

THE PERFECT VOICE



Funds transferred to 1.7 crore beneficiaries ... pg 2



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US Open: Novak Djokovic out ... pg 10



NorthEast United FC players celebrate after winning the Durand Cup 2024 final between Mohun Bagan Super Giant and NorthEast United FC at Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (Salt Lake Stadium), in Kolkata on Saturday. Pic-PTI

Haryana polls deferred to honour Bishnois

New Delhi: The Election Commission on Saturday deferred the Haryana assembly poll date to October 5 from October 1, saying the decision was taken keeping in mind a centuries-old festival of the Bishnoi community. The counting of votes for Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana assembly polls will now be held on October 8 instead of October 4. It has been a practice of the EC to hold the counting of votes on the same day for assemblies which go to polls together as the results of one state could affect trends in others. Before the revision of the date, the Haryana polls were to be held along with

Now voting on Oct 5, counting on Oct 8

the third and last phase of the Jammu and Kashmir elections. The decision to postpone the Haryana elections has been taken to honour both the voting rights and traditions of the Bishnoi community which has upheld a 300-400-year-old practice in remembrance of their Guru Jambheshwar, the EC said. It said it had received a representation from the national president of the All India Bishnoi Mahasabha, Bikaner, Rajasthan for rescheduling the Haryana assembly elections. He said generations of families from Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana visit their native village Mukam in Rajasthan on 'amavas' in the month of 'Asoj' for the annual festival in Bikaner in the memory of Guru Jambheshwar, according to the EC. This year, the festival falls on October 2 and thousands of Bishnoi families residing in Sirsa, Fatehabad and Hisar will be travelling to Rajasthan on the day, denying them their

The past postponement

#The 2022 Punjab Assembly elections were postponed by a week to accommodate devotees travelling to Varanasi for Guru Ravidas Jayanti.

#The dates for the 2022 Manipur polls were changed to respect the Christian community's Sunday prayers.

#In 2023 Rajasthan Assembly elections, polling was rescheduled as it was originally scheduled to be held on Devuthani Ekadashi, a day significant for mass weddings in Rajasthan.

#In the 2012 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, the poll date was changed due to Barawafat.

voting rights. The revised polling day would also resolve any concerns about a six-day holiday by taking a day's leave on September 30, sources pointed out. They said the chief electoral officer (CEO) of Haryana sent a report on Saturday wherein he confirmed after holding consultations with the deputy commissioners of Hisar, Sirsa and Fatehabad that the Bishnoi community's annual festi-

val falls on 'amavas' during the month of "Asoj" on October 2 this year.

The CEO noted that thousands of Bishnoi families reside in these three districts, and they have been visiting their native place in Mukam, Rajasthan during this time for the last three centuries. Families from these districts are expected to start their journey on October 1, he said.

-PTI

CM face should be decided after polls: Chavan

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Former Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan has said that the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) should decide its Chief Ministerial face only after

the Assembly election. In an exclusive interview to The Perfect Voice the veteran Congressman said that the party having maximum MLAs should get the CM's job. "This has been a tradition. First

time we are going in a three-party pre-poll alliance in the assembly election. The question is, should we declare a CM face before or which party does it or not? Yeah, my particular view is that we

always do it after the election. First, we must win the election and it's also important from the stability point of view and I think Delhi has agreed to that," he said. Full interview: Page 9

Interestingly, the Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar had cited the reason of festival season for not holding the Assembly elections in Maharashtra along with Haryana.

NC to prioritise lifting of AFSPA

Srinagar: The National Conference will prioritise the lifting of AFSPA from Jammu and Kashmir and put an end to the "unjust harassment faced by Kashmiri youth" if it is voted to power, party vice-president Omar Abdullah said on Saturday.

Abdullah had pitched for the revocation of the controversial Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in 2012 when he was chief minister of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state.

He had even announced that AFSPA would be revoked during his tenure but the proposal faced strong opposition from the Army.

"The party (National Conference) reiterates its unwavering dedication to fulfilling the promises outlined in our manifesto. Once in power, the National Conference-led government will prioritise the lifting of AFSPA, putting an end to the unjust harassment faced by our youth," Abdullah said as he welcomed prominent political activists into the party.



Abdullah said his party was committed to streamlining the passport verification process, creating job opportunities for the unemployed, and ensuring that every household had access to essential resources, increased ration and reliable utility services without putting a burden on their finances. Highlighting the significance of the party's manifesto, Abdullah said it truly reflected the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "This is precisely why it was rejected by the BJP," he said.

-PTI

Key CPI operative arrested

New Delhi: The NIA on Saturday arrested a key accused actively involved in recruitment and funds collection for the banned CPI (Maoist), it said in a statement.

The accused has been identified as Ajay Singhal alias Aman, a native of Haryana's Sonapat district who was residing in SAS Nagar, Punjab.

According to the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) investigation, Singhal was in charge of the state organising committee of the CPI (Maoist) in Haryana and actively involved in the revival of activities of the banned organisation in the Northern Regional Bureau states of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh. The accused had been visiting Jharkhand and Bihar to collect funds from CPI (Maoist) central committee member Pramod Mishra alias Vanbihari and Bihar-Jharkhand Special Area Committee commander/secretary Sandeep Yadav, the statement said.

Third front taking shape in Maharashtra

Manoj Jarange-Patil is likely to join hands with Bachchu Kadu, Sambhaji Rajee and Rajratna Ambedkar

By Suyash Padate

Mumbai: Despite Past Hiccups, a third front consisting of smaller parties is in the offing in the state. Prahar Janshakti Party (PJP) leader Bachchu Kadu has taken the initiative to form this alliance ahead of Assembly elections in Maharashtra. This development is seen as an attempt to queer the pitch for Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA).

Even as the ruling as well as the opposition gears up for the crucial assembly elections, at least a half a dozen smaller parties with pockets of influence in the state have announced their plans to either go solo or join the third front. Calling the exercise as a game-changing development, Bachchu Kadu seems to be confident of smooth sailing of the third front.

Speaking to The Perfect Voice, Kadu, a Shiv Sena-backed Independent MLA said, "We are considering joining hands with former Rajya Sabha MP Sambhaji Rajee Chhatrapati and Bhartiya Jawan Kisan Party



leader Narayan Ankush to form a third front in the state. If this government does not make any decision regarding farmers and the disabled, I am prepared to take action. What's the use of leaders who say 'Jai Shivray' and 'Jai Shriram' only for convenience? The third front will be established in the next two weeks. After the formation of this front we will leave the Mahayuti soon".

Kadu's PJP was the first partner of the MVA government to offer its support to the Shiv Sena rebel group led by Eknath Shinde. However, he was unhappy because he wasn't given a



ministerial berth in the government. While expressing his dissatisfaction with the government, Kadu said, "My party will contest 20 seats in the forthcoming election. It will be too early to say anything but once we reach a decision we will make the announcement".

Sources have claimed that efforts are being made to include Prakash Ambedkar and his Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) in the front. The discussion among the leaders focused on how many seats each party will contest and the key issues the third front will prioritise. However, even after the two meetings

consensus has not yet been reached on some key points.

Significantly, Rajratna Ambedkar, great grandson of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has made up his mind to join the third front. When contacted Ambedkar said, "We have formed a third front. Along with Bachchu Kadu, Sambhaji Rajee and Maratha reservation activist Manoj Jarange-Patil are all set to join the hands. Our full-fledged plan is ready. Next government of Maharashtra will be formed only on our support".

When asked about Prakash Ambedkar joining the third front, he refused

to say anything.

Sambhaji Rajee who is in touch with all the leaders said, "Some issues about the formation are expected to be clarified in upcoming meetings. Maharashtra has a tradition of fighting against injustice. To continue this fight, we have decided to form the third front and we will go ahead with our decision".

Smaller parties who are neither aligned with the BJP nor the MVA, have begun to unite their forces in a bid to explore the formation of a Third Front. As many as six smaller parties have announced to either go into the elections on their own or float a third front. With the Maharashtra Assembly elections expected to be a close fight, the third front could play a spoilsport for the MVA as it goes all out to dislodge the BJP-Sena-NCP alliance from power. Elections in Maharashtra are expected to be held later this year and leaders expect clarity on the formation of a third front less than a month from now.

Re-released films receive thumbs up from audiences

By Komal Pancharatia

Mumbai: With a host of new films, including star-led biggies, tanking at the box-office, older ones are being re-released on the big screen to surprising success - from the 2012 hit "Gangs of Wasseypur" full of blood, gore and revenge to the romantic "Laila Majnu" that had a lackluster run when it was first re-released in 2018.

According to trade experts and exhibitors, this is a good way to fill up the halls and recover money as those who loved watching these movies or missed them at the time of their

release seem keen for the big screen experience.

"It's beneficial for exhibitors, and whoever holds the right to the film also earns money. For instance, when 'Laila Majnu' and 'Rockstar' were re-released, they didn't do well but this generation loved these films.

"The average occupancy for 'Laila Majnu' was 40 per cent all over India. In some properties in Mumbai, it registered over 80 per cent occupancy," trade analyst Atul Mohan told PTI, adding that he is confident that "Gangs of Wasseypur" will be immensely loved.

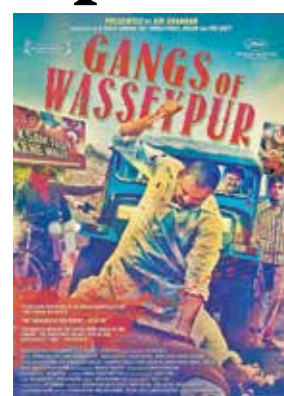
While "Stree 2" is doing well at the box office with earnings crossing over Rs 600 crore globally, the year was not that good for big budget, star-led vehicles like "Fighter", "Maidaan", "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan", "Sarfira", and "Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha". "Kalki 2898 AD", "Munjya", "Stree 2" and "Crew" were other handful exceptions to the poor run of Hindi cinema in theatres.

This month alone has witnessed a wave of re-releases of films, some of which are already available on streaming platforms. The films returning



to theatres include romance dramas like Salman Khan's "Maine Pyar Kiya" (1989), "Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein" and two-part revenge drama "Gangs of Wasseypur".

Movies like "Rockstar", "Jab We Met", "Yeh Jawani Hai Deewani", "Chak De! India" and "Hum Aapke Hain Koun..." also made a return to theatres for a while.



Imtiaz Ali-presented "Laila Majnu" earned Rs 6.15 crore in 14 days (according to Sacnilk). The Triptii Dimri and Avinash Tiwary-starrer didn't do well in 2018 despite good reviews.

Nitin Datar, President of Cinema Owners and Exhibitors Association of India, told PTI: "The response to re-released films has been generally good. I hope this trend continues because it's helping the exhibition industry to engage with the audience differently. Exhibitors are reeling under losses as the newly-released films are not appealing to people."

Ashish Kanakia, CEO of MovieMax Cinemas, emphasised that re-released films do not always generate huge profits but for them, it's all about bringing audiences to theatres. "Re-released films represent a different kind of investment. They help us maintain a balance between showing new and old films, which helps keep our audience numbers steady," Kanakia told PTI.

"Usually, the occupancy for re-released films hovers around 30 per cent, but it's about more than just the numbers. It's about giving people the opportunity to relive the nostalgia and magic of the big screen experience. Besides, the success of re-releases shows that people still have a strong desire to experience their favourite films in theatres," he said.

-PTI

Funds transferred to 1.7 crore beneficiaries

Nagpur: Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Saturday said the ambit of the Majhi Ladki Bahin Scheme will be expanded to cover 2.5 crore women even as the state government has transferred money into the bank accounts of 1.7 crore beneficiaries so far.

The Chief Minister launched the second phase of the scheme at Reshimbagh ground here in the presence of Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, and Women and Child Welfare Minister Aditi Tatkare.

"We were not born with a golden spoon. We belong to the family of farmers. Having experienced poverty, we understood why a scheme like this was necessary. We know the value of Rs 1,500," Shinde said.

The Ladki Bahin Scheme provides monthly assistance of Rs 1,500 to married,



Ladki Bahin Scheme

divorced, and destitute women in the 21-60 age group with a Rs 2.5 lakh annual family income ceiling.

The chief minister said the state government deposited money in the bank accounts of 1.7 crore women

in the first phase of the scheme.

"Today, we transferred funds into the bank accounts of 52 lakh women, and we will ensure that the remaining funds are disbursed soon," he said, adding that the target is to extend the benefits to 2.5 crore women.

Shinde also slammed the opposition for criticising the

scheme, which he claimed had broken records.

"This government does not take money, but it gives money. The opposition had previously claimed that funds would not land in people's bank accounts. However, now that beneficiaries are receiving money, they are asking them to withdraw it quickly," he said.

-PTI

MVA to protest today

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) has called for a 'Jode Mara' (shoe beating) protest against the Maharashtra government on Sunday protesting against the "corruption" in erecting Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue at Malvan, Sindhudurg that collapsed on August 26.

The protestors have planned to march from Hutatma Chowk to Gateway of India via Balasaheb Thackeray Chowk.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had apologised for collapse of the statue on Friday. He had inaugurated the statue on December 9, 2023.

The MVA has rejected Modi's apology saying it did not come from his heart. The MVA leaders also have alleged that the state government was shielding the inexperienced sculptor in this case.

Ajit absent as CM, DCM visit Hedgewar memorial

By Correspondent

Mumbai: NCP leader and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday didn't join his Cabinet colleagues Devendra Fadnavis and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in visiting the Nagpur-based memorial of the RSS founder.

Taking a swipe, NCP (SP) leader and MLA Jitendra Awhad said people will not be fooled by Ajit Pawar's optics given that he shares power with the BJP, backed by the Sangh.

Shinde and Fadnavis visited Hedgewar's memorial in Nagpur ahead of a "Mazi Ladki Bahin" scheme function in Nagpur.

"Ajit Pawar is playing a game at a different level. He is politically sharing power with the BJP but has also been trying to project himself as a leader who will not visit the memorial (of the RSS founder). He (Ajit Pawar) acts differently in public as a politician and practices



Rift over inflated bill

Jitendra Awhad alleged that Shiv Sena leader and Health Minister Tanaji Sawant's "nausea" remarks on the association with NCP was a fallout of Pawar - who holds the finance ministry - objecting to clearing Sawant's file.

"Sawant intended to purchase a vehicle for Rs 30 lakh despite its actual price being only Rs 3 lakh. This caused a stormy discussion at the last Cabinet meeting where Ajit Pawar objected to the inflated price. It was revealed that Sawant had already taken a 50 per cent commission, but the file regarding the purchase is now stuck," he alleged.

different politics behind curtains," Awhad alleged.

He rejected PM Narendra Modi's apology over the collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue in Sindhudurg district.

"Why did Modi raise the Veer Savarkar issue and demand an apology (for

those who insulted) Savarkar while speaking about the statue incident? The Savarkar issue was over before the Lok Sabha elections. It means he (Modi) did not want to apologise. Why bring up an issue nobody was discussing?" Awhad stated.

Skeletal remains of elderly couple, daughter found

Palghar: Police have recovered the skeletal remains of three persons - suspected to be an elderly couple and their daughter - from a house in a village in Palghar district, a senior official said on Saturday.

They were recovered from Nehroli village in Wada tehsil of the district on Friday, he said.

"Local residents complained of foul smell emanating from the house,

which was locked from inside, and alerted the police about it," senior inspector Datta Kindre of Wada police station said.

"The police personnel rushed to the house and broke open the door. They were shocked to find the skeletal remains of two women in the drawing room, while those of the man were inside in the bathroom. The bodies were completely decomposed with only skeletal



remains in place," he said.

These remains are sus-

pected to be those of a 70 year-old man, his 65-year-old wife and their daughter aged 35.

They were immediately sent to a government hospital for a post-mortem procedure, he added.

"How the three family members died is being ascertained and a probe has been launched," Kindre said.

A case under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections of murder,

concealing information and others has been registered against unidentified persons, the official said.

As per the preliminary information, the old couple and their differently-abled daughter resided there, while their two sons lived at Vasai in the district, the police said.

The recovery of the skeletal remains has created shock waves among the villagers.

-PTI

School boy dies while playing

Mumbai: An 8-year-old boy, Shivansh Jha, died at Nirmala English School in Kandivali East while playing on Friday. The police stated that the preliminary investigation found no foul play.

CCTV footage revealed that while he was playing hopscotch, he suddenly fell to the floor and became unconscious. The school staff rushed him to hospital.

Nod for radar at new site

Mumbai: The Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change accorded Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance to the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) for development of Dhakale island in Shahaj village to set up radar for the proposed Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA).

The land for setting up of the radar facility was given to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) by the CIDCO.

"The MoEF&CC has accorded CRZ clearance vide File no. 11/8/2024-IA.III dated April 25, 2024, for area development of Dhakale island including connectivity works and construction of the proposed Airport Surveillance Radar (ASR-1), a Critical Air Navigational & Surveillance Facility for operation of Navi Mumbai International Airport at Dhakale Island, Village Shahaj, CBD-Belapur as proposed by CIDCO."

Vehicles restricted on four roads



By Correspondent

Mumbai: The BMC has devised a plan to pedestrianise four key roads at Kala Ghoda drawing inspiration from Glasgow's Buchanan Street and London's Carnaby Street.

The proposed initiative will restrict vehicular access to internal streets from 7 pm to 12 pm on weekends, thereby enabling pedestrians to freely navigate the area. The four roads are Forbes Street, Saibaba Road, Rutherford Street, and B Bharucha Road.

The pedestrianisation of the selected streets is a deliberate strategy, driven by their concentration of gas-

tronomical, cultural, fashionable, and artistic activities. The Kala Ghoda Association has ratified the initiative, and the pilot project will launch on a trial basis from the first week of September.

This initiative is an integral component of a broader scheme to rejuvenate the art precinct, which encompasses a comprehensive beautification project slated to commence in October.

Some local residents, entrepreneurs and office workers situated within the vicinity have articulated reservations regarding the proposed pedestrianisation plan.

Elderly man assaulted inside train

Mumbai: An elderly man was allegedly assaulted by his co-passengers in an express train near Igatpuri in Maharashtra's Nashik district on suspicion that he was carrying beef, the Government Railway Police (GRP) said on Saturday.

The GRP has initiated a probe after a video of the alleged incident, which took place earlier this week, surfaced on social media, an official said.

The video shows a dozen people assaulting a man and verbally abusing him inside a train.

According to the GRP, the victim, Haji Ashraf Munyar, a resident of Jalgaon district, was travelling to his daughter's house in Kalyan when he was allegedly beaten up by his co-passengers near Igatpuri on suspicion that he was carrying beef.

"We have taken cognisance of the video and identified the victim. Some of the people involved in the attack have also been identified, and a probe is on," the official said, adding that no case has been registered so far.

-PTI



Devotees gather during a religious procession of 'Chinchpokli Cha Chintamani' as the idol of Lord Ganesha is carried to a pandal ahead of the 'Ganesh Chaturthi' festival, in Mumbai on Saturday.

Pic: Bhushan Koyande

Cockroach in coffee, hotel staff booked

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Malad Police have registered an FIR against the manager, a waiter, and other individuals associated with a hotel for allegedly adulterating food or drink intended for sale.

The incident occurred on Friday when a cockroach was found in a customer's cold coffee. The customer, Pratik Rawat, 25, filed a complaint with the police station, leading to the registration of the FIR.

On Friday, Rawat and a

friend visited the hotel. They ordered two cold coffees. Both found the coffee bitter, so they asked the waiter to add sugar. The waiter took the glasses to the bar counter, added sugar, and served the coffee again to Rawat

and his friend.

While drinking the cold coffee through a straw, Rawat felt something unusual in the glass as he was about to finish it. He checked and discovered

a cockroach in the glass. Rawat immediately took a photo of the glass, called the waiter, and showed him the cockroach.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Ajit Pawar, Deputy Chief Minister

"I had decided at the start of the 'Jansanman Yatra' that I don't want to criticise or comment against anyone. It doesn't matter to me if someone speaks against me. I believe in my work and work for the people."

'Emergency' stuck with board

Mumbai: Actor-politician Kangana Ranaut on Friday said her film "Emergency" is still stuck with the censor board contrary to rumours that it has been cleared for release.

Ranaut, the BJP MP from Himachal Pradesh's Mandi, stars in the role of former prime minister Indira Gandhi in the film that is scheduled for release on September 6.

In a video message posted on X, the actor claimed that she and the members of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) have been receiving threats.

She said she is under pressure to not show the assassination of the former prime minister by her security guards.

"There are rumours that our film 'Emergency' has got a censor certificate. It is not true. In fact, our film was cleared



earlier but its certification has been stopped because of several threats," Ranaut said.

"People of the censor board are also getting a lot of threats. There is pressure on us to not show the assassination of Mrs Gandhi, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and the Punjab riots. I don't know what we will show then, that there is a blackout in the film? This is unbelievable time for me and I am very sorry for this state of things in this country," she added.

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to general public that my client DHIREN DASHRATH PARMAR & DASHRATH DAYABHAI PARMAR are joint owners of Flat No. H/204, 2nd Floor, PAVITRA DHAM BLDG NO.9 to 16, Phase 2 CHS, Ltd., Near Tivari Railway Fatak, Naigaon (East), Tal. Vasai, Dist. Palghar. They are members of the said society DASHRATH DAYABHAI PARMAR died on dtd. 22/06/2020. He left behind him BHARATI DASHRATH PARMAR as wife and DHIREN DASHRATH PARMAR & ARUNA JIGAR ZAVERI alias ARUNA DASHRATH PARMAR as children. The son DHIREN DASHRATH PARMAR has applied to the society for membership and transfer of shares of late DASHRATH DAYABHAI PARMAR in his name. So, anyone having any objection to admitted DHIREN DASHRATH PARMAR as a member of the society then pl. write to the above mentioned society or to the undersigned within 7 day from the publication of this notice, failing which the society will be informed accordingly to admit DHIREN DASHRATH PARMAR as member of the society which please be noted.

JOHN M. RODRICKS
ADVOCATE
Office No. 2, First Floor,
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the Public at large that my client Mr. SANTOSH SUBHASH NAGWEKAR, his Owner of the Flat No. A/208, on the Second Floor, area admeasuring Sq. feet, in Building known as PANNA BHUVAN CO. OP. HSG. Ltd, Virar-(E). Constructed on N.A Land bearing Survey No. 8A, Hiss No. 4, 5, 6 AND 7, lying being and Situate at Village VIRAR, Tal-Vasai, Dist-Palghar., society Issue the Share Certificate No.25, Holding 5 Share of face value 50/- each the Share From No.116 to 120 has been lost/ Misplaced by my client on Travelling form Railway Station to Home. All Persons are hereby informed not to deal or carry out any transaction with anyone on the basis of the said missing document. If anyone has already carried out or being carried out kindly inform the undersigned in writing to the Office No. 102, Kunti Sadan, Veer Savarkar Marg, Virar-(E), Tal-Vasai, Dist-Palghar, with in 14 days from the Publication of this notice.

Sd/-
Adv. Ranjan Hasha Patil

Ajit's assertion to grow out of uncle's shadow

By Abhijit Mulye

Mumbai: Ajit Pawar has started asserting his position within the MahaYuti, the three-party ruling alliance. At least that is what it appears looking at some of the developments over the past week.

Pawar is currently crisscrossing Maharashtra, huddling up with local party leaders in various assembly constituencies, meeting people, addressing rallies and road shows in order to give a much necessary boost to his grass root party workers after the party's debacle in Lok Sabha elections where only one of his candidates could win the elections.

On Saturday, when asked about the political developments around him and provocations from leaders in alliance parties, he said his policy is to keep on working hard and ignore everything else. "I'm a man of work. I brought in a budget that would benefit the people," Pawar added.



The NCP ran a social media campaign praising Ajit Pawar for his public apology.

However, that doesn't mean he is docile and meekly accepting whatever is coming his way. When the state government appeared confused as to what needs to be done after the Chhatrapati Shivaji Statue at Malvan collapsed on Monday, it was Ajit Pawar

who gave a definite direction to the government by tendering a public apology for the incident. He also ordered party workers to hold silent demonstrations, visited the site of the statue himself and asserted the CM's announcements that no one found guilty should

be spared and a new grand memorial would be built very soon. In doing so he managed a clever balance between drawing a distinctly separate line of the pasty, making the government follow him and also being seen with the government.

The task is not easy. Especially when one looks at him as a leader of a party with the poorest performance in the alliance during Lok Sabha election. Also, his party is the junior-most partner in the alliance as BJP and Shiv Sena (Shinde) faction had been in government for more than a year before he joined in and they have more numbers in the assembly. Yet, he is trying to have an almost equal share within the alliance, at least as much as what Shiv Sena under CM Shinde gets. Hence, the sudden assertion from Ajit Pawar over the past week can be seen as a pre-seat-sharing-talks maneuver.

However, some of the political analysts feel this is

something different. NCP (SP) leader Rohit Pawar, while giving a reason for the sudden assertion of Ajit Pawar earlier this week, said that the BJP's grand plan for the Maharashtra assembly elections is to have a third front to cut the opposition votes. He also said that Ajit Pawar and Raj Thackeray have been given the responsibility to build this 'third front' and both have started acting on the plan.

Another set of analysts too feel that Pawar's assertion is aimed at clinching more seats during seat sharing talks. But, they don't think that he would leave the alliance. They say that the state BJP has already fixed a target of winning 125 seats by contesting around 145 seats, leaving the rest to Shinde and Pawar.

Ajit Pawar will have to show that he is truly out of the shadow of his uncle Sharad Pawar and he certainly is working hard towards the goal.



A crane toppled at the construction site of Mumbai Metro line 3, at Girgaon in Mumbai on Saturday.

Pic- PTI

MVA's proposed protest politically motivated: BJP

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The BJP has questioned the relevance of the proposed agitation by the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) over the collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue even after Prime Minister Narendra Modi apologising for the incident.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, state BJP chief

spokesperson Keshav Upadhye alleged the agitation planned by MVA partners on Sunday is politically motivated with an eye on upcoming Assembly elections.

He said the opposition's love for the founder of the Maratha empire was superficial.

The Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (SP), and Congress have called for "jode maro" (hit with footwear) protests against the Mayahuti

government of Shiv Sena, BJP, and NCP.

Upadhye asked MVA whether they will stage similar protests for the past "apologies" by Jawaharlal Nehru over his remarks on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and by Sonia Gandhi over the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

"Rahul Gandhi had also apologised for his comments on the Rafale episode. Will they (MVA)

stage a similar protest for these apologies?" Upadhye questioned.

PM Modi apologised to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and those hurt by the collapse of the warrior king's statue in Sindhurdurg district amid backlash by the opposition. "Is the PM's apology not enough?" the BJP chief spokesperson asked.

Upadhye said the BJP's Youth Wing would stage agitations

across Maharashtra on Sunday near the statues of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj to "expose" the opposition.

Alleging that the MVA's planned protest is politically motivated in view of the upcoming assembly elections, Upadhye alleged the previous government (led by Congress) did nothing to preserve the forts of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

MP wants prayer played at railway stations

Thane: Naresh Mhaske, Shiv Sena MP from Thane, has requested the railway ministry to play the 'Ganesh Pancharatnam' prayer at all railway stations in the country during the coming Ganesh festival.

In a letter to railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw ahead of the festival slated to

start from September 7, Mhaske said the prayer, composed by 8th century philosopher Adi Shankaracharya, should be broadcast at railway stations. Sung by playback singer Anuradha Paudwal, it will enrich the travel experience and promoting India's cultural heritage, said the letter.



Dance Mumbai Dance : Child Rights and You – CRY, Shiamak Davar's Victory Arts Foundation and Dancing Cop Amol Kamble had Mumbai dancing to a flash mob performed to throw light on the issue of higher education amongst girls on Saturday evening.

Pic: Bhusan Koyande

19-year-old thrashed by mob

Thane: A 19-year-old man has been arrested in Kalamoli area of Navi Mumbai for allegedly outraging the modesty of a teenage girl, police said on Saturday.

A video of a mob thrashing the accused following the incident on Friday night went viral.

The accused allegedly molested a 15-year-old girl in Kalamoli sector 2, said a police official. As the girl shouted for help, some people caught hold of him and a mob thrashed him before handing him over to police. A First Information Report was registered against the accused under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita as well as Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

-PTI

Snag hits local train services on harbour line

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Local train services on the Harbour line of the Central Railway in Mumbai were disrupted on Saturday morning due to a snag in overhead equipment between Mankhurd and Vashi railway stations, causing inconvenience to commuters in the rush hours, officials said.

The services on the route remained completely suspended for at least two hours after the overhead equipment on the Down (Vashi-bound) line broke around 7.30 am and was fixed by 9.30 am, a Central Railway spokesperson said.

As a result, trains are running late by more than half an hour after the re-



sumption of services, commuters said.

Vashi is a railway station in Navi Mumbai, while Mankhurd is in Mumbai. A railway bridge built on a creek between these two stations links Mumbai with its satellite city Navi Mumbai. "We regret to inform you that there is disruption in services due to a broken Overhead Equipment (OHE) between Mankhurd and Vashi on the Harbour Line," Rajnish Goyal, divisional railway manager of Central Railway's Mumbai division said on social media platform X.

According to the spokesperson, tower wagons used for repairing overhead wire and equipment were sent to the spot and the issue was fixed by 9.30 am.

During the affected time, passengers were allowed to travel via the Trans-Harbour line using the same tickets and passes, Goyal said. Harbour line provides suburban railway connectivity to Navi Mumbai along with the Western and Eastern suburbs of Mumbai from south Mumbai. Lakhs of passengers use the suburban services on this route on a daily basis.

-PTI

Cops plant drugs on man, suspended

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Four police personnel were suspended here on Saturday after CCTV footage purportedly showing them planting drugs on a man during a raid went viral, a senior official said.

Those suspended included

a police sub-inspector and three constables, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone XI) Rajtilak Roshan.

The policemen, attached to the Anti-Terror Cell of the Khar police station, raided an open plot of land in Kalina area of the city on Friday evening and de-

tained a man called Daniel, sources said. But CCTV footage of the incident purportedly showed one of the policemen slipping something into the suspect's hip pocket.

Speaking to a local news channel, Daniel claimed that the policemen first threatened to frame him.

Police find actor's phone

Mumbai: The city police managed to find a lost mobile phone of actor Preeti Jhangiani within two hours. The Jhangiani expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the police for their swift action.

College officer held for taking bribe

Mumbai: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has arrested an administrative officer of a city-based college for allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 50,000 from a man for his daughter's admission to an academic course, an official said here on Saturday.

The accused was identi-

fied as Ravindranath Singh (56), working in Ramniranjn Jhunjhunwala College of Arts, Science and Commerce located in Ghatkopar, he said.

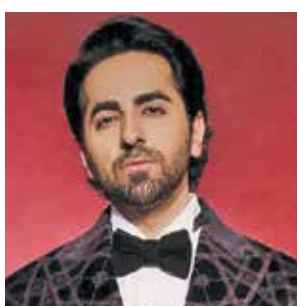
The complainant's daughter was seeking an admission in Class 11 of commerce stream at the college. But her name did

not figure in the list of shortlisted students. Therefore, the girl and her father went to the college and met Singh requesting him to help them in the process, the ACB official said.

The victim later also met the local legislator, who gave a recommendation letter addressed to the college

to help him in securing admission for his daughter, he added. When the victim met Singh again, he initially demanded Rs 1.50 lakh from him, but later reduced the amount to Rs 50,000. The complainant then approached the anti-graft agency, which verified his complaint.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Ayushmann Khurrana, Actor

"I am not an activist. I am an actor and an artiste. Whatever I have to say, I say through my poetry, music or films. The expectation of people that an actor or an artist should always stand up and voice his or her opinion is very naive because more than IQ, we have EQ (emotional quotient)."

Physical punishment reduced in slums

Mumbai: Negative forms of disciplinary practices by parents in terms of physical punishment has reduced from 77 per cent to 58 per cent in the slums of Dharavi, Govandi and Mankhurd. It is revealed in the latest prevention of violence against children survey report by Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action (SNEHA). The non-profit organisation released three reports on maternal and child health, adolescent

health as well as children's safety.

SNEHA released its program endline reports concerning their findings related to key social issues. This includes issues such as maternal and child health, adolescent health and wellbeing as well as ensuring safety and protection among children. These reports, titled EHSAS (Empowerment, Health & Sexuality of Adolescents) Endline Report, PVC (Prevention of Violence

against Children) Endline Survey Report and Maternal & Child Health intervention evaluation Survey.

The PVC Enline Survey Report (2022-2024) revealed that the negative forms of disciplinary practices by parents in terms of physical punishment such as hitting on hands, legs and arms have reduced from 77 per cent to 58 per cent. Communication between parents and child in terms of understanding worries



and concerns of children improved from 62 per cent to 77 per cent, while psychological aggression in

terms of yelling or shouting remained the same at 88 per cent during the project cycle.

Slowing of GDP growth due to lower govt spending: RBI Gov

Bhubaneswar: The slowing of India's economic growth to a 15-month low of 6.7 per cent in the April-June quarter was due to "lower" government spending in the wake of the enforcement of the model code of conduct for the recent Lok Sabha polls, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said here on Saturday.

The RBI had projected a growth rate of 7.1 per cent for the April-June quarter of this fiscal.

"The Reserve Bank projected a growth rate of 7.1 per cent for the first quarter. However, the first advance estimation data released by the National Statistical Office showed the growth rate at 6.7 per cent," Das told reporters here.

The components and main drivers responsible for the GDP growth like consumption, investment, manufacturing, services and



construction have registered a growth of more than 7 per cent, he said.

Only two aspects have pulled the growth rate slightly down. Those are—government (both central and state) expenditure and agriculture, the RBI governor pointed out.

He said the government expenditure was low during the first quarter perhaps due to elections (April to

June) and operation of model code of conduct by the Election Commission.

"We would expect the government expenditure to pick up in coming quarters and provide the required support to growth," Das said.

Similarly, the agriculture sector has recorded a minimal growth rate of around 2 per cent in the April to June quarter. However, the

monsoon was very good and spread all over India except a few areas. So, everyone is optimistic and positive about the agriculture sector, he noted.

"Under these circumstances, we have reasonably confident expectations that the annual growth rate of 7.2 per cent projected by the RBI will be materialized in coming quarters," the governor asserted. -PTI

Expect above normal rainfall in Sept

New Delhi: After a wetter-than-normal August, India is likely to experience above normal rainfall in September, with heavy to very heavy precipitation expected in northwest India and the surrounding areas.

Above normal rainfall is likely over most parts of India, except for some areas in extreme northwest India, many parts of the southern peninsula, northern Bihar, and northeastern Uttar Pradesh, as well as most of northeast India, where below normal rainfall is expected, the IMD said.

Addressing a virtual press conference, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said that the country is expected to receive above normal rainfall in September, at 109 per cent of the long-period average of 167.9 mm. -PTI

Tie up for development of hydrogen air taxi

New Delhi: Darsh Dronobotics Systems on Saturday announced its collaboration with Canada-based Trouvé Innovation Hub Inc. for the development of hydrogen-based five-seater air taxi.

The partnership also aims at combating climate change and reducing carbon emissions in the mobility and aviation sector, a company statement said.

Supporting India's net zero goals and country's ambition to be a pioneer in the air taxi revolution by 2025, Vjaitra Air Mobility, a division of Darsh Dronobotics Systems Pvt Ltd, has announced its strategic partnership with Trouvé Innovation Hub Inc, the statement said.

As part of this partnership, Trouvé Innovation Hub Inc. will play a pivotal role in supporting Darsh Dronobotics Systems in raising necessary funds to build a full-scale prototype

of the hydrogen air taxi.

The project is set to redefine the future of urban transportation, offering an eco-friendly and efficient alternative to traditional modes of travel, it said.

Ratandeep Tripathi, CEO of Vjaitra Air Mobility, said, "Their support in fundraising and innovation will be instrumental in bringing our hydrogen-based air taxi to life, aligning with our commitment to sustainable and cutting-edge transportation solutions."

These air taxis promise quieter flights, zero emissions, and reduced operating costs as compared to conventional aircraft, it noted.

The air taxis will be capable of covering up to 600 kilometres, enabling users to travel from Delhi-NCR to Lucknow and other state capitals as well as other metropolitan city airports.

Trouvé Innovation Hub Inc. will assist in securing the required funding for the project, leveraging their extensive network of private investors, government funding, and institutional support. This will enable Darsh Dronobotics Systems to accelerate the development and bring the hydrogen air taxi closer to commercialisation.

The partnership will combine Vjaitra Air Mobility's expertise in drone and aviation technology with Trouvé Innovation Hub's strengths in innovation and investment, creating a powerful synergy that will drive the project forward.

Faruk Rama, CEO of Trouvé Innovation Hub Inc., said, "We are confident that together, we can achieve new heights in developing eco-friendly transportation technologies that will benefit cities and communities worldwide."

Four Indian organisations for AI-driven climate solutions

New Delhi: Four India-based organisations have been selected among 14 recipients across the Asia Pacific region for grants under the APAC Sustainability Seed Fund 2.0, supported by a USD 5-million grant from Google.org, the tech giant's philanthropic arm.

The fund, managed by Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN), aims to foster technology- and AI-driven solutions addressing critical environmental and social challenges.



The Indian recipients include INREM Foundation, CEPT Research and Development Foundation (CRDF), Institute for Financial Management and Research (WELL Labs), and Gujarat Mahila Housing Sewa Trust (MHT), Google.org said in a statement. INREM Foundation will

develop AI-enabled open digital solutions for community access to water contamination data. CRDF plans to use machine learning and satellite imagery to protect lakes and their carbon sink function. WELL Labs will develop advanced models for village-level water security insights, while MHT will create an AI-powered model to identify urban heat islands and suggest community-centric solutions, the statement added.

-PTI

Vaidya steps down as IOC Chairman

New Delhi: S.M. Vaidya on Saturday stepped down as Chairman of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) at the conclusion of his tenure. "A chemical engineer with over 37 years of experience, Vaidya has been a pivotal force in steering IndianOil to unprecedented heights," the company said in a statement.

Since taking over the reins in July 2020, Vaidya led IOC through a period of extraordinary growth. Under his leadership, the company's net profit surged from Rs 1,313 crore in FY20 to an all-time high of Rs 39,619 crore in FY24. -PTI

India's iron ore production rises 9 pc

New Delhi: The country's iron ore production rose by 8.9 per cent to 98 million tonnes (MT) in the first four months of the ongoing fiscal, the government said on Friday.

The country's iron ore output was 90 MT in the April-July period of the previous fiscal, according to the provisional data.

The production of limestone also rose marginally by 0.7 per cent to 150 MT in the April-July period from 149 MT in the year-ago period, the mines ministry said in a statement.

Production of manganese

ore rose by 18.2 per cent to 1.3 MT in April-July period of FY25 as compared to 1.1 MT in the corresponding period of previous financial year.

Continued growth in production of iron ore and limestone in the current financial year reflects the robust demand conditions in the user industries viz, steel and cement, the statement said.

India is the second largest producer of aluminium, third largest lime producer and fourth largest iron ore producer in the world.

"In the non-ferrous metal sector, primary aluminium production in FY 2024-25



(April-July) posted a growth of 1.3 per cent over the corresponding period last year, increasing to 13.95 lakh tonnes (LT) in FY 2024-25 (April-July) from 13.77 LT in FY2023-24 (April-July)," it said. Coupled with growth in

aluminium, these growth trends point towards continued strong economic activity in user sectors such as energy, infrastructure, construction, automotive and machinery, the ministry said. -PTI



Union Minister of State for Railways V. Somanna during the flagging-off ceremony of the Vande Bharat Express train connecting Madurai with Bengaluru in Madurai on Saturday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually flagged off the train. Pic- PTI

Hero MotoCorp elevates Sanjay Bhan

Mumbai: Hero MotoCorp has elevated its Chief Business Officer for global business, Sanjay Bhan to the role of Executive Vice President with effect from September 1.

Bhan, in his expanded capacity, will also lead the Global Product Planning (GPP) portfolio along with the newly established Global Market Insights function, Hero MotoCorp said in a regulatory filing on Friday.

"This new function will be our strategic engine, enabling us anticipate customer and market trends, seize opportunities ahead of time, and further solidify our position as a thought leader in the industry," CEO Niranjan Gupta said. Bhan, however, will con-

tinue to report to the CEO for Global Business and GPP. Additionally, he will report directly to the Executive Chairman as the head of the Global Market Insights function while also leading the sports vertical.

A veteran at Hero MotoCorp, Bhan joined the company in 1991 and has been instrumental in the launch of several two-wheeler models during the period, the company said.

In his current role as Head of Global Business, Sanjay has steered the company's expansion into Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America, HeroMoto said adding that it is now set to enter new geographies in Europe and Brazil. -PTI

Property registration set to rise in Mumbai

Mumbai: Registration of properties in Mumbai municipal region is likely to rise 7 per cent annually in August to around 11,650 units on strong demand, according to Knight Frank India.

Citing Maharashtra government data, real estate consultant Knight Frank India said that Mumbai city (area under BMC jurisdiction) has recorded 11,631 property registrations so far in the month of August. The data is till 8.15 pm on Saturday, August 31 and the number is likely to increase slightly to around 11,650 units.

In August 2023, the Mumbai city saw registration of 10,902 properties. The data pertains to registration of properties transacted in both primary (first sale) and secondary (resale) markets.

The state government is expected to earn more than Rs 1,050 crore from the registration of these properties.

Govt plans FMD-free zones in eight states

New Delhi: The government plans to establish Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)-free zones in eight states to boost exports of animal products, according to a senior government official.

Alka Upadhyaya, Secretary in the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, announced the initiative at the workshop that concluded on August 30 on the issue of animal infectious disease prioritisation, organised by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in collaboration with the department.

"We've made significant progress in tackling four critical diseases: FMD, Peste des Petits Ruminants, Brucellosis, and Classical Swine Fever under the National Control Programme," Upadhyaya said. -PTI

The government "plans to establish FMD-free zones in eight states, where advanced vaccination efforts are underway", she said.

This strategic move is expected to pave the way for expanded export opportunities for Indian animal products, enhancing the country's global market presence, she added.

The three-day workshop resulted in a prioritized list of the top 20 animal infectious diseases, based on factors including severity, transmissibility, and national importance.

An action plan was developed focusing on coordination, communication, monitoring and surveillance, prevention and control, therapeutics, and socio-economic and contingency planning. -PTI

Jio 4G phone offer may make 2G-mukt India

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Reliance Industries offering entry level 4G phones at prices lower than 2G phones is set to make 2G-mukt India, said a report by Nuvama – an Indian wealth management company.

Reliance's Jio, the world's largest mobile data company currently has over 490 million customers and is uniquely positioned to convert over 200 million 2G users to 4G, the report said, adding that nearly all smartphones over Rs 8,000 sold in India are 5G ready.

While India is now the world's largest data market, Jio constitutes 8 per cent of total global markets and the current data prices in India are one-fourth of the global average and one-tenth of that in developed countries, the report said.

Last financial year, Reliance completed the pan-India rollout of 5G and 85 percent of the 5G mobile handset operat-



ing in India belong to Jio, with over 130 million customers having embraced 5G.

In October 2023, Reliance had launched its Jio Airfiber – its 5G-based home broadband service and within six months acquired 1 million customers and further by leveraging its deep-tech capabilities and continuously optimising every process it acquired the next 1 million customers in next 100 days.

It is now targeting 1 million home customers every 30 days with an overall target of 100 million, the Nuvama report

said. JioAI Cloud, entailing 100GB free cloud storage and incremental storage at affordable pricing, would be launched during the forthcoming Diwali festival.

Among other things, it will also launch the Jio PhoneCall AI to record, transcribe, translate, and summarize the audio and also introduce the JioTV OS, its in-house operating system for the Jio set-up box with AI capabilities.

All this would lead to Jio doubling its revenue and operating profit in the next 3-4 years, the report said.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Hul Seila, Minister for Tourism, Cambodia

"We have launched Cambodia-India Tourism year for the first time this year to tap the Indian market which has potential, as the country's tourism is booming. We are witnessing a positive momentum and expect that there will be a lot more tourists from India. We expect to increase, maybe, 3-4 times in terms of the number at the moment that we have."

Hema Panel Report

Mohanlal says entire industry is answerable

He says the actors' association is targeted

Thiruvananthapuram: Top actor Mohanlal on Saturday broke his silence over the shocking revelations in the Justice Hema Committee report which has shaken the Malayalam film industry, and said the entire industry is answerable to the questions raised but the actors' association is targeted and blamed for everything.

He said Malayalam cinema is a huge industry where thousands of people work and the actors' association AMMA (Association of Malayalam Movie Artists) could not address every issue that cropped up there.

Cinema is part of the society and what happens everywhere else is happening in the industry also, the "Kireedam" actor told reporters here. It was for the first time that Mohanlal, who recently resigned as the president of AMMA, was addressing the media following the release of the Hema panel report which shed light on the alleged harassment and exploitation of women professionals in the Malayalam film industry.

Speaking on the sidelines of a programme, the actor said the executive panel of the Association headed by him resigned recently in the wake of "unnecessary allegations" being raised against it after the release of the report.

Justifying his alleged delayed response over the findings in the report, Mohanlal said he never ran away from his responsibilities but could not appear before the media in the past few days as he was away



from the state due to his personal and professional commitments.

He said he had been part of the film industry for the past 47 years and it was "painful" to answer the questions with regard to the unfortunate issues in the film industry.

He said as a movie professional, he had deposed before the Hema Committee twice and he had no knowledge about its content other than what has appeared on the media. However, he said he was unaware about the report's revelations on the alleged presence of a power group in the film industry.

"I am not part of any power group in Malayalam cinema and not aware of the existence of any such group. I have heard about it for the first time," the actor said.

The national award winning actor also justified the actions of AMMA, whose executive panel helmed by him was resigned recently. "AMMA is not an outfit with trade union nature. It was launched for the welfare of its

The Youth Congress' protest march to the office of Kollam legislator M Mukesh on Saturday demanding his resignation over the rape

YOUTH CONGRESS PROTEST IN KOLLAM

allegations against him, turned violent as protestors and police clashed with each other. The police resorted to lathicharge

A second case for a sexual offence has been registered against director Ranjith on a complaint by a male actor

MAN FILES CASE AGAINST RANJITH

in this district, police said on Saturday. An FIR under sections 377 (unnatural offence) of the IPC and section 66 E (punishment for

members....The entire film industry is answerable to the questions regarding the Hema panel," he further said.

There are several associations and outfits in the Malayalam cinema but AMMA is targeted and blamed for everything in view of the revelations in the report, he al-

against the agitators, many of whom were injured according to visuals shown on TV channels. Some police officers were also reportedly injured in the clash between them and the Youth Congress activists. The police resorted to lathi charge after the protestors tried to climb over the barricades and enter the MLA office. The protestors shouted slogans against the CPI(M) and Mukesh.

violation of privacy) of the Information Technology (IT) Act was lodged against the director on Friday night at the Kasaba police station, a senior police officer of the district said.

The complainant actor has alleged that the director called him to a hotel in Bengaluru in 2012, asked him to strip and took his nude photos.

leged. "It is not right to crucify an outfit alone for all these issues," Mohanlal said. Most of the questions were directed at the actors' Association and himself which resulted in the recent resignation of its executive panel, the top actor said.

- PTI



Kuki Students' Organisation members protest at Jantar Mantar against the alleged genocide campaign against the Kuki-Zo with a demand for urgent establishment of a Union Territory with a legislature for the Kuki-Zo, in New Delhi on Saturday.

Cases of crime against women

PM bats for speedy justice

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday underlined the need for swift justice in cases involving crime against women and said that it will give them greater assurance of their safety.

His remarks come against the backdrop of the rape and murder of a Kolkata doctor and sexual assault on two kindergarten girls in Maharashtra's Thane.

Modi also said the judiciary is considered a guardian of the Constitution, and that the Supreme Court and the judiciary have lived up to the responsibility.

Addressing the inaugural session of a national conference of the district judiciary in the presence of Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, Modi referred to the "burning issue" of atrocities against women and safety of children and said it was a matter of serious concern.

Noting that stringent provisions have been made in laws for safety of women, the prime minister referred to the fast track special court scheme launched in 2019. "The faster the verdict is delivered in cases of atrocities against women, the greater assurance half

of the population will have about their safety," he said. The district monitoring committees, comprising the district judge, the district magistrate and the superintendent of police, can play a key role, he said.

Pointing to the important role of the panel in co-ordinating between various aspects of the criminal justice system, Modi stressed on the need to make these committees more active.

The Kolkata incident has also become a flashpoint between the TMC government in West Bengal and the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre.



Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar along with other Congress leaders stage a protest against the central government over the sanction granted by Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot to investigate a housing scam in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Pic: PTI

PDP banks on Iltija to retain bastion

Srinagar: The PDP has banked on Iltija Mufti, the daughter of party chief Mehbooba Mufti and a third-generation member of the family, to retain its Srigufwara-Bijbehara Assembly seat, a PDP bastion since 1996.

The Srigufwara-Bijbehara Assembly seat, earlier

known as the Bijbehara constituency before the delimitation exercise of 2022, is going to polls in the first phase of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir on September 18.

This constituency in south Kashmir's Anantnag district has the least number of candidates -- just

three. The other two candidates in the fray are two former MLCs -- National Conference (NC) leader Bashir Ahmad Shah and BJP leader Sofi Mohammad Yousuf. If 37-year-old Iltija Mufti emerges victorious, it would strengthen the PDP's -- and the Mufti family's -- hold on this bastion that

they have made their own since 1996.

Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, who founded the PDP in the latter part of his long political career, started his electoral foray with a win from the Bijbehara seat in 1962 as candidate of the NC faction headed by Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq.

NIA conducts searches in Bihar

New Delhi: As part of a crackdown on the banned outfit CPI (Maoist), the NIA conducted searches at seven locations in two districts of Bihar and seized incriminating digital devices, documents and ammunition, an official statement said on Saturday.

Searches were conducted on Friday at five locations in Kaimur district and two in Rohtas district in the case connected with the arrest of two key CPI (Maoist) leaders, Vijay Kumar Arya and Umesh Chaudhary, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said. The duo were picked up from Rohtas in April 2022. Levy receipts, pamphlets and digital devices were seized from Arya at that time, according to the statement.

Three accused -- Anil Yadav alias Anil Vyas, Rajesh Kumar Gupta and Rupesh Kumar Singh -- are currently in judicial custody.

Digital devices including mobile phones, SIM cards, memory cards along with some incriminating documents and diaries and live ammunition were seized.

Indian Ocean co-founder Susmit Sen files complaint

New Delhi: Susmit Sen, co-founder of Indian Ocean, has filed a police complaint against former bandmates Rahul Ram and Amit Kilam over unpaid royalties, which the duo has dismissed as an arm-twisting tactic for "illegal and unwarranted demands".

Sen has filed the complaint along with Sunita Chakravarty, wife of Ashim Chakravarty, with whom he had formed the band in 1990. Ashim Chakravarty died in 2009 following complications from a cardiac arrest, while Sen left Indian Ocean in 2013 and started his own band called Susmit Sen Chronicles.

Kandisa Music Productions Pvt Ltd, the company that runs the Indian Ocean band, is also listed as an accused in the police complaint, which Sen lodged at Mukherjee Nagar police station in New Delhi on August 16. An FIR is yet to be registered in the case.

The charges, made under multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS), include criminal conspiracy, criminal breach of trust, cheating, misappropriation, falsification of accounts, fraud against the Registrar of Companies



(RoC) and authorities, among others.

"After forming the band, I was there with them for 23 and a half years... There was so much trust. And when it breaks, it's a very painful procedure. It is quite heartbreaking when your close friends, partners and colleagues behave like this," Sen told PTI. Sen claimed that he has not received royalties or payments from the Indian Ocean since 2020, and Sunita Chakravarty has not been paid since 2021. The complainants have alleged that they have been denied royalty payments amounting to over Rs 50 lakh each, based on calculations made two years ago.

After Sen's complaint became public, Ram and Kilam released a statement on Saturday and said they are sur-

prised at the police case as the matter is already a pending matter in the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

"We are saddened to learn from the media that a police complaint has been filed against us by Mr Susmit Sen (Former member of Indian Ocean) and Ms Sunita Chakravarty (Spouse of former Indian Ocean member Ashim Chakravarty). We have not seen a copy of the complaint as yet and thus cannot address it on its merits," they said. Sen said Ram and Kilam have not yet reached out to him to resolve the matter. "There is another case that we filed in NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) in March 2023. At that point of time, the court had also asked them to resolve this matter amicably within themselves. But they did not reach out," Sen said.

He claimed the band members told them during the COVID-19 pandemic that they were not able to pay the royalties due to lack of work. Ram and Kilam have questioned the timing of the criminal complaint and called it an attempt to pressure them into settling the pending civil dispute.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Sanjiv Khanna, Justice, Supreme Court

"Today, the entire judiciary is faced with the problem of pendency and backlog of cases. Thus, efficient functioning of the district judiciary is crucial to mitigating these challenges. To look at the brighter side, the data reveals that the disposal rates in the district courts have gone up considerably since 2018."

Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition

Nine-year-old named runner-up

New Delhi: A chance encounter with two peahens on a morning stroll through the forests of Keoladeo National Park in Bharatpur has put nine-year-old Shreyovi Mehta in the annals of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year award.

The 60th edition of the prestigious award by Natural History Museum (NHM) has named Mehta

runner-up in the '10 Years and Under' category.

Titled "In the Spotlight", Mehta's photo showed a pair of peahens, silhouetted under a canopy of trees at Keoladeo National Park in Bharatpur, India.

Mehta's image was one of the nearly 60,000 photographs by participants of all ages and experience levels from 117 countries and territories.

Talking about receiving the recognition, Mehta said she wants to continue practising wildlife photography.

"I am glad that my image of our national bird has been given recognition by Natural History Museum at the biggest stage of wildlife photography. I will continue to practice so that one day even our national animal - the tiger gets the

same recognition," Mehta told PTI.

The class five student from Faridabad will receive a medal at an award ceremony at the Natural History Museum in London on October 8.

"In this selection you see species diversity, a range of behavior and conservation issues. These images represent the evolution of the competition through the

years, from pure natural history to photography that fully embraces representation of the natural world - the beauty and the challenges," Kathy Moran, chair of the judging panel, said in a statement.

The Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition will open at the NHM on October 11 and will run till June 29, 2025.

-PTI

Web series on Project Cheetah approved

By Gaurav Saini

New Delhi: The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has approved a proposal for the filming of a four-part web series on Project Cheetah to "showcase the efforts of the country to the world", official records show.

It is learned that the filming is likely to start in September, around the second anniversary of Project Cheetah on September 17.

In a letter to the chief wildlife warden of Madhya Pradesh on July 21, Vaibhav Chandra Mathur, Deputy Inspector General of the NTCA, wrote that the eighth technical committee of the authority accorded approval to the proposal for a web series on the world's first inter-continental translocation of a large carnivore -- Project Cheetah.

"In this regard, it is requested to kindly facilitate M/s Shen Films and Planting Productions to undertake and complete filming at the Kuno National Park and the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary as per standard terms and conditions, so that efforts of the country can be showcased to the world," the letter read.

The state's chief wildlife warden approved the proposal on August 6.

"It is requested to grant permission to M/s Shen Films and Planting Produc-



tions for filming as per the terms and conditions and also ensure necessary support to the crew members during the documentation of Project Cheetah. Please also ensure that during the filming of cheetahs, the minimum number of crew members carry out their work under the supervision of officials/veterinarians in the bomas," Subharanjan Sen, the then CWLW of the state, said in a letter to the additional principal chief conservator of forests, Shivpuri, and the divisional forest officer, Mandsaur.

According to the proposal, seen by PTI, the web series will be aired on Discovery Network in 170 countries in different languages.

The film aims to highlight

the conceptualisation of Project Cheetah, the struggles faced in bringing the animal back to India, the status of the cheetahs and the expectations for the future.

The goal is to make people "understand the nuances of this mammoth project", the proposal said.

The creators, who have previously collaborated with the NTCA and the Wildlife Institute of India, have also approached 'Madhya Pradesh Tourism' and the MP Tiger Foundation for assistance in securing funding for the project's execution.

"Although financial assistance isn't possible, we will give full support for the filming of the web series as directed," an official said, requesting anonymity.

Bhopal-based wildlife activist Ajay Dubey questioned the rush to film the "documentary", saying that the project faces "several challenges that should be addressed first".

He also questioned the process for granting permission to film the web series, noting that records indicate the Cheetah Project Steering Committee -- formed in May last year to monitor and review the progress of the project and advise the MP forest department and the NTCA on its execution -- "never discussed the issue".

Twenty cheetahs have been brought to India from Africa so far -- eight from Namibia in September 2022 and 12 from South Africa in February 2023. -PTI

GREEN MARSHAL

Innovation that helps in maintaining environment



By
Dr. Pradnya Rao



In the heart of what is now known as Nano Cellulose Valley, a groundbreaking development is taking shape that promises to revolutionize the packaging industry. I successfully led the team at the University of Maine, United States, and addressed one of the industry's most critical challenges: achieving sustainability through biopolymers while significantly reducing costs.

The persistent problem of plastic waste has long been a driving force behind the search for eco-friendly alternatives. Biopolymers such as starch, cellulose nanofibers (CNF), polylactic acid, and many more have emerged as potential solutions. Among these, CNF stands out due to its sustainable and natural derivation. However, its commercial use has been hindered by high water content and prolonged drying times, making it less viable for widespread application.

Transporting CNF slurry, with such a low concentration of solid content, is not only inefficient but also costly, as the bulk of the weight being moved is water. Additionally, handling and processing these dilute slurries require substantial energy and infrastructure, further increasing the costs. Efficient water removal of CNF slurry is therefore crucial. By reducing the water content, the volume and weight of the

CNF material are significantly decreased, making transportation and handling more economical and environmentally friendly. This process also facilitates easier incorporation of CNF into various industrial applications, as less water needs to be removed during the final stages of production.

This pioneering research introduces a game-changing solution. The invention of "Electrostatic Contact Dewatering technique". This innovative technique utilizes the electrostatic attraction between negatively charged CNF and positively charged precipitated calcium carbonate particles. By making this composite, the dewatering process accelerates fivefold, significantly reducing drying time and enhancing the cost-efficiency of CNF films.

The implications of this breakthrough are far-reaching. With high solids slurries of CNF now producible more efficiently, various industries can incorporate CNF-composites into their products. Potential applications span coatings, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, biomedical fields, electronics, and, notably, packaging.

The research, detailed in the paper "Influence of Electrostatic Interac-

tions on the Dewatering and Mechanical Properties of Cellulose Nanofiber/Precipitated Calcium Carbonate Composite Films," published in the Cellulose Journal, reveals that these sustainable composite materials also exhibit exceptional strength. The strength of these films surpasses that of polypropylene, a commonly used plastic, making this composite a revolutionary development for packaging and other industries. This exceptional and extraordinary research was also presented as an invited talk at the International Conference on Nanotechnology for Renewable Materials in Helsinki, Finland. The research represents a significant leap forward in our quest for a greener, more sustainable future.

As industries strive to reduce their environmental footprint, the advancements provide a beacon of hope. By harnessing the power of natural materials and innovative processes, the path toward sustainable and cost-effective biobased packaging is clearer than ever. The future of packaging, and indeed many other sectors, looks bright with nanocellulose leading the charge.

(The writer is an environmental expert. Views personal)



People travel using a boat across the swollen Ganga river, at Bind Tola area in Patna district on Saturday.

Pic-PTI

Poba Reserve Forest to become wildlife sanctuary

Guwahati: The Poba Reserve Forest, a rainforest located in the northeastern part of Assam, will soon be notified as a wildlife sanctuary, state Environment and Forest Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said.

The proposed Poba Wildlife Sanctuary will encompass an area of 257.29 sq km, including the Poba Reserve Forest, Kabu Chapri Proposed Reserve Forest and the surrounding riverine areas, he said.

Making the announcement on Friday, the minister said it is a testament of the government's commitment for conservation and sustainable development of the state's natural resources and biodiversity.

Known for its rich wildlife, Poba Reserve Forest serves as an important migratory route for various animals, particularly elephants, as it connects the D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary, Kabu Chapri Proposed Reserve Forest and Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, an official state-



ment said.

This corridor is the second significant elephant migration route from the north to the south bank of the Brahmaputra river, the other being the Panpur-Kaziranga route.

Herds of approximately 70-80 elephants migrate across the river at various times, while male elephants utilise these routes almost throughout the year.

Poba Reserve Forest is home to various arboreal species, including the slow

loris and capped langur. Among the most common mammal species is the wild boar.

The forest is also a habitat for about 45 species of birds and reptiles, and the confluence of Siang and Lohit rivers supports a diverse range of fish species.

Moreover, the forest is renowned for its variety of orchids, making it an attractive destination for nature enthusiasts and researchers alike, the statement added.

-PTI

Ladakh to hold Climate Cup

Srinagar: Touted as one of the world's lowest carbon footprint football tournaments, administrative bodies in Ladakh have come together to organise the second edition of the Climate Cup, with

matches to be played on grounds at 11,000 feet above sea level. Ladakh Football Association general secretary Tsering Angmo said the tournament has become a marquee event of the Union

Territory's administration and the Ladakh autonomous Hill Development Council to create awareness on climate change. "At 11,000 feet above sea level, six teams will gather for a week in September to

compete in Ladakh's Climate Cup," Angmo said.

"The Climate Cup is one of the world's lowest carbon footprint football tournaments where there is 'zero plastic,' she said and added

that battery-operated buses are used for team transportation. Refreshments made from local fruits are given to players to encourage the local "green ecosystem", she said.

Seismic echoes reveal a mysterious 'donut' inside Earth's core

By Hrvoje Tkalčić

Canberra: About 2,890 kilometres beneath our feet lies a gigantic ball of liquid metal: our planet's core. Scientists like me use the seismic waves created by earthquakes as a kind of ultrasound to "see" the shape and structure of the core.

Using a new way of studying these waves, my colleague Xiaolong Ma and I have made a surprising discovery: there is a large donut-shaped region of the core around the Equator, a few hundred kilometres thick, where seismic waves travel about 2 per cent slower

than in the rest of the core.

We think this region contains more lighter elements such as silicon and oxygen, and may play a crucial role in the vast currents of liquid metal running through the core that generate Earth's magnetic field. Our results are published today in Science Advances.

The 'coda-correlation wavefield'

Most studies of the seismic waves created by earthquakes look at the big, initial wavefronts that travel around the world in the hour or so after the quake.

We realised we could

learn something new by looking at the later, fainter part of these waves, known as the coda -- the section that brings a piece of music to its end. In particular, we looked at how similar the coda recorded at different seismic detectors were, several hours after they began.

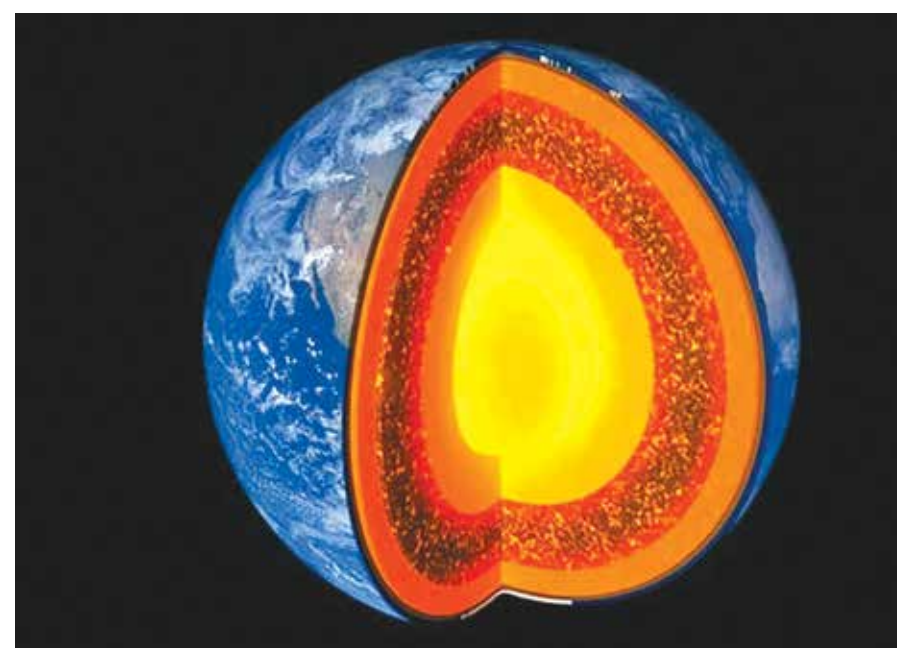
In mathematical terms, this similarity is measured by something called correlation. Together, we call these similarities in the late parts of earthquake waves the "coda-correlation wavefield".

By looking at the coda-correlation wavefield, we detected tiny signals stemming from multiple

reverberating waves we wouldn't otherwise see. By understanding the paths these reverberating waves had taken and matching them with signals in the coda-correlation wavefield, we worked out how long they had taken to travel through the planet.

We then compared what we saw in seismic detectors closer to the poles with results from nearer the Equator. Overall, the waves detected closer to the poles were travelling faster than those near the Equator.

We tried out many computer models and simulations of what conditions in the core could create



these results. In the end, we found there must be a torus -- a donut-shaped region -- in the outer core around the Equator, where waves travel more slowly.

Seismologists have not detected this region before. However, using the coda-correlation wavefield lets us "see" the outer core in more detail, and more evenly.

Previous studies concluded that waves moved more slowly everywhere around the "ceiling" of the outer core. However, we have shown in this study that the low-velocity region is only near the Equator.

-The Conversation

Top Brazilian judge orders suspension of X

Judge says Elon Musk showed total disrespect for Brazilian sovereignty

Sao Paulo: A Brazilian Supreme Court justice has ordered the suspension of Elon Musk's social media giant X in Brazil after the tech billionaire refused to name a legal representative in the country, according to a copy of his decision.

The move on Friday further escalates the months-long feud between the two men over free speech, far-right accounts and misinformation.

Justice Alexandre de Moraes had warned Musk on Wednesday night that X could be blocked in Brazil if he failed to comply with his order to name a representative, and established a 24-hour deadline. The company hasn't had a representative in the country since earlier this month.

"Elon Musk showed his total disrespect for Brazilian sovereignty and, in particular, for the judiciary, setting himself up as a true supranational entity and immune to the laws of each country," de Moraes wrote in his decision.

The justice said the platform will stay suspended until it complies with his



orders, and also set a daily fine of 50,000 reais (\$8,900) for people or companies using VPNs to access it.

In a later ruling, he backtracked on his initial decision to establish a 5-day deadline for internet service providers themselves - and not just the telecommunications regulator - to block access to X, as well as his directive for app stores to remove virtual private networks, or

VPNs.

Brazil's telecommunications regulator Anatel has 24 hours to comply. The regulator's chairman Carlos Baigorri told GloboNews channel that the country's biggest service providers will respond quickly, but added smaller ones might need more time to suspend X from their services.

The full bench of Brazil's Supreme Court is ex-

pected to rule on the case, but no date for deliberations was set.

Brazil is an important market for X, which has struggled with the loss of advertisers since Musk purchased the former Twitter in 2022. Market research group Emarketer says some 40 million Brazilians, roughly one-fifth of the population, access X at least once per month.

-AP

Another knife attack in Germany, six hurt

Berlin: Police arrested a 32-year-old woman after six people were hurt in a knife attack on a bus headed to a festival in western Germany. Authorities said on Saturday that there was no evidence of a political or religious motive.

Three of those attacked are in life-threatening condition, police said on Friday evening.

The knife attack took place in Siegen, east of Cologne. The bus was on its way to a local festival in the town and at least another 40 people were on board when the attack took place at about 7:40 pm.

Police and prosecutors said the six people wounded were aged between 16 and 30 and all were from the region. By Saturday morning, three of them had left the hospital after outpatient treatment.

Local authorities planned to go ahead with the festival.

The stabbing in Siegen happened a week after a knife attack in Solingen, a city in the same state of North Rhine-Westphalia, in which a suspected Islamic extremist from Syria who had avoided being deported is accused of killing three people and wounding another eight.

The Solingen attack prompted the governing coalition to draw up plans to tighten knife laws and make deportations easier.

Police said the woman arrested in Siegen was a German citizen with no immigrant roots.

-AP

Pakistan's ISI complicit with terrorists, says former US NSA

By Lalit K Jha

Washington: There is an "undeniable complicity" of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) with terrorist groups, former US National Security Advisor Lt Gen (retd) H R McMaster has said, revealing that during his tenure under then President Donald Trump, the White House faced resistance from the state department and Pentagon over providing security aid to Islamabad.

Despite directions from Trump to stop all aid to Pakistan till it stops giving safe havens to terrorists, McMaster in his latest book 'At War with Ourselves: My Tour of Duty in the Trump White House' says that the then Defence Secretary Jim Mattis was planning to deliver a military aid package to Islamabad that included over USD 150 million worth of armoured vehicles.

However, the aid was stopped after his intervention, McMaster writes in the book that hit the bookstores this week.

"It was difficult to get State and Defence even to comply with Trump's directives to stop certain activities. I discovered that contrary to the South Asia strategy, which called for the suspension of all aid to Pakistan with a few exceptions, when Mattis visited Islamabad in the coming weeks, the Pentagon was going to deliver a military aid package that included more than USD 150 million worth of armoured vehicles," he writes.

McMaster says soon after he came to know about



it, he called for a meeting with Mattis, the deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Gina Haspel, and other senior officials.

"I started by noting that the president (Trump) had been very clear on multiple occasions to suspend aid to the Pakistanis until they halted support for terrorist organisations that were killing Afghans, Americans, and coalition members in Afghanistan...We had all heard Trump say, 'I do not want any money going to Pakistan,'" he says.

Mattis, the former NSA writes, noted the possibility that Pakistan might retaliate in certain ways, but others, including Ambassador David Hale, who had joined by video from Islamabad, did not share those concerns.

"Mattis reluctantly halted that shipment of assistance, but other aid would continue, prompting Trump to tweet on New Year's Day, 'The United States has foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years and they have given us nothing but lies & deceit thinking of our leaders as fools. They give safe haven

to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan with little help. No more!," he writes.

"Pakistan was not changing its behaviour, and almost as an insult, the government released Hafiz Saeed, the mastermind behind the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks, on the eve of Mattis's visit. Moreover, a recent event in Pakistan involving hostages had exposed the undeniable complicity of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence with the terrorists," McMaster writes.

He notes that news reports that time criticised the president's tweet as capricious and devoid of a coherent policy. But halting assistance was a critical part of the South Asia strategy that Trump had approved at Camp David in August, he says.

"A lunch that the president hosted with the vice president, Tillerson, Mattis, Kelly, and me on December 14 helped me understand why it was difficult to implement Trump's guidance on Pakistan or to foster cooperation on contingency plans for North Korea," says McMaster.

- PTI

Ramon Magsaysay Awards Doctor who fought 'Agent Orange' in the list

Manila: A Vietnamese doctor who has helped seek justice for victims of the powerful defoliant dioxin "Agent Orange" used by US forces during the Vietnam War is among this year's winners of the Ramon Magsaysay Awards — regarded as Asia's version of the Nobel Prizes.

The other winners announced on Saturday were a group of doctors who struggled to secure adequate healthcare for Thailand's rural poor, an Indonesian environmental defender, a Japanese animator who tackles complex issues for children and a Bhutanese academician promoting his country's cultural heritage to help current predicaments.

First given in 1958, the annual awards are named after a Philippine president who died in a 1957 plane crash, and honour "greatness of spirit" in selfless service to people across Asia.

Vietnamese doctor Nguyen Thi Ngoc Phuung carried out extensive research into the devastating and long-term effects of Agent Orange which she said she first encountered in the late 1960s as a medical intern when she helped deliver babies with severe birth defects as a result of the lingering effect of highly toxic chemical, according to the awards body.

"Her work serves as a dire warning for the world to avoid war at all costs as its tragic repercussions can reach far into the future," the Magsaysay foundation said. "She offers proof that it can never be too late to right the wrongs of war and gain justice and relief for its hapless victims."

American forces used Agent Orange during the Vietnam War to defoliate Vietnamese jungles and to destroy crops for the Vietnamese Communists, or Viet Cong, who fought against South Vietnam

and the United States.

Between 1962 and 1971, the US military sprayed roughly 11 million gallons of the chemical agent dioxin used in Agent Orange across large swaths of southern Vietnam. Dioxin stays in the soil and in the sediment of lakes and rivers for generations. It can enter the food supply through the fat of fish and other animals.

Vietnam says as many as 4 million citizens were exposed to the herbicide and as many as 3 million have suffered illnesses from it, including the children of people exposed during the war.

Indonesian Farwiza Farhan won the award for helping lead a group protect the Leuser Ecosystem, a 2.6-million-hectare forest on Sumatra Island in his country's Aceh province where some of the world's most highly endangered species have managed to survive, the foundation said.

-AP

Rahul to visit Washington DC

New Delhi: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi will visit the US from September 8-10 during which he will hold numerous interactions in Washington DC and Dallas, including at the University of Texas.

Indian Overseas Congress chief Sam Pitroda shared details of Gandhi's first visit to the US after becoming the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha in June.

"Since Rahul Gandhi has become the leader of opposition, I, as chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, which has a presence in 32 countries, (have) been bombarded with requests from the Indian diaspora, diplomats, academicians, businesspersons, leaders, international media and many others, for interactions with him," Pitroda said in a video statement.

"Now, he (Gandhi) is coming to the US for a very brief visit. He will be in Dallas on September 8th and Washington DC on September 9th and 10th. In Dallas, we will have interactions with the University of Texas, (with) students, academic institutions."



Israeli armoured vehicles move during a military operation in the West Bank Jenin refugee camp on Saturday.

Pic-AP/PTI

Chinese survey ship entering water Japan lodges formal protest

Tokyo: Japan lodged a formal protest via China's embassy against what it called an incursion by a Chinese survey ship into its territorial waters Saturday, the Japanese foreign ministry said.

The ministry expressed "strong concern" after the ship was spotted near Kagoshima Prefecture,

southwestern Japan, early in the morning.

The Chinese ship, confirmed in territorial waters at 6 am local time, left shortly before 8 am, according to Japan's Defence Ministry, adding it was monitored by a Japanese military vessel and plane.

Recently, China's increasingly assertive activ-

ity around Japanese waters and airspace has caused unease among Japanese defence officials, also concerned about the growing military cooperation between the Chinese and Russian air forces.

This follows Tokyo's protest after a Chinese military aircraft briefly entered Japan's southwestern

airspace on Monday. It was the first time the Japanese Self Defence Force detected a Chinese military aircraft in Japan's airspace. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said on Tuesday his country had "no intention" to violate any country's airspace.

-AP

QUOTE OF THE DAY



Donald Trump, former President, US on illegal immigrants

"Our country is being poisoned. And your schools and your children are suffering greatly because they are going into the classrooms and taking disease, and they don't even speak English. It's crazy."

Writer dramatises history of Empire

By Aditi Khanna

London: An Indian-origin playwright has joined hands with a former diplomat for a unique immersive theatrical experience, with the city of London as their stage to tell the story of the East India Company and British Empire.

"A London Lark Rising" is a dramatised walking tour being brought to life by Dr Anu Kumar Lazarus and Lisa Honan, with double shows scheduled next weekend on September 7. The so-

called "walking play" spans hundreds of years of history as it takes audiences through well-known and lesser-known sites in the heart of London, showcasing several famous historic characters from both India and the UK.

The walking play, structured over 90 minutes, is designed as a promenade performance experience, recounting the history of the East India Company (EIC) in some of the places where the events actually took place. With the help of



artists in period costumes, the tour is intended to transport audiences back to the facades of the 16th century

to delve into how today's London was shaped by a shared past with India.

"For me, iconic characters like William Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth I walking in the City walls just as they should have done sends a shiver down the spine. But I think the really great thing is the Indian characters that we bring to life in the streets of London — alluding to the fact that without India, England would not look like it does today," said Kumar Lazarus.

"We walk between the sites where the East India Company (EIC) had a footprint as I tell the history of the Company, from the courtyard where it first began in the 17th century and how it changed what the world ate, drank, and wore through its trade with India, Indonesia, China and points beyond," explains Honan, a certified City of London Guide who was awarded a CBE by Queen Elizabeth II for services to international aid.

- PTI

MY CORNER

Retirement from politics...

By
Shyam Tare

Politicians are considered to be a class apart. Their rise could be self-sustained efforts, familial or party based. However, their stay at the helm of affairs is shrouded in a usual question of mandatory retirement posed more often as prominent leaders around the world are getting older. Although many of the world political leaders are currently well beyond the normal retirement age of working class, the discussion rests with the results of an election they contest at their level.

In the United States of America, for example, Americans prefer to work more either as weekly or annual working hours as well as the number of years of life they spend working in spite of the benefits accrued to them by the Government. It can be said that their maturity and expertise is needed and used by establishments and enterprises with mutual benefits. A medical anthropologist and historian from USA has commented that Americans prefer higher wages to reduced working hours when the question of Four Days Week arrives.

Retirement conventions for various occupations around the world have revolved around the advances in manufacturing and computing. It has been observed that many Europeans prefer shorter working hours and longer vacations by and large. As for the formulation of retirement age, it has been pointed out that the convention for a set retirement age came up in the 20th century and was based on the data about life expectancy and

societal factors.

Research suggests that remaining active and staying healthy throughout your life will provide you with an age to stay better equipped to work even in a typically volatile environment of politics. However, there are certain natural drawbacks for work due to aging. Whereas incidences of cognitive decline cannot be tolerated in most of the workspaces, certain people are adamant enough to stick through somehow instead of relinquishing.

Coming back to the political arena, it has been held that the toughest question is who decides when to retire? Certain norms may have been prescribed by those who have formatted the policy. However, once you are in position, it is difficult for even any of the insiders to suggest you about the same as the same may boomerang on the insider himself. Any of the discussions on cognitive abilities are shooed and remain grounded.

Maintaining once own stance, dignity and demure seems to be one of the surest ways to quiet any issues of political retirement. The rest is said to be governed by the stars as they say.

Going back once again, Aristotle considers politics as study of communities and gives it a higher priority than morals and beliefs. Politics in India is rooted in human to human framework and gets amalgamated in groups of communities for purpose of placing forward agendas considered non-congenial to other groups.

Just as there could be hardly any family without disturbances aka disputes that need settlements amicably, the groups, states and nations too have and breed inherent disputes and hence are unlikely to remain together. The beauty of such relationships could be observed when certain components sitting on the fence conjure meetings with opposite factions under a disguise of being long time friends.

(The writer is a resident of Surat, Gujarat. Views personal)

LETTER FROM PAKISTAN

Escalating Conflict in Balochistan Threatens Global Stability

By
Kaswar Klasra

In the province of Balochistan on the southwestern edge of Pakistan, violence has become disturbingly routine. It's a region rich in natural resources and geopolitical significance, yet its story is largely untold outside the corridors of power in Islamabad, Washington, and Beijing. And that's a problem—because what's happening in Balochistan could have repercussions far beyond Pakistan's borders.

Imagine, if you will, a bus journey where the passengers—ordinary men, women, and children—are suddenly thrust into a nightmare as armed men storm the vehicle. These men, hardened by years of conflict, pull off the male passengers, leaving behind women and children to run for their lives. Moments later, the night air is filled with the staccato of gunfire and the gut-wrenching cries of men being executed on the spot.

This isn't the plot of a Hollywood thriller, but the grim reality that unfolded in Balochistan left nearly two dozen people dead. It is part of a broader wave of violence that claimed at least 74 lives within a 24-hour span.

So, why should the U.S. and the international community care about Balochistan? The answer lies in the interconnected nature of global politics, where even remote conflicts can have far-reaching and unpredictable consequences.

Balochistan is the linchpin in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a multi-billion-dollar infrastructure project critical to China's global ambitions, including its Belt and Road initiative. The province's Gwadar Port offers China access to the Arabian Sea and the Middle East.

Balochistan remains one of the most underdeveloped and unstable regions in Pakistan, with the ethnic Baloch locals feeling marginalised by the central government. Their grievances the exploitation of their land's resources without any tangible benefits to the local population—have fuelled a decades-long insurgency by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), who have demanded greater autonomy or outright independence.

This insurgency might have stayed local, but outside involvement changed the game. Islamabad has accused India of backing Baloch separatists, especially after the capture of Kulbhushan Yadav, who Pakistan claims was running a spy network in Balochistan. Yadav's arrest and confessions have intensified suspicions that India is fanning the rebellion in Pakistan's most restive province.

Additionally, Islamist militant groups, including Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), have also entrenched themselves in the province, turning it into a battleground for their sectarian and anti-state agendas. These groups have targeted Shia Muslims, security forces, and even Chinese nationals working on CPEC projects, creating a volatile mix that threatens to destabilise the entire region.

For Pakistan, the situation is a security nightmare. Despite launching multiple military operations and killing dozens of militants, the state has struggled to contain the violence. The porous border with Afghanistan provides



militants with a safe haven, complicating Islamabad's efforts to restore order.

The United States, too, has a stake in what happens next in Balochistan. As tensions rise between Washington and Beijing, the stability of regions like Balochistan becomes increasingly important. If CPEC falters due to instability, it could slow China's economic rise, impacting global markets in ways that would be felt in New York as much as in Islamabad or Beijing. Furthermore, the spread of extremist ideologies in Balochistan could eventually find its way back to the West, as has happened with other conflict zones.

If insurgents are for better governance, fair distribution of resources, and respect for their cultural identity, then they are reasonable, and the authorities in Islamabad need to take care of it. On the other hand, if the insurgents only intend to blackmail, Islamabad needs to come hard on them. Beijing, the US, and the entire world should help Pakistan to quell militancy in Balochistan.

Washington must recognise the province's strategic importance and support efforts to address the root causes of the conflict—poverty, underdevelopment, and political disenfranchisement. This means

encouraging Islamabad to pursue a more inclusive approach, one that prioritises dialogue over brute force. Second, the international community must press all the forces to end their proxy battles in Balochistan. Islamabad needs support on a large scale to quell militancy in Balochistan.

Finally, the U.S. should work with Pakistan to counter the growing influence of Islamist militant groups in the province. This requires more than just military cooperation; it involves supporting educational and economic initiatives that can offer young Baloch a viable alternative to joining extremist organisations.

The situation in Balochistan is complex, and there are no easy solutions. But as the violence continues to spiral out of control, the cost of doing nothing becomes increasingly untenable. For the sake of regional and global security, it's time the world starts helping Pakistan in its fight against militancy and terrorism.

Because in a world as interconnected as ours, the conflicts that seem far away are often closer than we think!

(The writer is a senior journalist based in Islamabad. Views personal)

NEWSMAKER OF THE WEEK

To Lam: Steely Pragmatist

In a meticulously choreographed ascent to power, To Lam, a veteran security chief, has emerged as the new General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). His rise, following the unexpected death of his predecessor Nguyen Phu Trong, marks a decisive turn in the Communist Party's playbook—a shift from the typical technocratic leadership to a man who has long been the embodiment of Vietnam's internal security apparatus.

Lam's deep roots in the Ministry of Public Security have shaped him into a leader known for his uncompromising stance on internal security and a penchant for maintaining the party's firm grip on power. His background is steeped in the shadowy arts of state security, and he has overseen a tightening of state control over civil society, the press, and the internet. This however, has come at a cost — criticism from Western governments and international rights groups over human rights abuses have often punctuated Lam's tenure. Yet, within the Vietnamese leadership, these critiques are viewed as proof of Lam's efficacy in safeguarding the party's interests.

His leadership will likely preserve the current trajectory of Vietnam's governance but is also likely to introduce subtle shifts in its diplomatic engagements in the current global scenario.

To Lam's foreign policy manoeuvres began swiftly. On August 18, Lam made his first official visit abroad as CPV leader to China, prompting speculation about a potential pro-China tilt in Hanoi. However, such interpretations overstate the significance of this move. Lam had already visited Cambodia and Laos—Vietnam's traditional partners—earlier this year after becoming President in May, making China the next logical destination. The trip to Beijing, likely planned months in advance before Trong's death, aligns more with diplomatic protocol than a strategic pivot towards Beijing.

Vietnam's 'bamboo diplomacy' (a



metaphor for its flexible and resilient foreign policy approach), continues to serve as the cornerstone of its international relations. Much like bamboo that bends but does not break, Vietnam adeptly balances its ties with major powers without becoming overly aligned with any. This non-aligned strategy enables Hanoi to maintain its sovereignty and navigate the complex geopolitical landscape of Southeast Asia. Lam's subsequent anticipated visit to New York next month for the United Nations General Assembly or the U.N. Summit of the Future underscores Hanoi's balanced approach.

Despite the symbolic nature of any potential meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden or Vice-President Kamala Harris, it reinforces Vietnam's delicate balancing act—a diplomatic dance perfected by Lam's predecessors.

The prospect of To Lam's engagement with U.S. officials comes at a delicate time in U.S.-Vietnam relations. Last year, Biden upgraded the bilateral relationship to a "comprehensive strategic partnership" during a visit to Hanoi, setting the stage for deeper ties. Yet, Hanoi was recently disappointed by the U.S. Commerce Department's refusal to reclassify Vietnam as a "market economy," a decision that stings amid a growing trade surplus with the U.S., now doubling to \$104 billion since 2019.

Lam's possible encounter with

Biden or Harris at the U.N. meetings would be largely ceremonial, yet it could serve as a crucial gesture of neutrality amid growing U.S.-China tensions. Should Harris ascend to the presidency, Vietnam may find a more receptive audience for its market economy aspirations, though this remains speculative. The South China Sea remains a perennial challenge for Vietnam. Lam, with his background in security, may take a firmer approach to maritime disputes, balancing assertiveness with a readiness to engage in diplomatic dialogues. His administration could deepen security ties within ASEAN, seeking regional solidarity against external pressures while avoiding outright confrontation with China.

The South China Sea remains the linchpin of Vietnam's foreign policy challenges. Lam doubtless understands the tightrope Vietnam walks between asserting its claims and managing China's ambitions. His leadership could see a continuation of the calibrated assertiveness that has characterized Vietnam's approach: maintaining military readiness, building up its naval capabilities, and engaging in quiet diplomacy with regional and extra-regional powers. His administration could deepen security ties within ASEAN, seeking regional solidarity against external pressures while avoiding outright confrontation with China.

Domestically, Lam's rise signals a continued focus on stability, with an unwavering stance on suppressing dissent and fortifying state control over media and civil society. His leadership style is unlikely to disrupt the economic liberalization that has spurred Vietnam's growth but will certainly prioritize the party's ideological integrity and security apparatus.

Lam's pragmatic realism will be tested by the interplay of global powers and domestic imperatives. His tenure may not bring radical shifts, but it will undoubtedly shape the contours of Vietnam's foreign policy in an increasingly polarized world.

BY INVITATION

Seeking the Godfather

By
Mamta Sen

Malatitai (name changed), a fifty-something Mahayuti political party worker is a constant fixture beside her boss, a prominent and powerful state government minister. She regularly accompanies him to inaugurations, meetings, and events where he is a chief guest, appearing in every photograph that gets published in the media and interview. An important figure in his party, Malatitai oversees the activities of the women's wing and holds various state commission board positions, thanks to

In Indian politics, a godfather is crucial for newcomers, but finding one is a daunting task. Political godfathers are often wealthy, powerful, and selective. Aspiring politicians must navigate this landscape with tact and skill, while godfathers increasingly adopt cautious approaches amid rising defections and shifting loyalties.



her boss. She hopes to contest the upcoming assembly elections, relying on her boss, whom she sees as her Godfather, to secure her a ticket. However, he is focused on managing current MLAs and is searching for a younger, wealthier, and more dynamic version of Malatitai to advance his political ambitions.

Like Malatitai, 47-year-old Kunal (name changed), a former youth wing president, avoided marriage, hoping to wed the Dalit leader's daughter (now a Lok Sabha MP) to launch his political career. However, the Dalit leader has no interest in a son-in-law; he's focused on making his daughter the next chief minister, a far more secure plan than relying on followers like Kunal, who might switch sides as soon as they gain power.

A successful career in Indian politics requires a godfather. For a newcomer with no family connection, a godfather is a boon, but often the real task is the ability to find one or be found by one. Having a godfather helps to smooth out the difficult journey ahead, which is largely dominated by caste equations, money and muscle power, character assassinations, and backbiting.

Finding a godfather today remains a formidable task. Mere networking may not land you that perfect mentee. You must possess several qualities before you come under the focus of a godfather. A typical godfather in Indian politics has access to lots of money, power, connections, and the ability to 'get things done.'

Compared to the early seventies and eighties, almost all political

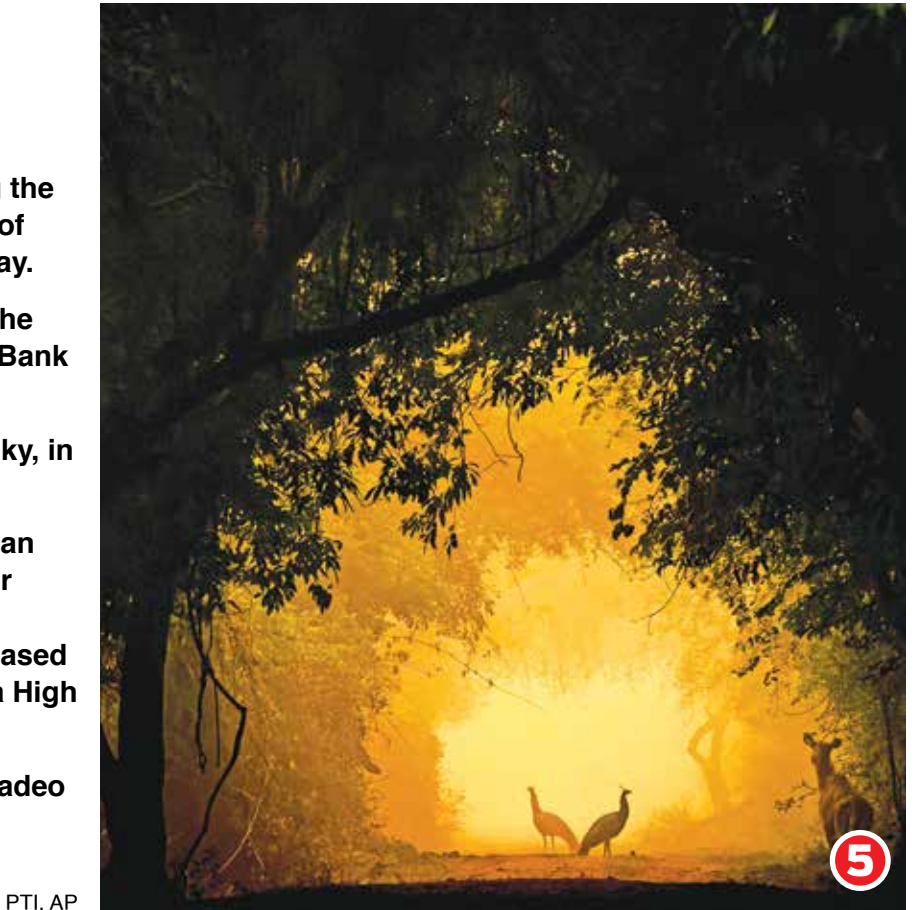
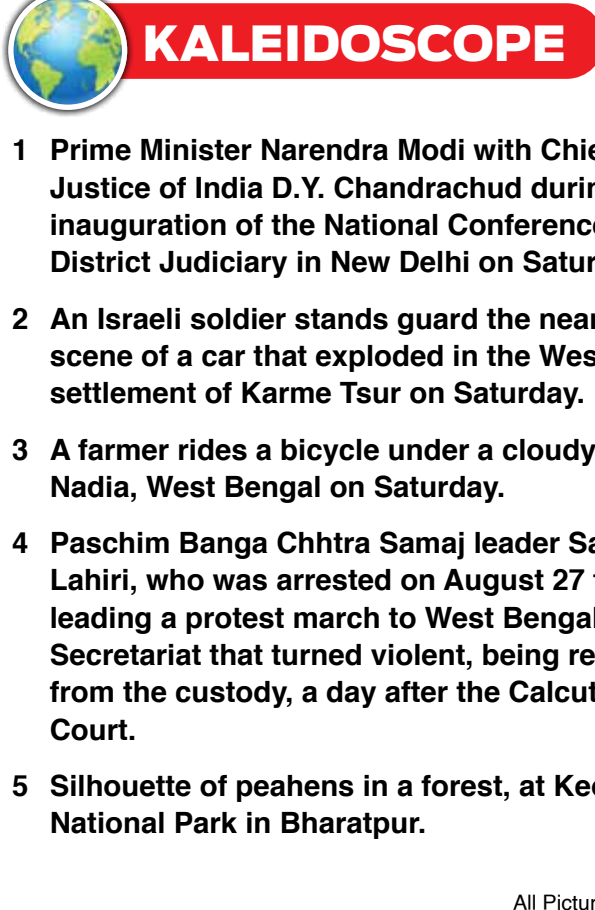
parties in India today are overflowing with leaders controlling their camps of all castes and sizes. These camps continue to be dominated by self-proclaimed godfathers who control their 'territory.'

Seeking out a godfather requires tact, skill, and the ability to gauge his capacity, resources, and commitment to delivering on promises. Some foot soldiers form relationships with godfathers to gain party positions and secure election tickets, while others, despite loyalty, switch allegiances based on the party's fortunes. In some cases, those seeking lasting ties with their godfathers choose marriage or business partnerships, marrying into political families to ensure lifelong loyalty, regardless of their political success. The lure of power and its perks are strong, leading many to practice social climbing, becoming stooges to access and bask in that power.

Another easy access to people already in positions of power and seeking out a godfather to groom their political ambitions is through the Indian Civil Service. There are many examples of government officials ending up in politics post-retirement.

Many godfathers are now wary of mentoring. With defections on the rise, veteran leaders are mindful of the shifting dynamics with their loyalists. Many admit they are proceeding cautiously, adopting an 'open-door policy.'

"People come and go. I don't look for loyalists, but those who deliver when asked to, and that's what matters in the end," admits one such Godfather.



KALEIDOSCOPE

- 1 Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud during the inauguration of the National Conference of District Judiciary in New Delhi on Saturday.
- 2 An Israeli soldier stands guard near the scene of a car that exploded in the West Bank settlement of Karne Tsur on Saturday.
- 3 A farmer rides a bicycle under a cloudy sky, in Nadia, West Bengal on Saturday.
- 4 Paschim Banga Chhtra Samaj leader Sayan Lahiri, who was arrested on August 27 for leading a protest march to West Bengal Secretariat that turned violent, being released from the custody, a day after the Calcutta High Court.
- 5 Silhouette of peahens in a forest, at Keoladeo National Park in Bharatpur.

All Pictures PTI, AP

THE PERFECT INTERVIEW

First, we must win the election and the biggest party should get CM's job



Prithviraj Chavan, a seasoned politician with a career spanning over four decades, has played a pivotal role in shaping the political landscape of Maharashtra and India. Chavan's political journey began in the 1980s when he became active in the Congress party. He quickly rose through the ranks, holding various significant positions. Having earned

the image of skilled statesman and honest politician during his positions in Prime Minister's Office, and Chief Minister of Maharashtra, he is often credited for initiating several key infrastructure projects in Maharashtra, including the Mumbai Metro and Mumbai Trans Harbour Link. Nowadays, Chavan, 78, is an extremely busy Congress leader with only a mission to oust Mahayuti government. **The Perfect Voice** representative **Anand Mishra** spoke to him about various political scenarios. Excerpts...

So how confident you are to repeat the same success story in the upcoming Assembly election?

Overall we may not sweep, but in North Maharashtra, NCP (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT) will fight with their opponents. In Western Maharashtra Congress and NCP (SP) will fight the BJP and in Mumbai (region) it will be Shiv Sena and Congress that will be fighting with BJP and its allies. So, in three regions, it is going to be an equal fight while in three regions, we are go-

ing to sweep... and the majority will be with Congress. We are getting 180 plus seats.

What is the progress on the seat sharing formula?

There are many formulas. First, is the past performance in the 2019 election. Lok Sabha election is not a clear indication because if you get a seat and you win that all six seats are plus for you. It can be supportive evidence, but the main evidence will be, what was your situation in 2019. After the vertical split in NCP and Shiv Sena, the seat sharing arrangement issue has become a little tricky as many MLAs have switched sides. These are going to be tough decisions. Our first job is to secure those 155 seats that we won last time in 2019.

What has been your party's stance on CM face? Because in 2019, your party agreed to make Uddhav Thackeray CM as Sena was the largest party. (Interrupting) Absolutely and this has

been a tradition. First time we are going in a three-party pre-poll alliance in the assembly election. The question is, should we declare a CM face before or which party does it or not? Yeah, my particular view is that we always do it after the election. First, we must win the election and the biggest party (having maximum MLAs) should get its CM job. It's also important from the stability point of view and I think Delhi has agreed to that.

Any specific target that your party has fixed to win that number of seats?

We want to win the maximum number of seats. But by the 65 per cent formula, it works out to 183 whereas Sharad Pawar ji has predicted for 225 seats. But the fact that we are discussing Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi's CM candidate, which evidently, is very a clear indication that we are winning. Nobody is asking about Mahayuti's CM face.

Is Ladki Bahin like populist scheme going to help present government in getting votes?

Government thinks that it will help them. But I would like to humbly sub-

mit that such schemes by different names like Nari Samman Yojna in MP or Mahalakshmi Yojna in Karnataka, are our ideas. It comes out of the minimum basic income concept, which is a very popular concept internationally. In Lok Sabha, we thought of giving Rs 1 lakh to each deserving woman. In Karnataka, we promised and gave 2000 Rs per month. In Telangana, we promised and gave Rs 2000 per month to women.

What's your party's stance on the Maratha reservation issue?

When I was Chief Minister, I gave Maratha reservation to 16 per cent people and this was not properly defended by the subsequent government. We gave reservation to Muslim backwards also which was upheld by the court for educational purposes. Unfortunately, courts ruled against during Devendra Fadnavis tenure. He gave the same reservation, same law in December 2018. But that was a total fraud, because, in that same year, Modi Government had amended the Constitution and taken away the rights of the state to give reservation. So, Devendra Fadnavis had no authority, no legislative competence to give reservation to any community. They are only playing with the sentiments of the people of Maharashtra. Mr. Devendra promised to give reservation to the Dhargar community within 15 days of coming to power, but see, nothing has happened for 10 years.

In case you come to power, will you implement all the suggestions given by Manoj Jarange-Patil?

No. See the different things. Jarange-Patil is fighting that Kunbi Marathas are already OBCs and they get reservation within this category. He is just demanding that the certificate be given to more people based on some record in Nizam's era and that that's a different matter. Our fight is that unless we exceed the current 50 per cent limit, you will not be able to give reservation to Marathas.

Central government should take up the reservation issue so seriously and I think the best thing would be to give 10 per cent reservation rights to states.

Do you think that the present government miserably failed to tackle the situation in Badlapur rape case and subsequent public agitation?

Yes. When the incident came to light, they knew that it was run by RSS-BJP minded people and they tried to suppress it. Victim's mother- who is pregnant- was made to sit in the police station for the whole 12 hours. You had to take strict action but did not. That's why people are still so angry.

What are the issues MVA will take up?

Complete failure of the government in handling the economy, both the Central government and the state government level. Huge corruption, Crony Capitalism. Unemployment. And the issues which are coming every day like Badlapur rape case, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue collapse etc. Maharashtra has a debt of Rs 7.80 lakh crores. The recent budget had a fiscal deficit of Rs 2.40 lakh crores. Eventually, we are under Rs 10 lakh crore debt. Secondly, this whole government is born in sin and corruption. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue collapse is the burning example of it. Now they are apologising one by one. But voters are aware of this.

Ladki Bahin like schemes are originally our ideas. Devendra Fadnavis' provision for Maratha reservation was total fraud, state is under huge debt.

So basically, it is our idea and we will give it in Maharashtra also. And we don't think Rs 1500 per month is enough because of Modi government's abrupt economic policies have inflated the cost of living so adversely.



US Open Novak Djokovic out

New York: Defending champion Novak Djokovic was shocked at the U.S. Open one night after Carlos Alcaraz was, bowing out in the third round with a 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 loss to 28th-seeded Alexei Popyrin of Australia on Friday night.

The No. 2-seeded Djokovic was trying to become the first player in tennis history with 25 Grand Slam singles titles. Instead, he finishes a year without claiming at least one major championship for the first time since 2017. Before that, it hadn't happened since 2010.

Also of note: 2024 now becomes the first season since 2002 in which none of the Big Three of men's tennis — Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer — earned a Slam trophy.

The third-round exit equals Djokovic's worst showing at Flushing Meadows; the only other occasions he was beaten that early at the U.S. Open came in 2005 and 2006. The man who defeated Djokovic 18 years ago, International Tennis Hall of Fame member Lleyton Hewitt, is now Australia's Davis Cup captain and was sitting in Popyrin's guest box in Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Djokovic, who is 37, has reached the



Alexei Popyrin, of Australia, reacts against Novak Djokovic

final in Ashe 10 times, leaving with the title in 2011, 2015, 2018 and 2023.

On Friday, though, he double-faulted 14 times and looked physically sluggish and emotionally flat, perhaps residual fatigue after collecting his first Olympic gold medal for Serbia by beating Alcaraz in the final at the Paris Games earlier in August.

The No. 3-seeded Alcaraz entered the US Open as the tournament favorite hav-

ing won the French Open and Wimbledon, and acknowledged his energy was lower than he realized after getting eliminated in New York by 74th-ranked Botić van de Zandschulp 6-1, 7-5, 6-4 on Thursday night.

Djokovic then replaced Alcaraz as the money-line pick to take the men's title, according to BetMGM Sportsbook, but that status didn't last long at all.

-AP

Bhambri-Olivetti in third round

New York: India's Yuki Bhambri and Albano Olivetti advanced to the men's doubles third round of the US Open with a hard-fought win over Austin Krajicek and Jean-Julien Roger here.

The Indo-French pair defeated USA's Krajicek and his Dutch partner Jean-Julien Roger, who were 15th

seeds in the event, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.

However, another Indian in the fray, N Sriram Balaji and his Argentine partner Guido Andreozzi exited the US Open after losing to Michael Venus of New Zealand and Neal Skupski of Great Britain.

The Indo-Argentine pair

lost 6-7 (4), 4-6 in the second-round match that featured just one break of serve in the second set.

In total, Venus and Skupski received seven break points, and converted one, while Balaji and Andreozzi failed to capitalise on their lone opportunity for a service break.

-PTI



Arshad, Jyoti disappoint in track cycling

Paris: Indian cyclists Arshad Shaik and Jyoti Gaderiya failed to make an impact in their respective track cycling events as they crashed out in the qualification round in the Paris Paralympics on Saturday.

In the qualifying stage of the men's 1,000m time trial C1-3, Shaik managed a disappointing bottom-place (17th) finish with a

timing of 1:21.416, failing to make it to the final round.

On Friday, he had also failed to progress in the men's 3,000m pursuit C2 event, managing a bottom-place (ninth) finish in the qualifying round.

Jyoti too finished at the bottom (11th place) in the women's 500m time trial C1-3 qualifying event, with a timing of 49.233.

-PTI

Training Indian athletes on mental health issues a 'work in progress'

Mumbai: Olympic gold medalist Abhinav Bindra on Friday acknowledged training Indian athletes across sports on the aspect of mental health remains a "work in progress", while adding that benefits of the same must reach grassroots level.

Bindra said mental health directly influences overall well-being of an athlete and sports administrators also share equal responsibility in it.

"It's an area where there is work in progress — we all acknowledge that. We are a sporting ecosystem which is developing. It is slowly maturing," he said during a virtual interaction organised by Mpower to launch AMP: A Sports Psy-

chology Division to Elevate Athlete Performance.

"This is an aspect that just from a shooting athlete's point of view, but across the board, which needs to be prioritised. It is something which has a direct influence on the perfor-

mance of the athlete. "It has a direct influence on the well-being of an athlete. Sports organisations and everybody involved in governance has to also ensure that our athletes perform well, but their well-being is of equal importance," he added.

Bindra highlighted the presence of a mental health expert with the Indian contingent in Paris Olympics as a step in the right direction.

"We've seen progress made even during the Olympics in Paris. It was the first time there was a mental health expert who was with the team. There (also) was somebody for sleep," he said.

"There are things that are happening. But we need to keep working with intensity to make sure that this perpetuates

down to the grassroots level," he added.

Bindra rejected the notion that athletes today are "softer" than those in the past.

"I completely disagree. If that is the notion to be believed, then the softer ones are winning more than the tougher ones because that's what our results and our history tell us," he said.

Bindra revealed how a meditation course, while planning to quit shooting, helped him find "love for the process" after winning the Olympic gold in 2008.

"When I did win that gold medal at the Olympics, my energy was completely drained in the sense that I was physically, emotionally

(and) mentally drained. It also required a period of time to just let go and then to recharge my batteries and that wasn't easy," he said.

Indian rowers finish third

Paris: Indian rowers Anita and Narayana Konganapalle managed a third-place finish in the mixed PR3 double sculls event at the Paris Paralympics here on Saturday.

The pair finished the race with a timing of 7:54.33s, behind Ukraine (7:29.24s) and Great Britain (7:20.53s).

The Indian duo will now be competing in Final B, which is for 7 to 12th spot.

During the heat on Friday, the Indian pair had finished fifth with a timing of 8:06.84s. Anita lost her leg in a road accident when she was 18-years-old. She won the gold medal in the World Rowing Asian and Oceanian Paralympic Qualifiers earlier this year.

Konganapalle, an ex-soldier with Rashtriya Rifles, lost his leg in a mine blast while on duty in Jammu and Kashmir in 2015. His accolades include gold medals in World Rowing Asian and Oceanian Paralympic Qualifiers and Asian Rowing Virtual Indoor Championship.

-PTI

Samit Dravid in India U19 squad

New Delhi: Samit Dravid, son of former India captain and head coach Rahul Dravid, was on Saturday drafted into the India under-19 squad for the upcoming multi-format series against Australia.

The three-match one-day series will be held in Puducherry on September 21, 23 and 26, and India will be led by Uttar Pradesh's Mohammad Amaan.

The series will then roll to Chennai for two four-day matches beginning on September 30 and October 7. The India squad for this leg of the tour will be captained by Soham Patwardhan of Madhya Pradesh.

Samit, a pace-bowling all-rounder, is currently playing for Mysore Warriors in the ongoing KSCA Maharaja T20 trophy in Bengaluru.

However, his outings so far have been underwhelm-



ing with the bat — 82 runs from seven innings with a highest of 33, and he is yet to bowl in the tournament.

But earlier this year, Samit had a productive time in the Cooch Behar Trophy, playing an important role in Karnataka's maiden title triumph in the event.

The 18-year-old made 362 runs from eight matches and his 98 against Jammu and Kashmir stood out for its quality and fluency.

Samit also had a memora-

ble tournament with the ball, where he claimed 16 scalps in eight matches, including two in the final against Mumbai.

India U19 squad for one-day series: Rudra Patel, Sahil Parakh, Kartikeya KP, Mohd Amaan (Captain), Kiran Chormale, Abhigyan Kundu (wk), Harvansh Singh Pangalia (WK), Samit Dravid, Yudhajit Guha, Samarth N, Nikhil Kumar, Chetan Sharma, Hardik Raj, Rohit Rajawat, Mohd Enaan.

India U19 squad for four-day series: Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Nitya Pandya, Vihan Malhotra, Soham Patwardhan (Captain), Kartikeya KP, Samit Dravid, Abhigyan Kundu (WK), Harvansh Singh Pangalia (WK), Chetan Sharma, Samarth N, Aditya Rawat, Nikhil Kumar, Anmoljeet Singh, Aditya Singh, Mohd Enaan.

-PTI

Krishan hopes to match 'Sree Bhai's' standards

By Saumojyoti S Choudhury

New Delhi: Krishan Bahadur Pathak knows that being the Indian hockey team's new first-choice goalkeeper won't be easy thanks to the high standards set by PR Sreejesh but he believes "dedication and discipline" will help him fill the big boots of his retired predecessor, who played a key role in shaping him.

The 27-year-old custodian of Nepalese descent, who was born in Punjab's Kapurthala, is no greenhorn and has made 125 appearances for India since making his debut in 2018.

But becoming the first-choice keeper has placed the spotlight firmly on him after Sreejesh decided to call time at the end of India's bronze-winning Olym-



pic campaign in Paris last month.

"It's a nice feeling that I am the main goalkeeper now. But it comes with added responsibility. What I have learnt from Sree bhai is to go along with the team...I was with him for the last six years, so it's a nice feeling to take his place," Pathak told PTI in

an exclusive interview.

Pathak's first major test is going to be the Asian Champions Trophy starting September 8 in Hulubuir, China. He acknowledged that it would be challenging to guard the post the way Sreejesh did, sometimes becoming the only difference between a victory and defeat.

"It will be difficult to fill in his shoes because he endured a 20-22 years journey to reach this level. But I will definitely try to match the benchmark which he has set for us, which is difficult but not impossible," he said.

The Arjuna awardee's biggest moment so far has been to be a part of the Asian Games gold-winning team last year. He was a reserve in the squads for both the Tokyo and Paris Olympic Games.

Pathak said he has had the good fortune of learning from Sreejesh and the affable Kerala-man remains ever-ready to help even now.

"He just told me play normal hockey the way you used to play with me. Keep playing with confidence in

tournaments. He said 'if you need any help or advice, I am always there for you'," Pathak recalled.

Not just advice, Sreejesh has also given him targets to achieve. Pathak wants to realise his mentor's dream of winning an Olympic gold in 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

"...he wanted to win an Olympic gold medal, a wish which remained unfulfilled but he has given that responsibility of fulfilling that dream to me," he said.

"In the last two Olympics I was a reserve goalkeeper. LA 2028 is obviously there among my goals but before that many big tournaments are there like Asian Games, from where we have to qualify for Olympics, then there is the World Cup.

-PTI

Seine water quality issues resurface

Paris: Concerns over water quality in the Seine River resurfaced at the Paralympic Games when organizers changed the schedule for para triathlon races.

All 11 medal events are to be held on one day, Sept. 1, instead of two as originally planned, Paris 2024 organizers said in a statement.

"The decision to hold all medal events on one day was taken in view of the weather forecast and to provide athletes and coaches with as much certainty as possible. The course of the swim remains unchanged," organizers said.

Water quality in the Seine River was also a major issue at the Olympics. Bacteria levels in the long-polluted Paris waterway fluctuate constantly depending on weather.

Paris Paralympics Shuttler Mandeep enters quarter final

Paris: Indian shuttler Mandeep Kaur entered the quarterfinals of the women's singles SL 3 category in the Paris Paralympics after defeating Australia's Vinot Celine Aurelie in the women's singles SL 3 event on Saturday.

Mandeep regrouped to win her last group B match 21-23 21-10 21-17 against her Australian rival. She had lost her opening match to Nigeria's Bolaji Mariam.

The Indian finished second in the three-player group B to book a quarterfinal spot. Mariam topped the group to enter the semifinals. The toppers of group A and C directly advanced to

the semifinals. The top two teams in group B as well as second-place finishers in group A and C compete in the quarterfinal for the two remaining semifinal spots.

SL3 class is for players with severe lower limb disability. They compete on half-width court.

In Friday's late night matches, Suhas Yathiraj and Palak Kohli lost their opening mixed doubles SL3 contest 11-21 17-21 to top seeded Indonesian pair of Hikmat Ramdani and Leani Ratri Oktia. In another group A SL3 mixed doubles contest involving Indians, Nitesh Kumar and Thulasimathi Murugesan lost.