. Several company officials, meanwhile, spoke of the explorer spirit and taking calculated risks to push humankind's boundaries.

Those different viewpoints emerged as the Coast Guard panel on Friday wraps up two weeks of testimony on the Titan disaster last year. The panel is tasked with determining why the carbon-fibre submersible was lost 12,500 feet (3,810 metres) deep on the ocean floor near the wreck of the Titanic.

Testimony painted contrasting images of greed and hubris as OceanGate sought out well-heeled clients for its submersible made from carbon fibre — a material that was untested at such depths — versus modern-day explorers who

carefully considered risks as they sought to open the deepest depths of the world's oceans to more people. Guillermo Sohnlein, who helped found OceanGate with Stockton Rush, described the lofty goal "to give humanity greater access to the ocean, specifically the deep ocean." Using carbon fibre for the pressure hull was hardly a novel idea, he said, and noted Rush himself was the first human to test the design. But former operations

director David Lochridge said the company was committed only to profit making. "The whole idea behind the company was to make money," he testified. "There was very little in the way of science." Witnesses could not even agree on what to call the wealthy clients who paid USD 250,000 for the experience. Some said they were simply passengers, even though OceanGate called them "mission specialists" who were given tasks.

-AP

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We will also change how the UK does things. Moving from the paternalism of the past towards partnership for the future — listening a lot more, speaking a lot less."



Keir Starmer, Prime Minister, Britain

California to apologise for state's legacy of racism

By Sophie Austin

Sacramento (California): California will formally apologise for slavery and its lingering effects on Black Americans in the state under a new law Governor Gavin Newsom has signed.

The legislation was part of a package of reparations bills introduced this year that seek to offer repair for decades of policies that drove racial disparities for African Americans. Newsom also approved on Thursday laws to improve protec-

tions against hair discrimination for athletes and increase oversight over the banning of books in state prisons.

Newsom signed the bills after vetoing a proposal Wednesday that would have helped Black families reclaim or be compensated for property that was unjustly seized by the government through eminent domain. The bill by itself would not have been able to take full effect because lawmakers blocked another bill to create a reparations



Gavin Newsom

agency that would have reviewed claims.

Efforts to study reparations at the federal level have stalled in Congress for decades. Illinois and New York state passed laws in

"The State of California accepts responsibility for the role we played in promoting, facilitating, and permitting the institution of slavery, as well as its enduring legacy of persistent racial disparities," the Democratic governor said in a statement. "Building on decades of work, California is now taking another important step forward in recognising the grave injustices of the past and making amends for the harms caused."

recent years creating reparations commissions. Local officials in Boston and New York City have voted to create task forces studying reparations. Evanston, Illinois, launched a program to provide housing assis-

tance to Black residents to help atone for past discrimination.

California has moved further along on the issue than any other state. But state lawmakers did not introduce legislation this

year to give widespread direct payments to African Americans, which frustrated some reparations advocates.

Newsom approved a USD297.9 billion budget in June that included up to USD12 million for reparations legislation that became law.

He already signed laws included in the reparations package aimed at improving outcomes for students of colour in K-12 career education programs.

-AP

EDITORIAL

Motormouth Mayhem

In a democracy as robust and rowdy as India's, politicians ought to remember that their words matter. Sadly, many have taken the liberty of speaking first and thinking later, leading to an almost comedic display of unfiltered rhetoric. The latest spectacle involves Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut, who was recently handed a 15-day jail sentence for defaming BJP leader Kirit Somaiya's wife, Medha Somaiya. This is hardly Raut's first verbal misfire, and he is far from alone. An unsavoury trend has emerged in Indian politics where leaders across the political spectrum spout off inflammatory or simply irresponsible statements without considering the consequences.

Raut's 15-day sentence, along with a fine of ₹25,000, stems from his accusations that the Somaiyas were involved in a ₹100 crore public toilet scam. No stranger to controversy, Raut is known for remarks that veer from the provocative to the unparliamentary. During the Lok Sabha campaign, he compared PM Narendra Modi to Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. While colourful language may win applause from a certain type of audience, it seldom aids constructive political discourse. Such barbs erode the already thin veneer of civility in India's political arena.

BJP's Kangana Ranaut recently stirred the pot with her comments on the farm laws. After the Modi government had taken the unusual step of repealing these laws following widespread protests, she suggested they should be reconsidered. While the ruling BJP has rightly sought to curtail her, it must question why such voices within its ranks continue to speak out without proper restraint.

The list of offenders goes on. Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister, Ajit Pawar, in 2013 had made a spectacularly poor attempt at humour during a rally, suggesting that urinating might be the only way to solve a water shortage. His attempt at levity was met with outrage. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, often known for her biting rhetoric and controversial remarks, got in trouble in the aftermath of the RG Kar incident for suggesting that riots in one state could spill over into others. Across the political landscape, irresponsible statements are becoming routine. It is time for Indian politicians to embrace a little discretion. A healthy democracy requires debate and disagreement, not denigration and defamation. One might argue that colourful language and exaggerated claims are part of India's vibrant political tradition. But there is a fine line between spirited debate and verbal brawling.

Politicians need to hold themselves, and each other, accountable. Public discourse should focus on policy and governance rather than personal attacks and inflammatory rhetoric. If political leaders spent as much time on improving their states as they do in crafting creative insults, perhaps India would be better off. To paraphrase Voltaire, while politicians may not always agree with each other's words, they should at least try to say them responsibly. After all, a sharp tongue may win a headline or two, but in the long run, responsible words build a legacy.



By
Shoumojit Banerjee

In American filmmaker Sidney Lumet's 1964 classic 'Fail-Safe,' a technical malfunction sends American bombers hurtling towards Moscow, triggering a countdown to nuclear war. As the clock ticks down, both the United States and the Soviet Union are trapped in a desperate struggle to avoid mutual annihilation. The film captures the chilling fear of miscalculation and the terrifying consequences of nuclear brinkmanship - a reality that seems far from fiction once more. This week, Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a stark warning to the West: if Russia were struck with conventional missiles by Ukraine, it could respond with nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, Moscow would consider any assault on it, backed by a nuclear power, as a joint attack - a signal that the risk of escalation has returned to center stage in global affairs. Putin's warning followed after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's recent impassioned ap-

The Russian strongman's nuclear threats echo historical near-catastrophes, challenging Western powers to tread carefully along the razor's edge between deterrence and potential disaster.

AGE OF EXTREMES

Putin's Nuclear Gambit in a New Age of Brinkmanship

peal for military support at the United Nations, following which the Russian President unveiled a 'draft' nuclear doctrine. Putin and his aides have been indicating a potential shift in Russia's nuclear doctrine for some time now, the doctrine being the document which governs the deployment of its extensive nuclear arsenal - said to be the largest in the world.

Since the onset of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Putin and his inner circle have consistently invoked the specter of nuclear deterrence.

The Kremlin has urged the West to take Vladimir Putin's latest nuclear threat seriously. In response, U.S. President Joe Biden, while confirming the provision of additional long-range munitions to Ukraine - including the Joint Standoff Weapon (JSOW) - but reiterated the restrictions on using these weapons against Russian targets. During a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the White House, Biden reiterated the U.S. commitment to supporting Ukraine against Russian aggression.

The question is if Putin's latest gambit is a calculated bluff, like so many of the threats during the Cold War. History offers stark reminders of how easily these games of chicken can spiral out of control. The Cuban Missile Crisis remains the archetypal example of a nuclear standoff. In October 1962, the United States discovered Soviet missiles in Cuba, sparking a tense 13-day confrontation during which the world came terrifyingly close to a nuclear apocalypse.

During the standoff, a Soviet submarine, surrounded by American ships, had nearly launched a nuclear torpedo, only to be stopped by a last-minute intervention from one of its officers.

In his definitive account of the Cuban Missile Crisis 'Abyss', distinguished historian Max Hastings sharply criticizes Nikita Khrushchev's decision to send nuclear missiles to Cuba, despite the Soviet leader's memoirs justifying it as a response to U.S. missiles near Soviet bor-



ders. Initially, most American leaders, including US President John F. Kennedy, had backed military strikes, risking nuclear war. However, Hastings credits Kennedy's restraint - choosing a naval blockade and warning Khrushchev, who withdrew the missiles - as an act of rare statesmanship. He argues that many successors would have chosen war, making Kennedy's decision pivotal in averting disaster.

But this would not be the last time the world faced such peril. In 1983, NATO's military exercise 'Able Archer' nearly triggered a Soviet pre-emptive nuclear strike.

The war games simulated the escalation of conflict into nuclear warfare, but the Soviet Union, interpreting the drill as a cover for an actual attack, put its forces on high alert. It was the intervention of Oleg Gordievsky, a KGB defector working with British intelligence, that alerted the West to Soviet paranoia, thus preventing a possible Armageddon.

In another instance of the perilous fallout of Cold War brinkmanship, in March 1986, the Soviet nuclear submarine K-219 sank in the Atlantic following a missile tube explosion, raising fears of sensitive nuclear material falling into enemy hands. The U.S. Navy deployed ships to monitor the situation, heightening tensions as both sides grappled with the incident's implications. While direct confrontation was avoided, the incident starkly underscored the risk of accidental

escalation.

Putin's rhetoric, like Khrushchev's during the Cuban Missile Crisis, may well be aimed at rattling Western nerves. But the stakes are different now.

The prospect of nuclear escalation is also compounded by the erosion of communication channels between Moscow and the West, given the steady deterioration of relations since the past decade. During the Cold War, hotlines between Washington and Moscow had often played a critical role in defusing crises.

Today, however, the collapse of arms control agreements and the deterioration of diplomatic relations have left the West and Russia without many of the safeguards that once existed. The New START treaty, the last remaining nuclear arms control pact between the U.S. and Russia, is now on shaky ground. Without these structures in place, the risk of miscalculation rises significantly.

Putin's current posturing bears uncomfortable similarities to these Cold War episodes. His nuclear posturing, like the fictional bombers of 'Fail-Safe,' puts the world on a terrifying countdown. Whether the West can steer clear of the same disastrous miscalculations that nearly brought the world to the brink in 1962 and 1983 will depend on cool heads and a renewed commitment to diplomacy in both the US and the European Union. As history has shown time and again, the line between threat and catastrophe is perilously thin.

SATIRE WITH SWAG



Chandra X-Ray is precious, save it

While the world was looking beyond the expanse of Earth, a need for an Observatory to look beyond was felt. Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar (1910-1995) was an Indian American scientist who had carried out extensive research on "... theoretical studies of the physical processes of importance to the structure and evolution of the stars" and was honored with a Nobel Prize in 1983 with William A. Fowler.

In 1999 that NASA launched an Orbiting Telescopic Laboratory so that we could detect the X-ray light emitted by high energy astrophysical phenomenon such as galaxies, nebulae, black holes and others. The project was rightly marked as NASA's flagship mission for X-ray astronomy. This was one of the great observatory concepts with a set of four telescopes launched between

1990 and 2003. The project was aptly named "Chandra" in honor of S. Chandrasekhar and worked along with other such projects such as Hubble Telescope, Spitzer Space Telescope and Compton Gamma Ray Observatory.

Coming to the state of affairs at the present moment it is observed that all the other projects have been further developed and launched for gathering information on observational astronomy. Astronomy community was surprised at 3 per cent Budget cut in Science at the President's 2025 budget.

With this NASA subsequently decided that funding for Chandra X-Ray Observatory would be curtailed drastically. So much so, that it is feared that the Chandra X-Ray Observatory could be decommissioned. Chandra X-Ray Observatory has around 10 years of life from now and

hence the same should also be developed similar to other projects.

Chandra is unique in that it allows astronomers to understand extremely high-energy astrophysical events such as exploding stars and areas around black holes. Current Director is learnt to have stated that efficiency of the observatory is stable and that Chandra X-ray could continue for up to 10 years.

Prominent astronomers have already started a movement to restore the budget for Chandra through a website. Science communicators worldwide are supporting the cause as well through social media outlets. Let us that NASA will see the light and keep the memories of S. Chandrasekhar alive through his Chandra X-ray Observatory and a knowledge pool that he has created beyond Earth through his research.

STATES WATCH

End in sight to Central India's Riparian Rivalry?

After two decades of disputes, the water-sharing battle between Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan appears to be nearing resolution. Recently, the two states signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the Parvati-Kalisindh-Chambal (PKC) river linking project, aimed at addressing long-standing water scarcity in both regions. The Rs 72,000 crore project, set to benefit 26 districts across both states, marks a significant breakthrough in India's interstate water politics.

The PKC plan was first proposed in 2004, but it languished in political and bureaucratic limbo as Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh clashed over how to divide the waters. Madhya Pradesh, controlling the upstream sections of the Parvati, Kalisindh, and Chambal rivers, was reluctant to release more water downstream to arid Rajasthan, whose eastern districts depend heavily on these rivers for irrigation and drinking water.

With the MoU now signed, the project will channel water to key dry belt regions in both states, providing much-needed irrigation to over 6.17 lakh hectares of land. Madhya Pradesh's districts of Sheopur, Morena, and Guna are among the primary beneficiaries, while Rajasthan's equally water-starved areas of Kota, Bundi, and Jhalawar are set to gain. Both Chief Ministers, Madhya Pradesh's Dr.

After 20 years of conflict, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan unite to resolve water-sharing disputes with landmark river-linking project

Mohan Yadav and Rajasthan's Bhajan Lal Sharma, heralded the agreement as a turning point that would fuel industrialisation and tourism, particularly in the Malwa region.

The agreement also marks a break in the impasse in the feuding when the erstwhile Congress government Rajasthan locked horns with the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh.

In some ways, the water dispute between the two states is rooted in historical grievances dating back to the mid-20th century. In 1954, soon after India's independence, the Chambal Valley Development Project was initiated, aimed at controlling floods, improving irrigation, and generating hydroelectric power. The primary beneficiaries of this grand project were Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, which share the Chambal's waters. At first, the arrangements appeared amicable: water-sharing agreements and dam construction - such as the iconic Gandhi Sagar Dam in Madhya Pradesh - were developed to regulate usage and provide equitable distribution between the two regions.

However, as agriculture expanded, so did the demand for water. Madhya Pradesh, an upstream state, controls the majority of the river's flow and has long sought to maximize its irrigation capacity. Rajasthan, being downstream and arid, depends on the regulated release of water to nourish its parched land. In 1971, the two states signed an agreement detailing water sharing, but this has since become a matter of frequent litigation. Both Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have accused each other of violat-

ing the terms - Madhya Pradesh for holding back excess water in its reservoirs during critical periods, and Rajasthan for demanding more than what was initially agreed upon.

Rajasthan argued that the Chambal River's contribution is critical for its eastern districts,



Madhya Pradesh

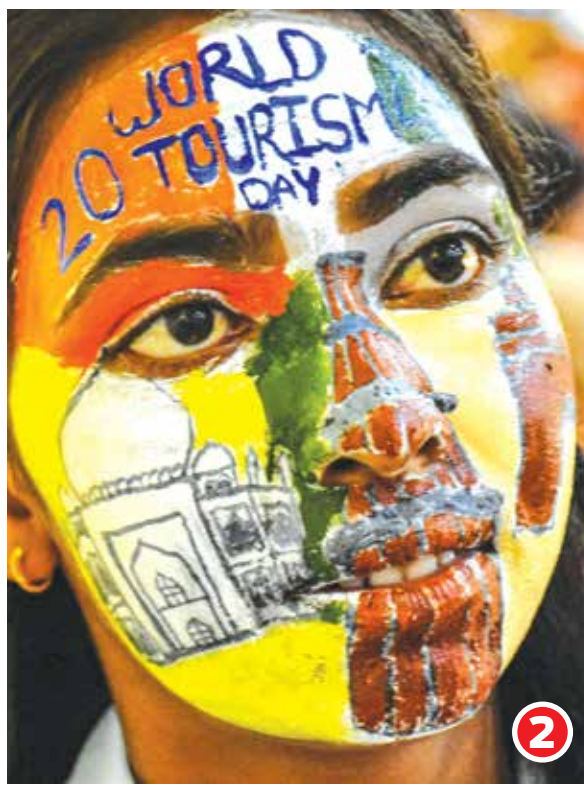
where crops like wheat, mustard, and pulses are highly dependent on irrigation. Madhya Pradesh, on the other hand, insisted it was not obliged to release more water than specified, as it must ensure its own farmers' needs are met first.

The legal battle has been protracted. In 2017, Rajasthan, then under the Congress, had approached the Supreme Court seeking an intervention to ensure timely and adequate releases of water from Madhya Pradesh's reservoirs. The PKC-Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP) - had become a political and legal quagmire with the Gehlot government sparring with the BJP-led Centre and the Madhya Pradesh government.

Now, with BJP governments in place in both states, the inking of the MoU signals a newfound cooperation between Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh to end central India's long-running water war.



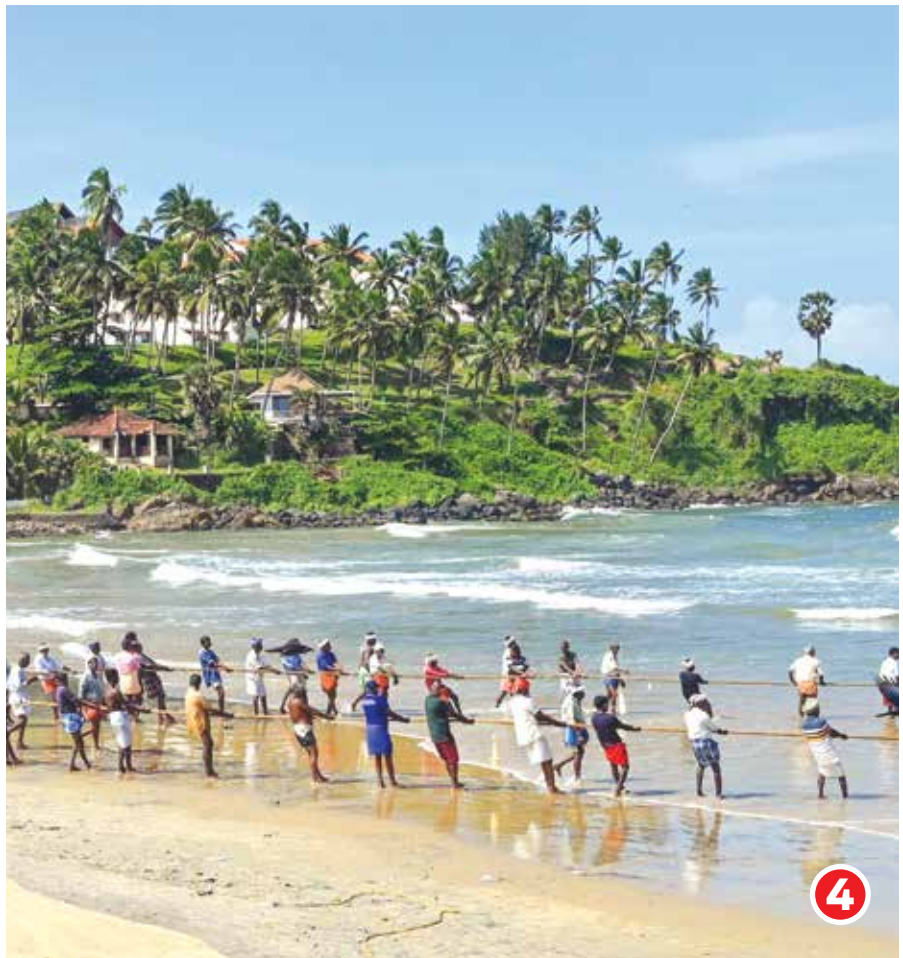
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KALEIDOSCOPE

- 1 People are silhouetted against the sky at sunset as they run at Shawnee Mission park in Shawnee, Kan on Thursday.
- 2 A student with her face painted takes part in a programme on the World Tourism Day in Moradabad on Friday.
- 3 People participate in a cyclothon organised on the occasion of World Tourism Day in Bhopal on Friday.
- 4 Fishermen lay a long 'Kambavala' fishing net at Grove beach Kovalam, in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday.
- 5 Members of the Hotel and Restaurant Association Agra welcome tourists at the Agra Fort on World Tourism Day in Agra on Friday.



5

All Pictures PTI, AP

GUEST VOICE

Countering the Naxal Threat



By
Pravin Dixit



The banned Communist Party of India (Maoist), CPI(M), has urged its cadre and masses to observe its 20th foundation day from September 21 to October 20, 2024, according to a recently published booklet. Although the Naxal movement, founded by Charu Majumdar and Kanhai Chatterji in 1968, has existed for decades, its activities have splintered into various factions.

On 21 September 2004, these splinter groups united to form the Communist Party of India (Maoists) inspired by the principles of Marx, Lenin, and Mao. It firmly believes in capturing power through armed revolution to eliminate capitalism advocated by the United States, feudalism, and its remaining remnants. It proposes starting this revolution in rural areas and encircling urban areas. According to CPI (Maoists), the urban areas would provide sympathisers and further the mass movement. It boasts that during the last twenty years, it launched several successful ambushes against paramilitary and police forces, killing 3090 commandos or policemen, injuring 4077, and capturing 2366 sophisticated modern weapons as well as 1,19,682 ammunition rounds. Significantly, the appeal is completely silent on the gruesome murders they committed of innocent persons who they claim to be police informers.

Their former colleagues who had surrendered out of frustration have also been brutally eliminated. The party is of the firm opinion that without armed revolution, there would be no social justice, real freedom, establishment of people's rule, and freedom for self-determination with the resolve to break from India. According to the booklet, the three miraculous weapons to achieve

these targets are the Party, the Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA), which operates in Dandakaranya, and various urban organisations that act as a front to mobilise its sympathisers and resources.

In 2007, the party formulated the "Strategy and Tactics of the Indian Revolution" with the goal of killing soldiers, police, and government officers to create liberated zones free from government control.

It emphasised the importance of urban naxalism for recruiting, supplying essentials like medicine and money, and acquiring new technologies. It promotes protests against labour exploitation, globalisation, and Hindu supremacy. Urban Naxal groups are encouraged to infiltrate the army, police, and bureaucracy to provide strategic information and ensure the supply of arms, media control, and care for the injured. Currently, about 227 organisations, classified as A4, operate under innocent-sounding names. Sympathisers from these groups are selected for indoctrination and elevated to A3, committed to armed revolution.

The Naxal movement began in Naxalbari, West Bengal, and by 2013, had spread to over 110 districts. However, after the BJP formed the central government in 2014, various developmental measures were introduced, including a 'one-window assistance' scheme to ensure access to necessary certificates for jobs and businesses. Over 10,000 youth from Gadchiroli have benefited from this. State governments have also introduced surrender and rehabilitation policies for former Naxal cadres, including child soldiers, weak-

ening the movement. Additionally, mining activities now provide employment to local tribes, and many affected areas have been designated as aspirational districts, improving infrastructure, healthcare, and education.

The Indian government has implemented measures to improve intelligence sharing, coordination, and training among affected state police forces while providing additional paramilitary support and funding for infrastructure. As a result, the number of affected districts has dropped from 110 to 34. Currently, CPI (Maoists) remain active in Chhattisgarh's Abujmal Pahad area, where difficult terrain and isolation leave locals vulnerable to Naxal control. To combat this, law enforcement should adopt loitering drone technology to minimise security personnel losses and assist locals in neutralising insurgents.

Apart from such administrative measures, it is imperative to realise to all democratic and freedom-cherishing political parties, including those who are in opposition, as well as social influencers such as media, academicians, and professionals, that there would be no change of heart in the CPI (Maoists) cadre, who are determined to break India through an armed revolution and capture political power to usher in their dictatorship. The Public Safety Bill 2024 introduced in the Maharashtra legislature to ensure this democratic freedom also needs to be enacted unanimously.

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

EXPLAINER

Why does Lebanon fear Gaza-level violence?

Nearly 700 people have been killed in Lebanon this week, according to Lebanon's health ministry. Israel has dramatically escalated strikes, saying it is targeting Hezbollah's military capacities and senior Hezbollah commanders.

Top Israeli officials have threatened to repeat the destruction of Gaza in Lebanon if the Hezbollah fire continues, raising fears that Israel's actions in Gaza since October 7 would be repeated in Lebanon.

The International Organisation for Migration estimated on Thursday that more than 200,000 people have been displaced in Lebanon since Hezbollah began firing rockets into northern Israel in support of Hamas after it stormed into Israel, sparking the Israel-Hamas war. Lebanon says a total of 1,540 people have been killed within its borders in that time.

The United States, France and other allies jointly called for a 21-day cease-fire. Lebanon's foreign minister said the country welcomed the cease-fire efforts, and decried Israel's "systematic destruction of Lebanese border villages".

Israeli military vehicles were seen transporting tanks and armoured vehicles toward the country's northern border with Lebanon, and commanders have issued a call-up of reservists. Netanyahu says Israel is striking Hezbollah "with full force" and won't stop until its goals are achieved.

Israeli military reports more strikes

Incoming fire from Lebanon into Israel continued Friday, with one man suffering wounds from shrapnel.

The Israeli military said four drones came across the border Friday, all of which were intercepted. Earlier Friday, the Israeli military said another 10 projectiles came into Israel from Lebanon, with some intercepted and others falling into open fields.

Hezbollah claimed it had targeted the Israeli city of Tiberias with missiles.



Palestinian supporters protest Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Times Square during the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday

Pic: AP/PTI

Israeli strike in Syria kills 5 soldiers

An overnight Israeli airstrike on a military site in the area of Kfar Yabus in Syria near the border with Lebanon killed five Syrian army soldiers and injured another, Syrian state news agency SANA reported Friday, citing an unnamed military official.

Israel's military did not immediately acknowledge the strike. Israel regularly targets military sites in Syria and facilities linked to Iran and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah but rarely acknowledges them. Those strikes have become more frequent as Hezbollah has exchanged fire with Israeli forces for the past 11 months against the backdrop of Israel's war against Hamas — a Hezbollah ally — in Gaza.

Tens of thousands of Lebanese and Syrians have fled across the border from Lebanon into Syria since the beginning of the week amid intense Israeli bombardment that Israel says is targeting Hezbollah militants and weapons. The strikes have killed an estimated 700 people to date, including at least 150 women and children.

strike in a town near the border with Israel.

The state-run National News Agency reported the deaths in the strike early Friday in Shebaa. It put the strike at 3 a.m. local.

The report offered no other details and the Israeli military did not immediately acknowledge the strike.

Philippines to evacuate

The Philippine government is bracing to evacuate thousands of Filipino workers in Lebanon in case the deadly conflict between Israel and the Hezbollah militant group further escalates, Philippine officials said on Friday.

More than 11,000 Filipinos live and work in Lebanon, often as house cleaners. Philippine officials have not yet ordered a mandatory evacuation of its citizens because it was not yet clear whether a full-scale war would erupt, including an Israeli ground attack. Many Filipinos were adamant not to leave their jobs in Lebanon and return to uncertainties at home, but they have been told to be ready to evacuate any time. Philippine Ambassador to Lebanon Raymond Balatbat said many Filipinos there "will only decide to leave when the situation is so bad, when the war is at their doorsteps".

-AP

Bangladeshi fan hospitalised after falling ill

POLICE DENIES ASSAULT SPECULATION



Kanpur: A Bangladeshi cricket fan had to be hospitalised after "falling ill" while watching the second Test against India at the Green Park Stadium here, an incident that was first suspected to be a case of heckling after he indicated being involved in a physical altercation.

Self-proclaimed super fan Roby, who dresses in tiger costume and is a regular in his team's games, was in stand C and had to be carried out of the stadium in a state of distress.

During a brief interaction with media, Roby indicated that he had been punched in his abdomen during an altercation. However, in a statement issued

from his hospital bed later, he said he merely felt unwell and was given the requisite assistance by the local police.

"I fell ill and the police brought me to the hospital. Now I am feeling much better. My name is Roby and I have come from Bangladesh," he stated in a short video clip.

Abhishek Pandey, ACP (Kalyanpur), said Roby received immediate medical care and insisted that he had not been assaulted as alleged in early reports.

"During the Test match between India and Bangladesh, one of the spectators whose name is Tiger, suddenly fell ill," the officer stated. "As soon as he fell

ill, he was picked up by the police and was sent to the medical team for treatment. He is fine now and a liaison officer has been attached to him so that he can get help if needed.

"There were some reports of assault but these are baseless, no such incident happened with him. He might have taken a fall, this is what we have been able to gather," he added.

Earlier, an Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association official said Roby could barely communicate what exactly had happened. "As he came out of the stands, he was wincing in pain and seemed to be fainting. He was given a chair to sit but he fell," the official said. **-PTI**

By Amanpreet Singh

Kanpur: Pacer Akash Deep was impressive in a probing opening spell while Ravichandran Ashwin removed the dangerous Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto before rain halted India's progress in the second Test on the opening day, here Friday.

Given the forecast, it was expected to be a weather-hit contest from the beginning. Only 35 overs could be bowled after Rohit Sharma invited Bangladesh to bat in overcast conditions as visitors struggled to 107 for three after a brief resistance through Shanto (31).

Mominul Haque (40 batting) and veteran Mushfiqur Rahim (6) were at the crease when heavens opened up.

Overnight rain had delayed the start of the match by an hour. Heavy overcast conditions influenced India's team selection as the hosts kept all three pacers from the Chennai Test, which meant that local boy Kuldeep Yadav missed out on another Test match.

Akash (2/14 in 10 overs), who bowled round the wicket to the left-handers, consistently hit the good length areas and got the ball to either shape away or come in with the angle.

Shanto (57 balls, 4x6), though, batted with positive intent, if not combative, to ensure Bangladesh don't lose way from the start.

As expected, the initial bounce and seam movement had openers Zakir Hasan and Shadman Islam playing in circumspect manner. Islam (24) worked the ball around but an overcautious Hasan (0) simply couldn't get going.

Jasprit Bumrah had the openers squared up as the away-going deliveries kept landing in Rishab Pant's gloves.

Mohammed Siraj induced edges that flew to the slip cordon but none carried to



Akash Deep, Ashwin keep India ahead

the fielders'.

Shadman hit couple of boundaries off Bumrah in a single over, the first was a flick off the pads, and the second was an uppish drive.

On the other side, Hasan consumed 23 dot balls and was yet to open his account. Akash, who came in as a second-change, ended his misery by inducing an edge that flew to Yashasvi Jaiswal who went low on his right to grab the chance.

Akash soon sent back Shadman on a ball that came in and caught him in front of the wicket. The opener reviewed the decision but to no avail.

Shanto, who has been in good rhythm, began with two shots to the fence in a

Bangladesh 1st innings:

Zakir Hasan c Jaiswal b Akash Deep 0

Shadman Islam lbw b Akash Deep 24

Mominul Haque not out 40

Najmul Hossain Shanto lbw b Ashwin 31

Mushfiqur Rahim not out 6

Extras: 6 (b-4, lb-1, nb-1)

Total: 107/3 in 35 overs

Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-29, 3-80

Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 9-4-19-0, Mohammed Siraj 7-0-27-0, Ravichandran Ashwin 9-0-22-1, Akash Deep 10-4-34-2.

sort of statement that he won't get intimidated by the classy Indian bowlers.

He also got a boundary off Siraj but those were not the cleanest of hits. His reverse sweep off off-spinner Ravi-

chandran Ashwin though stood out.

Ashwin, who did not get a wicket in the opening session, trapped Shanto in the third over of the second session. Shanto played for the

turn but was beaten. The umpire had no hesitation in raising his finger. The Bangladesh skipper reviewed the decision hoping against hope.

Seasoned Mominul grew in confidence as he spent more time at the crease. He hit two boundaries off Akash in a single over and later hit an exquisite drive through mid-off.

He raised Bangladesh's hundred with another four.

Only nine overs were bowled in the second session when bad light stopped play even as the flood lights were on, forcing the players off the field. Light drizzle followed and soon it was pouring. **-PTI**



Former Indian cricketer Sunil Gavaskar meets Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust General Secretary Champat Rai in Ayodhya on Thursday. Pic: PTI

Treesa-Gayatri enter semifinals

Macau: India's Kidambi Srikanth was ousted in men's singles but the women's pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand progressed to the semifinals of the Macau Open Super 300 badminton tournament here on Friday.

Returning from an injury sustained in May, sixth seed Srikanth, a 2021 world championships silver medalist, struggled to find his rhythm against Hong Kong's Ng Ka Long Angus, losing 16-21 12-21 in just 31 minutes to bow out of the tournament.

Treesa and Gayatri, seeded third, emerged as the lone Indians in the fray after they outwitted Chinese Taipei's sixth seed Hsu Yin-Hui and Lon Jih Yun 21-12 21-17 in the women's doubles quarterfinals.

In the semifinals, the world number 23 Indians will face another Chinese Taipei pair Hsieh Pei Shan and Hung En-Tzu, seeded eighth. This is the second semifinal for the pair.

No confidence motion against AITA President

By Amanpreet Singh

Kanpur: In an unprecedented move, eight state tennis associations, affiliated with AITA, have proposed to move a no confidence motion against President Anil Jain and an Extra Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) has been called on September 28 in New Delhi for the purpose.

Interestingly, the All India Tennis Association (AITA) has called the EGM on the day it is scheduled to hold its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and conduct elections, the result of which can't be declared and are to be submitted to the Delhi High Court in a sealed envelop.

Jain, who is a BJP Rajya Sabha MP, is facing the charges of "loading the association with his personal 'entitled' expenses by travelling with his family abroad several times."

The state units that proposed the no-confidence motion are: Assam, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Tripura.

If the no confidence mo-



Is this their way to penalise me for saying that they must follow Sports Code? All of them will be disqualified because this Electoral College is wrong. If I have done anything wrong, I will go. Anil Jain, President, AITA

tion is passed, Jain will cease to be AITA President. Never in the history of Indian tennis has the head of the federation been removed in this fashion.

Jain was elected the AITA President unopposed in September 2020, replacing Praveen Mahajan. He served as AITA Vice President before that from 2016-2020.

Jain said the state units have opened the front against him because he advised them to follow Sports Code during the upcoming elections.

"This EGM is illegal. A three-week notice is required to call any meeting. This meeting is null and void. I will take legal action. Clause 15 of AITA constitution explains the process to

call meetings. You can't send a notice on 23rd of a month and call a meeting on the 28th.

However, an official from the state associations said there are more allegations against Jain.

"This is the time to clean the system, this is the time to support the players and change the face of Indian tennis. We are united in this. We have a capable team to do it. You will see Indian tennis changing after these elections," he said. **-PTI**

Indians start well in TPC golf

Taipei: India's Yuvraj Sandhu got off to a superb start with a 7-under 65 that placed him tied second after the first round of the Yeangder TPC golf tournament in Taiwan.

Sandhu, who was one of the early starters from the first tee, had three birdies in the first four holes and

turned in 3-under. Then over the last seven holes, he had five birdies, one bogey and one par for a brilliant 65.

He was one behind Thailand's Suteepat Prateepitichai, who blasted an eight-under-par 64 to take the lead after the first-round.

The leader had an eagle,

seven birdies and one dropped shot at Linkou International Golf & Country Club.

Chinese-Taipei's Wang Wei-hsuan, who also carded a 7-under 65, shared the second spot with Sandhu.

Indians had a good day as Ajeetesh Sandhu (67) and Karandeep Kochhar (67)

were tied sixth while Shiv Kapur (68) was T-14.

Among other Indians, Rashid Khan (70) was T-46, Gaganjeet Bhullar (71) was T-67, SSP Chawrasia (75) was T-128, S Chikkarangappa (76) was T-137 and Varun Chopra (82) was T-150. Indian-American Manav Shah (70) was T-46.



Next target 2025 world championship: Neeraj

By Rohit Mitra

Sonepat: Promising to be 100 per cent fit for the new season, India's two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Friday said a podium finish in the 2025 Tokyo World Championships is the next big target on his mind going forward.

The 26-year-old is back in the country after winding up his season with a second-place finish at the Diamond

League finale in Brussels.

This was after he became the first Indian track-and-field athlete to claim successive Olympic medals by adding a silver in Paris to the momentous gold clinched in Tokyo.

"The season is over now. The biggest target for next year is the World Championship, and we will begin preparations for that now. The Olympics are always on our minds, but we have four years for that," Neeraj told PTI Videos on the sidelines of a conference on 'Mission Olympics 2036' organised at the Sports University of Haryana here.

The world championship is

scheduled to be held from September 13 to 21 next year.

Chopra battled an adductor muscle niggle throughout the year and it also affected his performance at both the Olympics and the DL finale, where he also competed with a fractured left hand.

He had spoken about consulting doctors at the end of the season to decide whether to go for a surgery to fix the problem.

Asked about his fitness, Chopra played down concerns and also stated that he will look to improve his technique. The Haryana-lad is trained by renowned German biomechanics

expert Klaus Bartonietz.

"It was an injury-plagued year but injury is fine now, I will be 100 per cent fit for the new season," he asserted.

"Technical issues are also there but we will work on them. I will look to improve my technique. I do like to train in India but when competitions start, I prefer to train abroad," he said.

Reflecting on India's Olympic performance, which yielded six medals but no gold this time, Chopra pointed out that the country could have got more as reflected by the half a dozen fourth place finishes.

"There were a lot of fourth positions. (But) this time, we

had a very good performance in the Paralympics and won several medals.

"In the coming times, we expect strong performances in both the Olympics and the Paralympics," said Chopra.

Chopra has been working hard to hit the 90m mark but hasn't managed so far despite coming close. In the Paris Olympics, his silver-winning throw was 89.45m and he was bested by Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who broke the Games record with a 92.97m effort.

At the DL finale, Chopra threw 87.86m to miss the top finish by just one centimetre. **-PTI**