

# THE PERFECT VOICE



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## Trouble for Sidda as MUDA probe ordered



JD(S) workers raise slogans against Siddaramaiah during a protest demanding his resignation over MUDA scam, in Bengaluru on Wednesday. Pic: PTI

**Bengaluru:** A Special Court here on Wednesday ordered a Lokayukta police probe against Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment case. The order of the Special Court Judge, Santhosh Bhat, came a day after the High Court upheld the sanction granted by the Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot to conduct an investigation against Siddaramaiah on the allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to

his wife B.M. Parvathi by 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 Snehamaayi Krishna. The Court issued directions to take up investigation under section 156(3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) (that gives a magistrate the power to or-

der an investigation into a cognisable offense.) It also directed the police to file the investigation report by December 24. The HC had also vacated its August 19 interim order directing the Special Court to defer the decision on complaints against the Chief Minister, giving the green signal for ordering a probe. It had dismissed Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the legality of the Governor's August 16 order granting approval for investigation under Section 17A of

**It is up to him (Siddaramaiah) to decide whether to resign or not but when there is such a serious allegation I feel that in public view point, he should resign though there is nothing wrong in not giving resignation as per law.**  
Justice Santosh Hegde, Ex-Lokayukta

**Already I have said that I am ready to face an investigation. I am not afraid of a probe. I am ready for a legal fight. I had said this yesterday and I am reiterating it today as well.**  
Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister, Karnataka

the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, 1988. In the MUDA site allotment case, it is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife in an upmarket area in

Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA. The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where it developed a residential layout. Under the controversial scheme, MUDA allotted 50 per cent of developed land to the land losers in lieu of undeveloped land acquired from them for forming residential layouts. It is alleged that Parvathi had no legal title over this 3.16 acres of land at survey number 464 of Kasare village, Kasaba hobli of Mysuru taluk. **-PTI**  
**MUDA Case Has Its Origins More Than Decades Ago ... page 9**



Demonstrators protest against the Iranian regime outside United Nations headquarters in New York on Tuesday. Pic: APPTI

**51 killed in Israeli strikes**

**Tel Aviv:** Lebanon's health minister said 51 people were killed and 223 wounded Wednesday in Israeli strikes. The count comes on top of 564 who were killed and more than 1,800 wounded in the previous two days, including around 150 women and children. Health Minister Firas Abiad did not give a breakdown of how many women and children were wounded Wednesday. This week has been the deadliest in Lebanon since the bruising monthlong war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006. **-AP**

**Nadda's remarks a family matter: RSS**

**Mumbai:** Senior RSS functionary Sunil Ambekar on Wednesday termed BJP president J P Nadda's remarks that the saffron party had grown from relying on the RSS to becoming self-sufficient as family matter. Asked if Nadda's comments caused a rift between the BJP and the Sangh, Ambekar said, "We solve family matters like family matters, don't discuss on public platforms". In a media interview in May, Nadda said the BJP has grown from the time it needed the RSS and is now "sakhsham" (capable) and runs its own affairs. The RSS, he had said, is an "ideological front" and does its own work. Speaking at the India Today Conclave in Mumbai, Ambekar said that even if people join the Sangh thinking about political gains, they automatically start doing good work due to their association with the organisation. **'Rat-like' RSS invaded state, says Soren** Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Wednesday compared the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh with "rats" and accused both the BJP and the RSS of attempting to undermine communal harmony in the state for electoral gains.



## Rains lash; train, road traffic hit

**Mumbai:** After a long hiatus, heavy rains returned to lash Mumbai and suburbs on Wednesday, inundating low-lying areas, stopping local trains on tracks between Kurla and Thane stations and stranding passengers even as traffic crawled on roads. The IMD upgraded its orange alert for Mumbai city and its neighbouring districts to a red alert, valid till 8.30 am on Thursday. Officials said two flights

were diverted and seven flights had to make a go-around at Mumbai airport due to inclement weather. Several suburbs of Mumbai have been receiving significant rain from Wednesday afternoon, with Mulund and its surroundings experiencing the heaviest rainfall, inundating low-lying areas. Heavy showers have been lashing the island city from the evening, slowing down road traffic due to water-logging and poor visibility. Local train services

were also delayed due to rains, said officials. Significant water-logging was reported from Kurla, Chembur, Mulund, Vikhroli, Breach Candy and some other areas in Mumbai, where people can be seen wading their way through waist-level water. "Kurla railway track was inundated due to heavy rains, forcing local trains to stop on tracks between Thane and Mumbai. Thousands of passengers are stranded in these trains," a railway commuter said.

## HC calls for impartial probe

SAYS IF INVESTIGATION IS NOT CONDUCTED PROPERLY WILL ISSUE APPROPRIATE ORDERS

**Mumbai:** The Bombay High Court expressed concerns on Wednesday regarding the police shooting of Akshay Shinde, the accused in the Badlapur school sexual assault case, stating that the incident could have been avoided and emphasised the necessity for a fair and impartial probe. A division bench comprising Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan also raised pertinent questions over the manner in which the shoot out was executed. The bench said while it was not impugning the police's integrity, it insisted on the importance of clarity in the investigation. It also stressed the necessity for a fair and impartial investigation into the circumstances surrounding the shooting. During the proceedings, the court underscored its expectation that the police

would address all aspects of the case transparently. "If we find that the investigation is not conducted properly, we will be constrained to issue appropriate orders," the bench warned. The court scheduled the next hearing for October 3, by which date the police are expected to decide on a complaint filed by the father of the deceased, requesting a First Information Report (FIR) against the involved police officers. It also directed the immediate transfer of all case files to the Maharashtra Crime Investigation Department (CID) for further inquiry. The judges raised pointed questions about the circumstances of the shooting, suggesting that it may have been preventable if police had attempted to subdue Shinde before the incident escalated. The bench also noted that the officer who shot at Shinde was a police inspector



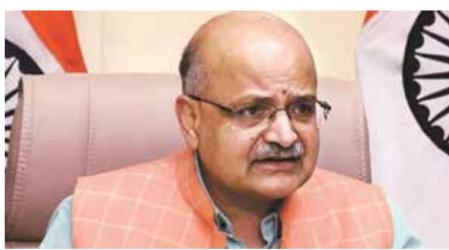
who has experience on how to react in such a situation. Justice Chavan said he has used a pistol several times and it is very hard to use. "This is very hard to believe. I have fired a pistol a hundred times. It is hard to unlock and fire. We are not suspecting at this stage but just looking at the possibilities. Revolver is easier. Any Tom, Dick or Harry can do it. But a pistol is very hard to fire," Justice Chavan said. The bench said the incident could have been avoided as the escorting team were officers from the Thane police's crime

**What the HC said**  
"Ordinarily, the retaliation would be on the leg or arm. Why directly on the head? Does he (police) not know where the shot has to be fired? It may have been spontaneous. The first reaction should have been to disarm him."  
● Why are the files not handed over to the CID yet? Preservation of evidence is vital. Any delay on your part would raise doubts and speculations.  
● It is not very easy to unlock and open fire from a pistol.  
● We are not suspecting the police on their activities but come clean on all aspects.  
● It is difficult to believe that Shinde could have seized a pistol from a police officer and fired it.  
● It could have been avoided. Four officers were there in the vehicle. One of the officers was involved in encounters in the past. Four officers couldn't overpower the accused?

## Maha economy to double in 5 years: NITI Aayog CEO

**Mumbai:** Maharashtra economy will be doubled in next five years, NITI Aayog CEO Dr B.V.R. Subrahmanyan said on Wednesday. He also added that the plans are being made to boost the economy of the MMR region to over a trillion dollar to make it into a region equivalent to New York by 2047. He was delivering special lecture on '5 trillion economy and role of Maharashtra' organised by the Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini to mark the birth anniversary of Pt. Deendray Upadhyay. Dr. Subrahmanyan stated that India could success-

**Mumbai has the potential to become a global city in true sense of the world. India's 20 per cent economy will come from Maharashtra in near future. Maharashtra has a vast manufacturing potential in the Pune region also it is an IT hub. It has vast mineral potential. Especially it is the only state in south of Vindhyas that has coal reserves. Maharashtra has a robust agriculture to fuel economy and its rich heritage gives it the necessary strength and unique work culture.**  
Dr. B.V.R. Subrahmanyan, CEO, NITI Aayog



will be the 3rd largest economy of the world within next 3 years, i.e. by 2027. "There is no company in world today that dares to ignore India," he added. "In next 25 years almost half of the global workforce will be Indian," he said while explaining the scope and scale of India's advantages. Principal Economic Advisor of the NITI Aayog Anna Roy made a detailed presentation giving a complete outline of various kinds of interventions that are being made to help the Mumbai Metropolitan Region emerge into a truly global economic hub and

Robust democratic structure, young population and the rich cultural heritage are the things that are driving India's growth and are proving to be the greatest advantage, the NITI Aayog CEO said. He also added that climate change and artificial intelligence are being perceived as challenge all over the world, but India plans to use its innovation potential to turn them into opportunity in unleashing its own development potential.

boost the national economy. "The present government has taken a bottom-up approach in developing economy masterplans for different regions and aspirational participatory model is being engaged in the development," Roy said adding that this makes it truly people driven development. Vice Chairman of Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini (RMP) Dr Vinay Sahasrabudhe stated that the dream of 5 trillion dollar economy is not only about economy, but is also about human resources development and elaborated on efforts being made on the front.

## EY's office operating sans license

**Pune:** The Pune office of Ernst & Young (EY), in news after the death of a woman CA, was functioning since 2007 without a license under the Shops Act, which stipulates employees' welfare among other conditions, an official said on Wednesday. This is a violation of norms. A notice will be issued to the firm and based on its response, further action will be initiated, the official from the Maharashtra labour department said. A labour department official inspected the EY office here on Monday.

# Mahayuti says decision soon on seat-sharing

## BJP LIKELY TO CLAIM 50 SEATS, OFFER SENA 70



By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Ahead of the Maharashtra assembly polls, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has met Chief Minister Eknath Shinde as well as Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar.

Though details of the meeting, which took place on Tuesday night, were not known, CM Shinde later said the meet was positive and "everything was going on smoothly."

After the meeting, when reporters asked Shinde at the city airport about seat-sharing, the CM said, "The meeting was positive and a decision will be taken soon. Talks are moving ahead positively with co-ordination."

Amit Shah is on a two-

day visit to Maharashtra from Tuesday.

The ruling Mahayuti partners -- Shiv Sena led by Shinde, BJP and the Ajit Pawar-headed NCP -- have been holding discussions on seat-sharing for the state assembly polls, which are likely to be held in November.

Union ministers Amit Shah and Bhupender Yadav, CM Shinde and his deputy Fadnis reached a hotel in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar for a meeting on Tuesday night.

Deputy CM Ajit Pawar and NCP working president Praful Patel also reached the venue later and the meeting went on till around 12.30 am on Wednesday.

Shinde and his two deputies later left for the Chikhalthana airport at around 12.45 am.

None of the leaders interacted with mediapersons at the hotel.

CM Shinde later said, "The meeting was positive and a decision will be taken soon. Talks are moving ahead positively with co-ordination."

Last week, Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule said the Mahayuti alliance constituents have arrived at a consensus on contesting 70 to 80 per cent of the 288 seats for the assembly elections.

He hinted that winnability will be the criterion for distributing poll tickets.

In the current assembly, the BJP is the single largest party with 103 MLAs, followed by Shiv Sena 40, NCP 41, Congress 40, Shiv Sena (UBT) 15, NCP (SP) 13 and others 29. Some seats are vacant.

# NCP to remain in Mahayuti, says Ajit Pawar

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Wednesday asserted that NCP would contest the upcoming assembly polls with allies BJP and Shiv Sena under the Mahayuti banner and there was no questioning of his party quitting the ruling coalition.

He was speaking at the India Today Conclave here.

Pawar's assertion about contesting the state polls together with his Mahayuti partners comes amid claims by the Shiv Sena (UBT) that the BJP and Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena are systematically working to oust his party from the ruling alliance.

The talks on the political utility of the Ajit Pawar-led NCP keep surfacing intermittently in light of the BJP's dismal performance in the Lok Sabha elections in Maharashtra and ahead of the upcoming assembly elections. After the BJP's tally fell to nine in the state in the general elections, an RSS-linked Marathi weekly had called NCP as one of the reasons behind the poor performance.

Replying to a question about the critical remarks by the publication, Ajit Pawar said he has held alliance talks with Prime Min-



"We will fight to bring Mahayuti to power again. I want to work for development."

- Ajit Pawar, Chief, NCP

ister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP chief JP Nadda and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis.

"I am not bothered about who says what," said Ajit Pawar, who rebelled against his uncle and political mentor Sharad Pawar in July 2023 to join the Mahayuti government.

The NCP president also admitted that it was wrong to have fielded his wife Sunetra against cousin Supriya Sule. "Nobody told me to field Sunetra from Bara-mati. It was my own decision. Later, I realised I was wrong. Only those who work make mistakes," he said. This is the third time

since August Ajit Pawar has publicly admitted that he had made a mistake by fielding his wife against Sule, who emerged victorious, though earlier he had called it the party's decision.

Asked if he regretted revolting against Sharad Pawar, the deputy CM called it an old matter, stressing that there was no need to raise it again. All NCP MLAs including those with Sharad Pawar had written to him about the need to be in the ruling Mahayuti after the collapse of the MVA government, he said. Various works needed to be expedited as they had hit a roadblock after the COVID pan-

**"There is visible resentment against the central leadership of the BJP. Each time these leaders visit Maharashtra, the Mahayuti's support base erodes further. The BJP has relied heavily on its central leaders to boost its electoral performance in Maharashtra, but the people of this state are no longer interested. They want accountability, development, jobs - which the Mahayuti has failed to give."**

- Mahesh Tapase, Spokesperson, NCP (SP)

demic, Ajit Pawar said.

The NCP chief said corruption allegations against him have not been proved.

In the recently held Lok Sabha polls, of the 48 seats in Maharashtra, the BJP and allies won only 17 seats, while the opposition Maha-

ashtra Vikas Aghadi of Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) bagged 30. Between the NCP factions, the Ajit Pawar-led outfit won only one seat compared to 8 by the one headed by Sharad Pawar.

Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly will likely be held in November or December.

**Thakur targets Rahul Pune:** Former Union minister Anurag Thakur on Wednesday launched a veiled attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, stating that those whose family and party ruled the country for long and made it pauper are now denoting its image abroad. The BJP leader also alleged that the Congress' mentality is to finish off the system of reservation in the country.

"But those whose family and party reigned the country for 60 years and made the country pauper, they are now damaging the image of the country abroad," he said.

These people spread lies, put forth such a propaganda that the image of the country gets affected. But people of the country know who is increasing its respect and who is insulting it, the former minister added.

## CRIME WATCH

### Food vendor attacked in Mumbai

**Mumbai:** An 18-year-old vendor was seriously injured after two men allegedly attacked him when he refused to serve them free 'bhelpuri', a popular street food, in Mumbai, police said.

The two accused approached food vendor on Sunday night at his shop in Liberty Garden area of Malad. They demanded bhelpuri for free, but when the vendor asked them to settle their previous dues first, the two men got angry and started hurling abuses at him, a Malad police official said on Tuesday.

The accused, in a fit of rage, picked up an iron rod lying nearby and attacked the vendor, who suffered multiple injuries and was immediately rushed to a hospital for treatment, he said.

### Four held for killing man over old dispute

**Thane:** Police on Wednesday arrested four persons for allegedly killing a man in Kalyan taluka of Maharashtra's Thane district over an old dispute, an official said. The murder took place during the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday in Lakshminagar area of Kalyan East, an official of Kosewadi police station said.

"The victim, Ayub Shaikh, had an old dispute with the accused. They asked him to meet them to settle the matter. However, during their talks, the situation escalated and led to confrontation. Shaikh was attacked with a chopper, due to which he died on the spot, while the assailants fled the scene," he said.

### Man booked for sexually harassing girl

**Thane:** Police in Maharashtra's Thane district have registered a case against a 25-year-old man for allegedly sexually harassing a 17-year-old girl after giving her a lift in his car, an official said on Wednesday.

Accused Ganesh Devidas Shelar and the complainant know each other, he said. The teenager was waiting at Raita bridge near Kalyan for an autorickshaw to go home on Monday when Shelar, who was travelling in his car, stopped and offered to drop her. However, during the ride, he allegedly touched her inappropriately. The teenager asked him to stop the car, got off and walked home.

## Jarange ends fast over reservation

By Correspondent

**Jalna:** Maratha activist Manoj Jarange on Wednesday called off his indefinite fast, nine days after its launch for the OBC quota demand, citing pleas from members of the Maratha community to withdraw his hunger strike.

Speaking to his supporters in Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district, Jarange said he had decided to call off the fast keeping in mind the sentiments of the Maratha community.

"We will deal with those who have hurt the Maratha community," Jarange said.

Jarange sat on a hunger strike on September 17, his sixth in a year, to demand reservation to the Maratha community under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category.

"I have decided to call off the fast after repeated pleas from my community members.

Those responsible for harassing the Maratha community will not be spared," Jarange said and appealed to Marathas to refrain from attending any political meetings.

Jarange said the Maratha community suffered a lot in the last 70 years. "We want the reservation for a better future for our youth," he added.

In February this year, the Maharashtra legislature unanimously passed a bill providing 10 per cent reservation for the Marathas in education and government jobs under a separate category. Jarange, however, stuck to his demand for a quota for the community under the OBC head.

Jarange announced the withdrawal of the fast



By Suyash Padate

hours after Jalna district collector Radhakrishna Panchal and Superintendent of Police Ajaykumar Bansal met him at the protest site on Tuesday night and convinced him to end the fast considering his failing health.

Jarange has been demanding the implementation of the draft notification that recognises Kunbis as 'sage soyare' (blood relatives) of Maratha community members and granting reservation to the latter under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category.

This was Jarange's sixth indefinite fast since September 1 last year, when police had lathi-charged protesters at Antarwali Sarati.

**Mumbai:** The Food and Civil Supply Minister Chhagan Bhujbal on Wednesday came down heavily on Maratha reservation activist Manoj Jarange-Patil by challenging him to prove his influence in the upcoming Assembly elections.

Bhujbal is at loggerheads with Jarange-Patil over the reservation issue of OBC's. He said, "One more episode of the drama has come to an end. Now, it has become his habit to sit on hunger strike, withdraw after some weeks and get hospitalised. Today, I am giving him an open challenge that if Jarange has cour-

## Bhujbal challenges: Show influence

age and guts he should enter the electoral arena."

"I have made this clear even in the past that my stance is clear and firm that the demand for Maratha reservation should not get the nod at the cost of the OBC community's rights. Grant Maratha community their separate reservation, but do not touch the OBC quota. But this man is insisting for the reservation from our quota. We will not allow this," Bhujbal added.

"No OBC reservation would be diverted to the Maratha community, the legal experts have already submitted their opinion and made this point clear. It's impossible to grant OBC reservation to the Marathas, especially to those with influential connections. The law doesn't permit any such move or decision," he pointed out.

"The funny part of Manoj Jarange's agitation

is that he is changing his demands every now and then. One day, he demands that all Marathas be given Kumbi certificates, the next, he insists that the well-connected be granted reservation.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to all the concerned that the Original Agreement dated 13/07/2009 by and between M/S. Kale & Agarwal Associates and Mr. Bhawaran K. Choudhary in respect of Shop No. B/2 on Ground floor, in the building known as "VRINDAVAN HEIGHTS" in SHRUSHTI TOWNSHIP, lying, being and situated at Village: Bolinj, Tal. Vasai, Dist. Palghar has been lost. By an Agreement dated 15/01/2020 Mr. Bhawaran K. Choudhary has sold the aforesaid shop to KISHOR SHRIKRUSHNA CHINDARKAR & PRADIP SHRIKRUSHNA CHINDARKAR, therefore, if any bank or any financial institutions or any other persons are having any right, title, claim and interest against aforesaid Shop then they can take the objection within 14 days from the date of this Public Notice in the office of R. T. PATHAK, Advocate, at 111, Kapadia House, Gaothan Rd., Virar(W), Tal. Vasai, Dist : Palghar with all relevant document, failing which it will be presumed that nobody has any objection.

Signature  
R. T. PATHAK Advocate

## Modi to launch Pune infra projects today

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off a Metro train in Pune on Thursday and also launch various development projects worth over Rs 22,600 crore.

An official statement said the inauguration of Pune Metro section of District Court to Swargate will mark the completion of Pune Metro Rail Project (Phase-1). The cost of the underground section between District Court to Swargate is around Rs 1,810 crore.

In line with his commitment to make India self-reliant in the field of super-

### Other projects to be launched

- Memorial for Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule's first girl school at Bhidewada
- Swargate-Katraj extension of Pune Metro Phase-1
- Bidkin Industrial Area, a transformative project covering an expansive 7,855 acres under the National Industrial Corridor Development Program, situated 20 kms south of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

computing technology, the statement said, Modi will dedicate to the nation three PARAM Rudra Supercomputers worth around Rs 130 crore, developed indigenously under the National Supercomputing Mission

(NSM). These supercomputers have been deployed in Pune, Delhi and Kolkata to facilitate pioneering scientific research. Giant Metre Radio Telescope (GMRT) in Pune will leverage the su-

percomputer to explore Fast Radio Bursts (FRBs) and other astronomical phenomena. Inter University Accelerator Centre (IUAC) in Delhi will enhance research in fields like material science and atomic physics. The S.N. Bose Centre in Kolkata will drive advanced research in areas such as physics, cosmology and earth sciences.

Modi will launch various initiatives of petroleum and natural gas sector worth Rs 10,400 crore. These initiatives will focus on energy, infrastructure, safety and convenience of truck and cab drivers, cleaner mobility and a sustainable future.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We came up with this jugaad (ploy) of Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana to ensure women vote for the BJP. Tell me honestly, why else would we do it? Because during polls, my dear sisters will vote for the BJP."



Tekchand Sawarkar, MLA, BJP

### PUBLIC NOTICE

TAKE NOTICE THAT the Mr. Vikas Moreshwar Naik & Mr. Anant Ramchandra Naik and others are owned, possessed and entitled to land bearing (1) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 1, admeasuring area 17.20.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (2) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 2/2, admeasuring area 11.10.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (3) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 5/2, admeasuring area 10.10.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (4) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 5/3, admeasuring area 19.60.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (5) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 9/2, admeasuring area 03.50.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. and Mr. Vikas Moreshwar Naik and others are owned, possessed and entitled to land bearing (1) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 2/1, admeasuring area 13.10.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (2) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 3/1, admeasuring area 08.10.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (3) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 5/1, admeasuring area 23.10.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (4) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 9/1, admeasuring area 06.60.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. and Mr. Anant Ramchandra Naik is owned, possessed and entitled to land bearing (1) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 2/1, admeasuring area 13.10.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (2) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 3/1, admeasuring area 08.10.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (3) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 5/1, admeasuring area 23.10.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (4) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 9/1, admeasuring area 06.60.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. and Mr. Anant Ramchandra Naik is owned, possessed and entitled to land bearing (1) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 4, admeasuring area 02.50.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (2) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 6, admeasuring area 04.00.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (3) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 7, admeasuring area 20.30.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (4) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 8, admeasuring area 03.50.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (5) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 10, admeasuring area 04.30.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (6) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 11, admeasuring area 05.60.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (7) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 12, admeasuring area 14.70.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (8) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 13, admeasuring area 03.50.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (9) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 14, admeasuring area 04.00.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (10) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 15, admeasuring area 03.50.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. (11) Survey No. 228, Hissa No. 16, admeasuring area 03.30.00 Aar.Sq.Mtr. are free from all encumbrances. My client is in process to submit an application to the Deputy Director, Town Planning Department, Vasai Virar City Municipal Corporation for obtaining construction permission in respect of the said property.

Any person having any claim or right in respect of the said property by way of inheritance, share, sale, mortgage, lease, lien, licence, gift, possession or encumbrance whatsoever or otherwise is hereby required to intimate to the undersigned within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice of their such claim, if any, with all supporting documents at my office situated at, A/103, Paradise Apartment, S. T. Depot Road, Nallasopara (West), Tal. Vasai, Dist. Palghar, failing which the claims, if any, of such person shall be treated as waived and not binding on my clients, which is please note that.

Date 26/09/2024

Advocate for Land Owners  
Adv. Madhur Mohan Giri

## Badlapur Sexual Assault Case

## HC asks why no Child Safety Committee



Hoarding of Devendra Fadnavis near Udhav Thackeray's bungalow at Kalanagar Bandra.  
Pic: Bhushan Koyande

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** The Bombay High Court on Wednesday expressed its displeasure with the Maharashtra government for not constituting a Child Safety Committee despite directions in the wake of the Badlapur school sexual assault incident.

A division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan said the government's assurances do not match its actions.

"This reflects on your (government's) bonafide. Your actions contradict your words," the court said.

The bench said the Child Safety Committee (CSC) was supposed to meet, discuss, and submit a report in eight weeks with recommendations on the safety and security of children in schools.

The high court had last month taken suo motu cognisance of the alleged sexual assault of two minor girls inside the toilet of a school in Badlapur by a male attendant.

The accused, Akshay Shinde, was killed in retaliatory firing in police custody on September 23.

The bench had directed the formation of a committee comprising Justices Sadhana Jadhav and Shalini Phansalkar-Joshi (retired), retired IPS officer Meeran Borwankar, education professionals Sucheta Bhawalkar and Jaywanti Baban Sawant, psychiatrist Dr Harish Shetty, and Brian Seymour, President of ICSE and ISC preschools in Maharashtra and Goa and submission of a report by October 29.

None of the committee members was contacted by

the government to date, the court told public prosecutor Hiten Venegaonkar on Wednesday.

"None of the committee members has heard from the state government. You (government) say one thing but your actions speak otherwise," the court said.

The bench questioned how the government expects the committee to prepare and submit its report.

"How do you expect the committee to function? The committee is not supposed to be only on paper. You agreed to everything we had said that day," the court said.

Venegaonkar informed the bench that he would take instructions from Advocate General Birendra Saraf and get back to the court.

The bench is likely to take up the matter for a hearing on October 1.

## IMD issues red alert for Mumbai

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday evening issued a red alert for Mumbai and its neighbouring districts, predicting "extremely heavy rainfall".

It has been raining in many parts of the city since afternoon.

A civic official said the IMD upgraded its orange alert for the country's financial capital to red alert, which is valid till 8.30 am on Thursday.

In its latest warning, issued at 5.30 pm, IMD has predicted "extremely heavy rainfall and thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds at isolated places very likely" in Mumbai, Thane, Raigad and Ratnagiri districts.

The weather bureau has issued an orange alert for the coastal districts of Palghar and Sindhudurg with "heavy to very heavy rainfall and thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds at isolated places very likely".

Mumbai's island city has been witnessing heavy rains since evening, while it has been pouring in many suburban pockets since afternoon.

Heavy rains slowed down road traffic due to waterlogging and poor visibility. Suburban train services, considered the lifeline of Mumbai, were also delayed due to rains, said officials.

## Lightning strikes kill three

Three persons were killed in separate incidents of lightning strikes over the last 24 hours ending Wednesday evening in Thane district.



Artists perform during a dress rehearsal for 'The Little Prince', a theatrical adaptation of French author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's novel of the same title, at The Grand Theatre of the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre

## Reservations must stand legal scrutiny, says Fadnavis

**Thane:** Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday underlined the necessity of any reservation standing legal scrutiny as he listed key measures undertaken by the state government for the Maratha community.

Fadnavis also said efforts are being made to grant the reservation to the Maratha community within the legal framework.

"Significant opportunities are being created for the Maratha community in police recruitment. Sarthi initiative has produced 12 IAS, 18 IPS, and 480 MPSC officers from the Maratha community. It is necessary to ensure that any reservation granted (by a government) is upheld in court," he said.

Fadnavis made these remarks while addressing a gathering of Mathadi (head-loader) workers in Navi Mumbai commemorating the birth anniversary of late Annasaheb Patil.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj Research, Training and Human Development Institute (SARTHII) is an autonomous institute of the government of Maharashtra established for the education, social, and financial development of Maratha and Kunbi-Maratha communities.

Fadnavis' remarks come amid a hunger strike by Maratha quota leader Manoj Jarange demanding the induction of Marathas under the OBC category.

"To support Maratha students, a subsistence allowance of Rs 7,000 is provided by the government to those who do not secure hostel admissions and girls

are granted free education," he added.

He highlighted several key initiatives and commitments to support Mathadi workers and the Maratha community.

Fadnavis said several decisions have been taken in the best interest of Mathadi workers.

He stressed the need to resolve housing issues for Mathadi workers.

Highlighting the achievements of the state government on the economic front, Fadnavis mentioned the creation of 1 lakh entrepreneurs through the Economic Development Corporation, which has disbursed loans of over Rs 8,400 crore.

He announced that the corporation would be named after Annasaheb Patil.

## Bail to two men in actor drug case

**Mumbai:** The Bombay High Court has granted bail to two men accused of trying to frame actor Chrisann Pereira in a drug case in the United Arab Emirates.

Justice Manish Pitale, in the order passed on Tuesday, granted bail to Rajesh Bobhate and Anthony Paul on personal bonds of Rs 50,000 each. The order became available on Wednesday.

The duo had been in jail for about one year and five months, the court noted.

"Even as per the material available on record, only a small quantity of ganja (cannabis) is involved. In such a situation, no purpose would be served by continuing the custody of the applicants," the order said.

Bobhate and Paul were arrested in April 2023.

## Man gets 20 years for sexually abusing daughter

**Thane:** A special POCSCO court in Maharashtra's Thane district has sentenced a man to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment after holding him guilty of sexually abusing his nine-year-old daughter, a case their neighbour had exposed.

In his order on Tuesday, Judge D.S. Deshmukh of the court dealing with cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act also fined the 35-year-old convict Rs 50,000.

Special Public Prosecutor Sandhya H Mhatre told the court that the man used to sexually abuse his daughter when his wife was away and after driving away their other children.

In August 2020, a neighbour, who had observed a change in the girl's behaviour, persuaded the minor to share her ordeal. The 20-year-old neighbour then approached the police, ensuring the man's arrest.

Mhatre said six prosecution witnesses, including the neighbour, deposed in the court. The girl and her mother were not among the witnesses, she said.

## MU Senate polls counting tomorrow

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** The University of Mumbai has conducted the much-delayed senate elections for 10 seats, in a contest where the Shiv Sena (UBT) is seeking to strengthen its hold and the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) challenging the status-quo. Nearly 55 per cent voting took place at 38 polling centers and 64 booths in the elections held on Tuesday, an

official said.

There are 13,406 registered voters. Counting will be held on September 27.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) led by Udhav Thackeray won all the 10 seats in the last two polls. The RSS-affiliated ABVP also fielded 10 candidates. Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Aaditya Thackeray, his mother Rashmi Thackeray and brother Tejas Thackeray cast their votes on Tuesday, in the battle which has become a

high prestige issue for the party.

ABVP public relations in-charge Nilesh Tharwani alleged that the youth wing of Shiv Sena (UBT) "resorted to deceit and deploying fraudulent polling agents". "This blatant misconduct not only exposes their unethical tactics but also underscores their growing fear of ABVP's strength and integrity," he said.

The senate elections for 10 seats representing the

university's registered graduates were pending for two years. The polls, earlier scheduled on September 22, were held on Tuesday after the Bombay High Court directed the university to do so. The HC last week directed that the university's senate elections be held on September 24 after staying a state government circular postponing the polls which it noted was a last minute intervention.



Activists of Prahar Divyang Sangathan protested in front of the MLA hostel regarding their various demands. Protesters reached the terrace of the building at Churchgate on Wednesday.  
Pic: Bhushan Koyande

## Pandit Jasraj's wife Madhura passes away

**Mumbai:** Filmmaker Madhura Pandit Jasraj, wife of the late music maestro Pandit Jasraj, passed away early Wednesday in Mumbai following age-related ailments. She was 86.

The last rites will be performed at the Oshiwara crematorium in Mumbai in the evening, family spokesperson Pritam Sharma said.

Madhura was the daughter of celebrated filmmaker V Shantaram. She married music maestro Pandit Jasraj in 1962 and is survived by two children - music director Shaarang Dev Pan-

dit and TV personality Durga Jasraj.

Having donned several hats in her career -- that of a director, producer, writer -- Madhura, besides directing plays and movies, wrote several books, including biography on his father "V Shantaram: The Man Who Changed Indian Cinema".

In 2010, Madhura made history by directing Marathi film "Aai Tujha Aashirwad" as she became the oldest debutant director of a feature film, earning her a place in the Limca Book of Records.

## Two flights diverted as rains lash

**Mumbai:** Two flights were diverted out of Mumbai Airport on Wednesday due to the inclement weather in the city, an airport official said.

Besides, seven flights of different airlines had to make a go-around till 8.09 pm before getting clearance for landing, he said.

The two diverted flights included IndiGo flight 6E1052, which initially did a go-around before finally getting diverted to Ahmedabad. The city is witnessing heavy showers leading to waterlogging.

## RSS says boys-only structure of shakhas to stay

**Mumbai:** Senior RSS functionary Sunil Ambekar on Wednesday said there was no demand from the ground level that its shakhas should have boys and girls participating together and "society is not asking for it".

If such a demand is made, the Sangh will make necessary changes in the present structure, he said.

Ambekar, who is the Akhil Bharatiya prachar pramukh (national spokesperson) of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) was speaking at the India Today Conclave here.

A shakha is a place where RSS volunteers gath-



er every day. The daily routine programmes held there include physical exercises and singing patriotic songs.

When asked why women did not hold any big positions in the organisation, he said, "As a structure on the ground, the RSS shakhas are only for boys. But the Rashtra Sevika Samiti, an all-women or-

ganisation (of the RSS), has been doing the same work as the RSS since the 1930s. The basic structure of RSS is shakha. This structure is for the man-making process."

"Man-making and nation-building is RSS's mission. Hence, shakhas have only males, while Rashtra Sevika Samiti has women (as members). When residents of a locality say that girls and boys can play together, we will make necessary changes in our structure. But society is not asking for anything like that," he said.

"Society is not asking for girls and boys to play to-

gether. The current structure is a matter of convenience, and that is why there is such an arrangement (of Sangh having only boys as volunteers)," he said.

Speaking on the situation in Manipur, which faced ethnic clashes, Ambekar said, "It is a serious matter, and it is serious for everyone in the country. RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has also expressed concerns over the situation in that state."

RSS workers are active there on the ground to establish peace. They are trying to find a solution and efforts are on for it, he said.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Even today, he (Udhav) is the most accepted face. If you go out to the hinterlands of Maharashtra, farmlands of Maharashtra, and (ask people) they will tell you that Udhav Balasaheb Thackeray is the only man who stood with us in our toughest of times."  
Aaditya Thackeray, Shiv Sena (UBT)



## First whole breast reconstruction procedure

**Mumbai:** A research and development wing of the Tata Memorial Centre (TMC) here has said its doctors have performed the whole breast reconstruction using a biological mesh called Braxton, which is a less painful and quicker procedure.

It also does not involve using the patients' tissue from another part of their body and the recovery is also faster, the Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer (ACTREC) said in a

statement on Tuesday.

The first whole breast reconstruction using Braxton biological mesh was performed on September 10 at the centre in Kharghar, Navi Mumbai, by senior surgical oncologist Dr Amar Deshpande along with Dr Dileep Hoysal and their team, the statement said.

The ACTREC and TMC breast unit treats about 5,000 breast cancers per year. The unit has been a pioneer in adopting modern surgical techniques



that help in clearing the cancer while maintaining cosmesis, it said.

Whole breast recon-

structive procedures are also performed, with the help of a plastic surgical team.

Most of these are traditional forms of reconstruction using the patients' own tissues and can result in partial loss of function and other problems related to the donor area including pain, infection, scarring, among others, the release said.

Even the time required for these operations is more (5-6 hours on an average) and the recovery is long as well (6-8 weeks), it said.

Dr. Deshpande said this form of breast reconstruction (with use of biological

mesh) is much less painful, quicker (about 2-3 hours) and does not involve using the patients' tissue from another part of their body, therefore, it eliminates the risks associated with the donor area of their body, as in the traditional method.

"The recovery is faster (about 3-4 weeks). The procedure has comparable results with the traditional forms of breast reconstruction. The cost is also similar to the traditional reconstructive procedures," he added.  
-PTI

# Diamantaires to witness 25-27 pc decline in revenue

**Mumbai:** India's natural diamond polishing industry is likely to witness a 25-27 per cent decline in revenue to a decadal-low of USD 12 billion this fiscal on lower demand in key markets and a shift in preference to consumer lab-grown diamonds, according to a report released on Wednesday.

The decline in revenue is mainly due to muted demand in key export markets of the US and China, a 10-15 per cent fall in diamond prices amid oversupply and a shift in consumer preference towards lab-grown diamonds (LGDs), Crisil Ratings said in its report.

Declining for the third fiscal in a row, the natural diamond polishing industry's revenues are estimated to fall 25-27 per cent year-on-year to a decadal low of USD 12 billion this fiscal, it added.

The industry's revenue contracted 29 per cent in the previous fiscal and 9 per cent in FY23.

The report stated that tepid demand amid decreasing prices has seen diamond polishers limiting the purchase of roughs and have curbed manufacturing.

In turn, miners have cut production and eased inventory push, which has helped arrest the fall in the prices of roughs and polished natural diamonds.



**Sluggish demand from the US resulted in a 43 per cent decline in exports to that market in value terms over the past two fiscals, with the share of the US in India's diamond exports reducing to 35 per cent in FY24, from over 40 per cent two years back, Crisil Ratings said. On the other hand, the report said, preference for gold jewellery is growing in China, which accounts for 28 per cent of India's exports, as the yellow metal continues to be perceived as a safer asset providing better returns amid economic uncertainty. A sharp decline in diamond prices over the past 2-3 fiscals has hindered the revival of demand for natural diamonds.**

As a result, operating margins will stabilise at 4.5-4.7 per cent in FY25.

Overall, lower working capital requirements will limit reliance on external debt and support credit

profiles over the medium term.

Further, the youth in these key export markets are increasingly embracing LGDs as limited disposable incomes are constraining

discretionary spending, which eats into the share of natural diamonds, Crisil Ratings said.

"LGDs, which resemble natural diamonds, are 90 per cent cheaper. Their market share has increased to about 25 per cent by value in the US from 8 per cent, two years ago. The share would have been higher, if not for the sharp fall in LGD prices owing to supply outpacing demand. As a result, revenue of natural diamond exporters may continue to face serious headwinds," Crisil Ratings Director Rahul Guha said.

As miners and polishers prepare for continued weak demand, they are focusing on reducing inventory and costs in FY25, which will lower working capital requirements. -PTI

## Mindspace to build Data Center Campus

**Mumbai:** Mindspace Business Parks REIT is set to construct a data center campus for Princeton Digital Group in Navi Mumbai, covering an area of 1 million square feet. In a press release, Mindspace REIT announced its strategic collaboration with Princeton Digital Group (PDG) to develop its premier and largest data center campus in India. Princeton Digital Group (PDG) is a leading developer and operator of internet infrastructure. Headquartered in Singapore with presence and operations in China, Singapore, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan, their portfolio of data centers powers the expansion of hyperscalers and enterprises in the fastest-growing digital economies across Asia.

The data center will be constructed at the Mindspace Airoli. As part of this agreement, Mindspace REIT will also develop three additional data centers, expanding its portfolio by an additional 1 million square feet. The REIT has previously completed two data centers for PDG, each spanning approximately 0.63 million square feet. Upon completion, the business park will include five data center buildings.

This development will increase the total data center area in Mindspace REIT's portfolio to around 1.65 million square feet. This significant project, covering approximately 15 acres, will be integrated into the larger 50-acre campus of Mindspace Airoli West. "Data centres offer stable and long-term revenue streams, future proof our portfolio, and help diversify income sources", Ramesh Nair, CEO of Mindspace REIT, stated.



Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal during a visit to the Lot Fourteen Innovation District in Adelaide, Australia. Pic: PTI

## Container shipping rates down by 23 pc

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Container shipping rates have dropped by 23 per cent over the past month due to lower Chinese exports and growing supply of vessels that were ordered after the pandemic, a report by a domestic brokerage said.

Drewry WCI, a composite index that measures container freight rates, indicated a 23 per cent decline at USD 4,168 for a 40 ft container but still remains above December 2023 levels that reached after breakout of the Red Sea crisis.

The decline in freight rates also was attributed to the recently announced cut in storage charges of empty containers at ports and procurement of additional used container vessels by the Indian government.

The Indian government's move should also aid volumes for container ports and railway container logis-

tics operators, said the Emkay Global report.

According to industry experts, the global supply chain pressures index (GSC-PI) rose in August above its historical average for the first time since November 2023. With Geopolitical risks remaining high due to continued tensions in the Middle East, Supply disruptions had kept container shipping costs elevated, although they recorded some moderation during August-September 2024 from the peak levels recorded in July.

Container movement on Indian rail routes were also seen flat as per data released by CMA CGM the global container shipping line. Such potential weakness in rail volumes would indicate weak pricing though global macro events including end of congestion phase caused by China US trade along with easing of shipping freight rates, said Kotak Institutional Equities report.

## Gautam Adani meets Bombardier CEO

**New Delhi:** Billionaire Gautam Adani met Bombardier chief executive Eric Martel to discuss partnership in aircraft services and the defence sector.



Adani's ports-to-energy conglomerate operates seven airports in the country, while Bombardier is a Canadian business jet manufacturer.

"Powering India's aviation growth! Had a great discussion with @Bombardier CEO Eric Martel on transformative partnerships in Aircraft Services, MRO and Defence. Together, we are harnessing synergies for a stronger, self-reliant India," Adani said in a post on X.

He did not give details of the meeting.

## Coal imports rise to 90.51 mt in April-July

**New Delhi:** There is a "critical need" for coal imports, and the country has reported a marginal rise of 0.9 per cent to 90.51 mt in the April-July period of FY25, according to an official statement.

India, which has the fifth-largest coal reserves in the world, is also its second-largest consumer, driven by a rapidly growing economy, Ministry of Coal said on Wednesday.

Coal production during



the April-July FY25 period increased 9.56 per cent to 321.40 MT from 293.35 MT in FY24.

"However, the current consumption landscape reveals a critical need for imports, particularly for cok-

ing coal and high-grade thermal coal, which are not sufficiently available within domestic reserves. This shortfall necessitates imports to support key industries, including steel," it said.

According to the ministry, coal imports during April-July period of FY25 reported a marginal increase of 0.9 per cent, reaching 90.51 million tonnes (MT) level compared to 89.68 MT in the previous year.

While the non-coking coal imports increased 2 per cent, coking coal imports declined 2.6 per cent. In July alone, coal imports rose 15.9 per cent to 21.81 MT from 18.82 MT in July 2023.

The ministry further said the imports for blending purposes have decreased 8.2 per cent despite a 10.18 per cent year-on-year growth in coal-based power generation from April-July 2024 compared to the same period last year.

Additionally, the coal imports by the non-regulated sector saw a significant decline of 11 per cent to 44.97 MT from 50.53 MT earlier.

-PTI



Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman interacts with an Indian student studying in Uzbekistan during her train journey from Tashkent to Samarkand. Pic: PTI

## Vedanta to consider dividend on Oct 8

**New Delhi:** Mining major Vedanta Ltd on Wednesday said its board will meet on October 8 to consider and approve the fourth interim dividend for 2024-25.

The record date for the purpose of determining the entitlement of the equity shareholders for the fourth dividend, if declared, is being fixed as October 16, 2024, the mining conglomerate said. So far, the entity has approved a total dividend of Rs 13,474 crore for 2024-25.

## Hyundai IPO gets approval

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** The Indian subsidiary of South Korean car manufacturer Hyundai has secured the necessary approval from the capital markets regulator, Sebi, to launch its initial public offering (IPO), people familiar with the development said on Wednesday. This achievement is a major step forward for the Indian automotive sector, as it represents the first time an automobile

company has gone public in India in over 20 years, following Maruti Suzuki's debut in 2003.

The initial public offering by Hyundai Motor India is set to be a complete Offer-for-Sale of 142,194,700 equity shares, with no new shares being issued, as per the preliminary draft red herring prospectus submitted in June. The parent company, Hyundai Motor Company, is reducing its ownership stake through this method.

## Economists call for reduction in time lag for GDP data release

**New Delhi:** Economists have suggested the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) to reduce the time lag for release of macro economic data like GDP, as this is a key factor for investment, business and policy decisions.

Officials from the ministry of statistics and programme implementation met with forecasters and economists of GDP and CPI on September 24, 2024 in Mumbai to seek their suggestions for making the key macroeconomic data more robust.

Nilesh Shah, Member, EAC-PM, MD Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company Ltd suggested that MoSPI should look for avenues of improvement to ensure data accuracy and reduce time lag of release.

Echoing similar sentiments, Ajay Seth, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, suggested availability of timely and consistent data for better clarity, investing, business and policy decisions.

He emphasized use of advanced technologies for better data governance. "Lag for GDP data re-



Nilesh Shah



Ajay Seth

**They also suggested that frequent Household Consumption Expenditure Surveys may be conducted to ensure frequent base revision of Consumer Price Index and other macro-economic indicators. Availability of old indices for chain-linking was also requested by users.**

lease may be reduced. Release time of these indices may be changed to provide sufficient time for analysis by the users on the same day," a ministry statement said.

The open house discussion witnessed enthusiastic participation from the forecasters and economists. Based on the discussion, major suggestions emerged.

It was suggested that to have a uniform understanding of core inflation, MoSPI may explore compli-

ation of Core Inflation. Attempts may be made to reduce discrepancy in estimation of GDP from two approaches, they suggested.

Possibility of better coverage of services in the revised series of CPI can be explored, they said.

Request for frequent such interactions, to understand the methodologies of data collection of education, health services and data for housing index, was also made, the ministry said. -PTI

## Informa Markets' futuristic corporate film 'MILAN'

By Correspondent

**Mumbai:** Informa Markets in India (IMI) has announced the launch of its highly anticipated corporate film, 'MILAN' which captures the essence of change and opportunity in today's business landscape.

A bold departure from its previous brand film, 'MILAN' reflects IMI's vision for the next decade, positioning the company as a pioneer in connecting businesses and inspiring future growth. Its central message "Starting the Right Conversations" portrays IMI as a key enabler of opportunities,

guiding businesses towards the future through meaningful connections.

Set in a sci-fi-inspired world expo, the film transports viewers from a barren desert to a futuristic, bustling expo full of possibilities—a metaphor for the journey from struggling in harsh conditions to thriving through the right connections. The visually stunning landscape, complete with holographic displays, neon elements, and floating structures, highlights India's readiness to embrace the future.

While futuristic, the film remains rooted in Indian culture,



blending vibrant contrasts in costumes with a memorable scene featuring a woman on a Chakka motorcycle—symbolising IMI's fearless innovation. 'MILAN' targets entrepreneurs in their late 20s to 40s, committed to building the future of India, while also instilling pride in older audiences as

they witness India's rise on the global stage.

The production, which took eight months of refinement before filming began in May this year, was brought to life by a talented team led by Creative Director Praatek Sethi of Trip Creative Services, renowned for his work on major campaigns and animated series. Filmmaker Prachi Shirodkar infused the story with narrative magic, while Kabir Bedi's narration lent gravitas to the production.

The narrative follows two friends lost in a desert—a metaphor for struggling businesses—

until a good Samaritan, representing Informa Markets in India, guides them to a vibrant expo filled with opportunities. The expo serves as a launchpad for ideas, recognition, and innovation.

Praatek Sethi, Producer-Director at Trip Creative, said, "'MILAN' is a hallmark campaign in our portfolio. We are thrilled to collaborate with Informa Markets, India's largest B2B exhibition organizer. This campaign will showcase IMI's expertise in live media and market intelligence, while our creative efforts drive impactful results for clients."

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

**"We have neither opened up dairy for Europe nor planning to open up...nor have we opened it even with Switzerland and Norway with whom we have recently signed EFTA trade agreement. This is the agreement that Switzerland has signed without any component of dairy in it."**



Piyush Goyal, Union Minister, Commerce and Industry

# BJP MP flags startling feedback on Waqf bill

**New Delhi:** Raising concern over the nearly 1.25 crore feedback submissions received by the parliamentary committee scrutinising the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, BJP member Nishikant Dubey has called for a probe into their sources, including in the possible role of ISI and China.

This investigation must cover the possible roles of fundamentalist organisations, individuals like Zakir Naik, and foreign powers like the ISI and China, as well as their proxies, he has said in a letter written to the committee's chairperson Jagdambika Pal.

Dubey, a committee member, said the geographical origin of these submissions needs immediate at-

“There is reason to suspect that these elements are leveraging the Waqf Bill deliberations to sow discord and polarise public opinion. The influence of a radical Islamist preacher Zakir Naik cannot be underestimated.”

Nishikant Dubey, MP, BJP

ention, claiming that it is statistically improbable that such an overwhelming response could emerge organically from within India alone.

He described the enormity of feedback as “unprecedented” in which, he added, has set a global record for legislative submissions and invites scrutiny over the motivations and

sources behind these communications.

“I believe it is vital that the committee addresses these concerns head-on to ensure the integrity and independence of our legislative process,” he added.

The committee examining the contentious bill, which has been opposed stridently by opposition parties and several Muslim

groups for its alleged attempt to interfere in religious affairs, had come out with advertisement, seeking people's feedback on its provisions.

Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju had said that no one ever thought that the panel would receive recommendations in crores. Even if 1,000 recommendations or representations were made, it used to be considered a big number, he had said.

Dubey said in his letter to Pal that it is essential to ask whether foreign entities, organisations, and individuals may be deliberately orchestrating this “flood of responses to manipulate the democratic process”. -PTI



People wait in queues to cast their votes at a polling booth during the second phase of Jammu & Kashmir Assembly elections, at a village near the Line of Control (LoC), at Nowshera in Rajouri district, J&K on Wednesday. Pic:PTI

## Sikh body voices support to Rahul

**New Delhi:** A Sikh body on Wednesday came out in support of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's remarks during his recent US visit about the community, saying its members have an inalienable right to adhere to and protect their religious and cultural rights.

Khushhal Singh, general secretary of Kendri Sri Guru Singh Sabha said Gandhi's special mention of Sikhs' freedom to wear turban and worship in gurdwaras was an open recognition of their distinct religious and cultural identity. He said Gandhi rightly identified decades-old distortions in Indian politics.

## Champai claims security withdrawn

**Ranchi:** Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren, who joined the BJP last month, on Wednesday accused the Hemant Soren government in the state of putting his life at risk by withdrawing all security vehicles assigned to him.

The former Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader alleged that withdrawing his security vehicles was a political conspiracy.

The state police, however, rejected the charge saying that five vehicles are still engaged with the security of the former chief minister who also enjoys the services of 63 police personnel. “The Jharkhand gov-

ernment withdrew all security vehicles assigned to me, putting my life at risk, under a political conspiracy. I am not afraid of this move. The people of Jharkhand would provide security to me,” Champai Soren told PTI.

He asserted that he never compromised with his values and people will give a befitting reply to the JMM-led coalition in the assembly polls due later this year.

Asked about Chief Minister Hemant Soren's remarks that the BJP “bought” political leaders in Jharkhand, Champai Soren said, “No one can dare buy me. I have made crystal clear the circumstances behind leaving

JMM.”

Champai Soren joined the BJP claiming that he was “humiliated” and “disrespected” by the JMM. Responding to Champai Soren's remarks, the state government said the accusation about the withdrawal of all security vehicles is baseless since five cars are still being assigned to him.

In a statement, the police said that four other vehicles were recalled since those are part of the CM's carcade and cannot be used elsewhere.

It said that the former CM still enjoys the services of 63 security personnel including six bodyguards from the Special Branch. -PTI

## Kid dies under mysterious circumstances

**Hathras (UP):** A class 2 student at a private school here died under mysterious circumstances, police said on Wednesday adding that the school director among five people have been booked in the case.

According to the student's father, Krishan Kushwaha, he received a call from the DL Public School administration on Monday informing him that his son had fallen ill. When Kushwaha reached the school, the authorities told him that the school director, Dinesh Baghel, had taken his son to a hospital.

## Delhi Police questions Gehlot's ex-OSD

**New Delhi:** The Delhi Police questioned former Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot's ex-OSD Lokesh Sharma on Wednesday in connection with a phone-tapping case lodged on a complaint from Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

Sharma was called for questioning at the Delhi Police's Crime Branch office at Rohini. He reached the office at around 11 am, officials said.

Sharma's interrogation this time could be a cause of concern for Gehlot as his former officer on special duty (OSD) has publicly alleged that an audio clip of a

purported telephonic conversation between Shekhawat and some Congress leaders on “toppling” the then Congress government in Rajasthan in 2020 was given to him by the former chief minister himself. Sharma's claim has marked a shift from his previous stand that he had got three audio clips from social media and forwarded those to news organisations.

In March 2021, the Delhi Police registered an FIR against Sharma on charges of criminal conspiracy, criminal breach of trust and unlawfully intercepting telephonic conversations on a complaint from Shekhawat.

## 3-year-old boy stabbed to death in Bihar, one held

**Muzaffarpur:** A three-year-old boy was stabbed to death by a person in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district, police said on Wednesday.

The incident occurred on Tuesday at Dighra village and the accused was arrested, a senior officer said. A team of police personnel reached the spot after getting information about the incident and took the boy to a local hospital where he succumbed to injuries during treatment. Muzaffarpur Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO-2) Vinita Sinha said.

## Security to army officer, fiancée

**Bhubaneswar:** The Odisha government has provided security to the army officer and his fiancée, the victim of the alleged sexual assault in custody at the Bharatpur Police Station here.

Personal security officers (PSO) were engaged for the two following a decision of the state government, a senior officer of the Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Commissionerate of Police said on Tuesday. The PSOs would accompany them when they travel in the city, he said. Both the army officer and his fiancée have accepted the PSOs provided by the government.

The step came a day after the army officer and the

woman, along with her father and some ex-army men, met Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at the state secretariat.

During her meeting with Majhi, the alleged sexual assault victim said that she could face threats because of the case. After meeting the chief minister, the woman had said that she felt relieved and hoped that she would get justice through the judicial inquiry earlier announced by the state government.

The alleged incident took place on September 15 when the army officer and his fiancée went to Bharatpur Police Station to lodge a complaint on road rage.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being presented a mace by Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini during a public meeting in Sonapat, Haryana on Wednesday. Pic: PTI

## Dancing videos of Modi, Mahatma: case filed

**Ballia (UP):** An FIR has been registered against unidentified persons for allegedly posting an “objectionable” video of Mahatma Gandhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on social media.

The matter was highlighted by Neha Singh Rathore from her X account @imrowdy\_rathore on Tuesday.

“The popular and successful Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath Ji Maharaj has made many efforts for the honour and security and

empowerment of women of his state. How some cheap street reelers are using Yogi Ji for a few views. Not only this, how the videos of Prime Minister and Mahatma Gandhi are being edited and uploaded for cheap popularity,” Rathore, who wrote herself as a nationalist, social activist and public speaker, said.

An FIR has been registered under sections of the Information Technology Act against unknown persons on Tuesday on the complaint of Praveen Singh, in charge of the media cell at Cyber Thana, Ad-

ditional Superintendent of Police Anil Kumar Jha said.

Police are investigating the case and legal action will be taken, he added.

Rathore has also posted a video on X, in which Mahatma Gandhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath are seen dancing and singing with a woman on a Bhojpuri song.

Questioning the Ballia police she said, “When will action be taken against this cheap street reeler?” -PTI

## Girl Kidnapped from Delhi rescued

**Buxar (Bihar):** RPF personnel rescued an eight-year-old girl, who had allegedly been kidnapped a few days ago from Delhi, in Bihar's Buxar district, an official said on Wednesday.

The girl was rescued from the Delhi-Malda Town train at Raghunathpur railway station on Tuesday and the accused kidnapper, a resident of Bihar's Sa-

mastipur district, was arrested, he said.

“The girl was kidnapped from a locality under the jurisdiction of Fatehpur Beri Police Station in Delhi a few days ago. The Delhi Police and other senior officials had informed that the girl was being taken to a town in Bihar by the Indore-Patna Express train.

“We immediately laid a

trap and searched the train at Dildarnagar station. But the girl and the accused were not found.” RPF (Buxar) Inspector Deepak Kumar told PTI.

The RPF was again provided with fresh input that the accused along with the girl was travelling in the Delhi-Malda Town train, he said. “Accordingly, we searched the train at Rag-

hunathpur railway station and found the girl, as we were provided with her photographs by Delhi Police,” he said.

A team of Delhi Police officials reached Buxar by Tuesday evening. “We handed over the victim and the accused to the officials of Delhi Police after completing all formalities.”

## Illegal mini gun factory busted

**Kolkata:** Five persons were held and a cache of semi-finished firearms seized during a raid by a joint team of Kolkata Police and Bihar Police at an illegal mini gun factory in Bhagalpur in the neighbouring state, an official statement said on Wednesday.

## Elephant overturns rickshaw

**Idukki (Kerala):** Four people were injured, one of them seriously, on Wednesday after the autorickshaw they were travelling in was “accidentally” overturned by an elephant fleeing from another tusker at Kallar near Munnar in Idukki district, forest officials said.

The incident occurred in the morning when the injured persons, all of them sanitation workers, were go-

ing to the waste dumping yard at Kallar here, the officials said. They said that the yard is unfenced and being a source of food, wild animals often frequent the area.

“Two elephants were present in the area since Tuesday and we had conveyed this information. The elephants got into a fight with each other and after that, one of them fled from there,” a forest official said.

## Seven killed as car collides with truck

**Sabarkantha:** Seven men were killed and one was grievously injured when a speeding car rammed into a trailer truck on a highway near Himatnagar in Gujarat's Sabarkantha district early Wednesday morning.

The car was badly mangled. The bodies were retrieved after hectic efforts.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Farmers are a pillar of strength in India's progress. Only in some states, they had objected to farm laws. I appeal with folded hands that farm laws should be brought back in the interest of farmers.”

Kangana Ranaut, MP, BJP



## Panchamirtham: Tamil film director held, released

**Tiruchirappalli:** Noted Tamil film director Mohan G was arrested for his alleged remarks on Panchamirtham, a popular prasadam of Palani Lord Murugan temple, and he was later released on bail by a court.

According to police, an FIR was registered following a complaint from a HR and CE official and Mohan was arrested under various sections of BNS including disturbing peace and tranquility and he was produced before a court here on Sep-



tember 24. The court ordered his release on bail. PMK founder leader S Ramadoss condemned his arrest. The PMK leader said Mohan had in his interview to a YouTube channel only referred to some allegations on Panchamirtham and had

wanted the government and officials to be cautious. Mohan's arrest was ‘injustice,’ he said.

Pazhaya Vannarappetai, Draupadi, Rudra Thandavam and Bahasuran were Mohan's films, who had strongly condemned playing with sentiments of crores of people on the Tirupati laddu controversy and demanded stringent punishment for those responsible. Panchamirtham is made from five ingredients, cow ghee, banana, honey, jaggery, cardamom.

### Actor Idavela Babu arrested

**Kochi:** Malayalam actor Idavela Babu was arrested on Wednesday in connection with a case involving the alleged sexual assault of a female actor.

However, due to the anticipatory bail granted by the court earlier, he was released on bail after the medical examination, police said.

This is the second arrest



of an actor by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing cases of sexual abuse of women in the Malayalam film industry, following the release of portions of the Justice Hema Committee report, which investigated such issues.

Earlier in the day, Babu

appeared before the SIT in Kochi for questioning. The interrogation commenced around 10 am, and his arrest was recorded at around 1 pm. According to the complaint, the actress alleged that Babu had called her to discuss her application for membership in the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA). He allegedly invited her to his flat to complete the paperwork, during which he allegedly sexually abused her.

# Youth in island nations face existential question

**United Nations:** It's the uncomfortable talk that as a young woman, she knows she should have with her parents. They alluded to it, once, but couldn't quite address it directly. And Grace Malie was glad to avoid the subject with them, though she and her friends do discuss it.

As her home, the tiny but shrinking island of Tuvalu, slowly erodes from climate change's rising seas, should she rough it out on the remaining high land? Or should she flee her home, her culture, her heritage and her past to go to Australia — in what her government negotiated as "Plan B?"

The 25-year-old, who on Wednesday addresses a

special UN General Assembly summit on sea level rise as a representative for her country, has years to decide — decades, even. But it's a decision that, like the mythical sword of Damocles, hangs over a nation's entire generation. And two of the biggest issues facing the summit are what to do about people like Grace Malie and how countries like Tuvalu will keep the sovereignty even when they lose their land.

"This is not about leaving," said Kamal Amakrane, managing director of the Global Centre for Climate Mobility and climate envoy to the president of the General Assembly. "This is not about giving up. This is not about

giving in. This is about agency."

Your whole world could be gone

Such a situation is like no other. It can't be compared to when other climate, conflict or economic refugees have to flee with little or no notice as storms hit or drought takes away livelihoods, said Alex Randall, the United Kingdom-based coordinator of the Climate and Migration Coalition.

The vast majority of people permanently fleeing climate-related disasters stay within their own country and travel short distances — such as those who left New Orleans after 2005's Hurricane Katrina. This is about young people today



making a long-term, stay-or-go decision that lingers in the back of their minds. It's a conversation that's happening now, even though the fleeing won't happen until later.

"It's a very difficult conversation, very emotional," Malie said in an interview. "And it's 50-50. Some of us wish to stay. Some of

them, because they have families," will probably head to Australia.

And that's what Malie thinks will be her own future. If she has children, she would think about "the life of my children. I would have to opt for Plan B. Worst comes to worst, relocate."

Her parents wouldn't

come right out and say it, but they have dropped hints that she should think about going to Australia, Malie said. She said they want what's best for her.

Tuvalu Climate Minister Maina Talia has had the same discomfort but from the father's point of view. He said he talked to his four young children about the inexorable threat of sea-level rise on their home and future, but he has not yet quite raised the idea of leaving the island to them.

How do you parse the words existential threat?

Talia calls sea-level rise "an existential threat". And it's those two words — "existential threat" — that are at the heart of Wednes-

day's summit. For years, small island nations have used that phrase, as have leaders of the United Nations and climate activists. But now it's coming back to bite them because island nations want their sovereignty, their culture, to exist — even if their land does not.

"We've been trying really hard to as (the Alliance of Small Island States) to move away from that concept of existential threat given the fact that if we say that that means, does that mean that the State no longer exists? The people no longer exist? And that's not the case," said Michai Robertson, an advisor to the small island states' alliance.

-AP

## Odisha CM takes stock of flood situation

**Bhubaneswar:** Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has announced financial assistance for the people affected by recent floods in Balasore district, according to an official statement.

Majhi visited the flood-hit areas in Balasore on September 18 and held a meeting with the district administration. After returning from the areas, he directed officers concerned to provide relief to the affected people, the statement from the chief minister's office (CMO) said late on Tuesday. According to the announcement, assistance of Rs 1.20 lakh will be provided for each household whose residence was completely damaged in the flood, while Rs 6,500 has been earmarked for each partially damaged 'pucca' house.

## AP gets Rs 400 cr donations

**Vijayawada:** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday said that the Chief Minister's Relief Fund has received contributions to the tune of Rs 400 crore from political parties, film personalities, social organisations and others, to support flood victims in the state.

The Chief Minister underscored that donors responded enthusiastically to the relief efforts of the government machinery.

"People have responded enthusiastically," said Naidu.



A vehicle buried under the debris after landslide at Sanjauli in Shimla.

PICT: PTI

## Delhi winter plan unveiled

**New Delhi:** Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Wednesday unveiled the city's Winter Action Plan, featuring a range of measures including drone monitoring, an anti-dust campaign, the formation of new task forces, road-sweeping machines and the deployment of 200 mobile anti-smog guns to combat air pollution.

Launching the Winter Action Plan, which is based on 21 key focus areas, the minister said, "This year, our theme is 'Mil Kar Chale, Pradushan Se Lade'." and added that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

government in the national capital will start working on it from Wednesday itself.

Speaking on the plan, Rai said the pollution-hotspot areas will be monitored with the help of drones, which were also used last year but were monitored manually.

He added that a special task force has been formed, comprising six members who will monitor the pollution levels and take action accordingly.

The plan also includes the deployment of mobile anti-smog guns, with their frequency being increased this year, Rai said.

"A ban on firecrackers will be implemented this year as well and once the notification is issued, the ban will be fully enforced. GRAP (Graded Response Action Plan) stages will come into effect and 588 teams have been formed to control the open burning of garbage.

"We will encourage work from home and voluntarily reducing the use of private vehicles. If necessary, the odd-even (road rationalisation) scheme will be implemented, and artificial rain is also an option that we are exploring," the minister added.

-PTI

## Tropical Storm Helene strengthens over Florida, Mexico; moves to US

**Washington:** Tropical Storm Helene was rapidly strengthening in the Caribbean Sea and expected to become a hurricane Wednesday while moving north along Mexico's coast toward the US, prompting residents to evacuate, schools to close and officials to declare emergencies in Florida and Georgia.

The storm is forecast to be "near hurricane strength" when it passes near Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula early Wednesday, the US National Hurricane Centre said, and to "intensify and grow in size" as it moves north across the Gulf of Mexico.

Heavy rainfall was forecast for the southeastern US starting on Wednesday, with a "life-threatening storm surge" along the entire west coast of Florida, according to the centre.

Helene is expected to become a major hurricane — a Category 3 or higher — on Thursday, the day it's set to reach Florida's Gulf Coast, according to the



hurricane centre.

The centre has issued hurricane warnings for part of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and Florida's northwestern coastline, where large storm surges of up to 15 feet (4.5 metres) were expected.

Mexico is still reeling from former Hurricane John battering its other coast. John hit the country's southern Pacific coast late Monday, killing two people, blowing tin roofs off houses, triggering mudslides and toppling scores of trees, officials said on Tuesday.

John grew into a Category 3 hurricane in a matter of hours Monday and

made landfall about 80 miles (128 kilometers) east of the resort of Acapulco, near the town of Punta Maldonado, with maximum sustained winds of 120 mph (193 kph) before weakening to a tropical storm after moving inland.

Helene, which formed Tuesday in the Caribbean, is expected to move over deep, warm waters, fueling its intensification.

People in regions under hurricane warnings and watches should be prepared to lose power and should have enough food and water for at least three days, forecasters warned.

Hurricane watches —

which are a step down from warnings — were also in effect for parts of western Cuba and Florida, including the Tampa Bay area, the National Hurricane Centre said. "It's going to be a very large system with impacts across all of Florida," said Larry Kelly, a specialist at the hurricane centre.

Several counties on Florida's west and northwestern coasts have issued evacuation orders. Multiple school districts, including in the areas around Tampa and the state capital Tallahassee, plan to close schools or reduce hours starting Wednesday.

Some residents started filling sandbags ahead of anticipated flooding and began leaving areas on the coast.

President Joe Biden declared an emergency in Florida and deployed Federal Emergency Management Agency teams to Florida and Alabama to support local first responders.

-AP

## BluPine's 120 MW solar plant in Gujarat

**New Delhi:** BluPine Energy on Wednesday commissioned its first solar project of 120 megawatts in Gujarat.

The project will generate close to 3.23 lakh MWh (megawatt hour) of electricity, offsetting 2.96 lakh tonne of carbon dioxide emissions annually, BluPine Energy said in a statement.

The project includes a 70 MW solar plant at Radhanpur and a 50 MW solar plant at Nenava. It achieved financial closure under THE GUVNL 16 (Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Ltd) tender, with green financing secured through Standard Chartered Bank.

The electricity generated will be supplied to GUVNL under a 25-year Power Purchase Agreement (PPA).

With the addition of this project, BluPine Energy has expanded its renewable energy capacity in Gujarat to 540 MW for solar and 290 MW for wind, secured through tenders from GUVNL.

BluPine is a renewable energy services company established in India.



Bollywood actor Arjun Kapoor poses with his EV Bike BGauss RUV 350 in Mumbai on Wednesday.

PICT: PTI

## Two IITs develop eco-friendly geogrids

**Indore:** The IITs in Indore and Hyderabad have jointly developed two special geogrids, inspired by the Taj Mahal's architecture and the Indian star tortoise's shell pattern, to strengthen eco-friendly construction work and address climate change issues, officials said.

These two geogrids are expected to have various civil engineering applications, including the construction of flexible pave-

ments, especially highways, they said.

A geogrid is a geosynthetic material used to reinforce soil and other materials.

The geogrids developed by the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) at Indore and Hyderabad have been named Multiaxial Diamond Anchored Octagonal Geogrid (MDAOG) and Multiaxial Concentric Octagonal Geogrid (MCOG), an official said on

Tuesday.

These two innovations drew inspiration from nature, particularly from the Indian star tortoise and the architecture of the Taj Mahal, the official said.

India, with its extensive road network, faces significant challenges in managing massive volumes of crushed stone aggregates required for such infrastructure, IIT Indore's director Prof Suhas Joshi said.

-PTI

## Deadly flooding in Central Europe

**Washington:** Human-caused climate change doubled the likelihood and intensified the heavy rains that led to devastating flooding in Central Europe earlier this month, a new flash study found.

Torrential rain in mid-September from Storm Boris pummeled a large part of central Europe, including Romania, Poland, Czechia, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Germany, and caused widespread damage. The floods killed 24 people, damaged bridges, submerged cars, left towns without power and in need of significant infra-

structure repairs.

The severe four-day rainfall was "by far" the heaviest ever recorded in Central Europe and twice as likely because of warming from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, World Weather Attribution, a collection of scientists that run rapid climate attribution studies, said on Wednesday from Europe. Climate change also made the rains between 7 per cent and 20 per cent more intense, the study found.

"Yet again, these floods highlight the devastating results of fossil fuel-driven warming," said Joyce Ki-

mutai, the study's lead author and a climate researcher at Imperial College, London.

To test the influence of human-caused climate change, the team of scientists analysed weather data and used climate models to compare how such events have changed since cooler preindustrial times to today. Such models simulate a world without the current 1.3 degrees Celsius (2.3 degrees Fahrenheit) of global warming since preindustrial times, and see how likely a rainfall event that severe would be in such a world.



The study analysed four-day rainfall events, focusing on the countries that felt severe impacts.

Though the rapid study hasn't been peer-reviewed,

it follows scientifically accepted techniques.

"In any climate, you would expect to occasionally see records broken," said Friederike Otto, an

Imperial College, London, climate scientist who coordinates the attribution study team. But, "to see records being broken by such large margins, that is really the fingerprint of climate change. And that is only something that we see in a warming world".

Some of the most severe impacts were felt in the Polish-Czech border region and Austria, mainly in urban areas along major rivers. The study noted that the death toll from this month's flooding was considerably lower than during catastrophic floods in the region in 1997 and 2002.

Still, infrastructure and emergency management systems were overwhelmed in many cases and will require billions of euros to fix.

Last week, European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen pledged billions of euros in aid for countries that suffered damage to infrastructure and housing from the floods.

The World Weather Attribution study also warned that in a world with even more warming — specifically 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming since preindustrial times, the

likelihood of ferocious four-day storms would grow by 50 per cent compared to current levels. Such storms would grow in intensity, too, the authors found.

The heavy rainfall across Central Europe was caused by what's known as a "Vb depression" that forms when cold polar air flows from the north over the Alps and meets warm air from Southern Europe. The study's authors found no observable change in the number of similar Vb depressions since the 1950s.

-AP

# Zelensky's victory plan sets Ukraine's terms

**Kyiv:** The victory plan that President Volodymyr Zelensky will present to the White House this week asks the Biden administration to do something it has not achieved in the two and a half years since Russia invaded Ukraine: act quickly to support Kyiv's campaign.

While Western dawdling has amplified Ukraine's losses, some Ukrainian officials, diplomats and analysts fear Kyiv's aim to have the plan implemented before a new US president takes office in January may be out of reach. US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield, reportedly briefed on the plan, said it "can work" but many privately question how.

The specifics of Zelensky's blueprint have been kept under wraps until it can be formally presented to President Joe Biden, but contours of the plan have emerged, including the need for fast action on decisions Western allies have been mulling since the full-scale invasion began in 2022. It includes the security guarantee of NATO membership, according to Zelensky's chief of staff Andrii Yermak — a principal demand of Kyiv and Moscow's key point of contention. Western allies, including the US, have been sceptical about this option.

Zelensky has said he will also seek permission to use long-range weapons to strike deep inside Russian territory, another red line for some of Ukraine's supporters.



"Partners often say, 'We will be with Ukraine until its victory.' Now we clearly show how Ukraine can win and what is needed for this. Very specific things," Zelensky told reporters ahead of the trip. "Let's do all this today, while all the officials who want victory for Ukraine are still in official positions."

Meanwhile, outnumbered Ukrainian forces face grinding battles against one of the world's most powerful armies in the east. As Zelensky pitches his plan to Biden on Thursday, Ukrainian servicemen will be grappling to hold defensive lines in the key logistics point of Vuhledar in the Donetsk region. For some of them, it is essential that Biden buys into Zelensky's plan.

**Kyiv sets the terms**  
The victory plan is Kyiv's response to rising pressure from Western allies and war-weary Ukrainians to negotiate a cease-fire. A deal with Russia would almost certainly be unfavourable for Ukraine, which has lost a fifth of its territory and tens of thousands of lives in the

conflict. Unless, Kyiv calculates, its western partners act quickly. Ukraine's allies have routinely mulled over requests for weapons and capabilities, granting them often after their strategic value is diminished. Under the plan, from October to December, they must dramatically strengthen Kyiv's hand. The plan comprises military, political, diplomatic and economic elements.

Aside from the demand for NATO membership, it seeks to bolster Ukraine's defenses, including air defense capabilities, enough to force Moscow to negotiate.

Zelensky has said without elaborating that Kyiv's military incursion into Kursk, in Russia, is part of the victory plan. That offensive, which embarrassed President Vladimir Putin as the Kremlin scrambled to counterattack, has not yielded any strategic gains. But it has shown the Russian public and doubtful Western allies that Russia is not invincible and Kyiv still has offensive capabilities despite being battered on the east-

ern front.

## The cost of inaction

Zelensky has described his proposal as "a bridge to the Peace Summit" that he has proposed for November but that Russia says it will not attend. No international players capable of swaying Moscow agreed to his earlier 10-point peace plan, which calls for the full withdrawal of Russian forces.

Ukrainian presidential advisors and lawmakers have told The Associated Press that Kyiv will only agree to a cease-fire with Russia if Putin's ability to invade the country again is crippled. Any other arrangement would not benefit Ukraine's future or honour the sacrifices of its people. Ukrainian officials have rejected competing proposals from China and Brazil, believing they would merely pause the war and give Moscow time to consolidate its battered army and defence industry.

Russia's conditions for ending the war are spelled out in a 17-page draft agreement penned in April 2022. Prolonging the status quo will only play into Russia's hands in the long-term, analysts said. "We lack every kind of weapon, and Russia produces their weapons 24 hours a day," Kovalenko said. Russia has updated its aerial glide bombs, for which Ukraine has no effective countermeasure. They now weigh 3,000 pounds, which is six times bigger than when they were first used in the battle. -AP



Smoke rises from Israeli airstrikes in the southern village of Haboush in Lebanon on Wednesday.

Pic: AP/PTI

# Hezbollah fires missile at Tel Aviv

**Beirut:** Hezbollah launched a missile at Tel Aviv early Wednesday in its deepest strike yet into Israel, marking a further escalation after Israeli strikes on Lebanon killed hundreds of people.

The Israeli military said it intercepted the surface-to-surface missile, which set off air raid sirens in Tel Aviv and across central Israel, and there were no reports of casualties or damage. The military said it struck the site in southern Lebanon from which the missile was launched.

Hezbollah said it fired a Qader 1 ballistic missile targeting the headquarters of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, which it blames for a recent string of targeted killings of its top commanders and for

an attack last week in which explosives hidden in pagers and walkie-talkies killed dozens of people and wounded thousands, including many Hezbollah members.

The Israeli military said it was the first time a projectile fired from Lebanon had reached central Israel. Hezbollah claimed to have targeted an intelligence base near Tel Aviv last month in an aerial attack, but there was no confirmation. The Palestinian Hamas militant group in Gaza repeatedly targeted Tel Aviv in the opening months of the war.

The launch ratcheted up tensions as the region appears to be teetering toward another all-out war, even as Israel continues to battle Hamas in the Gaza

Strip. A wave of Israeli strikes on Monday and Tuesday killed at least 560 people in Lebanon and forced thousands to seek refuge.

Families have fled southern Lebanon, flocking to Beirut and the coastal city of Sidon, sleeping in schools turned into shelters, as well as in cars, parks and along the beach. Some sought to leave the country, causing a traffic jam at the border with Syria.

Israel said late Tuesday that fighter jets carried out "extensive strikes" on Hezbollah weapons and rocket launchers across southern Lebanon and in the Bekaa region to the north. The military has said it has no immediate plans for a ground invasion but has

declined to give a timetable for the air campaign.

Tensions between Israel and the Lebanese militant group have steadily escalated over the last 11 months. Hezbollah has been firing rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza and its ally Hamas, a fellow Iran-backed militant group.

Israel has responded with increasingly heavy airstrikes and the targeted killing of Hezbollah commanders while threatening a wider operation.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah on Tuesday confirmed the death of one of its top commanders, Ibrahim Kobeisi, who was killed in an Israeli strike in a southern Beirut suburb.

# US man charged for Donald Trump assassination attempt

**Washington:** A man who authorities say staked out Donald Trump for 12 hours on his golf course in Florida and wrote of his desire to kill him was indicted Tuesday on an attempted assassination charge.

Ryan Wesley Routh had been initially charged with two federal firearms offenses. The upgraded charges contained in a five-count indictment reflect the Justice Department's assessment that he methodically plotted to kill the Republican nominee, aiming a rifle through the shrubbery surrounding Trump's West Palm Beach golf course on an afternoon Trump was playing on it. Routh left behind a note in which he described his intention, prosecutors said.

Court records show the case has been assigned to Aileen Cannon, a Trump-appointed federal judge who generated intense scrutiny for her handling of a criminal case charging Trump with illegally hoarding classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. She dis-

missed that case in July, a decision now being appealed by special counsel Jack Smith's team.

The attempted assassination indictment had been foreshadowed during a court hearing Monday in which prosecutors successfully argued for the 58-year-old Routh to remain behind bars as a flight risk and a threat to public safety.

The arrest came two months after Trump was shot and wounded in the ear in an assassination attempt during a campaign rally in Pennsylvania. The Secret Service has acknowledged failings leading up to that shooting but has said that security worked as it should have to thwart a potential attack in Florida.

In addition, prosecutors have cited a book authored by Routh last year in which he lambasted Trump's approach to foreign policy, including in Ukraine. In the book, he wrote that Iran was "free to assassinate Trump" for having left the nuclear deal.

-AP



Military personnel of India and Oman during the 5th edition of India-Oman joint exercise 'Al Najah 2024', at Rabkoot Training Area, Salalah, Oman.

Pic: PTI

# China test-fires missile into Pacific Ocean

**Beijing:** China test-fired an intercontinental ballistic missile into the Pacific Ocean on Wednesday.

The ICBM carried a dummy warhead and fell into a designated area of the sea, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

The launch by the People's Liberation Army was part of routine annual training. It added the launch complied with international law and was not directed against any country or target. It is unclear how often China conducts tests over such a distance. In 1980, China launched an ICBM into the South Pacific. -AP

# PM Modi calls for promoting Indian tourism in US

**Washington:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged the members of the Overseas Friends of BJP to help promote India's tourism in the US to encourage Americans to explore India.

Modi made the remark on Monday in a meeting with a delegation of Overseas Friends of BJP (OFBJP) in New York, during his three-day visit to the US, an official said.

"OFBJP met with Prime Minister Modi on Monday, September 23 in New York. He said that the Indian diaspora are ambassadors of

India. He urged OFBJP members to work with Americans to promote tourism in India by asking their American friends," OFBJP President Adapa Prasad told PTI on Tuesday, a day after the meeting.

Following the meeting, Prasad said OFBJP is planning a virtual meeting with its nationwide members to convey the message and chalk out a strategy to promote tourism.

This would help build a people-to-people relationship between the two countries, he said. -PTI

# Iran urges US to strengthen relations with Tehran

**Tehran:** Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian urged the US to begin a new era in its relations with Iran.

While criticising the US military presence in Iran's neighbourhood, the US sanctions against Iran, and the killing of Iranian top Gen. Qassem Soleimani in 2020, Pezeshkian said during his speech at the UN General Assembly, "We can go beyond these limits and begin a new era.

Meanwhile, Iran's new president signalled to world leaders Tuesday that he wants to open a "constructive" chapter in his country's international relations — but he made clear that everyone else, including the United States, needs to do their part.

In his first speech at the UN General Assembly's annual gathering of world leaders, Masoud Pezeshkian struck a somewhat more measured tone than his predecessors often have in recent years.

The new era begins by recognising Iran's security concerns as well as joint

work on joint issues." He said his message addresses all governments

that follow unconstructive strategies toward Iran.

Pezeshkian said despite the bitterness of years of sanctions, Iran has achieved strong will and self-confidence and is ready to work with the world, "Iran is ready to have economic, political and security equal-base cooperation for building a better world with world powers and neighbours." Pezeshkian also urged the international commu-

nity to work toward a permanent cease-fire as soon as possible and to "stop Israeli insane brutality in Lebanon before it sets the region and the world on fire."

Pezeshkian reiterated that his country is against the Russia-Ukraine war and supports any peaceful solution to end the war and added that Iran "believes that this crisis will end only through dialogue." -AP

# B'desh to negotiate over water sharing

**Dhaka:** Bangladesh will soon take steps to hold negotiations with India over the sharing of water of transboundary rivers, an adviser of the interim government said.

India and Bangladesh were set to sign a deal on Teesta water sharing during then-PM Manmohan Singh's visit to Dhaka in 2011, but West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee declined to endorse it.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The India-US relationship is strong and getting stronger. I think one word -- well, actually, three words: strong, and getting stronger. We've elevated our strategic partnership to the highest level."

John Kirby, Advisor, National Security Communications, White House



# Deceased Indian-origin Israeli soldier's family awaits help

By Harinder Mishra

**Jerusalem:** An Israeli NGO, which has been at the forefront of immigration of Indian-origin Jews from the northeastern states of Manipur and Mizoram who are commonly referred to as Bnei Menashe, has appealed for help regarding immigration of a deceased soldier's family to Israel.

Staff Sergeant Geri Gideon Hanghal, 24, was killed on duty earlier this month in a vehicle ram-

ming attack near Asaf Junction, close to the West Bank's Beit El settlement.

"First Sgt Gideon Hanghal was a Bnei Menashe hero who made the ultimate sacrifice for Israel. Meanwhile, Gideon's brother, along with his wife and two children, are among those still waiting to be allowed to make aliyah (immigration)," a message issued by Shavei Israel said.

"We must help Gideon's family and honour his memory in the best way



possible: for the Israeli government to bring all the remaining Bnei Menashe to Israel," it further said.

"Every last one of the 5,000 Bnei Menashe in India who wants to make aliyah should be allowed to do so — as soon as possible," the organisation said, asking people to "join us as we do what we can to help Gideon's family, and bring his remaining relatives on aliyah". The stated goal of the organisation is to reach out to "lost and hidden" Jews around the world and help them reconnect with the people and the State of Israel. "We owe him that much," Shavei Israel said

emphasising the need to help the deceased soldier's family remaining in India to immigrate.

Hanghal was a resident of Nof HaGalil and a soldier in the Kfir Brigade's Nahshon Battalion, as per the Israeli army. Community members expressed shock at the news of the loss of a young life and his funeral attracted a large gathering.

Hanghal immigrated to Israel from Manipur in 2020. Some 300 Bnei Menashe youngsters are said

to be doing army duty during the current war, most of them serving in combat units. The Bnei Menashe, hailing from India's northeastern states of Manipur and Mizoram, are believed to have descended from the Israelite tribe of Menasheh, one of the "lost tribes" of ancient times.

Sephardic Chief Rabbi, Shlomo Amar, declared them descendants of Menasheh in 2005 paving the path for their immigration to Israel as members of a "lost tribe." -PTI

## EDITORIAL

## Golden Triumph

India's journey in chess, once synonymous with Viswanathan Anand, has evolved into something far grander. A country that once revered a single grandmaster now basks in the collective glory of its young prodigies. The 45th International Chess Federation (FIDE) Chess Olympiad in Budapest marked the crowning achievement of this new generation. India's chess masters not only created history by winning team gold medals in both the men's and women's competitions, but they also swept individual honours with four gold medals. The performance in Budapest, which saw India dominate on the world stage, is the culmination of a chess revolution decades in the making.

The victories of Gukesh Dommaraju, Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa, and Arjun Erigaisi in the men's category as well as the wins by Harika Dronavalli, Vaishali Rameshbabu, Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agrawal and Tania Sachdev in the women's competition, were historic. It is a long way from the days when Viswanathan Anand stood alone on the global chess stage. Anand's world championship victories, particularly in 2000 when he became India's first world chess champion, paved the way for a new generation of players in a country where cricket has traditionally held a monopoly on sporting fame.

India's rise in chess is not just a story of talent but of perseverance and innovation. The country's chess revolution has been aided by the digital age, with online platforms like Chess.com and Lichess.org playing pivotal roles in democratizing the game. Many of India's young grandmasters, including Gukesh and Pragganandhaa sharpened their skills by playing against global opponents online, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, which forced tournaments into virtual spaces. The 2020 Chess Olympiad, held online, saw India joint winners alongside Russia - a precursor to the Budapest triumph.

In Budapest, the Indian team did more than win—they dominated. The women's team, led by Harika, finished with 19 points, edging out Kazakhstan. 18-year-old Deshmukh, who remained undefeated with seven wins and four draws, was praised by chess great Susan Polgar for her "amazing performance," with predictions that this Indian team would stay on top for years to come.

Challenges persist. Funding, though improving, lags behind nations like Russia and China. Young players often juggle chess careers with educational demands. Sustaining dominance will need ongoing investment in infrastructure, sponsorship, and global exposure.

But for now, India can celebrate a victory that was years in the making. The 2024 FIDE Chess Olympiad in Budapest is a milestone not only in the annals of Indian chess but in the global chess community as well. The triumph, both in the Open and Women's events, signals a new era where Indian chess players are not just competing with the best—they are the best! And in a game that rewards foresight, India's chess future looks brighter than ever.



By  
Abhijit Mulye

## Responsible Reaction to Plastic Menace



India is now the largest producer of plastic waste, posing a serious threat to the environment and public health. How can we responsibly address this issue? While the ability to process waste defines the problem's scope, individual responsibility is also crucial.

Two weeks ago, a paper published in the famous scientific journal Nature, which explained the enormity of the plastic waste menace, was quoted in this column. The paper pointed out that almost one fifth of the world's plastic waste is produced in India. However, when labelling India as the largest producer of plastic waste, one also needs to factor in the fact that India houses

**India has become the largest producer of plastic waste in the world, which poses a serious threat to both the environment and public health. What should be the responsible way to tackle the menace? While, the ability to process the waste one creates defines the true nature of the problem, the responsible behaviour of individuals must also be considered.**

around one-sixth of the total global population. The same paper also states that China was the biggest producer of plastic waste a few years ago, but by making investments in developing effective waste management systems, they have managed to tackle the issue successfully. The paper also suggests that developing countries should follow the example set by developed countries and invest more in waste management systems that would tackle the plastic menace.

However, the paper highlights that while inadequate waste management systems are the main issue in developing countries, the problem continues in developed nations even with robust systems in place. The paper attributes the growing plastic menace in these nations to irresponsible behaviour among the population. Is it not a more serious problem if people are irresponsibly throwing plastic anywhere in nature despite having some of the largest systems to tackle the issue in place? Shouldn't we also demand that developed nations, which have established waste management systems, take action against the plastic menace in their own countries rather than focussing solely on developing nations where peo-

ple's behaviour regarding plastic seems to be more responsible?

The system of plastic waste management involves stages such as collecting, segregating, and sending recyclable materials back to the industry, with the final step being the incineration of non-recyclable items. One needs both the technology and trained human resources to develop a system to tackle the plastic menace. The paper published in Nature pinpoints India's problem as its inability to collect plastic waste.

However, while thinking of sustainable development, one also needs to take into account the efficacy of the system developed for tackling the plastic menace. That would involve factors like availability, capacity, and the condition of the incinerators. Plastic waste going into nature due to the non-availability of incinerators and the air pollution that would be caused by improper operations or improper condition of incinerators would both finally add to the pollution, though one of those would be visible and the other would not be visible.

This demands a more evolved approach while looking at the plastic menace. Just counting the total plastic waste

produced by a country does not completely reflect the problem. To be able to assess the issue of plastic menace completely, one will need to study the various types of plastic products being used in a particular country, their supply chains, as well as the whole lifecycle of such products till they go to landfills as waste. Such a study may show that some of the plastic products have actually proved to be eco-friendly.

Over the past few decades, plastic has replaced metal in several automobile components, bringing down the weight and boosting the fuel efficiency of the vehicles, which in turn has led to decreased emissions of greenhouse gases. One must also factor in the energy efficiency of the waste plastic management system, which involves the consumption of large amounts of energy. Additionally, correctly identifying the real problem areas is necessary. Some of our policies make the use of wrappers mandatory, and plastic wrappers amount to more plastic waste than plastic carry bags, which have been banned. A relook at and rationalisation of such policies too would help undo the plastic menace.

## GLOBAL WATCH

## India's Balancing Act on Gaza and Ukraine

For months, India has walked a diplomatic tightrope in two of the world's most complex and bloody conflicts: Israel-Gaza and Russia-Ukraine. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a leader with a keen sense of India's global aspirations, has deftly refrained from outright condemnation of either Russia or Israel, signalling New Delhi's approach of pragmatic diplomacy rather than moral absolutism. During recent meetings with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on the sidelines of the United Nations 'Summit of the Future,' Modi reiterated India's calls for peace, but carefully sidestepped directly censuring either Moscow or Tel Aviv.

In his third meeting with Zelensky in just four months, Modi expressed support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Zelensky acknowledged this, thanking Modi for "the clear support" and describing their discussions as focused on deepening cooperation across international platforms, particularly at the UN and G20, as well as Ukraine's Peace Formula. Modi's diplomatic language emphasized dialogue, while avoiding a direct rebuke of Russia. This tightrope walk mirrors his stance on Gaza, where Modi expressed concern over the humanitarian crisis and reiterated India's long-standing support for a two-state

**Modi's diplomatic finesse is allowing India to keep channels open with both Russia and Ukraine, as well as Israel and Palestine, while avoiding direct condemnation.**



solution during his talks with Abbas. However, as with Ukraine, he avoided condemning Israel's military actions outright, reinforcing his delicate balancing act.

Modi's diplomatic caution has deep historical roots. India's abstentions at the United Nations, including a recent resolution calling on Israel to end its presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, reflect its long-standing reluctance to take sides too strongly in global conflicts. While this might appear as ambivalence to some, it is a hallmark of India's foreign policy, one that has been honed over decades.

Despite growing Western pressure, India has stopped short of condemning Russia's actions in Ukraine, largely due to its deep military and economic ties with Moscow. India continues to import Russian oil and military hardware, crucial for its energy needs and defense strategy.

The same balance is evident in the Israel-Palestine conflict. While India has drawn closer to Israel under Modi, particularly in defense and technology, the country remains cautious not to alienate Arab nations. Modi's support for Palestine's UN membership and his call for a ceasefire and dialogue between Israel and Palestine highlight New Delhi's long-standing ties with the Palestinian cause. Yet, India's refusal to criticize Israeli actions in Gaza outright underscores the competing imperatives of geopolitics. India's abstention

from the UN vote demanding Israel end its presence in Palestinian territories sparked criticism at home, notably from the Congress.

Historically, India's international posture has been shaped by its non-alignment during the Cold War. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, one of the architects of this policy, led India's role in the Non-Aligned Movement, resisting alignment with either superpower. This allowed India to chart its own path, though selective neutrality was often the reality.

For instance, while India promoted non-alignment, it sought U.S. support during the 1962 Sino-Indian War and decisively backed the independent Bangladesh in 1971. India's balance between principle and pragmatism has long been evident.

Modi's foreign policy, though less ideologically rooted than Nehru's, draws from this same tradition of maintaining flexibility in a multipolar world. Today, India's foreign policy emphasizes 'strategic autonomy,' allowing New Delhi to engage with competing powers without being bound by geopolitical pressures. During India's recent presidency of the G20, Modi successfully kept the final communiqué neutral on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, underscoring this delicate balance.

Despite Modi's efforts to position India as a peace broker, whether India can truly play this role remains to be seen.

## STATES WATCH

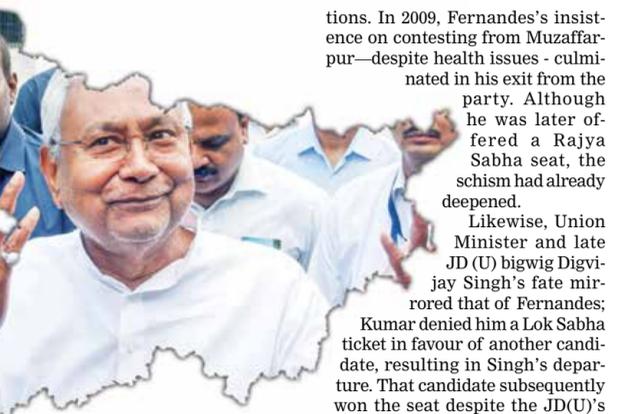
## Nitish's 'iron-fist' and JD(U)'s Internal Strife

In Bihar's volatile political landscape, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's authoritarian style of functioning has quashed dissent at the earliest instance within the Janata Dal (United) (JD(U)) led by him. Recently, a social media post by Ashok Choudhary, a senior JD(U) leader and Minister for Rural Works and a close Nitish aide, has sparked speculation of an internal rift.

An ambiguous post by Choudhary in Hindi on X, which hinted he was seemingly upset with the party leadership, was quickly seized upon by the opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) as precursor to a looming schism within the JD(U).

In response to the outcry, Choudhary sought an audience with Kumar, affirming that his remarks were intended as personal rather than political. Yet, this seemingly isolated incident mirrors the challenges Kumar has faced in maintaining cohesion within his party.

**In a state filled with larger-than-life politicians, Kumar's control of the JD(U) will be tested as he navigates the aspirations and expectations of his aides ahead of the Bihar Assembly polls.**



Bihar

In the past, Kumar has dealt with various party stalwarts who found themselves on the wrong side of his leadership in a cavalier, even ruthless fashion.

R. C. P. Singh, once viewed as a potential successor and a key player in the JD(U), was unceremoniously denied a nomination for a third term in the Rajya Sabha in 2022. Singh's proximity to the BJP and his divergence from JD(U)'s stance on critical issues, such as the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC), ultimately led to his political demise. Kumar's firm assertion that Singh had been entrusted with numerous responsibilities over the years only underscores his calculated approach to quelling any perceived threats.

The history of dissent within the JD(U) is in many ways as a testament to Kumar's vice-like grip over his party.

Figures like George Fernandes, once a mentor to Nitish, found themselves ousted after clashing with Kumar over candidate nomina-

tions. In 2009, Fernandes's insistence on contesting from Muzaffarpur—despite health issues - culminated in his exit from the party. Although he was later offered a Rajya Sabha seat, the schism had already deepened.

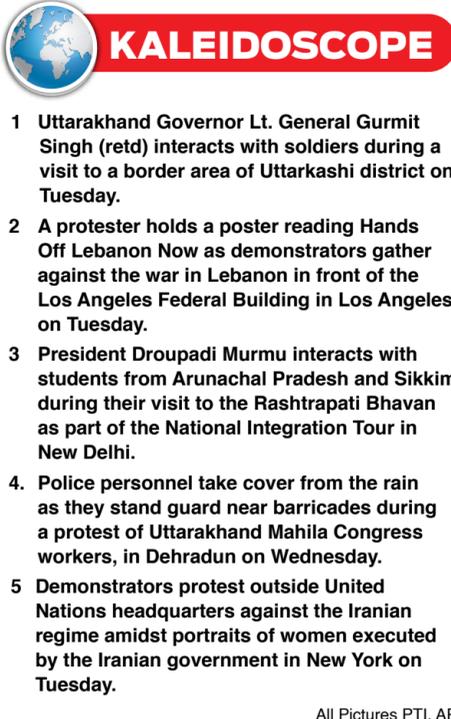
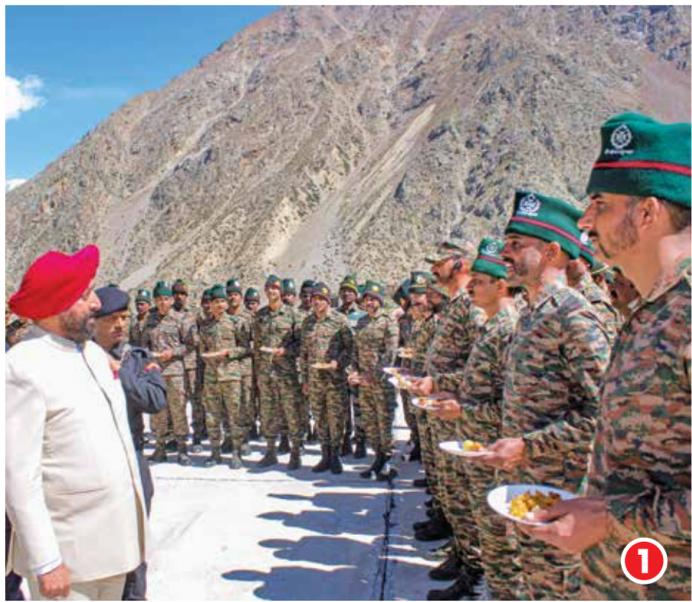
Likewise, Union Minister and late JD(U) bigwig Digvijay Singh's fate mirrored that of Fernandes;

Kumar denied him a Lok Sabha ticket in favour of another candidate, resulting in Singh's departure. That candidate subsequently won the seat despite the JD(U)'s poor performance in the constituency, further emphasizing Kumar's gamble in sidelining dissenters. Singh, who passed away in 2010, became one of Kumar's fiercest rivals.

Sharad Yadav's fall from grace is perhaps the most illustrative of Kumar's unwavering grip on the party. Yadav, who played a crucial role in Kumar's early political ascent, vocally opposed Kumar's return to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in 2017. His public dissent cost him a Rajya Sabha seat and ultimately led him to join the RJD, illustrating the high stakes involved in crossing Kumar.

As Kumar faces growing murmurs of discontent from leaders like Choudhary, political history shows how the Chief Minister has consistently demonstrated a willingness to address dissent with a precise and firm hand, often at the cost of alienating potential allies.

This strategy, while effective in consolidating power, will be put to the test as the JD(U) gears up for the 2025 Bihar Assembly election. The episode involving Choudhary is also a reminder of the specter of ever-present dissent within the JD(U).



### KALEIDOSCOPE

- 1 Uttarakhand Governor Lt. General Gurmit Singh (ret) interacts with soldiers during a visit to a border area of Uttarkashi district on Tuesday.
- 2 A protester holds a poster reading Hands Off Lebanon Now as demonstrators gather against the war in Lebanon in front of the Los Angeles Federal Building in Los Angeles on Tuesday.
- 3 President Droupadi Murmu interacts with students from Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim during their visit to the Rashtrapati Bhavan as part of the National Integration Tour in New Delhi.
- 4 Police personnel take cover from the rain as they stand guard near barricades during a protest of Uttarakhand Mahila Congress workers, in Dehradun on Wednesday.
- 5 Demonstrators protest outside United Nations headquarters against the Iranian regime amidst portraits of women executed by the Iranian government in New York on Tuesday.

All Pictures PTI, AP

### EXPLAINER

## MUDA Case Has Its Origins More Than Decades Ago

The Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) case over which the Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot accorded sanction for investigation against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has its origins more than three decades ago.

The case pertains to alleged allotment of compensatory sites to Siddaramaiah's wife B.M. Parvathi in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA.

The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where it developed a residential layout.

Under the controversial scheme, MUDA allotted 50 per cent of developed land to the land losers in lieu of undeveloped land acquired from them for forming residential layouts.

However, it is alleged that Parvathi had no legal title over this 3.16 acres of land at survey number 464 of Kasare village in Kasaba hobli of Mysuru taluk.

The issue finds its origins in September 1992, when preliminary notification was issued to acquire land measuring 3.16 acres belonging to one Ninga bin Javara to form the Devanur Layout third phase, and subsequent final notification in February 1998.

While the said land was later denotified in May 1998, it was still used to form Devanur Layout and sites were allotted in 2001.

Siddaramaiah's brother-in-law Mallikarjunaswamy in August 2004 purchased this 3.16 acres of "agricultural" land from one of the sons of the original holder, and got it converted for non-agricultural purposes in July 2005.

In October 2010, Mallikarjunaswamy executed the gift deed of the land to his sister Parvathi, Siddaramaiah's wife.

Questions are being raised as to how Siddaramaiah's brother-in-law purchased land in 2004 and gifted it



K. Siddaramaiah

to Parvathi, when the layout was formed and sites were allotted to various people in 2001 itself. Also, how the land that was denotified became 'agricultural' land for it to be converted as non-agricultural in 2005.

It is claimed that Parvathi in June 2014 realised that the MUDA had illegally acquired her 3.16 acres land without consent to develop Devanur Layout and had formed sites and sought compensation in lieu of her land. Following this, MUDA in December 2017, admitting its mistake in using the denotified land to form a layout, decided to award alternative sites to Parvathi.

The MUDA in November 2020 decided to award alternative sites to land losers including Parvathi on a 50:50 basis, and in January 2022 she was allotted 14 plots in (upmarket) Vijayanagar 3rd phase.

In October 2023, as questions were raised about the 50:50 scheme, the government scrapped it.

As allegations regarding the CM's wife getting benefitted from the MUDA site allotment 'scam' surfaced, the government set up a one-man inquiry commission under former High Court Judge Justice P.N. Desai to probe illegalities, just a day ahead of the monsoon session of the legislature beginning earlier

this year in July.

Amid the controversy, Siddaramaiah had, while alleging that his land was usurped by MUDA, said: "let it (MUDA) pay my family compensation of Rs 62 crore and take back 14 alternate sites."

The MUDA 'scam' had created uproar during the session as discussion on the subject was not allowed.

Based on a petition filed by complainant T J Abraham, the Governor had issued a "show-cause notice" on July 26 directing the Chief Minister to submit his reply to the allegations against him within seven days as to why permission for prosecution should not be granted against him.

The Karnataka government had on August one "strongly advised" the Governor to withdraw his "show-cause notice" to the Chief Minister and alleged "gross misuse of the Constitutional Office" of the Governor. Subsequently on August 3, the CM responded to the Governor's notice, denying allegations.

Opposition BJP and JD(S) had held a week-long 'padayatre' (foot march) earlier this month from Bengaluru to Mysuru demanding Siddaramaiah's resignation in connection with the scam.

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

On August 19, Siddaramaiah moved the High Court challenging the legality of the Governor's order.

After completing the hearings on the petition in six sittings from August 19, the single judge bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna on Tuesday dismissed his petition challenging Governor's approval for investigation against him in the case.

-PTI

### READERS' VOICE

## Annasaheb Patil: A Lifelong Advocate for Workers' Rights



By Niranjan Davkhare

Annasaheb Pandurang Patil, a member of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, made significant contributions to the uplifting of scattered workers in Mumbai. For this reason, he is regarded as the architect of the progress of the Maratha and Mathadi workers in Maharashtra. Annasaheb Patil proposed a simple yet broad definition of a 'Maratha,' stating that every person residing in Maharashtra and standing for its defence is a Maratha. With this ideology, he established the Mathadi Workers Union and the All India Maratha Federation.

When Annasaheb Patil arrived in Mumbai from his native village, Mandruikole in Patan Taluka, he began his career as a worker. At that time, workers in Mumbai were facing dire conditions, and a majority of them were Marathas. Annasaheb Patil believed that workers needed to experience both economic and social progress. He deeply studied their issues and began organising them, forming the Mathadi Workers Union, formally known as the Maharashtra State Mathadi Transport and General Workers Union. This became one of the largest labour unions in the state.

At the time, most labour unions were led by communists, but Annasaheb Patil rejected their ideologies, instead building a union based on Indigenous principles. He organised protests and movements, putting forward workers' demands for better wages, healthcare, and basic rights for workers before the government. His relentless work eventually bore fruit, and he became the

guiding force for workers.

Annasaheb Patil's efforts resonated with the government. The then-Chief Minister, Yashwantrao Chavan, addressed the demands put forth by Patil, and on June 5, 1969, the Mathadi Workers Act was enacted in Maharashtra. This legislation brought joy and relief to the workers, improving their quality of life. Due to this act, facilities such as hospitals, consumer societies, housing through CIDCO, and educational and medical services were made available to Mathadi workers. Patil's contribution to their welfare was pivotal.



Today, the issue of Maratha reservation is a significant topic in Maharashtra. Annasaheb Patil, the father of the Maratha reservation movement, made sure that his demands were reasonable and did not disturb social unity. His image is revered across Maharashtra for this reason.

Annasaheb Patil worked tirelessly for the welfare of Mathadi workers, most of whom were Marathas. He united the 12 Balutedars and 18 Pagadi communities, forming various organisations under the All India Maratha Federation. His leadership earned him widespread respect, and on July 8, 1980, he became a member of the Legislative Council.

During this time, the demand for Maratha reservations based on economic criteria was gaining traction. Annasaheb Patil toured Maharashtra while advocating for this cause. He resolved to lead a protest march to the Legislative Assembly. As an MLA in the Congress government, Patil, along with Advocate Shashikant Pawar, led a massive procession from Azad Maidan, Mumbai, on March 22, 1982. The sight of the marchers carrying Shivaji Maharaj's saffron flag caught the attention of the citizens of Mumbai.

Annasaheb Patil submitted a list of nine demands to the then Chief Minister, Babasaheb Bhosale. Realising that the demand for reservation would not be considered, he declared that if justice were not served to the Maratha community, he would not live to see the next sunrise. True to his word, he ended his life on March 23, 1982, leaving an indelible mark on the state.

Annasaheb Patil devoted his life to the progress of Mathadi workers, raising their issues before the government and improving their living conditions. His efforts for the Maratha reservation and social justice brought attention to the problems faced by the community. His life was a testament to the struggle for the welfare of society. Rightfully, he is remembered as the father of the Maratha reservation movement and the architect of Maratha upliftment.

On his birth anniversary, we humbly pay tribute to the sacred memory of Annasaheb Patil.

(The writer is a BJP member of Maharashtra Legislative Council. Views personal.)

# Germany series will revive spirit, says Harman



**New Delhi:** India hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh says he is looking forward to the two-match bilateral series against Germany as he feels the games on October 23 and 24 will be a good test for his side and also help in "reviving the spirit" of the sport in the national capital.

The short series, to be held at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium, will bring men's international hockey to the capital after a decade. The last match at the venue was played in 2014 during the Hero Hockey World League Final - men's round four.

"This series is not just about the two teams playing; it's about reviving the spirit of hockey in Delhi. We hope this will inspire more young players from the region to take up the game," Harmanpreet stated in a press release issued by Hockey India.

"Playing in front of home fans in Delhi after so many years is truly special for us as a team. The Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium holds a lot of history and memories and to lead the team here will be a huge honour."

The prolific drag-flicker

said the series would be an opportunity to test the team further after its title-winning run in the Asian Champions Trophy in China earlier this month.

"Germany is one of the top teams in world hockey, and playing against them will be a great challenge for us. It's important for our preparation as we gear up for major tournaments ahead.

"We are working hard, and this series will give us the opportunity to test ourselves against a very strong opponent," he said.

-PTI

## BMC official completes 'Ironman' triathlon

**Mumbai:** Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) deputy commissioner Vishwas Mote has successfully completed the 'Ironman Italy Emilia Romagna' triathlon and expressed hope that his achievement will inspire others also to focus on fitness.

Mote took 15 hours, 25 minutes, and 4 seconds to complete the triathlon, held in Cervia, Italy on September 21, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said in a release on Tuesday.

The event had 2,439 participants from across the world, including 28 competitors from India, it said.

The challenging competition involved swimming in the Adriatic Sea, cycling and running. Mote was among those who completed the event, earning the prestigious 'Ironman' title, the release said.

"Achieving the prestigious Ironman title is a matter of pride. Despite being busy with work, everyone should pay attention to physical fitness. A healthy body enables you to do much more. I hope my success inspires others to focus on fitness and exercise," the release said quoting Mote.

In November 2022, Mote completed the 'Ironman 70.3' in Goa. He currently holds the position of deputy commissioner (Circle-3) and assistant commissioner (M-West ward) in the BMC. Mote is also active in raising awareness among people about health and fitness, the civic body said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during an interaction with 45th FIDE Chess Olympiad winning Indian teams, at his residence in New Delhi on Wednesday. Pic: PTI

# Chess champion withdraws from competition to meet Modi

**New Delhi:** Fresh from his exploits in India's first-ever title-winning campaign at the Chess Olympiad, Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi has decided against defending his crown at the 10th Vugar Gashimov Memorial Chess Super Tournament in Azerbaijan for an audience with Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Thursday.

Gujrathi had won the Azerbaijan event last year after outperforming compatriot Arjun Erigaisi.

He was a part of the Indian men's team, which also included D Gukesh, R Praggnanandhaa and Arjun, that won a historic



Chess Olympiad gold in the Open category.

Gujrathi took to 'X', formerly twitter, to inform that he reached Baku for

the event but decided to return to India to meet Modi on learning about the felicitation function.

"I reached Baku and I

got to know our Hon'ble PM wants to felicitate the Indian team. I was overjoyed when I heard this and I wanted to be a part of it. It's amazing at how such short notice he is taking out time for us," Gujrathi wrote on 'X'.

Gujrathi, 29, has been replaced by Aravindh Chithambaram for the event to be held from September 25-30.

"I contacted Sarkhan Gashimov (organiser) and he understood my sentiments. Big thanks to him! Wishing Aravindh the best to play against top players in this prestigious event," Gujrathi wrote.

-PTI

## Delhi Ranji Probables: Kohli, Pant named in 84

**New Delhi:** Premier batter Virat Kohli and the flamboyant Rishabh Pant have once again been named in a jumbo 84-member Delhi Ranji Trophy probables list although the duo is unlikely to be available for any of the red ball games throughout the season.

However, veteran pacer Ishant Sharma's name didn't figure in the list which has the country's fastest bowler Mayank Yadav along with another Team India contender Harshit Rana.

Kohli had last played Ranji Trophy for Delhi in 2012 at Ghaziabad against Uttar Pradesh while Pant last featured in a red ball game for Delhi in the pre-COVID era.



Indian players during a training session ahead of the 2nd Test cricket match between India and Bangladesh, at Green Park Stadium in Kanpur on Wednesday. Pic: PTI

# Didn't do justice to our talent, says Bangladesh coach

By Amanpreet Singh

**Kanpur:** Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusinghe on Wednesday said his players did not do justice to their potential in the opening Test against India but promised a better approach in the must-win second game beginning here on Friday.

Visiting skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto (20) and veteran Shakib Al Hasan (32) got starts in the first innings but could not convert into big knocks.

In the second innings not only Shanto (82), top-order batters Zakir Hasan (35) and Shadman Islam (35) also got starts they failed to convert, resulting in a heavy defeat.

"We are a bit concerned. We normally talk about if



you get a start, make it big. That's the biggest concern because some of the guys got 30 balls. And then in cricket, it's the hardest thing to get in.

"But then this team, India, is posing different challenges. So we know that as well. So we have to bat for longer," Hathurusinghe told reporters here.

Bangladesh have five left-handers in the squad including the top-four that

has Mominul Haque. A left-right combination usually works better as it forces the bowlers to adjust their line and length consistently.

However, the Bangladesh team management will not pick the playing eleven thinking on those lines.

"That's our best players, whether right or left. If there are any changes, it's depending on the surface tomorrow."

"If we are making a change, whether batsman, or whoever is coming in, (we see) what he can bring and who will miss out. And we look at it holistically like that rather than left or right."

It is likely to be a low and slow pitch at the Green Park stadium, favouring spinners. -PTI

# Root will go down as England's greatest in Tests, says Bell

By Devarchit Varma

**Jodhpur:** Joe Root will go down as England's greatest batter in Tests even if he is not able to break Sachin Tendulkar's gargantuan record of 15,921 runs, reckons his former teammate Ian Bell.

Root went past Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara recently to move to the sixth spot in the list of highest run-getters in the longest format.

"He's played incredibly well in the last 12 months. I don't think he's overthinking too much what's ahead. He's just sort of living in the moment as we are," Bell told PTI in an exclusive interview on the sidelines of Legends League Cricket.

"To think that he can even get close to someone like Sachin, a real great of

the game, someone that we've all admired growing up, as a hero to not just people and fans in India, but around the world.

"To think that Joe could get close is an amazing achievement on his behalf. He'll go down as England's greatest batsman. There's no doubt whether he does get to Sachin or not," said the 42-year-old who played as many as 118 Tests for England.

With 12,402 runs, the 33-year-old Root is 3,519 runs away from breaking Tendulkar's record.

Bazball has unlocked talent

Bell feels England's much talked-about Bazball approach has unlocked talent of the current players.

"From a fan point of view, you have to look at the results. Since Brendon (Mc-



Joe Root

Cullum) has come into this England side and (Ben) Stokes has taken over, the results have been absolutely fantastic.

"What they've managed to do with the talent that they have is to unlock some of that... Zak Crawley's, Ollie Pope, Harry Brook, they've managed to get the best out of them.

"I don't think you could ask a Crawley or Pope to try and be an Alastair Cook or a Jonathan Trott who played in a different style, but were very successful. It's important to identify what they've got and they're adapting that as we go on now."

However, with England not featuring among contenders for World Test Championship final in the first two editions, Bell said winning away would be as important as at home in the next cycle.

"I'm sure they've got one eye on the next 12 months, which has five Test matches (against) India at home, which will be a huge challenge," he said.

"India are probably the best team in the world at the moment, and then, Australia away. Those 10 Test

matches on the road will be hugely important for that group of players and something they're gearing themselves up for.

"We were the last team to win in India, which was obviously (a) part of the journey to get to No 1 and we won in Australia. For this England side to get to No 1, there's no doubt, ability and talent-wise, they have that," he said.

He also stressed on consistency shown by the Indian team which has won 17 series in a row at home and its last two series in Australia.

"That's what we've seen with India at the moment. They've managed to be able to win away from home as much as anyone and that's the reason why they are the No 1 team in the world at the moment." -PTI



Badminton player P.V. Sindhu poses for photos during the 'Spectacular Saudi' event in Mumbai on Tuesday. Pic: PTI



Boxer Mary Kom arrives to attend the 'Spectacular Saudi' event in Mumbai on Tuesday. Pic: PTI